THE UNION VOLUNTEER-

NEWSLETTER OF THE 7TH MICHIGAN VOLUNTEER INFANTRY, Co. B, INC.

Volume XXXV No. 8 August 2016



Return of the Flags- Michigan State Capitol, Lansing, July 9, 2016. Photo shared by Jim Kirschensteiner on Facebook.

Hext Plub Meeting:

Saturday evening, September 17, at the Van Raalte Farm event

It Hotice of Annual Meeting:

Our 2016 annual meeting will be held on Sunday, October 16, 1:00pm Robbins United Methodist Church Eaton Rapids, MI

Please make every effort to attend, as this is our most important meeting of the year, in which we elect new club officers for the coming year. We need a quorum of eligible voters in order to conduct this essential business.

Annual club dues will also be due at this time!

Club Leadership

New Member Chairman: Daniel Malick (military) dmalick12@gmail.com

Katie Everett (civilian) cinderellie 2003@yahoo.com

President: Rob Stone
Vice President: Katie Everett
Secretary: Bill Jarrett
Treasurer: Don Everett
Military: Doug McComas, Captain
Civilian Coordinator: Katie Everett
Board Members-at-Large:
Doug McComas, Joy Henderson,
Dave Downing
Quartermaster: Don Everett
Club Historian: Doug McComas
Webmaster: Dennis Zank

Website: www.7thmichigan.us

Annual Membership Dues:
\$16.00 - single
\$19.20 - family
\$6.00 - to receive newsletter as
non-participating/non-voting member
Mail payments or inquiries to:

7th Michigan Volunteer Infantry, Co. B, Inc. P.O. Box 16206, Lansing, MI 48901-6206

Newsletter Submission Guidelines:

Thanks to all who submitted information for this month's issue.

Deadline date for submissions is the 25th of each month. Please have all reports, articles, notices, etc. in print-ready form.

I am able to accept documents in most of the usual word processing programs or formats. If accompanying maps or images are needed, please include them (in jpg format), if possible. Be sure to ascertain that any items coming from another source are properly credited, or have obtained reprint permission.

Personal news items are welcomed and encouraged, or photos of special events. Original articles (800-1000 word limit) pertaining to the Civil War or reenacting are also desired.

Email submissions to me at:

7thminewsletter@gmail.com
Or mail to:

736 Gettysburg Ave.
Jackson, MI 49203

Thank-you.

Ellyn Painter, Editor



At the request of Coletta Crews, I recently sent out an email to members regarding a new theater version of Michael Shaara's Civil War novel *The Killer Angels*; it is part of the Michigan Shakespeare Festival's offerings for this year. Unfortunately, the showings at the Potter Center, in Jackson, finished last week. On July 29 the Festival moved its venue to The Village Theater in Canton, MI, where it will remain through August 14. For those who didn't see that message, or who don't have email, here are Coletta's comments on her viewing of the play, followed by mine. (I saw it the night after she did.)

Coletta said: Last night [July 14], I was privileged to attend the first of two preview nights, at Jackson College's Potter Center. This production is simply awesome/stirring/moving. I cannot find enough descriptive words to properly characterize my experience.

I learned ... that this is only the fourth run of this production--anywhere! It was conceived in Chicago, went to Arizona (Phoenix?), had a return run in Chicago and is

continued on next page......

Photo adapted from Michigan Shakespeare Festival website

Military Report

Wow -- what a month. I'm reminded of a story I remember during the Constitutional Convention. Benjamin Franklin, an old man in his 80's, was present as the process took place. He observed on the back of George Washington's chair a sun. When the work was finally finished he addressed the assembly and said something like

"Through the course of these proceedings I have looked at that image often and wondered if it was a rising sun or a setting sun. Given this great work I know now that it is a rising sun".

We retired our dear flags at the Capitol with a kiss and a tear and it felt like the setting sun. We mourned the changes, the aging, the questions and fears about the future of the hobby, and the passing of friends and armies.

Then we went to Charlton Park. We worked with Cumberland Guard, Rob Van as commander, and our pards from the Great Lakes Battalion. A meeting with Guard and GLB Saturday evening was cordial, productive and looked to the future of the hobby in the spirit of reconciliation, mutual respect, and cooperation.



