

# Rock County Volunteer

*The Newsletter of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry*

---

April 2001  
Volume 17, Issue 2

---

## CAMP AND QUARTERS

### *The Shelter tent*

## Inside this Issue

- 1 Camp and Quarters
- 2 Spring Muster at LaRue
- 3 Whitewater School Event
- 3 Appleton School Event
- 4 New Date for North Freedom Event, July 13-15
- 4 The 33<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin at Vicksburg; Col. J. B. Moore
- 4 What is Campaign Style?
- 5 Proposal to cater evening meal at North Freedom event, July 14
- 5 Snelling Anyone?

Careful and Faithful Showing of the Cantonment Life of the Great Armies During Intervals of Campaigns. Every Old Soldier Will Recognize the Sketch.

by T. F. Galwey <sup>1</sup>

*Excerpts Transcribed and Edited by Mike Thorson.*

© 2001, Mike Thorson

All Rights Reserved

The art of living in camp and bivouac is an art in itself, which requires training and practice to learn and it was the first branch of the art of war which our Union troops, both volunteer and regular, had to acquire.

### *Early Drill*

A fact that has not been sufficiently remarked is that the Union army of 1861 taught itself the art of war and taught itself out of books. There were consequently many disputes of a good-natured sort. The colonel maneuvering his regiment would be openly disobeyed by a captain, when the colonel, instead of arresting him on the spot, would mildly inquire the reason of his disobedience, and the captain, with equal politeness, would take a drill manual from his pocket and point out to his superior that the order had been wrongly given. With a "thank you" from the colonel the order would be given again in a revised form and would be promptly obeyed.

It consisted of pieces of common white muslin about five feet square, buttoned together at will by the buttons and button holes that ran along their four edges. Each man had one piece, which on the march he carried rolled up in with his blanket. When the troops halted for the night or for a regular encampment, two or three or more men would button their squares together and stretch the sheet thus made, wedge-tent fashion, across the extemporized ridge pole resting on forked branches cut then and there for the purpose. During a halt on a sunny day the squares, either singly or buttoned together so as to cover a wider expanse, were raised horizontally and supported on sticks, or across the muzzles of upright muskets, so as to form awnings.

[Editor's note: Col. Moore of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin made the following notes regarding his opinion of shelter tents in a letter to the State Adjutant General on October 1, 1863:

*We received our marching orders and moved out upon this expedition on the 26th of November with ten days rations, one hundred rounds of ammunition, short transportation and shelter tents, (man killers: may the man who suggested their use in the American Army be compelled to live under one of them the remainder of his life).]*

Rock County Volunteer  
Mark Reitz, Editor  
550 Pine Acres Drive  
Baraboo, WI 53913-1216

## *The Bivouac*

During an active campaign there was no regular encampment. The troops, when they halted for the night or rested for the day, went in bivouac. That is to say, when the troops at the head of the column halted they were disposed in much the same order as for encampment, only that no tents were set up, the men making themselves as comfortable as they could on the bare ground, and the rest of the column halting as it arrived and making the same arrangements. A few tents, it is true, would be raised here and there, but the mass stretched themselves contentedly out after eating their supper and used their tent squares merely as additional covering with their blankets.

What soldier who has seen real service can ever forget the bivouacs? After a long day, perhaps, the day counting from before dawn, tramping under a burning sun through clouds of dust, or amid thunder and lightning and under a down pouring rain, through clinging mud, or over slippery, clay roads, or perhaps after a day of encounter, of brisk skirmish or bloody battle, late in the night, in a darkness so profound that one wing of the regiment was obscured from another, the halt was called. The first thing to be attended to after the ranks were broken was to find water to cook the coffee and fuel to make the fires. On all hands there was then a clatter of tinware, for two or three or more men from each company were going off in the darkness loaded down with empty canteens to search for water-for wells or streams as the case might be. Then there was a succession of crashes as fences were overturned and the rails pulled apart, or as sheds and outhouses were torn down to furnish the fires. The gloom began to disappear in the multitude of lights that were breaking out on

all sides. Just across the ravine a great blaze was shooting up from a headquarters' fire that showed the towering trunks of the somber woods just behind. There the general and his staff were sitting down to await their supper of coffee and fried pork and hard tack. Weary stragglers who had lagged behind on the march were limping along between the fires inquiring on all sides for their regiment, sometimes receiving a civil reply and information, as often being taunted with coarse or witty badinage.

