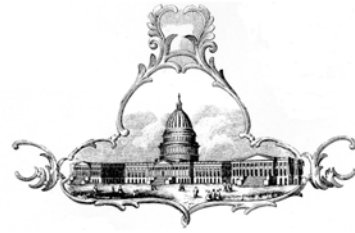




Gen. Philip Kearney

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



July/August 2010 Edition

From The Chairman

Greetings and salutations! I hope you all had a grand time at Civil War Days at Historic Fort Wayne. I know I sure did! We kept very busy living the life of a Civil War soldier which keeps the Fort alive for the general public. It also gives us a little taste of what it was actually like to garrison a fort. Building the interest of the people and government in Detroit in Historic Fort Wayne is an ongoing effort of the Historic Fort Wayne Coalition. This was the 5th time the coalition has hosted this event. The 5th Michigan, Co. K is a member of the coalition as a group. If you haven't yet, please visit the website: www.historicfortwaynecoalition.com

I don't know about you but I was a little tired after the event. It's a reminder to me that I need to continue to improve my physical health. Not only will it help me to reenact for years to come, but I will look a little more period with less bulk. Another health concern we discussed at the event is the need to stay hydrated. It is easy enough to become dehydrated in the summer, and when we add several layers of long clothing we only add to the risk. One rule we have as a group is that you should never leave camp without a canteen. Your canteen should be full for the next formation, but make sure you drink plenty and then refill.

I want to thank Robert May again for his Garrison Cook impression. All meals were delicious, and the menu was great. With as busy as we were, I do not know how I would have had time to prepare my own meals. At a garrison event, cooking our own meals would not be correct. Robert's impression helps bring another element of realism to our group.

Robert May brought with him Robert Cook who I think got hooked at this event. Robert Cook sure looked like he had done this before. Derek Hall was also able to join us Saturday. I think Derek has a fire in him as well; he has some WWII and Revolutionary War reenacting experience, so he seemed to be picking up our drill pretty quickly. Please congratulate Derek next time you see him as he was married the weekend following the event.

Up next is the 26th Annual Jackson, Michigan Cascades Civil War Muster. This year is the Battles of Atlanta, Georgia (Battle of Pickett's Mill and Battle of Jonesboro) August 27, 28, & 29. There is a link on our website www.unionreenactor.com on the schedule page to this event. Please let Scott Cummings, Will Eichler or myself know as soon as possible whether you will or will not be able to make it to the event. Also, if you need to borrow gear let us know as soon as possible. You should also hook up with a pard or vet. In your area and roll some cartridges.

See you all very soon.

Your pard,
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bfijeremy@att.net

Commander's Column

Boys,

Civil War Days at Historic Fort Wayne was a great success. I think we helped bring the old fort alive for the public to enjoy and get a glimpse of what the fort might have looked like back then. We had a grand total of fourteen men from the 5th in attendance. We even had a great surprise by seeing Edmund Lockhart in the ranks on Friday and Saturday. Thank you all for participating and giving us your precious time and talents to help bring the garrison to life.

I would like to thank the following men; Will Eichler, as always, did a fine job at leading us as our Colonel. Mark Heath, once again, your talents with the bugle were excellent. Robert May's first event as our company cook was a great success as it freed us all up to do other duties. Jeremy Buschlen made it easy to be your captain as he was always on top of things. Guy Purdue (Sally Port Mess) for changing his duty assignment as left general guide to serving as our 2nd Sgt. Mack Kerridge and Chris Buzzard as our corporals did an excellent job assisting Jeremy in keeping the company on task. Most importantly to the men in the ranks that did your duty without hesitation. None of us could do any of these jobs if it wasn't for you boys and your dedication to this hobby. Thank you all for making the Fifth's impression look so good in the field and in garrison. I was especially impressed with the regimental inspection. Our company was the only one that turned out with most of us having knapsacks and although the barracks area needing a quick sweep (which you all jumped in and did promptly) everything was squared away as it should be. Again, thank to you all.

