

# OUR CAMP JOURNAL

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

March 2024

## The 7<sup>th</sup> Maryland's Second Winter Camp

By Pvt. Jeff Joyce

During the summer and fall of 1863 the 7th Maryland marched from Maryland into Virginia with the Army of the Potomac, participating in the Bristoe Station and Mine Run Campaigns. It was attached to the 2nd Brigade (known as the Maryland Brigade), 3rd Division, I Corps.

On December 4, 1863, the 7th Maryland moved from Rappahannock Station to Kelly's Ford, occupying winter huts abandoned by the Confederates. Unfortunately, those huts were only tem-

porary accommodations.

On Christmas Eve the 7th Maryland marched to Culpeper to establish a permanent winter camp southwest of the town with the rest of the I Corps. The 7<sup>th</sup> Maryland celebrated Christmas building new winter huts. On Christmas Day 1863 Captain Edward Mobley of Company A (soon to be promoted to Major of the 7th Maryland) noted in his diary "Received a box from home and Christmas out of it. Lots of cakes and other fixins."

As was common to Civil War armies during win-

ter encampments several members of the 7th Maryland would succumb to disease. One soldier that perished was Private Lewis Pfeifer of Company G. Born about 1830 in Germany, Lewis immigrated to the United States through the Port of Baltimore. He married Julia Ann Ray on January 29, 1860 in Burkittsville and a daughter, Martha Ann,

was born in July 1862.

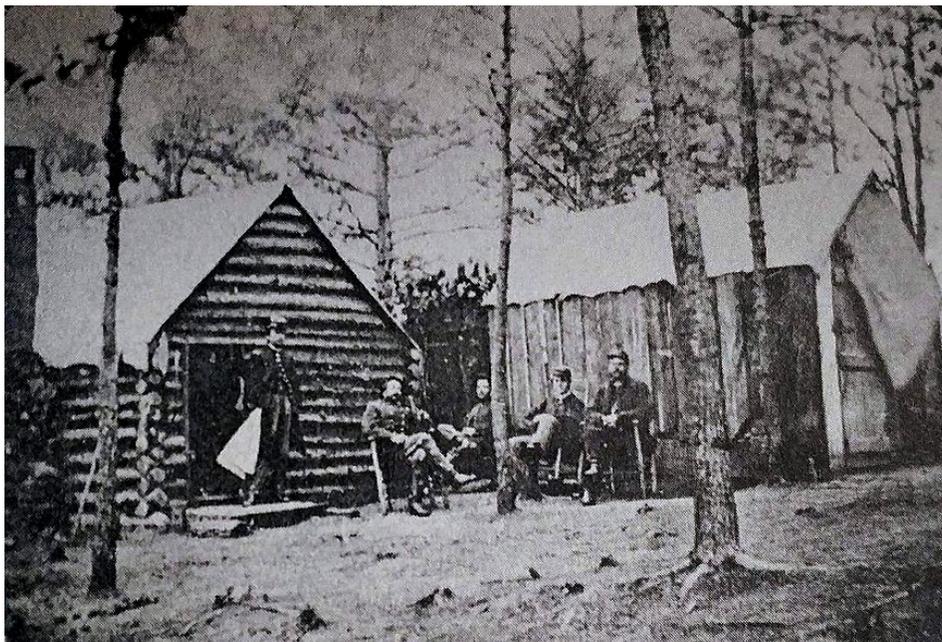


Pvt. Lewis Pfeifer

While working as a laborer Lewis enlisted in the 7th Maryland on August 19, 1862. Lewis died of heart disease on December 31, 1863. He was buried in a temporary cemetery near Culpeper before being moved to Culpeper National Cemetery after the war. Julia Ann applied for a monthly widow's pension and \$8 was approved with a subsequent increase to \$10 per month to help support their daughter Martha Ann.

In early February 1864 the 7th Maryland participated in a large demonstration along the Rapidan River known as the Battle of Morton's Ford. A II Corps Division commanded by Brigadier General Alexander Hays crossed Morton's Ford south of Stevensburg and clashed with

*(Continued on page 4)*



Left, canvas-covered log huts were often constructed for winter camps.

# Upcoming Campaigns

The 7th Maryland Annual Meeting will be held on **March 2nd, from 3 pm until 5 pm** at the C. Burr, Frederick Public Library

meeting room, in downtown Frederick, MD. Members unable to attend in person may join the meeting

via a virtual link. The link address and instructions for joining will be sent vial e-mail.