The sharp smoke of the burning wood seemed always to blow into the eyes, no matter on what side of the fire the men who were boiling the coffee might place themselves, while everywhere there was the appetizing smell of sizzling [sic] bacon and the pleasing aroma of "old government Java." It was a bright and busy scene, this bivouac, where less than an hour before there had not been a living soul, for, even if it were a region usually inhabited, the inhabitants had probably fled on hearing of the approach of the army.

But there was not much gayety in a bivouac, for a campaign is a serious and exhaustive thing, and when the army halts the soldiers' great desire is to gain as much repose and sleep as possible in the time. There is no telling what fatigue or danger the morrow may have in store, and every energy of the body must be economized for coming emergencies. Within an hour of the halt for the night all is still except for the sputtering of the fires and the occasional whinnying of a horse. In front of the long, narrow fires, with their feet almost in the widening bed of ashes, lie the rows of sleeping veterans rolled up in their blankets. It would be difficult to imagine a more impressive silence than that which by midnight brooded over a bivouac of twenty-five thousand or fifty thousand veterans. Except for a few guards there seems to be not a soul awake. The snoring of these

tired veterans was like the sighing of the wind. As morning approaches the fires begin to wane and the chill of the air sends a thrill and a shudder through the long lines of sleepers. A few restless ones creep closer to the fires and squat there, blinking into the embers and dozing by themselves tighter in their blankets and fall again into sound repose.

## Notes

1. Miller, Edward Gee, "Civil War papers, 1861-1906." ( Civil War papers of Captain Edward Gee Miller of Company G, 20th Wisconsin Infantry Regiment) Newspaper Article within papers entitled "Veteran's Corner. Camp and Quarters." by T. F. Galwey. State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Archives Division. 816 State Street, Madison, Wis. 53706. Call No. Wis Mss 62S. Excerpts transcribed and Edited by Mike Thorson

## Spring Muster at LaRue

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin will fall in for spring muster on Saturday, April 21, at LaRue, Wisconsin. The purpose of the muster is to scrape the rust off our impressions, and to get back up to speed for the coming reenacting season.

This will be a SATURDAY only event. Please plan to arrive on site by 8:00 am. However, we have been granted permission by Curt at the LaRue tavern to set up camp on Friday night. All who are so inclined are invited to pitch a tent on Friday night and sleep on site. Of course, with the comforts of the tavern so conveniently arranged, I am sure there will be time for socializing in the evening.

Plan to make Saturday a working day. We will have new members in the ranks, and this will be a time to

acclimate them to the drill and maneuvers. We will work on School of the Soldier, School of the Company, and the rudiments of some battalion drill, especially for those planning to attend the Raymond event with the Army of the Pacific. We will do some work on skirmish drill as well.

Depending on the weather prior to the event, and the dampness we have been experiencing in the prior week, we will do some repairs and construction to the works at the LaRue trestle. That bivouac will be made comfortable and ordered for the summer Train Museum event.

If we have the ambition, we may attempt to put a cover on the trestle, with a block house at either end. Lunettes are also a possibility. Each man attending is asked to bring 500 board feet of stout, six inch oak for the block houses. [Editor's note: not really]

LaRue, Wisconsin, in addition to being found in *Wisconsin Ghost Towns*, is located on CTH PF about 3 miles south of North Freedom. Travel to Baraboo, either by exiting Hwy. 33 from I 90/94 from points south and east, then traveling west to Baraboo and the intersection with Hwys 12 and 136 on the far west end of town; or by taking Hwy 12 south from the Dells to the Hwy 12 and 136 intersection. Then travel west on 136 to CTH PF, about 7 miles; turn left on PF, following the signs for the Mid-Continent Railway Museum. Once in North Freedom, turn left at the stop sign, and follow PF to LaRue, at the rail crossing.

