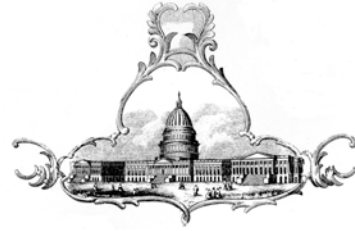




Gen. Philip Kearney

The Light
NEWSLETTER OF COMPANY K
Fifth Michigan Infantry
"Saginaw City Light Infantry"
Proud Member of the Cumberland Guard



July/August 2009 Edition

From The Chairman

Lads,

Are you enjoying this mild summer as much as I am? This has been a great reenacting season so far for weather. Knock on wood. Next up is Jackson, we all know it never rains at Jackson. Ha, ha!

I had a great time at Historic Fort Wayne Civil War Days. The weather was great, the camaraderie was second to none, we had our largest turnout from the 5th this year, and we had the largest turnout from the public I have seen at the Fort since the late 80's. The post sutler Pat Price was an appreciated addition. It added to the experience and provided a little relief from Army food just as the boys in the Civil War enjoyed. Although, I did not get a chance to view the Fort post office, I did receive some mail from my family and from the Christian Commission. The musket racks that Mark Heath and Dan Conklin put together Friday were great. I believe they are patterned from the ones Will saw at Fort Pulaski. They add to our garrison impression and are much better than laying our muskets next to us on the floor. Will Eichler, Chris Buzzard, Mack Kerridge, and Ernest Simmons were also able to arrive early Friday. I heard they worked hard all day to help prepare for the event. Thank you all for your efforts. John Legg came out Saturday morning after a long day of softball Friday. Scott Cummings and Edmund Lockhart came out Saturday evening what a grand surprise. See the photos page on the www.unionreenactor.com site for new photos from the event.

August 28-30 is the Jackson, MI 25th Anniversary event. There will be battles on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday each day will be from a different time period of the war. Use the link below for more info. http://www.7thmichigan.us/Jackson_Civil_War_Muster.htm

Friday @ 7:30pm **SKIRMISH AT BROWNSVILLE KY Nov. 20, 1861**
Saturday **BATTLE OF ANTIETAM CREEK (1st Jackson scenario in 1984) Sept. 17, 1862**
Sunday **BATTLE OF SAYLER'S CREEK AND CS SURRENDER April 6-9, 1864**

If able, please arrive early Friday so we can get organized and prepared for the Skirmish. Bring plenty of rounds. Plan on 60 rounds per day. I hope to see another big turnout.

I know Will Eichler will be unable to attend as he will soon be entering into a new phase of his life. We will miss you Will, but are excited for you and Wendy and can't wait to meet your new addition.

See you all very soon.
Jeremy Buschlen (269) 565-2393 bfjeremy@att.net

Commander's Column

Historic Fort Wayne Civil War Days-

This event was superb. A great turnout from the 5th (Jeremy Buschlen, Chris Buzzard, Dan Conklin, Will Eichler, Mark Health, Mack Kerridge, John Legg, Edmund Lockhart, Ernest Simmons and myself). Good job boys for showing your dedication to each other and this event. Edmund and I came to the event on Saturday night and got right into the fun. I decided to attend as a private as it wouldn't be fair to the company leaders to walk in half way through the event and expect a position of rank. I thoroughly enjoyed being a private in the ranks with you boys. Will Eichler did a great job of commanding the three company battalion. Jeremy Buschlen did a great job as 1st Sgt of our company. Mark Heath was fabulous on the bugle. John Legg did a great job as doing double duty with the drum and musket. Edmund as right general guide at one point did a great job as well. But none of it would have mattered if it weren't for you boys in the ranks toting the musket. It is my cap that I take off to you - the rank and file- that I give you three cheers. Without you there is no army to command, or play calls for or to guide around.

Coming back to my roots once in a while is a great thing. Being a private again in the line is a great refresher course for any officer. I think you boys got a kick out of it as well. J.R. Schroeder (21st MI) did a wonderful job at commanding you boys. J.R. and I go way back to the mid 1980's together. We have marched in many a campaign together and it is nice to see him in a new role. I have watched him grow from a timid officer to one that can do pretty well. It was nice to be under his command for a change instead of him under me (I know, sounds too kinky). The aspects of the Post Sutler complete with chits as well as the mail service was a great addition to this year's event. It was great to see Will Eichler speechless when Andy Roscoe (24th MI) presented him with the certificate of the 1860's Field Officers Sword that will be forthcoming (a bunch of us donated to this great cause). A wonderful time was had by all and I can't wait for next year's Fort Wayne Civil War days.

