



CHAMPLAIN VALLEY HISTORIC REENACTORS
2nd Vermont Volunteer Infantry, Co. A;
1st Vermont Cavalry, Co. K;
Vermont Brigade Field Dressing Station
and associated Green Mountain Citizens

FEBRUARY 2010

“You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.” – Abraham Lincoln

Dues & Medical Form- Annual dues are now due! Thank you to all who renewed their dues at the meeting! These funds primarily cover the costs of the groups’ insurance for the year. If you have not paid your dues, you really need to do so at once so that your name can be listed on the insurance policy. Please make checks payable to CVHRI, \$25.00 for an individual, \$40.00 for a family. Also please go to the website, obtain a medical form under “Join us” and please fill it out so we can have updated forms for 2010. These forms go into a sealed envelope to be put in a “historical 1ts aid kit” that

goes on the field with us, in case of emergencies. Mail your dues and medical form to Jim Buell, 223 Stokes Avenue, Shelburne, VT 05482. Thank you!

CVHR Potluck Dinner ~February 6

~Sue Brown
redwolf363@aol.com

The 2nd VT will be holding a potluck dinner at Cpl. Hendees house located at 178 Tatro Rd., Starkboro, VT. Dinner will be set for 6:30, arrival time of 6:00. We are hoping everyone can make it in period dress, but please, NO HOOPS due to space limitations. **Also, please remember that brogans with heel plates need to be removed at the door. No Heel Plates!!** We are considering this a whole family event, so please be sure to bring the family whether they reenact or not!

Winter Carnival Parade ~ Feb 13: -

~Mike Frisbie
Mike.Frisbie@rehabgym.com

Don't forget the Winter Carnival Parade in Saranac Lake, NY. The 55th VA would love to have the 2nd VT. in attendance. It's a real good time and great PR! The spectators usually number in the thousands for this parade.

University Mall Recruiting ~ March 27

~Ted Miles
tmilesffl@yahoo.com

Calling all Vermonters!

The season is approaching quickly. We have the University Mall community space reserved for us on March 27 for our recruiting event. The event is from 10-3 or 4. I am compiling a list of interested parties to participate in this event. It's indoors and heated. :). Please respond to this email if this is possible for you. Even a couple hours in the morning or afternoon is OK. Those who have participated in this in the past have not been disappointed from the public response.

For the union,
Pvt Miles

CVHRI 2nd VT Calendar 2010

February:

Feb 6: CVHR Potluck - Starksboro

Feb 13: Winter Carnival Parade - Saranac Lake, NY

March:

Mar 2: Monthly drill - location TBA - hopefully Starksboro Gym

Mar 6-7: Cavalry Training & Meeting, Gettysburg (cavalry)

Mar 27: University Mall Presentation

April:

Apr. 6: Monthly drill - location TBA - hopefully Starksboro Gym

Apr 16: Middlebury College Presentation with Amy Morseman

Apr. 16-18: Cavalry Spring Training - Alliance, Ohio

May:

May 1-2: DRILL WEEKEND W/ 55TH VA IN HAGUE, NY

May 4: Monthly drill at Cpl. Hendee's in Starksboro

May 15-16: Mountwood Campaign Ride VA-WV (cavalry)

May 16-17: TBA Clinton County Civil War Days, Peru, N.Y.

May 29: Lakeview Cemetery, Burlington, VT

May 30: Orwell Memorial Day Parade (campaign style sleepover at Brown Farm in Benson then off to ...)

May 31: Middlebury (infantry) Memorial Day parade

May 31: Vergennes (cavalry) Memorial Day parade

June:

Jun 1: Monthly drill at Cpl. Hendee's

Jun 5-6: Mountwood Campaign Ride VA-WV (cavalry)

Jun: Salisbury, NY Reenactment/Encampment

Jun 11-13: Rally for Norlands, Livermore Maine

July:

July 3-6: **Annual Gettysburg Civil War Battle Reenactment (USV)**

July 4: ?? Parade in Bristol (cavalry)

July 4: Parade in Richmond (infantry)

July 6?: Monthly drill at Cpl. Hendee's?