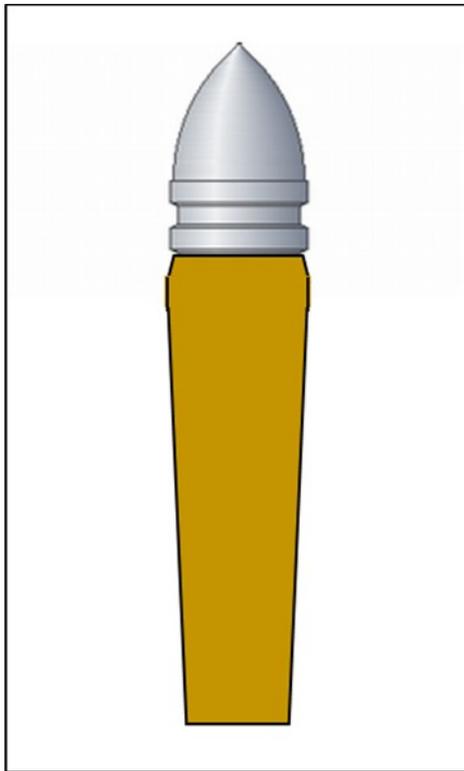
## The Combustible Envelope

By Pvt. Bill Hart

Reading a book on the Battle of Antietam recently and ran across an interesting item. "The 10<sup>th</sup> [Maine] had been supplied with an experimental cartridge, known as a "combustible envelope cartridge," which eliminated the need to tear open a cartridge, prime the rifle, and press the minié ball into the muzzle. Instead the whole cartridge as inserted and rammed down the gun barrel.

Some men discovered that it was also possible to insert the cartridge and then give the rifle a sharp rap on the ground, in order to seat the cartridge. This enabled the 10<sup>th</sup> to maintain a considerably more rapid fire than was typical for a muzzle-loading percussion rifle." Furthermore, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant John M. Gould, Adjutant of the 10<sup>th</sup> Maine indicated they worked well at Antietam.

I couldn't find a lot of information on these cartridges. They were likely made of nitrated paper and glued with sodium silicate and had a tapered cone, wider at the ball and narrowing to the base.



A rough guess at what a .58 caliber combustible envelope musket cartridge would look like.

even greater rate.

Of course since there is a restriction on putting lead down-range at a reenactment, this is all

hypothetical. It would be interesting to try at a firing range though.

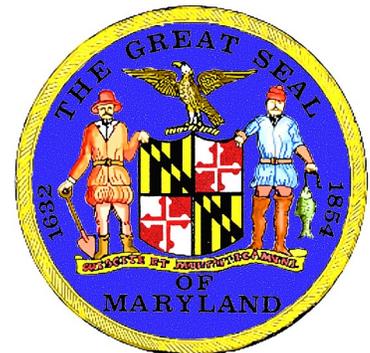
One item in reading [Scott] Hartwig's description<sup>1</sup>, he states that this experimental cartridge eliminated the need for among other things to "prime the rifle", I'm not sure what he meant by this as the requirement to prime by putting on a cap is still necessary.

<sup>1</sup>Hartwig, D. Scott, *I Dread the Thought of the Place: The Battle of Antietam and the End of the Maryland Campaign*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 2023, p. 160.

Perhaps our company quartermaster could make up a batch to issue to the troops. Instead of loading in nine times, we could reduce loading time by a third with a load in six times command.

Load  
Handle Cartridge  
Insert Cartridge  
Tap butt plate  
Prime  
Shoulder Arms

Then, in the words of our esteemed Corporal Paterson we could, "Burn some friggin' powder" at an



# Pvt. Henry Dove, Co. "B", 7th Maryland

Private Henry Dove was born in Calhoun County, Alabama, in 1838. Little is known of his early life but by 1862 he was working as a blacksmith in Maryland. Henry enlisted in Company B of the 7th Maryland for three years and was mustered into service in Baltimore on November 29, 1862. It's possible he was a substitute for another recruit. Henry was recorded as 6 feet tall with a dark complexion, grey eyes, and dark hair. At the time of his enlistment the 7th Maryland was guarding the Potomac River near Fort Frederick and would soon move to Maryland Heights above Harper's Ferry for the winter. Henry was

reported as present for duty during December 1862 but after the New Year contracted smallpox and was sent to a hospital in Hagerstown.