Edmund Lockhart-

Front and center. We wished Edmund farewell for the very last time...I think...at Historic Fort Wayne. (We did that at the Combined Arms Drill because he thought that would be his last event). I just wanted to take a few moments to draw it to your attention that Edmund will not be amongst us as he leaves for Marine Recruit Training Depot San Diego on Sunday July 19. He is about to embark on a great adventure and he will dearly be missed by his pards, not only here in the 5th but all over the state. Godspeed my friend and adopted third son. We will truly miss you. Our loss is the Marine Corps great gain.

Cartridge Party-

I know that a lack of enough rounds plagued me at the Fort. In the past we have had lots of cartridge parties by now. I usually host the parties but with my class load that has fallen by the wayside and so has the supply of rounds throughout our group. ***There is no reason that you boys can't get together on your own and have cartridge parties of your own.*** I am trying to put together a **cartridge party** together sometime in August at my house. My summer classes are done by August 13th. I can't pick a date right now because I know my family is planning to go camping one of the weekends after I am done with classes but we haven't coordinated that yet. Once I get a date figured out I will let you know.

Jackson MI 25th Anniversary-

Wow...25 years. I was at the first one and many, many of them in-between. I served as private through colonel over the years there and several ranks in-between. I wish I could say I went to all of them but I did miss several including the last two years. I am looking forward to returning this year and celebrating the three battles planned. I took a straw poll at the Fort and here is who said they will be attending: Jeremy Buschlen, Chris Buzzard, Dan Conklin, Scott Cummings, Mark Heath, Mack Kerridge, John Legg (maybe Sunday only), Zach Schatzer & Ernest Simmons. NOT attending is: Eric Berger & Will Eichler (baby is due Sept 10). It was rumored that Jim Martin might make it out to serve as a staff officer...it would be nice to see Jim Church do that as well...could we get Dave Post too. I will see if they can come out. One can only wish...maybe my wishes will come true. Need to hear from Kyle Neveau, Beau Shaver, Dan Watson, (Hey Kris Green how about you too) about their status.

With Will not there, I am not sure who will be commanding the battalion at this moment. Maybe me...I don't know. We will have to keep you posted on that. Until then I will plan on commanding our company. There is a battle scheduled for Friday night at 6:30. I plan on getting there earlier in the day on Friday. It would be great to see if many of you could do the same so we can be up and running. I know that many of you may not be able to come earlier but see what you can do. I would like to get a quick company drill in before we have to go into battle to shake out the rust. Anyway, the event looks to be another great Jackson and it looks like we will have another great turnout.

150th Anniversary of the War-

The 150th anniversary of the war starts on April 12th 2011. Hopefully the economy will start coming back soon or we maybe we will be reenacting Hooverville of the 1920's. Some 150th celebrations such as Harper's Ferry and Lincoln's Presidential election will happen just next year in 2010 = 1860. Now is the time to recruit and prepare for what I hope will be some of the best reenactments of our lifetimes. Recruit more men. If each of us could just bring one more person into our ranks we would double in size. The more men the better the fun (that's what she said). Start preparing now your pre-war persona for the lead up into the War. We all remember what we were doing on September 11th 2001. It is a day that is riveted into our memory. So should the firing on Fort Sumter be riveted into your personas' memory. What were you doing when you heard about it...what did you think and how did you feel? What made you enlist...was it that or something else? Those are the things I am talking about here. At any rate the 150th Anniversary of the war is 21 months away.

Your servant,
Scott Cummings
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989-415-8592

NOTE: *Boys, I wrote this for my Winter Semester English Class. I got an "A" on it. You might find it interesting. It is called a Literacy Autobiography, meaning that I had to write about something that I was good at and how I got good at it. Therefore it is written for an audience that doesn't know anything about reenacting etc. -SCOTT*

Tactical Time Traveling

by Scott Cummings

I feel I was born 145 years too late. I used to feel somewhat out of place in these modern times. I'm not really quite sure how to explain that feeling other than modern life just seemed too fast paced. Too much going on all at once in the world around me. It is just an out of place feeling. Because of that feeling I have always looked back in time and have always had a great love for history. Especially the military history of the United States but more specifically the American Civil War era. Life seemed simpler then and was not as fast paced as it is today.

Because of my love of the Civil War era I have been to Gettysburg PA at least ten times and can never get enough of touring the battlefield and town. While each trip has its own story, it was last summer that I came to Gettysburg in command of a 125 man regiment of union reenactors. We were all there to participate in the 145th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg. While this force may sound like a large number it really wasn't as we were surrounded by thousands of other union and confederate reenactors from all over the nation and even some from Europe.