POC is Mark Reitz, [mreitz@baraboo.com](mailto:mreitz@baraboo.com), phone eves at 608 356-3129.

### Whitewater School Event

The Whitewater Gifted and Talented Program will be presenting their

fourth annual Civil War Day Friday, April 27. This program is presented to 5th and 8th grade as part of their curriculum. We split the day into two halves, 5th grade in the morning and 8th grade in the afternoon. Classes proceed through 20 minute stations for hands on opportunities to experience more than a text book account of the period. We try to have different presentations for each grade level since 5th graders will participate again in 8th grade.

Stations we would like to have again this year are, drilling - 40 minutes long with two classes participating with two soldiers, food - hopefully we could have a cook fire and hardtack again, camp - with tents and soldiers equipment, etc., Sanitation Commission - Carl and Ann have volunteered to cover this station. Some other possibilities would also be Civil War Baseball for 5th grade, we did this the first year and the kids loved it, mail call, prisoner of war camps, military discipline. If anyone has any other favorite topics they would want to cover please let me know.

I have also contacted the Volunteer Regimental Band about presenting this year. She is going to get back to me but I haven't hear yet.

The day will be held at the Whitewater Middle School. If you come into Whitewater on Hwy 12, turn south on Elizabeth Street. The Middle School is on the left about two blocks down. They day will begin at 8:30 with the first station for 5th grade and end at 3:05 with the 8th grade. If people could arrive around 7:30 to set up it would be greatly appreciated.

If people could email me at [burven@whitewater.k12.wi.us](mailto:burven@whitewater.k12.wi.us) or call 262-472-8539 to let me know if they plan to attend I would be grateful. I need at least 6 presenters. More are more than welcome. I would like to have a schedule finalized the first week of April if possible. This program has

been well received and most of it's success is do to the involvement of the 33rd.

Please note that this is a paying event for the 33<sup>rd</sup> and much of our annual budget derives from this event. Your support is appreciated.

### Appleton School Event

The Appleton School event will take place on Friday, May 25, 9:00 am, at Johnston Elementary School. Eight reenactors are needed for this event and the 33<sup>rd</sup> will receive \$500 for our participation. Due to curriculum changes, this may be our last year for this event.

Each reenactor will drill with his students during the morning followed by a march to a local park. Reenactors will divide into either information stations. Stations include loading and firing, mail call, Wisconsin's involvement in the War, and everyday life of the soldier. We are not limited in the programs we can provide, and Whitewater certainly gives us good ideas for stations and what works. Civilians are welcome and desired. If you have an idea of your own, plan to bring it along and present it.

Lunch will be provided to us again this year. After lunch and the completion of the information stations, there will be a short battle reenactment, so plan to bring some cartridges. This will be followed by a march back to the school. The day will end around 3:00 pm. POC is Kres Peckham. Kres can be contacted at [kbpeckham@aol.com](mailto:kbpeckham@aol.com), or telephone to 920 738-9033. Please contact Kres by May 7 to let him know how many to expect for the event.

This is one of our principal income producing events, and we need your participation and support. Please plan to come if you are able.

DIRECTIONS: Hwy 41 to the Fox Valley. Exit onto Hwy 441 and take that to the CE (College Avenue) exit. After exiting, proceed west (left), pass through a stoplight and turn left onto Matthias. Forward to Forest, and turn left and you will see Johnston Elementary School. Try to arrive between 8:30 and 8:45 am.

The telephone number for Johnston school is 920 832-6265.

### NORTH FREEDOM : MID-CONTINENT RAILWAY MUSEUM

*PLEASE NOTE* that the date for the North Freedom event **has been changed** due to scheduling conflicts. The revised date for the event is July 13-15. This is one week earlier than previously anticipated.

