

OUR CAMP JOURNAL

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

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Sitzkreig!

By Bill Hart

This activity – a somewhat physically inactive activity – is recommended to all. The idea of the sedentary battlefield tour came from Pat Morton, an old comrade of the 7th Maryland, perhaps inspired by sitting to watch vintage baseball teams battle it out on playing fields in Gettysburg. This idea was then suggested to and subsequently refined by an informal working group within the 7th.

Rather than visiting a battlefield and touring significant sites, one picks a location on the field, takes a chair, and sits to contemplate it. A descriptive book, maps, a bottle of water – perhaps a thermos of coffee or some other hot beverage on cooler days, some readings, possibly binoculars, and a comrade or two aid the effort. None of these are necessary, not even the chair, but all add to the occasion. Such a tour may be done as a solo event but sharing it with a comrade or two or three makes the experience much more enjoyable.

Scouting the location ahead of time can prove useful. For comfort, areas with tall grass, thorns, prickles, and other such hazards dictate long pants rather than shorts. A shady spot in the summer is desirable remembering that shade in a given area changes depending on the time of day and year. Some sites lack any shade so a hat and sunscreen come recommended for such locations. Other clothing depends on weather

and time of year. Do make oneself comfortable for an extended stay. Dress appropriately for the occasion sums it up. These comments are only included as some members of the 7th may be recalled as lacking the sense to come in out of the rain.

Importantly, pick a site for your chair that doesn't interfere with other visitors' appreciation of the scene and their opportunities for photographs.

After getting comfortable, take some time to visually scan the chosen area and become familiar with it. A reading from a historian or a par-

ticipant of the action at the site is a good kickoff. It provides a suitable mood, helps to build a mind picture and allows one to imagine how the area looked and what was going on at various points within eyesight. Books and maps that have been brought along allow one to do on-site fact-checking. Prior study of the events at the area of interest adds immensely to the experience.

So . . . one continues to sit, imagine, talk. The talk does not always stay on topic. It often strays to discussions of other consequential (and

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Upcoming Campaigns

OCTOBER

October 16-18: 160th Battle of Cedar Creek, Middletown, VA. Register www.ccbf.us *(FVB Event)

(7th MD COMPANY Event)

TBA: Bristoe Station Event: Details and exact date to come.

NOVEMBER

November 14-15: FVB Annual Meeting & Remembrance Day Parade *(FVB Event)

(Parade: 7th MD COMPANY Event)

DECEMBER

Christmas related events will be listed as received and confirmed.



A Day at Shafer Farm



A grand time was had by the hardy few who were able to attend the Shafer Farm Living History event in Burkittsville, MD.

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A Day at Shafer Farm



The Burkittsville Preservation Association (BPA) is restoring the Hamilton Willard Shafer Farm to become a premium historical attraction for the region. Once restored to period specifications, the circa-1820 farmhouse and postbellum addition will house educational information dedicated to the Burkittsville area's history during the Civil War.



Pvt. Jeremiah Carter, Co. "C"

By Jeff Joyce

Private Jeremiah Carter was born on April 17, 1827, in Delaware to farmer Daniel Carter and Elizabeth Parker Myers. In May 1852 he married Adeline West from Pennsylvania and they had four children: Daniel (born 1854), Rachel (born 1857), Sarah (born 1859) and Katherine (born 1860). In 1860 Jeremiah was working as a farmer in Cecil County, Maryland.

On March 12, 1864, he enlisted in Company C of the 7th Maryland in Baltimore. At the time Jeremiah was recorded as 5' 5" tall with grey eyes and dark hair. It's likely he enlisted in response to the bounties being offered, which could total up to \$300. Jeremiah joined the 7th Maryland and Army of the Potomac outside Culpeper, Virginia, in time to participate in the Overland Campaign, which began in early May 1864.

Over the next six weeks he participated in the fighting at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, Cold Harbor and Petersburg. Following the Union's failure to capture Petersburg in early June, Lieutenant Ulysses S.

Grant directed the Second and Sixth Corps to cross the Jerusalem Plank Road and cut the Weldon Railroad. The Weldon was a vital railroad that connected Petersburg with Wilmington, North Carolina.

At the time the Fifth Corps, including the 7th Maryland, was on the Union's far left. The maneuver began on June 21 but the following day a Confederate counterattack by the division of Brigadier General William "Little Billy" Mahone forced the Second Corps back, capturing thousands of prisoners and four artillery pieces.