July 16-17: Genesee Country Village & Museum - Mumford, NY

July 24-25: Massena, N.Y. Civil War reenactment

August:

Aug 3: Monthly drill at Cpl Hendee's

Aug 6-8: Upper Canada Village; Ontario, Canada - 2nd Miss. Magnolia Rifles

Aug ?: University Mall Event

Aug 13-14: Wilmington Parade and Living History, Wilmington, Vt

Aug - TBA Andrew Whitehead Grave Dedication of the 5th NY, Barre, Vt

September:

Sep 7: Monthly drill / meeting - Shelburne Firehouse

Sep 10-12 Or 17-19 Battle of Shelburne Crossroads (Our premier event!)**

Sep. 16-19: Tunbridge World's Fair

October:

Oct 1-3: Living History, Dover, Vt

Oct 5: Monthly drill at Cpl Hendee's in Starksboro

Oct 16-17: Cedar Creek 146th Anniversary (cavalry)

November:

Nov 6?: Boy Scout Veterans Day Parade - St. Albans, VT

Nov 20: Remembrance Day & Illumnata, Gettysburg, PA

December:

Dec - TBA Executive Board Planning Meeting

Dec - TBA CVHR Annual Business Meeting

Have you ever wondered?

Have you ever wondered why someone reenacts? For Pvt, Mark Cassidy, it is because of family and love of history.

Why I reenact: Mark Cassidy

So, I was asked to write a short paragraph on why I decided to become a Civil War Re-enactor. A friend who I used to work with portrays a civil war surgeon and he would always tell me of all the places they would go and the interesting things they would do while at an event. He would share his love of the hobby and his knowledge of history with me and I thought that this was a thing I could do with my family.

Since I enjoy history myself and I knew my youngest son did, I decided that this was what we would do. Our family has traveled to historic battlefields in Virginia and Gettysburg as well as visiting many parts of the northeast. At every destination in our travels we are overwhelmed with kindness from fellow reenactors that we have never met as well as seeing old friends made along the way. The members of our unit have become like family to us and we always enjoy our time together. So I guess the reason I (we) became reenactors is because of the family that shares our hobby with us.

Your Uniform and Equipment

Choosing a Proper Forage Cap

A reenactor's hat is one of the most visible parts of his impression. Even from a distance, the most obvious give-away of a "newby" or "farby" reenactor will be a poorly made hat. For this reason any new reenactor who wants to be taken seriously should take the time and make the commitment get a well-made authentic reproduction hat. In the same spirit, if a veteran reenactor wants to upgrade his impression, he ought to consider an authentic cap if he does not have one already.

By far the most common hat worn by Vermonters during the Civil War was the Model 1858 forage cap that was issued to the soldier. A reenactor who wants to portray a Vermont soldier should have a good reproduction of this cap. It was a modified version of the stiffened shako-style 1851 cap which was, in turn, inspired by the hat worn in the French Army. While many contractors supplied caps with slight variations to the federal government during the war there are features common to all of these caps that the reenactor should look for in selecting his own.

Cloth – Forage caps in the period were made from broadcloth wool – relatively thin wool that was well “fulled” (the fibers expanded) with such a fine weave that it would be

difficult to actually see the weave. One of the glaring marks of a “farby” or “sutler row” cap is that it is made of heavy wool with a coarse weave. A hat made from heavy wool does not sit well on the head and does not look like caps seen in period photographs. *Top-* – A welt often filled with a reed or cord was stitched between the body of the cap and the stiffened top disk. The top should present a flat surface. Caps that have a raised edge around the outside and a bit of a step down to the disk are actually kepis. Many of these are sold on sutler row as forage caps but they are incorrect as a representation of the issued Model 1858 cap.