It is hoped that this will not derange the plans of any of you who desired to attend. The change of date is regrettable but necessary.

Information specific to the Railway Museum event will be available in future issues of the *Rock County Volunteer*.

### THE 33<sup>RD</sup> WISCONSIN AT VICKSBURG

"Again, on the night of the 21st of June, I was ordered to move forward our line, about the center of our Brigade front, and to dig a pit within eighty five yards of a large fort, occupied by the enemy. In this enterprise we again enjoyed the advantage of ground, being much lower than the enemy, rendering our fire almost as destructive as it would have been by daylight, while theirs was thrown over us. This enabled us to drive in their pickets, complete the work, and to repulse them in a charge which they made upon us, with small loss on our part (one killed and four wounded), while their loss was very heavy as we could

hear their ambulances running for some time after the fight was over, and prisoners told us afterwards that they had twenty nine killed, exclusive of the wounded. In this action, Co. C 2d Lieutenant Wm. Weir occupied the right, Co. H Captain Thayer, next; Co. E Lieutenant P.H. Swift next, Co. B Captain George R. Frank, next; Co. K Captain Sampson and Co. G 2d Lieutenant Schneider, the left.

"The behavior of the officers and men was most splendid, they having in about four hours succeeded in digging along our front rifle pits under a continued fire of musketry and a battery with but small loss. The artillery could not reach us, in consequence of our position being so near to their works, that they could not depress their guns sufficiently to bear upon us.

"This pit and ground was lost by the 14th Illinois Infantry the next night, they having suffered themselves to be surprised and defeated, in a desperate charge made by the enemy to recover the ground. In this action the 14th Illinois lost their Lieutenant Colonel taken prisoner, and seventeen killed, wounded and missing. The enemy filled up our pits and dug new ones, covering the ground with a sap connecting with their fort from which it became necessary on the night of the 24th, our regiment being again on duty, to dislodge them, which was accomplished in a most gallant Bayonet charge by co. C Captain John E. Gurley and Co. H Captain Chauncy R. Thayer (these two companies being under the immediate command of Major H.H. Virgin) supported by Co. A Captain George B. Carter, Co. D, Captain Wm. Warner, and co. F. Captain William Scott (?), the whole enterprise under the command of Lieutenant F. S. Lovell. In this action, the Officers and men engaged did themselves and the Regiment much credit. The charge was made with such celerity by Captain Gurley, followed almost

immediately by Captains [unreadable] up with a loud cry, that the enemy were taken completely by surprise, and fled precipitately into their fort, leaving in our hands seventeen of their muskets. We lost but one man, Private F. B. Taylor, Co. H, mortally wounded, since died. The enemy lost 4 killed and 17 wounded. These several affairs gave our Regiment such a reputation with the Commanding General that he immediately divided it into two reliefs, one of which was kept constantly in these pits until the close of the siege, on the 4th of July."

J. B. Moore  
Colonel commanding 33d Regiment  
Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry  
Natchez, Miss, October 1, 1863

### WHAT IS CAMPAIGN STYLE?

By Kevin O'Beirne  
*Printed with permission from The Columbia Examiner.*

In the past few years, there has been a lot of talk in the hobby about "campaign-style" reenacting. Those who toss around the term take it for granted that everyone knows what "campaign-style" means, but5, unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation and fear that gets in the way of proper understanding.

May reenactors recognize that a traditional reenactment, with its emphasis on the daily spectator battle and maybe one tactical during the weekend, is supposed to represent troops in the field on an active campaign. To encourage this notion, most event sponsors select a battle, or part of one, and maintain that the reenactment is supposed to represent "the Wilderness," or "Gettysburg," or "the fight for Snodgrass Hill." Unless an event is portraying a rare battle that was fought in the midst of a camp, such as Shiloh or Cedar Creek, chances are it is supposed to represent

troops on the march, ready for combat – in short *troops on campaign*.