Civil War days also saw several new or perspective members. Robert May who joined in November of last year made it out for his first event and again did a wonderful job feeding us for the weekend. Robert May, brought along one of his former students; Robert Cook, whose enthusiasm and excitement is almost contagious. Derek Hall, who was getting married the following weekend, was able to give us part of Friday and all of Saturday. Thank you all for helping to bring these new men up to speed as quickly as possible and maintaining a stellar reputation for safety. It is nice to see our ranks growing.

Our next event is Jackson Michigan. August 27-29. We will be doing two scenarios around the Atlanta Campaign. Saturday will be the battle of Picket's Mill, May 27th, 1864. Sunday will be the battle of Jonesborough, August 31, 1864. So we move from spring to summer in the matter of two days. At any rate, we are to play Western soldiers. Untrimmed Hardee hats, slouches or civilian hats would be the predominate headgear, but if all you have is a forage cap, by all means wear that. For more information on the event go to: www.civilwarmuster.org We will register as a group, so I will need to know who is all planning on attending as soon as you know, please let me know, so I can get our registration in. Make sure you have at least 60 rounds per battle.

As I recall, Robert May will not be in attendance, so we will need to bring our own campaign rations. For you new men, and as a refresher to the vets, please find an article about rations elsewhere in this newsletter.

CARTRIDGE PARTY at my house 400 N Sheridan Bay City on Saturday August 14th, 6:30 pm until whenever. We will be making as many authentic rounds as possible in one evening. Please be ready, willing and able to crank out some rounds. Bring with you a can of FF or FFF black powder, a tin of percussion caps, glue sticks, cotton balls and string. Also, bring money for pizza or nachos. For those that live farther away, you may stay the night if you wish...I have couches and floor.

River of Time, here in Bay City, is at the end of September. It is a multi-era event that I helped to co-found back in 1991. While it isn't the most authentic setting for an event, it does offer us a great opportunity to recruit as the public comes out in great numbers to walk through the camps. We will offer to the public a taste of camp life. Our camp will have at least one of each of these examples to show the public; Sibley, wall, A-frame & shelter tents, she-bang (if at all possible) and throw down as if on campaign.

We will have a recruiting sign and talk to the public as much as possible. Keeping that in mind, sometimes the public is reluctant to engage us in conversation; therefore we will need to start the conversation. In addition to talking to the public, we will have drill and firing demonstrations as well. We might even throw in some other scenarios too. Any ideas, on those, let me know. The idea is to have stuff going on as people do not want to walk through the camps and see men sitting around poking at the fire. We need to keep things active or engaging the public. I know many of you have other impressions from other eras. As a group, we voted to go to River of Time in force as Union soldiers. With numbers there is power and strength. Our aim is to recruit and fill our ranks...putting our best on for the public along with men in the ranks will show the public that we are a great viable group to join. . However, I realize that this is perhaps your only time of the year to show off your other impression in your own back yard. My request, for those that have other impressions and intend to go to River of Time as such is to ask the group permission to do so. Just as I ask your permission whenever I am asked to command a battalion or be out of the company for staff, please do the same. We all have a commitment to each other and that will honor that commitment by asking your pars for that opportunity. Please ask through me if you would and I will then poll the group.

Antietam in October registration is on our website www.unionreenactor.com Please note the uniform guidelines and start purchasing what you need before the event. We are playing the 6th Wisconsin Infantry, a part of the Iron Brigade and we will be camped on the actual battlefield, therefore we have a commitment to not only the National Park Service to uphold the historical integrity of those brave men, but also the public that will be there to view us. That commitment is to each other as well, but most importantly, that commitment goes much deeper. It is a commitment to honor those 6th Wisconsin soldiers that fought there and shed their blood for preserving our union. If you aren't going to the event and have a Hardee hat or other equipment that you can loan out, please let us know. Our aim is to be as authentic as possible without having to wear original equipment.