I remember standing there in front of my battalion of infantry awaiting the confederate attack to come. The enemy lines came out of the woods and formed poised to attack across that long open field before me. A stone fence divided the field with sporadic split rail fences portioning off sections of land for the obvious places for crops and cattle. As I stared out across the mile distance that the confederates would have to march across, I thought about the pathway that got me here and my mind wandered back in time.

As a child I spent countless hours reading books, playing with toy soldiers and playing army with my neighborhood friends. Even then I was always drawn to the Civil War era. Donning a toy store confederate cap and shouldering a toy musket that I got for Christmas one year. Instead of playing sports, which I did on occasion, I would spend most of my childhood summer days reliving the 1860's. Crawling through the bushes and emerging from under my neighbor's porch to ambush the enemy in an imagined embattled South. "Bang, bang, you're dead" I would shout as I got the drop on them. Even then I had an interest in the minor details of war such as the tactics they used.

I remember I would gather all the local kids in the neighborhood together in my driveway and try to drill them in some ad-hoc manual of arms I had combined from my imagination and watching John Wayne movies. It was quite comical when I look back on it now. Here is this nine-year-old trying to corral kids from age four to ten and get them to stand in a straight line. While I shouted orders "shoulder, arms; forward march" and they would just stand there and stare at me blankly. Over and over I would show them what I wanted them to do however, they were always distracted by the simplest things. One would run off and chase after a cat or say something like, "I think I hear my mom calling me for home for lunch." "*Who eats lunch at 9:30 in the morning?*" I thought to myself. The scene was duplicated very nicely for me, later in life, in a Monty Python movie in which a British Sergeant Major with his group of soldiers is marching his men up and

down the square. One by one each soldier tells the Sgt. Major that they have something else to do. Things like going to the theatre or doing their laundry. Each time the Sgt. Major says, "well off with you then" and ends up marching up and down the square by himself. I was that guy. It always ended in my frustration as I would never attain the desired results of whipping this toy-gun clad mob of kids into a disciplined fighting neighborhood militia to defend our street from the Yankee hoard poised ready to attack at anytime . . . as I imagined. My attempt at neighborhood drills didn't pan out because the neighbor kids wouldn't adhere to my boot-camp and at the first chance they would go AWOL. So much for teaching tactics at a young age.

Tactics are the way an army moves and fights. It includes the use of military decorum including how to; line up, march, face to the right & left, the manual of arms, firing of weapons and other maneuvers that are used to move soldiers from one point to another. The tactics used back in the Civil War to prepare for warfare was very different then they are today. Most of the drill manuals back then were based on the Napoleonic War Era of the early 1800's and hadn't changed much by the time the Civil War came along in 1861. The men fought in large groups shoulder to shoulder in two ranks and there is quite a detailed way in which to move soldiers around a battlefield in an orderly manner.

One can only imagine the difficulty in moving eighty-thousand men on both sides around strategically while trying to out maneuver the other side. Officers on horseback riding all over the place shouting orders while large numbers of horse drawn cannon with their crews bouncing along on their limbers trying to place their guns. Thousand of soldiers marching through the brambles and weeds kicking up dust as their feet hit the dry earth and mixing with the gun smoke that hugged the ground. The natural chaos of just that was probably enough to confuse even the most well trained soldiers. But through the chaos of animals and smoke, tactics were used to get the men to where they were supposed to go.

When I was twelve, I got the chance to see the battlefield at Gettysburg for the first time. My family stopped off there on the way to visit my uncle who lived in Washington, D.C. I only spent one afternoon there but I was like a kid in a candy store and knew that I would have to come back again as I relished every monument, cannon and historical plaque along our tour. At one stop I encountered my first Civil War reenactor. He was dressed in a Union Cavalry private's dark blue wool uniform. He had a horse and all the equipment that went with that. I looked at him from top to bottom and saw that he wore a black leather belt at his waist. On one side he had a pistol holster and on the other hung a saber. Over his shoulder and across his body was another black leather belt which held a carbine hooked to it. As I watched in amazement, he demonstrated how to fire his pistol. I remember thinking how I would love to do that someday and vowed that I would when I got older. I tucked the memory of that day into a special place in my mind and knew that one day when I was older I would get into reenacting as well.

Then one day in 1982 providence struck and an opportunity presented itself as if it was meant to be. It happened while I was working in my dad's store. In walks a guy wearing a Civil War Confederate uniform. It saw that it was Jim Martin who had been a customer

of ours for several years. Intrigued of course, I struck up a conversation and asked him what he was doing. He told me about a Civil War group that he had just joined and he suggested I check the group out too if I was interested in joining as well.