CSA Brig. Gen. William Mahone

Private James Dorrance of Company A wrote a letter from a "Camp near Petersburg Va" to his sister Emma on June 23, 1864. In the letter he shared his recollection of what had happened:

"Yesterday we had a pretty hard trip. About 5 P.M. orders came for us to move and we started off double quick and marched about 2 ½ miles to the left to reenforce the 2nd Corps who had advanced earlier in the day and had been flanked and forced back to their breastworks with the loss of 4 pieces of artillery and part of 1 Brig."

At some point on June 22 Jeremiah was killed by a gunshot. His final resting place is uncertain. According to War Department records a "Private J F-1k" of the 7th Maryland was killed on June 22 and re-interred after the war at City Point National Cemetery. It's possible this is Jeremiah Carter and the misspelling due to poor record keeping.



Adeline filed for a widow's pension in November 1864 and was granted \$8 a month, plus \$2 a month for each of their four children. In October 1867 she married John H. Marshall in Cecil County and according to the 1900 census the couple was still living there.



Left, Union HQ near Jerusalem Pike

Battle of Cedar Creek

Present for Duty

Military

Capt. Jay Henson (Wing Commander)
Lt. Rick Boyle (Co. Commander)

1st Sgt. Guy Beaven
2nd Sgt. Steve Bush
1st Sgt. Vince Jarzynka 155th Pa.

Corporals

Jeff Bush
Pat Ellis
Bob Tabisz

Privates

Charlie Umhau
Dan Hart
Bill Hart
Pete Hard
Todd Beckley
Dwight Coleman
Keith Watts
Bryant Boyle
Ethan Criswell
Steve Giovannini
David Jahnke
"Don" Giovannini

Rev. Frank Parkinson

Civilians

Miss Cheryl Bush
Miss Emma Bush
Miss Jen Coleman
Miss Abby Coleman
Miss Dee Beckley
Miss Vicky Jarzynka
Miss Chrisa Jahnke
Miss Latitia Parkinson
Miss Katy Parkinson
Miss Carolyn Parkinson

On one of the most beautiful fall weekends, albeit windy, the army of Gen. Sheridan once again fell victim to an all out rebel assault (literally with their pants down), only to recover magnificently to re-take the field and overwhelm the final semblance of enemy activity in the Shenandoah valley. It was a glorious affair.

Actually, there were two slaughters. The first on Saturday saw the 7th Md. and Vincent's Brigade push the Rebel horde almost a mile backwards. The dead and wounded were multiple and casualty centers burgeoned to capacity.



Above, the roar of battle came from nowhere as Early's rebels charged through the Union Camps. Nothing left but to run.

Right, the 7th Md. and the Union Army finally held their ground on the military slope of the hill leading to the Heater House.

Either return with victory...or on your shield. The shields belonged to the grey-backs.

On Sunday, the bloodletting was horrendous. The charge of the confederate battalions and their cavalry was a magnificent display of martial coordination - especially in the early morning hours of



pre-dawn where the 7th Md. not only suffered numerous battle wounds, but for the most part, was annihilated.

The resurrection angels arrived just in time for the afternoon for round two and this time the payback was extensive. Whole legions of Rebs were stacked up in front of the battle line of the 7th Md. as it charged forward in the counter attack.

Only the doleful sound of the bugles at the end of the exchange of fire ceased the blood letting. A fine sight.

Kudos go to the skillful handling of the 7th Md. by Lt. Boyle and the Wing Commander, Captain Henson. Each kept the pace moving inexorably forward like a Roman juggernaut.

On the camp side once the war had tucked itself back to sleep, the ladies of the 7th Maryland prepared a most fine meal for the returning warriors. Roast



beef, vegetables, potatoes...all the fixings. There was even an Officers/ Enlisted Men's soiree (whatever that means, not too good on this "frenchy" business).

Later on that Saturday evening, the 7th Md. Chorus got underway with some marvelous renditions of "Oh my Lord...Lord...Lord...Lord" by Pvt. Watts, and the religious application of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" by the 1st Sgt. The throng was impressed.

Left, with a great "HUZZAH!!!!" General Sheridan arrived and pushed the blue-belly army forward in the counterattack!

Below, afterwards, it was back to camp, a fine roast beef dinner, and some rounds of horse shoes.



The Ladies' Knapsack.