Visor – The visor of the cap was described in the Quartermaster Specifications as being of “glazed leather.” Surviving originals show the visor to have had a high gloss finish that sometimes crackled. The visors were typically less than 1/8” thick. Poor reproductions are often made of thicker leather with a matt finish. The visor edge was left unfinished with no stitched binding or embossed bead. Some were flat, some had a slight downward slant. The reenactor should resist the temptation to curl the visor down like a modern baseball cap. The narrow visor with the steeper downward slant is called a MacDowell cap by modern reenactors. This style is generally believed to have been a private purchase item, not an issue item.

Chinstrap – The chinstrap was two strips of very thin leather also with a high gloss or glazed finish. Cheap reproductions use thicker leather for the strap. Really poor reproductions may even use a modern army or air force uniform cap chinstrap. It was secured to the cap by a pair of 5/8 inch army pattern brass buttons. The brass buckle should be die-stamped from relatively thin sheet metal.

Lining – The lining of the cap should be a lightweight cotton with either a polished or fine twill finish in either brown or black.

Sweatband – Quartermaster Specifications called for “goatskin morocco.” This is a thin leather with a smooth finish on the side that comes into contact with the head. On originals this usually has a diamond or checked pattern embossed in it.

Hat Brass – Best to leave it off! If you must wear hat brass limit it to either a regimental number or a company letter. The infantry bugle was actually intended for the full dress hat (called a Hardee hat by reenactors). Although it is possible to find some original images and caps that display a bugle and other hat brass photographs show that by far most soldiers did not festoon their caps with brass. Authentic reenactors howl when they see a farb with his cap loaded down with brass.

It is difficult for the uninformed (read that word carefully!) reenactor to walk by what looks like a bargain on a hat for fifty dollars or even less. Today a new, authentic reproduction cap is going to cost closer to one hundred dollars or even more although it is possible to buy used gear for less on one of the reenactor classified ad sites online. (Some reenactors are real “gear heads” who end up with more caps than they discover they need and dump them all at once online to get some quick cash.) Brad Keune from Connecticut was making great reproduction caps for years at a great price but he has now retired from the business. Some of the more well known and productive makers of high quality caps today are:

Dirty Billy of Gettysburg

<http://www.dirtybillyshats.com/>

(note: some people have found mail service from Dirty Billy to be very slow and

recommend only buying from him in person at his shop or at an event.)

NJ Sekela

<http://www.njsekela.com/>

Greg Starbuck

<http://home.earthlink.net/~cwkepi/id2.html>

Other makers of caps are Don Smith of the Trans-Mississippi Depot and Chris Semancik. For more information on original forage caps consult "The Forage Cap" by John E. Tobey in **The Columbia Rifles Research Compendium**.

~John Peterson

***A Dozen Inexpensive Ways to Improve Your Personal Impression (Part I):* By: Cal Kinzer**

Everyone thinks it costs big bucks to have a first-rate authentic soldier impression. However, there are a number of things any Reenactor can do to improve his impression that cost little or no money.

Here are a dozen examples:

(1) Get a haircut: Both army regulations and contemporary photographs confirm that hair was kept short by soldiers. The idea that the Rebs wore long hair much like their "cavalier" ancestor is untrue, except for a few cases very early in the war. Problem with cleanliness and lice in the field made short hair a must. Don't be misled by the photographs of high-ranking officers. Their hair was probably longer than that of the men under their command. Civilian hair styles were shorter for the younger generation during the 1860's than they were among the older folks, many of whom still had longer hair from the 1840's or before. By the same token, long beards were probably uncommon for the same reasons. Most photos taken in winter quarters show the majority of the men with no beards at all. Most likely, beards, if worn, would be of the shorter variety and would be worn out of necessity during active campaigning when shaving was an impossibility. Most Civil War soldiers seem to have enjoyed shedding their summer growth of facial hair when they settled down to winter quarters.

(2) Lose some weight: I don't agree with the lady who is suing the Park Service because they won't let her participate as a soldier - but she is right about one thing. Reenactors as a group are grossly overweight. (Comes from munching Pringles while reading the latest Civil Warbook!) your uniform will never look

right if you're more than 10-15% overweight. Not all Civil War soldiers were bean poles, but fat ones didn't last very long - especially in the combat arms.