Campaign-style is a reenacting philosophy which holds that, "When in Rome, do as the Romans did." If a reenactment is representing a particular action in some campaign, then portray it! Use of orderly streets of large A-tents for a Gettysburg portrayal is certainly not accurate. Use of orderly, tented streets for just about any reenactment is not accurate. In the same vein, Federals at a Shiloh or Cedar Creek reenactment should be in an orderly camp, utilizing Sibley tents or may A-tents at the latter. A major part of the campaign reenactor's philosophy is to adhere to the historical scenario portrayed.

Picture yourself on the march. Hot, dusty road. The constant popping of skirmisher's rifles in the distance. The weight of your musket is heavy, and the weight of your knapsack is heavier still. Would a Civil War soldier on campaign have brought along on his back wooden tent poles? Two shelter halves? A cooler full of beer? A cot? Loads of modern food wrapped in plastic? A lantern? Of course not. And neither should reenactors who attend a battle-reenactment.

There is a misconception that campaigners never bring tents and camp without shelter in the rain. A simple rule is, "pack as the real soldiers packed, and carry what they carried." Bring one wool blanket, one rubber blanket, and one shelter half and some twine. When the weather looks like rain, button your shelter half to a pard's and rig up a shebang. Only idiots remain in the rain when one can get under cover.

Being a campaigner does not necessarily mean having the correct stitch count. Most serious campaigners list their priorities as: drill and safety, proper camping, proper rations, knowledge of history

and first-person, and then proper equipment. Terrible equipment won't cut it any day of the week, and proper uniforms and kit are essential to achieving the correct "look" of the soldiers we portray, but one can most certainly become a campaigner, and let the hand-stitched button holes follow later on.

Many reenactors offer standard responses to campaigners' approach to living history. Quotes such as, "It's only a hobby!" and "You don't have dysentery, so how authentic can you be?" are often used as arguments against the campaigner way. The hobby is very large and has many diverse opinions; there are events that cater specifically to campaigners, and others that cater to the "9 to 5, I want a beer when the public goes home" type of reenactors.

There is a difference between campaign-style reenacting and campaign-style *events*. A campaign-style event is one where the hosts strongly encourage — or require — adherence to campaign-style reenacting. These events often include marches, and do not have fixed locations for campsites. While such events are pretty rare, it is encouraging to see the number of campaign-style events increasing each year.

Your portrayal should fit the event. Campaign-style camping is inappropriate when one is attending a living history in an historic fort where the portrayal is one of troops on garrison duty. Most local living history events, which are essential for securing new members, portray troops on recruiting duty in their hometown, and campaign-style is not appropriate for these impressions either.

All living historians should strive to be campaigners — it is the most historically accurate way to reenact and does the most honor to our ancestors. Further, sponsors should endeavor to offer more campaign

events for those reenactors who wish to attain a better understanding of the soldiers of the Civil War.

Think about it the next time you prepare for an event.

### A PROPOSAL TO SPEND MONEY AT LARUE

According to our unit's rules, the expenditure of unit funds on a project exceeding \$35 requires notice to the unit and a vote. In past years, Mark Reitz has hosted a brat feed at his house and expense for those attending the July North Freedom event. This year we are expecting numbers in the 40 man range. While Mark enjoys having his pards over for a social, the size is getting a little too large for comfortable use of his home.

Mark proposes to spend \$100.00 of unit funds in order to buy catering from Curt at the LaRue tavern to feed the troops and civilians on Saturday night. Curt estimated a cost of \$2-3 per person, with a brat, slaw, potato salad fare. The unit would give Curt the \$100 and tell him to feed people until the money is gone.

Please contact Mark to vote on this proposal by June 1, by e mail at [mreitz@baraboo.com](mailto:mreitz@baraboo.com), or by letter to the RCV's address.

### FORT SNELLING, ANYONE?

John Atkinson is POC for Ft. Snelling, June 9-10. Anyone interested in attending should contact John for pre-planning purposes at [badgerboyjjea@aol.com](mailto:badgerboyjjea@aol.com).