As we approach the 150th Anniversary of the firing on Fort Sumter next April, let us all remember, realize and reflect on the fact that history didn't start with that event. Take the

time now to actually feel and read about what life was like now in 1860 or before. What tensions and politics were discussed on a daily basis? Reflect on what would be going through your mind. There is a Presidential election forth coming this fall that will change the very fabric of your life forever. What are you doing now in life in 1860 that will be changed forever? Who do you know that will be thrust into this upcoming war? Where do you stand politically on the southern states threatening toward secession? How does that affect your friends and family? Go further back and research some of what life was like the decade or so, or more for some of us, leading up to the war. Where were you born? What brought you to the state you are living in now (this sometimes has to be very generic in nature as in the case of portraying other regiments, such as the 6th Wisconsin). Build a life in your mind and visualize in as much detail that you can that life. If you need knowledge about that life, do some research on it. The next five years has the opportunity to be perhaps some of the most outstanding times of our lives. If we all dedicate ourselves to making it that much better, then we bring it up a notch. I was there at the 125's...if I last to the 175s, I will be in my late 70's. I will probably be doing GAR reenacting by then, if not dead. Many of you will carry with you the memories of the 150s. Let's make those memories great ones and dedicate ourselves to each other and to honoring those soldiers that we strive to remember.

Your servant,
Scott Cummings
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Rations

By Kurt Charles Loewe

(Editor's Note: This is a reprint an excellent article written by one of our unit's founders from an earlier edition of "The Light.")

Well, we had our first drill and are gearing up for another. It is now February and in a few months the campaign season will be upon us. So I'd like to start looking in that direction. And where better but the food we eat. Now I'm not going to tell you what you can and can't eat at events. That is up to you. But what one eats at events is also one of the simplest ways to improve your impression.

During the war, the army had basically two different types of rations, camp or garrison rations and marching rations. Because most of what we do is portray soldiers in the field (ie; not in camp or garrison), I'm choosing to only deal with the marching ration for right now. And that ration per day was as follows.¹

Meat:	12 ounces of pork or bacon, or 1 pound and 4 ounces of salt or fresh beef
Bread:	1 pound and 6 ounces of soft bread or flour, or 1 pound of hard bread [hardtack] or 1 pound and 4 ounces of corn meal
Coffee*:	1 ½ ounces green coffee or 1 ¼ ounces roasted coffee

Sugar*: 2 ¼ ounces sugar
Salt*: ½ ounce salt

* = approximate measures as these items were issued to every one hundred men in pounds, then divided

The above is what the official ration was. But based on accounts from soldiers, the most common things issued were salt pork, hard tack, roasted coffee and sugar. Definitely not the most exciting food, but you can survive on it. They did for long durations of time. So I know we can for a couple days. Once again for our purposes I am only going to cover the above daily ration based on what the soldiers talked about as the most common food issued.

Meat – ¾ pound of salt pork. You can find salt pork in your local grocery store, but I highly discourage using this. For starters it is not the same as what was issued, just has the same name. The closest thing that has been found to best emulate salt pork, is back bacon. This is not the stuff you normally buy that is sliced. It comes in slabs. Because of the low demand by today's customers, it is not usually available for purchase. But with a little looking around you can find it. My suggestion is to call around to your local meat markets and ask first if they carry back bacon. If not ask if they can either get it or recommend someplace that does carry it. Not always, but in most cases if a place can get it you have to order it in advance (a couple of days). And usually you need to buy a certain amount. If this is the case, my recommendation is to order how much you want. When you go to pick it up ask if they can cut it up into roughly ¾ lbs slabs. When you get home, pack a slab for each day of the event you're attending. Place the rest in the freezer for the next event. *Packing:* a lot of people are worried about raw bacon (or meat in general) not being refrigerated. And that is a good concern. But with back bacon, you need not worry. For starters it is cured and /or smoked not to mentioned filled with salt. So all you need to do is wrap your slabs in a cloth or place in a poke bag in your haversack and they should be fine for the duration of the event. The main thing with meat or any food in your haversack for that matter, is to use common sense. Don't leave your black-painted haversack sitting in the sun all afternoon. If you're going to a national, transport it in a cooler to the event then put in haversack once there. Another option is to cook it all prior to or upon arrival at the event. A lot of men upon receiving their rations cooked all the meat and ate it because it was less weight on their shoulders if it was in their belly. Also they never knew if they were going to get a chance to light fires and cook. If it is cooked right away and placed in the haversack it can be eaten whenever.