(3) Lose your hat insignia Kurt Holman pretty much said it all in his article ("Insignia Of The Common Union Solder", *CCG*, March, 1991). If you want to look like a real soldier, one of the easiest way to achieve it is to remove all insignia (bugle, corps, badge, etc.) from your headgear. Bugles were not even regulation for forage caps. Many Reenactors may also be surprised to learn that bugles and the side eagle plate were not issued with the Hardee hat. They had to be requisitioned separately. Once the war got going, soldiers rarely did so unless they were on special guard detachments behind the lines. Feathers are also wrong. I have yet to see any original photo of a field soldier wearing one. Hat cords were worn sometimes on Hardees, but since they also had to be obtained separately, probably not that much. The only ornamentation that came on the Hardee hat when it was issued was a 1.2" black ribbon which formed a small bow on the left side. The best way to go by far is to have a plain hat or forage cap. Take a long, hard look at your headgear. Nothing will make your impression like a good, correctly-styled hat. Nothing will ruin an otherwise good impression faster than a poor choice of headgear. Even though a hat may be historically correct, this still does not mean it is the right hat for you. Victorian men were very particular about their headgear. Soldiers were no different. Hats during the period had a definite shape and style. There were none of the shapeless(hillbilly) hats you so often see at reenactments. A hat should have a hatband and should not be too "floppy." Wearing a droopy hat is probably the most common mistake made by Reenactors.

(4) Burnish that Enfield: Several years ago some of the boys in my unit got into a discussion about whether period Enfields were burnished. After looking at scores of photographs and examining every original we could find that was documented as being issued, we came to the conclusion they definitely were not. In fact, I have yet to see a period photograph of a blued Enfield. (If anyone has one, I'd like to see it!) Yes, the Brits did blue their metal, but the type of bluing they used didn't last long. It quickly wore off when the weapon was cleaned. American arms had traditionally been burnished and there is no reason to believe that US and CS officers made any distinction in this area with regard to foreign-made weapons. The argument that you will have to clean the weapon if the bluing is removed won't wash. It's either authentic or it's not - the choice is yours.

(5) Burn those gaiters!: It seems like every once in a while sutlers come up with some off-the-wall item which is specially designed to farb up an otherwise decent impression. Such is certainly the case with the current craze for gaiters. Yes, they had them. Yes, they can be documented. Yes, there are pictures of soldiers wearing them. But they look STUPID! This is precisely the reason why most Civil War soldiers got rid of theirs as quickly as they could. It's another of those questions of what was typical. A typical soldier in the field, after the first few months of the war, wouldn't be caught dead with such a silly and useless item.

(6)Wear full gear: There is a myth in the reenactment community that soldiers habitually dropped their knapsacks and blanket rolls on going into battle. It is the result of a few early war accounts (or accounts of assaults on fortified positions)

in which this was done. (If you read farther in these same accounts, you almost always find that those who dropped their knapsacks or blanket rolls almost always later regretted having done so.) Veteran soldiers quickly learned that they would have urgent need of the dry clothing, blankets, and food contained therein once the battle was over - and who was to say that they wouldn't be miles from where they started when the fight was over. The wagons needed to carry knapsacks became fewer as the war progressed and the armies cut back on transport. Knapsacks aren't bad if you pack them right and don't overload them. They're much cooler than blanket rolls. There is plenty of documentation on their use in battle for those willing to hunt for it.

LETTERS TO VERMONT

Albert A. Crane taken from **Letters to Vermont** edited by Don Wickman. Crane was born in Bridport in 1836 and was a member of the 6th Vermont Regiment in the Vermont Brigade. Crane rose to the rank of lieutenant and died in the Battle of the Wilderness.

From the Vermont Brigade Camp of the Vermont Brigade Jan. 20, 1864.

An unusual number of citizens have recently visited this army. They express much surprise to find the men in so comfortable quarters, and many declare that our style of living is preferable to that at the Washington hotels.