On Saturday we performed well in our battle scenario and on Sunday the tactical had First Company running literally all over the field in the first Union win in some time. Sunday came and as we formed the company for the final battle I looked down the line at First Company and we had not less than 7 separate groups working together under my awkward command. We shared the grief of the loss of the 4th' Michigan's Jim Tononi and the fellowship of an amazing potluck with our civilians over the course of the event and we added this year, so far, 3 new military men.

I was shot by Pinkerton men but in my last breath I knew that my brave son and Sgt. Jarrett were there supporting me and protecting me to the end.

Over the last year we have, like Franklin, asked ourselves, "Is it a setting or rising sun?" This month gave me great hope that the 7th's sun is once again rising.

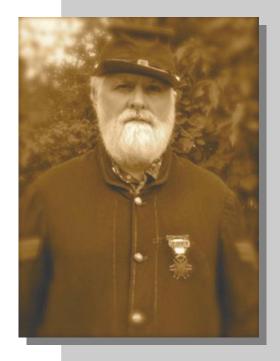
September brings Van Raalte and several living history events you will find in this newsletter. Please register for Perryville and look for word from me shortly about logistics for that amazing national.

As always I remain your most obedient servant,

Captain McComas

FRONT!

A Word From the "President....



Members of the Seventh can be justifiably proud of having participated in the 150th anniversary re-enactment of the Return of the Civil War Volunteers and Their Battle Flags. The Save the Flags committee, including our own General Dave Downing, did a superb job of organizing an event that featured the appropriate amount of "pomp and circumstance." (The way the musket volleys and cannonade echoed from the buildings surrounding the State Capitol was amazing.)

We are on the verge of late summer, and several opportunities to make our presence known still lie before us. For the first time the Seventh will take part in a living history event at Meridian Village in Okemos (Sept. 10). This will be a good chance to talk about the Civil War soldier's life and maybe pick up a potential new member or two. Once again we'll return to Van Raalte Farm (Sept. 17-18), a low-intensity weekend that supports our pards in the Third Michigan, Co. F. The famed Green Peacock "refreshment stand" will be present, offering re-enactors a variety of, uh, restorative beverages.

Seasoned club veterans will recall the good times we had at Woldumar Nature Center, including the famed "Woldumar Death March." We will return there for the first time in several seasons, putting in an appearance at the American Heritage Festival (Sept. 24). Finally, this campaign season's national event is the 154th Battle of Perryville, Kentucky (Oct. 7-9). A few of our members have signed up for Perryville but I encourage more of you to

consider it. The re-enactment takes place on the actual battlefield, which is state-owned rather than Federal land. A great feature of this event is that one of the scenarios takes place in a standing field of corn. I know from personal experience (at Perryville and Antietam) that few things are as disorienting—and fun, by jingo—than fighting in corn!

Here's where I put in my usual plug for the membership to, whenever possible, get out and participate in events. Thank you for supporting our hobby!

Rob

"The Xiller Angels" concluded:

now in Jackson. Each company has added its own touches. This one took my breath away.

I cannot guarantee that it will affect you as it did me, but I believe I can guarantee it will be worth your time. Hope many of you can go, if not in Jackson, then later, in Canton."

I should point out that her comments reflect a theatrical/production viewpoint, rather than a historically based one. It IS theater, of course, meaning that budget constraints and the limitations of the stage always compel a number of concessions.

Still, many people learn their history from watching things like this, so maybe period accuracy is a bit important. Historically speaking, those who attend will certainly recognize some "mistakes" - ie., bad uniforms, a few dialogue errors, the drum that sounded like a tom-tom rather than a snare (but a pretty good fifer, considering the actor/musician told us in the critique session after the play that he'd had only 7 weeks of lessons to prepare for the part), a (left-handed) soldier who incorrectly fired over his left shoulder, etc.

On the other hand, the way, during Pickett's Charge, in which the numerous dead were portrayed by having all the actors strip off their coats and scatter them across the stage, was a really effective theatrical device. The action throughout had excellent momentum, and the omnipotent narrator helped keep it all together. And the play focused on aspects of the emotions of the characters that weren't brought out in the movie.

All of that said, I whole-heartedly agree with Coletta that it was an enjoyable experience, and well worth seeing.