Bread – 1 lbs of hard tack. This is roughly ten pieces. There are two ways get a hold of this. Either make it yourself (contact me if you want a recipe) or an even simpler way is to purchase it from Bents Hardtack Company. This is a company that actually made it during the and for some reason still does, which is good for us. It costs \$10 per box (10 pieces) if bought singularly or \$8 per box if bought in quantities of ?? or more. Making it yourself may be cheaper, but I can tell you from experience it takes a long while to make a few pieces. Also rolling out the dough (flower and water) is a pain. If you want hard tack for just one event, this may be a consideration. But if you want it for a few events, I'd recommend getting it from Bents. This would be something that would be a great thing for the unit to do a unit buy and get it at a discount.

Coffee – 1 ¼ oz. This is easy. Go to your local store (or Dunkin Donuts) and buy a pound of un-ground coffee. Measure out the appropriate amount for the weekend and either place in bottom of haversack or poke bag. There is multiple ways to cook this up and drink it. If you aren't sure don't hesitate to ask. Also, if you save the beans after cooking, they can be used about two more times.

Sugar – 2 ¼ oz. A lady named Virginia Mescher had a three part article published in Food History News that described everything you ever wanted (or didn't want) to know about sugar and it's refining process during the Civil War. Based on her research, there were two main types of sugar during the war, white and brown, both from cane. It was figured that brown was probably the most prevalent for the army. So my recommendation is to obtain either dark brown Muscovado sugar from a specialty store or use your basic light brown sugar. Pack a bunch in a bowl or large cup and let it sit out to harden. Once it's hardened remove it from the container and let sit longer to make sure it's hardened all the way through. Then prior to an event break it and put chunks of roughly the above weight into your haversack. At the event you can either scrape what you need into your coffee with a knife or using your spoon like a shelf, carefully dip the block into coffee.

When you look at the above ration it does not seem like much, but you'd be surprised how much room it actually takes up. If you take two days rations (double above) and place that in your haversack with a plate or canteen half and your silverware. Your haversack will be full. Your cup would have to go in your knapsack (not the best place) or hooked to the outside of your haversack or knapsack. With that in mind it can easily be said that the only accurate definition of a haversack stuffer would be food!

From Will

Website

Be sure to check the website for some new photos from the season! I've put several up there. We are about to start a new section in the "Living History" section of the site. As I went back to find the rations article you read above, I found a LOT of good articles about how to improve your impression. We're going to start an articles section to the site to help those who see the site if they want to improve either their impression or their infantry craft!

If you have an idea how to help the site grow, please let me know! The good ideas are always coming in.

Being well at an event

Jeremy has touched on this above. Please take steps in your personal life to make you a better re-enactor and have a better experience. Jeremy mentions hydration and exercise which are great suggestions. Let me add one more. Be outside! Often I exercise at a gym. I get a good workout but I'm still in air conditioning. Spend time outside (go for a walk or do other things) being active. This will adjust your body to being in the weather. Often, that's part of what catches up with us.

I heard a story on the radio this week that says active exercisers need twice as long to recover from a work out in high humidity and their immune systems stay suppressed twice as long. The heat takes it out of us. Let's be prepared to care for ourselves!