Chaplain Webster, 28 of the Sixth Vermont Regiment, has recently procured of the Christian Commission a Chapel Tent, which, through his energetic efforts, seconded by members of the Regiment, has been raised upon stockades, and furnished with a desk, seats, a stove, &c, and forms a very comfortable and commodious place of worship. It is, I think, the first of the kind in the brigade since the winter of 1861-2.

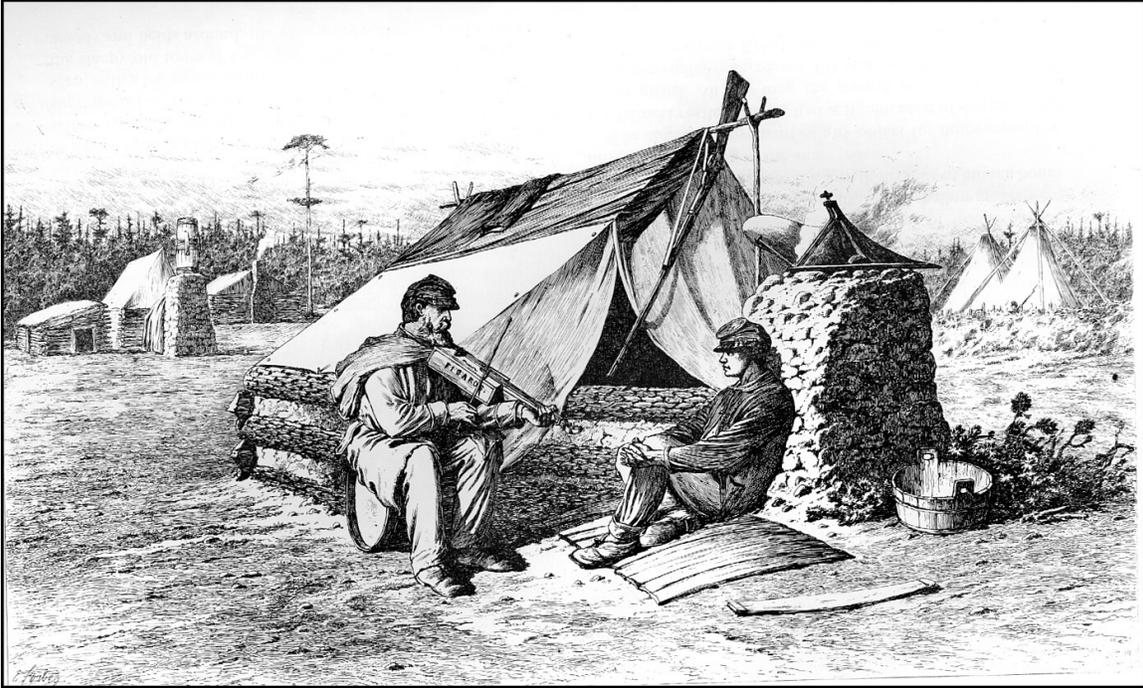
Those who think this portion of the "Sunny South" has anything in common with those regions where flowers blossom and oranges ripen in January would have such ideas quickly dispelled by a brief visit here at this season. During most of the time since the first of the month the ground has been covered with snow, and the cold has been so intense that, on some days, a clear sun at mid-day would make no impression upon the snow, or the frozen earth where its surface was exposed. Just now, however, it is quite warm; heavy rains have fallen, and the

depth of the mud does honor to the anniversary of the famous "Mud Fleet" expedition of one year ago.

Detachments of recruits continue to arrive. Their unmilitary ways are a source of much amusement, but there is no disposition to vex the new arrivals, on the part of the old soldiers. They are too well pleased to have their assistance for this; and so they go to work with a will to help build their tents, and make them generally comfortable.