The Editor

The link below will take you to the Michigan Shakespeare Festival site.

The club had a very busy July, with three







Returning the Flags-July 9, 2016

by Rob Stone

My July 11th post told how Michigan Civil War veterans donated their National colors and battle flags to the state in 1866. This time I will describe the recreation of the historic event, 150 years after the fact.

It occurred to people that re-enacting the flag return ceremony would be a fitting "bookend" to Civil War Sesquicentennial events in Michigan. A committee, made up of "Save the Flags" staff and other interested parties, undertook planning the event. The Michigan State Capitol Commission, re-enacting units, the Michigan National Guard, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and the Michigan State Police were involved in making the celebration a success.

Everything came together on a day that featured blessedly-comfortable temperatures for July. At least 80 re-enactors representing several Civil War regiments were in attendance, as well as some 150 spectators. Dignitaries were seated above the steps of the Capitol Building in Lansing. The Fifth Michigan Regimental Band and 126th Michigan National Guard Marching Band serenaded the assembly with period tunes.

Following speeches and the bestowal of several awards for historic preservation, a column of re-enactors processed to the Capitol steps. A total of nine reproduction flags were accepted on the state's behalf by Brigadier General John Slocum (Michigan Air National Guard. I was proud to present the Seventh Michigan's National colors. The flags donated that day had been unfurled in countless re-enactments, some of them having been in use for as long as 20 years. Thus, they were torn and stained like their predecessors in 1866.

The event culminated in a Civil War artillery barrage and musket volleys by the infantrymen.

All participants received a cockade that sported a reproduction Civil War-era state of Michigan button that was cast from the original die by the Waterbury Button Company (Cheshire, Connecticut).

All in all, this was a tremendous way to commemorate the memory of the Peninsula State men (yes, there were some women, too) that fought to preserve the Union from 1861-1865. It was gratifying to take part in this event.

Reprinted by permission from robsbigblog.com



Rob Stone at the State Capitol



See some great photos on next page!



Introducing: robsbigblog

As some of you may already be aware, our club president, Rob Stone, has recently begun publishing his own blogsite, with frequent posts on writing, reenacting, and other topics near and dear to his heart. The above article is one of those posts.

If you haven't yet viewed the site and signed up as a follower, you can do so at:

https://robsbigblog.com

Below: Photo shared by Jim Kirschensteiner, Facebook



Photos: Return of the Flags







Photos by Ellyn Painter, except where noted.



7th Michigan Volunteer Infantry, Co. B – Return of the Flags, State Capitol steps, Lansing, July 9, 2016

Linda Williams answered the question raised by the Editor in the last issue as to the correct year in which the 7th MI conducted our reenactment of the dedication of the original 7th MI battle flag. The year was 1995. Below is her account of the reenactment:

During the Civil War, when the soldiers came back to Michigan on furlough, they stopped by a convent and their tattered flag was noticed by the nuns. The women kept the flag so they could make a new one during the month the soldiers would spend with their families. At the end of the month, they went back to the convent and a ceremony was held to return the flag to the soldiers.

In 1995, I was honored to portray Sister Mary Xavier who gave a blessing on the flag, then presented it. The ceremony was <u>very</u> touching. The flag represented the lives given so that we can enjoy our freedom today.

Following was the arms inspection in camp, and Tom Emerick asked me to go with him. First we met Dave Shackelford. When told of all of the work that went into the flag, he reached for the blue silk saying, "I just want to be able to say I've touched it." Presenting the flag to the troops was singularly the most touching experience of my life in watching faces upturned with love and gratitude. As the flag went along in front of the army, many soldiers were crying. They followed with three huzzahs for the ladies in Monroe and the nuns from the convent. Obeying a "right face," the army marched off to war.

From Recollections of a Civil War Reenactor
With permission of the author, Linda Gilbert Williams



Our Grand Old Flag
Photo by Gloria Kirschensteiner, Facebook

Quartermaster Report

We have a supply of powder at \$15 per pound and a supply of caps at \$7 per 100. I will have Quartermaster merchandize at the Feb, March, and April meetings. If you would like to look at a rifle let me know and I will bring it to a meeting. After April I will be publishing an inventory list in the newsletter so you can shop from the list.