I checked them out and went to a few meetings and I joined that group as a private in March of 1983. I found that I thoroughly enjoyed the group. Who wouldn't, with the common bond we all had with the love of the Civil War era? Jim Martin, one year older than I and a short guy like me, was always standing next to me in ranks because we lined up by height. Jim and I we soon became best of friends.

I started acquiring the uniform and equipment and borrowed what I could when I didn't have it. Also, I started reading much more about the common soldier and other aspect of the Civil War. So I set to work preparing my mind and outfitting my body and my group held drill sessions weekly in the parking lot of Bay Lanes in Bay City. We practiced a modernized mixed up version of what the leadership thought was tactics of the Civil War.

In 1985, I was promoted to a corporal in my group, which is one step up from a private. I saw that there was a need to improve upon what we already knew and bring my reenacting group to a higher level of authenticity concerning learning the tactics of the era. I did some searching and found a reproduction manual being republished, "Hardee's Infantry Tactics." I sent away for a copy and when it arrived I sat at my kitchen table with chess pieces and coins lined up in two ranks in front of me and set to work understanding this book. This manual was originally written prior to the Civil War and it used language of that era. This made it a bit harder to decipher but I was able to do so after some patience and persistence on my part. Commands like "On the right by file into line" or "On the right into line wheel" or "By company into line" all sounded like they were all the same to me. Yet they are all very different maneuvers. While standing in two ranks firing away at each other might sound simple at first glance to most, this manual alone had more than 700 pages dedicated to just the tactics involved in moving small to large groups of men. Learning all that needed to be learned was no simple task, especially on my own.

Using the pennies on the table helped me to some extent but I was lucky to find by 1986 three mentors and great friends that had been reenacting since the mid 70's and were also dedicated to upgrading the hobby. Actually, I found out later that the upgrading of the hobby was a direct result of the preplanning involved as a grassroots movement nationwide for the 125th anniversary of the Battle of Bull Run in 1986. Because of my dedication to knowing and learning the tactics, I was promoted to Sergeant at this event. My mentors must have seen something in me that I hadn't seen in myself and nurtured and taught me whenever they could. Mostly by on the job training at a reenactment when they needed someone to fill a spot they would push me to do it even though I was a little reluctant, mostly because I had a fear of getting up in front of people and speaking, which is what I would be doing. Sure it was ok for me to drill my little group of ten guys in the parking lot at Bay Lanes every Wednesday night but to get up in front of sixty men just scared me. But they persisted and they knew I could do it even if I doubted it and I did.

On one occasion back in 1989 while garrisoning Fort Wayne for a drill weekend my mentor stretched my abilities and made me get out of my comfort zone. Fort Wayne is a Vauban style Star Fort in Detroit that was built in the 1840's and used as a gathering point and clearing house for Michigan soldiers headed off to the Civil War. When I arrived at the fort, my rank at the time was a 1st Sgt. However I was informed differently upon seeing one of my mentors Captain Harrison, who looked like an actual veteran from the war itself with a snow white full beard that came down to his chest. Capt. Harrison told me that I would be serving as Battalion Adjutant for the weekend. Yikes, I knew nothing of how to do that job. To say I was nervous is an understatement. I stayed up reading the details on the complicated job and was rather anxious about the "Dress Parade" that I would have to conduct first thing in the morning. I committed what I could to memory and then tried to sleep. I didn't sleep at all that night. However, to my surprise I pulled it off the next morning. While it wasn't obvious to the hundred soldiers in front of me that I was nervous, it sure was to me. My palms were sweating and at first my mind went blank then I gave the commands that I had committed to memory. "Attention, battalion; shoulder arms, prepare to open ranks, to the rear open order, march." Then marching to the front and center of the battalion I approached Capt. Harrison saluted and commanded "Present, Arms; Sir the parade is formed," He saluted me back and smiled and said I did an excellent job.

In 1990, I had attained the rank of Lieutenant. Becoming an officer for Civil War reenacting isn't just learning the manuals or going out and buying a sword and uniform. Leadership just isn't looking the part, but it entails so much more. It involves caring for the men under your command. Knowing when to be hard on the men at the right times and nice at others. Injecting humor at the appropriate time just to get fifteen more minutes out of the men at drill. Projecting my voice so everyone can hear. There is so much involved with it that I could write a book. It all starts with a knowledge of the tactics and the rest comes later. In 1992, the movie Gettysburg was filmed. I was fortunate enough to be able to be hired to provide back ground as a reenactor for the movie. I spent five weeks on the film. I was put up in a hotel, got paid \$300 a week and fed six out of seven days a week. I had one day off each week that I spent touring the battlefield. That was Heaven all in itself but the best was yet to come. I was also cast as one of the officers in the 20th Maine. I can be seen in the movie several times. Had I not had the knowledge of being an officer as well as the uniform and equipment that goes with it, I would not have gotten that part.