I will not lie, I thoroughly enjoy attending local events now that I have kids. We get to sleep in our own beds, drive a short distance to an event, spend the day enjoying the company and festivities, and then go back home to our own beds again. And even the logistics of setting up a fly on a Friday night is easier than hauling an entire trailer full of piles, canvas, boxes and other materials. I still get to participate in a hobby that I enjoy and broaden my kids' experience at the same time.

That is why I'm always open to trying a new local event, and the Shafer Farm event in Burkittsville, MD was right down my alley. The Shafer Farm event is not a new event, but it has not been held for several years. Organizers for the event have been working to rebuild and revital-

ize the Shafer Farm, which includes original structures that 'witnessed' soldiers passing through Crampton's Gap on the way to Antietam. There are hopes of turning this event into an annual event, as well as having additional events at the farm site as the house is improved on.

I was approached by Wayne Hutzle at Funkstown this past July, who was very excited about his work and the upcoming event at Shafer Farm. He acknowledged that it might be hard to find reenactors, as company calendars had already been set and other events were occurring in September, but he was still hopeful of getting a few people out. Burkittsville is about a 10-minute drive from my house, and I had a feeling I could get a few members of the 7th MD out, so I volunteered us for the weekend.



Miss Sarah Harris
Civilian
Coordinator

The event was small, with a handful of civilians and soldiers in attendance. We were fortunate enough to have my family, Kevin and Joshua Harris, the Gosmeyer family, Jeff Joyce, and Katie Blake come out for a few hours to try out the site and event. Bill Hart even made an appearance as a spectator. I used civilian fundraising money to provide snacks and food, since I did sort of volunteer us to attend the event. The original event schedule included firing demonstrations and other activities, but the day stayed more relaxed and was an opportuni-

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*Civil War Re-enactors;
America's Living Historians.*

Ladies' Knapsack

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ty to enjoy each other's company and chat with the occasional spectator.

Wayne was incredibly thankful to those who did come out for the event, and was already talking about how to improve it next year. He was also talking of plans to hold Christmas events in the house once it had been refurbished, and other ideas for land use. I encouraged Wayne to keep in touch, even if it is just me dragging the kids out in their 'camping clothes to help support a local event.

I do think it is important to support small, local events, even ones

just starting out. I think back to Funkstown, where the first few years consisted of the 7th and 3rd fighting each other as the main entertainment for the event. Now Funkstown has grown to quite a decent size, and the organizers and spectators have come to look forward to the event and the reenactors who attend. Perhaps Shafer Farm could turn into such an event. As long as people tolerate it, I will keep volunteering us for the small events. Who knows, maybe we'll help lay the foundation for a long-lasting event in the future.

I look forward to possibly seeing a few of you either at Cedar Creek or Remembrance Day, as I drag my kids out for another convenient little day trip.

SITZKREIG!

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inconsequential) actions of units and participants of the event that occurred elsewhere or even to other historical figures and events. Sports, food, drink, old friends, reenacting memories, a passing bird or butterfly may also enter into the conversation. The sedentary battlefield tour term arose during one of these discussions when the subject wandered to the necessity of having a name to what we were doing. Sitzkrieg was a later thought. This borrowing of a World War II term has the benefit of being both descriptive and brief.

It's a different way of looking at a battlefield. The group has done this at a number of locations on different battlefields and have come away with new understandings about familiar places and events. Spending more than ten minutes at a tour stop provides time for additional insight to creep into one's awareness about the events that

took place there. Looking at the terrain and studying it closely increases one's cognizance into why the events there unfolded in the way they did. Little wrinkles in the land explain how different elements of a unit became separated or why a unit went in one direction rather than in another. We get to understand actions taken by the participants in added detail. Spending time on the ground where men fought helps to clarify what happened there.

No one has ever bothered us. No rangers have come by and told us to move along. There is no prohibition about sitting in

a National Park that we've come by.

While seated in this pursuit, others have stopped by to talk. Some are first time visitors, some bring experience and knowledge. We exchange information, help to educate novices, learn, have fun and enjoy the company. Companionship is one of the most pleasant elements of the experience. Several hours are not too much to spend at one place. Sometimes one place is enough for the day, other times you move on to another site for another period of contemplation.

All-in-all, sedentary battlefield touring is a superb way of enjoying a day and comes with strongest recommendation. It is not a substitute for auto or walking tours but is an additional way of studying a battlefield. The sedentary battlefield tour, like many new ideas, is likely not a new idea at all, only new to the working group toiling to advance it.

An agreeable pastime worth sharing.