At the Flag Ceremony Sgt. McComas marveled at how clean the club rifle that Wyatt Strauss used was. I mentioned how I cleaned it and thought that it might be time to once again share my formula for my secret sauce and how I clean a musket.

16 oz. hydrogen peroxide

16 oz. isopropyl alcohol

4 oz. Murphy's Oil Soap

Combine ingredients and store in a dark container. The peroxide bottle makes a good container to use to carry and dispense the cleaning fluid.

To clean, place a folded cleaning patch over the cone, under the hammer and fill the barrel with water (hot if can be had though cold will work), then dump water out. Repeat until water runs clear. At last fill place hammer on full cock and let water run out cone. Replace patch on cone, wrap a rag around the muzzle, fill barrel with secret sauce and let sit while it foams. It will foam out of the muzzle. Let stand for 15 min. or until it stops foaming. Place hammer on full cock and allow peroxide mixture to run out of cone. Wet a patch with mixture and scrub bore until patch is clean. Rinse with water several times. Dry with a patch and liberally apply

Thanks- Don

Plub Kews

WD-40. Oil metal parts with WD-40.

Keith Harrison was recently hospitalized for a minor stroke, but has, thankfully, returned home and is recovering well.

Congratulations to Doug and Jackie McComas, who recently celebrated 31 years of being happily married.

Bob and Carol Smith's 47th joyful wedding anniversary took place on August 2.

Please make welcome new club members: Rebecca Strauss Wyatt Strauss Kevin & Gina Courter

The Blue Bottle Respite Tent Update

Julie Sarge

2016 Goals:

1. Present a historically accurate impression that demonstrates the direct and indirect ways in which the Civil War and Spiritualism affected one another.

We will be adding a small space for sittings in August.

2. Provide a place for brief respite from the adversities of re-enacting a war for military and civilian re-enactors in need of such respite.

Three groups from the other side of veil received healing help at the flag return ceremony in Lansing. Four groups from the other side of the veil received healing at the Charlton Park event.

Although no one requested water or food, we do have some info for everyone regarding rehydration.

- By the time a person notices thirst, he/she may be "down a quart or so" of water. Drink water before you feel thirsty.
- Our body recognizes water as water, but it recognizes flavored waters, juices, sodapop, teas, coffees, malts, shakes, energy drinks, and Gatorade as food and processes them as food not as water.
- Drink plain water first. Wait 5 to 10 minutes. Then drink the Gatorade or switchel or juice.
- Drink more water than Gatorade.



"A copy of the minutes of previous club meetings is available upon request to all members in good standing."

William Jarrett, Club Secretary

btjarrett@aol.com 8

Recent Rallies by Confederates of Michigan Spark Area Controversy

Reports on MLIve of two recent rallies by the year-old group, Confederates of Michigan, have led to spirited debate in the Jackson area. The first gathering was on May 22 in Columbia Township at Austin Blair Memorial Roadside Park, an odd choice for such an event, it would seem. The other, held July 30 in Leoni Township, during which members of the group waved Confederate flags at motorists from an I-94 overpass, was peaceful, but police were called in to monitor the proceedings (as they were at the May event) after receiving several 911 calls about the occurrence, including an unsubstantiated report that group members were throwing objects down on vehicles.

Members of Confederates of Michigan, which has a Facebook page, are firm in declaring that they are loyal Americans who are simply proud of their southern heritage. They claim the divisive Confederate battle flag is not a symbol of hate or racism. Founder Steve Panther, 34, who lives in the Jackson area, and also flies an American flag, traveled this past spring to Georgia to participate in a protest against the Ku Klux Klan at Stone Mountain. "We very much love our country," said Panther, who wore a blue and black ribbon is support of the police and military. He says he is neither for nor against the "Black Lives Matter" movement. "We all bleed red." Panther said his ancestors, like many others who were in the war, were poor farmers who did not own slaves.