I was also elected by my group to serve as its captain in 1992. I have held that rank ever since. I am the Captain for the 5th Michigan Infantry Co. K. A captain commands a company of men which back then consisted of one-hundred men. This is scaled down for reenacting purposes usually no more than about forty-men are in a company.

There are times however when an officer is chosen or appointed to command a regiment as a Colonel. This is usually when larger groups are brought together throughout the Midwest or nation. When these groups are combined together, we form a regiment. A regiment might have one-hundred to three-hundred men. Back in the Civil war a regiment was one-thousand men. I started commanding regiments in 1994. Again there was a bit of

trepidation however not as much as it was that first time as an Adjutant. Again there is a set of tactics that one must commit to memory in order to teach it to the men and function as a fight force did back in the Civil War. The largest battalion I ever commanded was in 1997 at the 135th anniversary battle of Shiloh. I had three hundred and six men all broke down into ten companies. This one was quite a challenge. Normally a colonel is usually mounted on a horse. I didn't have a horse at this event and had to command on foot. Projecting my voice far enough to give the commands was hard at times but I had a great staff under me that helped me considerably and it was a great regiment to command.

Last year, I commanded a one-hundred and twenty-five man regiment at the 145th anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg. As I stood there waiting for the enemy to attack, I realized I had come full circle. The very place in which I got that desire to reenact as a twelve-year-old boy I have returned 37 years later as a Colonel commanding a regiment of union soldiers. My hope is that out of the thousands of people that were there to watch the reenactment that day there were many young boys that were impressed with the desire to learn more of the Civil War and develop a love for history and perhaps one of them will develop the love of studying tactics of that era. Maybe 37 years from now that person will return with an army of reenactors to do the same for the next generation and experience the slower pace of those times . . . at least for a weekend.

From Will

Pards,

First of all, thank you all so much for the amazing gift of the officer's sword. I was floored when I was presented the certificate and I continue to be amazed by the gift. It comes to me a you vote of confidence in my leadership, which is something I hold dear to my heart and take as a welcome weight on my shoulders. We are making good strides in our hobby here in MI, and I'm thrilled as we approach the 150! As Scott said, they are coming fast. Be there with us! Be ready! Find some new pards. Recruit!

I'm bummed I'll miss Jackson but they have moved Wendy's due date up to September 10. Two weeks before the baby might come (and babies have a habit of coming just when they please) is too close for our family's comfort. Enjoy the 25th! I'll see you at the 26th.

J. Lammers is back! No, Jim hasn't raised from the grave. His son, John Lammers has taken over parts of Dad's business. We've been talking and I hope to get a look at this wares in the near future. You might even see him at Jackson. This is great for recruiting because it will give us a good, less expensive, Michigan based place to purchase leathers from. More news as I get it.

About the Website

The website continues to improve greatly. We've just added a page on the living history section of the site which not only tells a person what they need for the hobby but SHOWS it to them. I've never seen another site do this in this way. The page is titled "What Do I Need?" Check it out off the Living history page. Also, when Scott schedules date for the cartridge party, it will be posted up there. John Legg is working on a history of the 5th for that page. We're always looking for feedback on how to make the site better!

About our Schedule

At the January powder party and meeting, we voted on events for this year. Below are the ones we selected that are upcoming. I hope to see you at many of them!

August 28-30 – Jackson, MI – 25th Anniversary of the event. The event gets into full swing with a battle on Friday evening this year to celebrate the anniversary. Be sure to come early and roll some extra rounds!

September 25-27 – River of Time - We discussed attending this event to do only two things: teach the public our history and RECRUIT. Beau Shaver just told me he had a great School presentation on May 1 and many of the students said they wanted to come out with their families. People will be looking for us!

October 10-11 – Wolcott Mill – The scenario will be from Chickamauga this year. This has become an excellent event over the past few years. We have an all day tactical on Saturday that is focused on living the life of a soldier. We take a break in the field for the dinner meal. The weather has been amazing for the past few years. Come join us for a great weekend!

Next Newsletter

Deadline will be September 10th (no I'm not joking – I'll be staying up all night a lot after the baby arrives and we'll have time to do it). See you all soon!