The construction of tents, or rather huts, for winter quarters, has become quite an art. Many of these structures display more skill, and are really more comfortable than the dwellings of the poorer citizens about here. The old soldier never waits for orders to build winter quarters, but whenever the army halts more than two days at a time, he proceeds to fell trees and "confiscate" unoccupied buildings, and soon the camp rings with the sound of the saw, axe and hatchet. He builds of logs or boards a box-like structure from six to ten feet square, according to the number who are to occupy it, for which the shelter tent makes an excellent roof, and fills also the place of windows. The interstices are "daubed with untempered mortar," that is, Virginia's "sacred soil," whose adhesive qualities render it invaluable as building material. A bedstead is made of poles, and covered with "Virginia feathers," while tables and chairs are improvised of hard bread boxes, &c. A fireplace in one corner, containing a blazing fire, makes all look bright and comfortable. As the tents of a company are always laid out in the form of a street, the camp of a regiment thus becomes a miniature village, and when built with taste is not without artistic effect. Thus snugly housed, the soldier laughs at the storm, and, so far as the substantial elements of comfort are concerned, is as well off as anybody in the world.

A.A.C.



~Submitted by John Peterson

Notes From the Medicine Chest

By Dan Celik

Civil War Transportation for the Wounded

Once an army had engaged on the field the most important medical function was the care of the wounded. The armies were ill prepared for the sheer number of casualties that resulted. Surgeon John Vance Lauderdale concluded, "There are so many of them, that it is impossible to do justice to each one."

The act of transporting the wounded from field to hospital was no easy task. The performance of those functions demanded organization and trained personnel.

The removal of the wounded from the battlefield was performed by hospital details consisting of ten men from each regiment often consisting of musicians detailed from the ranks. However, by 1863 litter bearers often held regular maintained positions in the Union army's ambulance corps.

Their duty as litter bearers were to carry the wounded to the dressing station, using a pace to hold the patient's suffering to a minimum.

The south employed the use of an infirmary corps, consisting of 30 detailed men. All members of the corps were unarmed and wore badges to distinguish them from other soldiers. They were outfitted with one stretcher to every two men. Each member carried a canteen and a knapsack containing: bandages, tourniquets, splints, and alcoholic stimulants.

After being transported from the battlefield to the dressing station, the wounded were brought a distance of two to three miles to the rear where the field hospitals were located. Early in the war a loose-knit Union ambulance system was in place, but it lacked men and wagons to adequately transport the wounded. In August 1862, Union Medical Director Jonathan Letterman persuaded George McClellan, Commander of the Army of the Potomac, to issue a general order creating an Army of the Potomac ambulance corps.

Under that order ambulances were taken away from regiments and successfully organized into corps and divisional units. On March 11, 1864, a bill was passed to have a legally constituted ambulance service.

The guidelines of the Letterman plan formed the basis of the ambulance organization through World War I. Although there was quick transportation off the field of battle it came short of being comfortable. Captain John S. Kidder of the 121st New York Volunteer Regiment wrote, "I got out of the ambulance . . . if I ever suffered, it was last night . . . all but killed me to ride on such rough roads."

Civil War Slang

Hospital Rats - Person who fakes illness

Quartermaster Hunter - Shot or shell that passed overhead and far into rear

French Leave - Going AWOL

Did you know????

Abraham Lincoln (February 12, 1809 – April 15, 1865)

Abraham Lincoln was the only President ever to obtain a patent. In 1849 he invented a complicated device for lifting ships over dangerous shoals by means of "buoyant air chambers." Much to Lincoln's disappointment, U.S. Patent No. 6,469 was never put into practical use. The clutter in Lincoln's law office was notorious, and a continual

source of irritation to his partner, William Herndon. On his desk, Lincoln kept one envelope marked "When you can't find it anywhere else, look into this."

Lincoln took his dreams seriously. On one occasion he wrote to his wife to be watchful with their son Tad because Lincoln had experienced an "unpleasant" dream. On the day of his assassination, April 14, 1865, he was so troubled by a dream that he actually discussed it at a Cabinet meeting. He told his colleagues that he had seen himself sailing "in an indescribable vessel and moving rapidly toward an indistinct shore." Even more explicit was a dream that he discussed just a week before he was shot. In his dream, Lincoln awoke, and walked through the silent White House, following the sound of sobbing. When he came to the East Room, he saw a catafalque draped in black. "Who is dead?" Lincoln asked. A military guard replied that it was the President.