Presumably, Confederates of Michigan was formed as part of the impetus for activities by Sons of Confederate Veterans officials, who sponsored the first nation-wide "Confederate Flag Day" event on March 5, 2016. This date was chosen because it was on March 4, 1861 that the First National Flag ("Stars and Bars") was raised above the first Confederate Capitol in Montgomery, Alabama. It was also on March 4, 1865 that Confederate President Jefferson Davis signed a bill creating the Third National Flag. According to the U.S. map on the Flag Day website, csaflag.org, 23 states participated by flying Confederate flags and hosting a Confederate Flag Day event somewhere in their state. Northern states included Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, and all three of the Pacific coast states (Washington, Oregon, and California).

Confederates of Michigan organizes numerous events throughout the year to show its southern pride. "We are not here to be confrontational," says Panther. But members realize the Confederate flag does elicit high emotion and discourse. And that, they admit, is part of the point.

Sources:

Http://www.mlive.com/news/jackson/index Google "Confederate flags fly over US-127 at anniversary rally – May 22"

and: "Group waves Confederate flags on highway overpass July 30"

Www.csaflag.org

Confederates Should Presumably be Ousted from Civil War Reenactments, Says Pennsylvania State Representative

An Editorial by Ellyn Painter

A June 30th news story by ABC27 correspondent Dennis Owens reported that Pennsylvania state Representative Vanessa Lowery Brown is "fighting mad" over the fact that Confederate flags would be seen flying at the 153rd Anniversary Gettysburg reenactment, which took place on July 1-3, 2016—the dates coincidentally coincided with the exact dates of the original 1863 conflict.

"I've been to a lot of reenacting and the reenacting does not tell the stories accurately," Brown reportedly said.

Recently, a historical display at the Pennsylvania State Capitol featuring a Confederate flag was ordered removed by Gov. Tom Wolf after Brown protested its presence, stating that the exhibit made no mention of the fact that the flag is a symbol of hate. She complained that the upcoming Gettysburg reenactment would likely not "tell the truth," either. She claims that while she enjoys going to Civil War reenactments, there have not been many that have revealed the oppression that existed under the Confederate flag.

Fellow Representative Dan Moul responded by saying that we can't rewrite history. What should we do, he opined, take all the Confederate reenactors off the field? There then apparently ensued an argument between Brown and Moul as to which of them *really* wanted to rewrite history.

"Political correctness" has its place, I reckon, (though far too often there is very little that is correct about it). Admittedly, reenactors DO indulge in a bit of it, realizing, as we do, that the organizers and host units of events must walk a fine tightrope between presenting the painful realities of the past, and not offending modern sensibilities. (Remember the debacle that occurred some years ago at Crossroads Village when some reenactors tried to present the truth that in the early 1860's most black Americans would have been slaves?). Soreenactors don't "tell the story properly?" Come on.

What Rep. Brown no doubt fails to consider (and probably doesn't care about) is that

Confederates Ousted? concluded:

historical reenactments attempt to portray *history*–from the perspective of *that time*, not the view from the future. Not the hind-sight perspective of we 21st century Americans.

It's interesting that the honorable representative does not condemn the first person impressions of the living historians who portray historical figures at such places as Conner Prairie, Plimoth Plantation and Greenfield Village. They are so good at completely staying in character that it is nearly impossible for a modern visitor wishing to know his/her opinion, for instance, on why women in the 18th century were treated as second-class citizens, to get a "correct" answer, especially if the living historian is a man. He would express a very prejudiced and benighted astonishment at the question, or worse. At best, he would claim not to know what you are talking about. The point of historical reenacting at its finest is to NOT display a modern viewpoint of history. It is to present the feelings and actions, as much as possible, of the people who were living at the time. Interpretation, of course, does take place at most Civil War reenactments, and to a certain extent it should. Visitors who may know little about history need context, after all. But certainly not on a battlefield, where worlds collide. Essentially, it is not the job of a reenactor or living historian to provide political or social enlightenment relative to the historical period he/she is portraying. One's job is to portray that period as it was lived.

It is difficult for us all to have to face the fact that, a hundred and fifty years from now, OUR opinions on race, social evils and the failures of interpretation of historical events, will themselves be---HISTORY, and therefore subject to reinterpretation. Representative Brown certainly means well in her supposed defense of "proper" story-telling, but the fact is, it is only the future generations which can judge the past (in this case, our present) as they will deem it *should* have been, and only the present one which can know what it actually was.

Charlton Park

More Charlton Park photos on next page.....