Following the Battle of Antietam, Hagerstown had become a major hospital center, with wounded and sick soldiers treated in private homes and public buildings, including the Franklin Hotel, the Hagerstown Male Academy and the Hagerstown Female Seminary. It's not clear where Henry was treated but most hospitals had a separate ward for treating smallpox.

Smallpox was one of many diseases faced by Civil War soldiers, with over 12,000 reported cases among white Union sol-

diers (5.5 per thousand men annually). Though smallpox inoculations and vaccinations had existed since the 1700s many Civil War recruits had not been vaccinated or exposed to smallpox. Regulations requiring smallpox vaccinations were often ignored in the rush to organize and train recruits.

Sadly, Henry succumbed to smallpox in Hagerstown on January 25, 1863. He was likely buried in a temporary grave in the city and moved to Antietam National Cemetery following its establishment in 1867, where he now rests.

Below, a Civil War era smallpox vaccination kit.



Above right, the Hagerstown Female Seminary in 1855 where smallpox victims were housed during the Civil War.

Below left, smallpox patients were also housed at Hagerstown's Franklin Hotel located near the town square, in this 1867 view.

Below right, Pvt. Henry Dove's marker at Antietam National Cemetery.



# 1ST BATTLE OF FUNKSTOWN

My wife and I ran across this painting early in February while going through an antique store. Turns out the 7<sup>th</sup> Maryland wasn't the first to do battle in Funkstown. A bit of research found that it was based on actual events.

At the time of the first battle the villagers were predominately of German or English heritage. South of Funkstown was a make-shift settlement of Irish migrant laborers known as Cork. Turns out that on March 16, 1823 at a tavern along the National Pike one of the locals hung out a "Paddy", a life-size straw-stuffed figure, normally with ape-like features, decorated with strings of potatoes, mackerel, and liquor bottles intended to annoy the Irish. It did. The Irish

armed themselves with clubs and like weapons, formed up and marched on Funkstown. They caught several locals and gave them sound beatings according to reports of the time. The Funkstown Yager Rifle Corps was called out to put down the riotous Irish but were driven back. Help was sent for and the Hagerstown American Blues Light Dragoons arrived and rode into the insurgents. There was some skirmishing and some parleying before the mob was disbursed and order restored. No report of casualties has been found. Two days later five

Irish were found guilty of assault and battery and fined five dollars each plus costs. Thus endeth the tale. --By *Bill Hart*



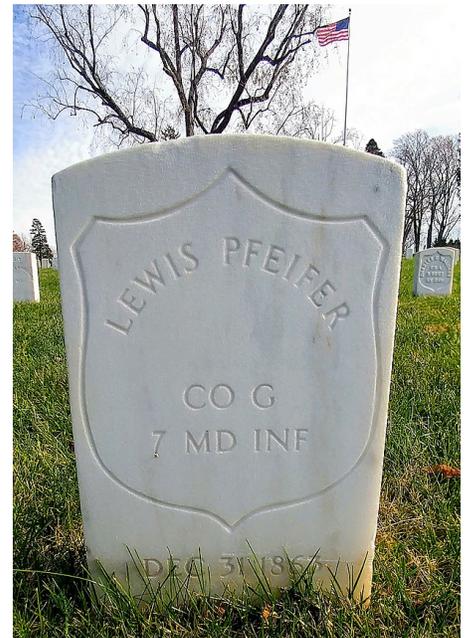
## The 7<sup>th</sup> Maryland's Second Winter Camp

*(Continued from page 1)*

elements of Confederate Lieutenant General Richard Ewell's Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia. At the same time the 7th Maryland and the I Corps marched to Raccoon Ford several miles upstream in support of the II Corps. Major Edward Mobley wrote in his diary on February 6 "Marched to Raccoon Ford and lay in a swampy woods all night." The following day he wrote

"Marched back to our old camp near Culpeper." Though the 7th Maryland only had to endure a cold, wet night at Raccoon Ford the II Corps at Morton's Ford suffered over 250 casualties.

The 7th Maryland would remain in winter camp until the beginning of the Overland Campaign three months later.



Above, the headstone of Pvt. Lewis Pfeifer, Co. G, 7th Maryland, at the Culpeper National Cemetery.

Left, Raccoon Ford near Culpeper, Virginia, where the 7th Maryland and the I Corps marched to in support of the II Corps.