Antietam

The Antietam Living History is drawing closer. Along with our pards in the Sally Port Mess, we will be the base of a progressive company for the Regiment. We will portray

Company I. They were used as skirmisher at the battle! Mark – I hope you have time to join us! For those of you who were at Backwaters, we have several registrations already sent in from others from our company in Tennessee.

Please review the website for our company. It's hosted on our group's website. The link is: <http://unionreenactor.com/6thWI.html>

In order to best portray the 6th Wisconsin, the hosts are asking all men to wear a Hardee Hat that weekend. It will be mandatory in our company. Please make arrangements now. It's easy to get one from Bender Hats in time for the event. You might also ask around and see who isn't going who has one you can borrow. If you are looking to make one upgrade or addition to your kit this year, consider this one. A link to Bender Hats can be found on our website at: <http://unionreenactor.com/EquipNeeded.html>

Please note – Registration for our company will be on an individual basis! You must register yourself with Jeremy Bevard. A copy of the registration form is on the website and I'm attaching it with the email I send this newsletter out in. Why is pre-registration necessary? We are providing rations for the company. To improve your experience, we have a lot of good information on what the men ate around the battle and, based on that and standard army field rations, we will issue rations at the event.

The cost to be in the company for the weekend is \$20.00. That will get your 5 meals. You are on your own on Friday night. Rations cover Saturday all day and Breakfast and Lunch on Sunday. The event will end about 2pm on Sunday and you'll be able to be at work on Monday morning easily.

Come be part of a great weekend with your pards! Sleep on a National Battlefield!

Schedule

We've set our schedule for 2010. It looks very exciting to me! Scott has elaborated on the early events in his article so I'll only give you dates for those.

All registration (except where individual registration is noted) will be done for us by Scott Cummings. Please help him and tell him what events you plan to go to!!!

August 27-29 – Jackson Muster. It will be the 26th anniversary of the event. I'm not sure if a scenario has been selected.

September 25-26 – River of Time. We voted to go to this event and set up and recruit! The 150s are coming and we want to grow. We will have Jim Rapai with us and he will be bringing his Sibley tent to go along with our display!

October 10-11 – Wolcott Mill – I really wish I had something to say about this event but the hosts are being incredibly slow in getting with me on this event. We'll see... The good news is the Black Hat Battalion has voted it a max effort event and the Ohio boys are asking again.

October 23-24 – Antietam National Battlefield Living History. Pards, what an opportunity! We will get to camp in the actual West Woods near the Dunker Church. We will portray the 6th Wisconsin of the Iron Brigade. This is hosted by the 24th

Michigan and is an opportunity not to be missed. The hosts ask that all men possible come with a Hardee hat. Second choice will be a black civilian hat and the forage cap last as we are portraying the Iron Brigade. With our pards in the Sally Port Mess, we will form the base for Company I. We will also have some of the Tanglefoot Mess and others join in the company. I'm even trying to get Skip Owens (our battalion commander from Backwaters) to come out and march with us. Jeremy Bevard will be the Captain and our own Scotty will be the Lieutenant. Check out <http://unionreenactor.com/6thWI.html> for more information.

Dues

Thanks to those of you who made sure your dues are paid! It is money we each chip in to help keep the efforts of our group moving forward. We've used the money to help Fort Wayne by becoming an organizational member. We maintain our website with it. Now, Scott, Jeremy and I are talking about getting the business cards we've talked about to support recruiting. We need to discuss this as a group so we can make a decision together.

Paid for 2010:

Jeremy Buschlen

Dan Conklin

Will Eichler

Derek Hall

Mark Heath

Robert May

Beau Shaver - *Scott has his money

Have I missed anyone? I think I have the list complete. The rest of you need to please pay 2010 dues! Our treasury, after putting the \$90 into it is at \$144.97. We'll have a good amount of money to do some good things for the 5th and history. Please either pay me at the next drill or mail me a check. Make it out to Will Eichler and put "5th MI" in the memo line.

Send it to me at:

Will Eichler

57431 Junction Ct.

Washington, MI 48094