Charlton Park, July 16, 2016. Mark gets the upper hand. Photo shared by Steve Hainstock, on Facebook.



The Buge behind bars? Marshal Conklin reads the charges against his prisoner.





An Indecent Exposure Award nominee if ever I saw one! How did we miss this? Caught at Charlton Park 2012. Courtesy of Bill Jarrett. (Could his be the butt in question? Hmmm.... a mystery...would anyone care to volunteer an answer for next issue?)





Charlton Park

July 16 - 17, 2016

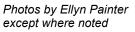




Visiting grandchildren of Bob & Carol Smith, Jessica & Ronnie Tomalia. Smith photos shared on Facebook.









At Vonda's potluck in modern camp

Upcoming Events

September 10 - Meridian Village, Okemos

The event hours are from 10:00AM to 3:00PM. They wish us to set up at 9:00AM. We have full use of the cabin for cooking and other activities; also the grounds around the cabin. The Village would like to see us do whatever demonstrations we wish: children's games, quilting/sewing, camp cooking, etc.

Sue Colegrove has been attending the meetings re: this event; there is one more meeting before the event, so if you have anything you would like her to ask the committee, please contact her.

scolegrove@rocketmail.com 517-626-0144

Questions may also be directed to Bob Smith.

The Village has indicated they might have a food truck, but there is <u>no confirmation</u> yet on this. To be on the safe side, Sue recommends participants bring their own lunches.

There may be a few other details to be finalized, so stay tuned for final information in the September issue.

September 10, 2016 - Frontier Days Parade – Charlotte, MI

The 7th Michigan is participating in the annual parade through the streets of Charlotte. Step off for the parade is at 10:30 a.m. We will be mustering after 8:30 a.m. at Vonda Warren's home in advance of the parade. There will be a trailer for the Civilians to ride on. The Military will not be firing volleys during the parade. Vonda has graciously offered to host a potluck dinner after the parade for Club members interested in socializing following the festivities. Please RSVP to Vonda (517) 543-4474 if you plan to stay for dinner and, if you plan to bring dish to pass, and what food you may be bringing. Dinner participants will need to bring their own table service and chairs. Vonda's home is located at 602 Shaw Street, Charlotte, Michigan 48813.

Tom Emerick (517) 604-6116 is the co-coordinator for the event should you desire any additional information.

60 69 St Holiday Inn Express Charlotte Warren Ave & Suites Charlotte Vonda Warren 602 Shaw St. Charlotte, MI Meijer Pharr E Shaw St St Meijer Gas Station 5 5 Shepherd St E Shepherd St

We need an August event to replace Jackson. Here's one! Road trip, anyone? (Or not...)



September 17-18 – Van Raalte Farm, Holland, MI

Host 3rd Michigan Co F reports the battle theme this year is First Bull Run. This 2016 event will be the start of a planned 155th anniversary series.

Special features this year include the Saturday night reenactor dinner. (It's your fault if you don't get enough to eat.) In addition, there'll be an arsenal pack issue and beer from New Holland Brewery. Civilian camping is in a flat, open area that's close to everything.

Battalion drills are well-run with a focus on learning for everyone who takes part - a good opportunity for new recruits. This event will be the location of the September 7th Michigan Club meeting.

The Van Raalte Farm event takes place in Holland, Michigan. It's easy to get there with most of the travel by major roads. The next update will include directions and details on camping and parking.

Al Baerren is the coordinator for this event.

Event listing continued next page...





Saturday, September 24, 2016 American Heritage Festival -Woldemar Nature Center, Lansing, MI

Time: 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM. Details in September

issue.

Sunday, October 9, 2016 - Williamston History Day/Civil War Reenactment, Williamston, MI

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, this is an event for which area students get credit for attending. More details next issue.

Jim Kirschensteiner is the contact person.

Remaining 2016 Key Effort Events

September 17-18: Van Raalte Farm – Coordinator: Al Baerren

October 7-9: Perryville, Kentucky – Coordinator: Doug McComas

October 22: 7th MI Annual Harvest Ball – Coordinators: Gilbert & Cyndi Carlson

November: NO EVENTS

December 3: 7th MI Annual Christmas Party -Contact Person: Pat Downing

