

# Rock County Volunteer

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

June 2002  
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### WAUWATOSA JULY 4 PARADE

Once again this year the 33<sup>rd</sup> will be participating in the annual Wauwatosa July 4 parade. This year we will be unit #83 in the parade. The unit needs to be at Mayfair, at assembly area "C" (northeastern parking area at Mayfair), by 8:00 am. Please try to meet at Jeff Saeger's house before the parade. Vehicles will be shuttling from Jeff's for Mayfair at 7:40. Please arrive before then however. Jeff will be providing coffee and donuts up until we leave. If you end up running late and cannot get to Jeff's by 7:40, then you should go straight to Mayfair.

Jeff will again graciously be offering a cookout at his house after the parade for those who can stay. Jeff asks that all who plan to stay for the cookout RSVP by June 30. Jeff will provide burgers and brats based on the head count from the RSVP's. For those who can stay, a dish to pass would be greatly appreciated.

For any who might need them, here are the directions to our house:

From west; 94 to 45 north. take 45 north and exit at Mayfair Road and go north to North Ave. At North Ave. turn east and proceed to 83rd street. Turn south on 83rd and take to Milwaukee Ave. East on Milwaukee Ave. Five doors down. We are on the south side of the street.

From the south; take 94 to 894 bypass. Take this to 43 north and follow above directions.

From the north, using 45; exit at Capitol Drive and go east to Mayfair Road. Take this to North Ave. and follow above directions.

Well, lets hope for a good parade and see what we can win this year.

POC: Jeff Saeger. Telephone (414) 771-5127. [saeger@execpc.com](mailto:saeger@execpc.com)

As an added bonus for July 4, Tom Redman has been conducting some research into the Old Soldiers' Home located near Miller Park in Milwaukee. This is also a national grave site for veterans. There are 33,000 graves there! Yes, 33,000 veterans buried there, ring a bell? (33rd Wis., spooky huh?) – Veterans buried there for all wars except the American Revolution.

This is a great site to explore, and Tom is willing to offer a tour of the grounds after the parade and picnic at Jeff's house.

The old military looking complex of the Soldiers' Home facilities up on a hill, include many buildings of Victorian architecture and is truly, a jewel lost in time. There are Civil War soldier monuments on the grounds as well as Span/Am and other wars too. There is also an image of General Grant on horse back, in stained glass, on a large window of an old vaudeville theatre there. It was donated by Civil War veterans during a G.A.R. encampment in the 1880's!

Tom has offered to lead a brief tour for anyone interested after the Wauwatosa Parade on July 4th. The tour will leave from Jeff's house after

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the completion of the picnic and parade. I am certain that those who take the tour will find it to be interesting and informative.

## A BOX FROM HOME

By Jeff Tobey  
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One event that was often recorded by the original soldiers was the receipt of a “box from home.” Not only was this an important part of the soldier’s experience, it was also an important source of material culture that supplemented issue items and articles purchased from the sutler.

### *Frequency*

Boxes were sent when the troops were ensconced in permanent camps. A box sent before the army was settled stood little chance of finding the intended recipient, and even if it could be delivered during a temporary halt, it would have been impossible to consume or carry off everything that was shipped. It was probably for these reasons that many soldiers gave specific instructions to the folks at home about preparing a box. A soldier of the 126th New York named Andrew Chestnut wrote to his family,

“Eugene Baker received a letter from his Sister stating that you was to their house & you talked of sending me a Box next week. I do not want you to send it just yet. I will write you when I want you to send it.”<sup>1</sup>

When the soldier was sure he was going to stay put for a while, he would write home, describing some of the things he wanted. These “wish lists” will be described in more detail later in this article. According to John Billings,

“Whenever it became clear, or even tolerably clear, that the army was likely to make pause in one place for at least two or three weeks, straightaway the average soldier mailed a letter

home...setting forth in careful detail what he should like to have sent in a box.”<sup>2</sup>

Although Billings states that soldiers would write home for a box given a potential rest of only two or three weeks, most of the soldiers whose letters or memoirs studied for this article waited until the army seemed to be ready for a prolonged stay – like winter quarters.

There are also infrequent accounts of boxes being sent from home on the initiative of the family, but these should be considered the exception rather than the rule, and the soldiers probably solicited the majority of the boxes.

The “season” for boxes would usually correspond with the period spent in winter quarters. The most popular time period for the boxes sent in accounts studied for this article appear to have been between November and March, with a high concentration being sent in the months of November and January.

How often were boxes sent to soldiers? Most soldiers who had friends or family to send them could expect at least one box per winter. Andrew Chestnut received *two* shipments during the winter of 1862-1863. Charles Reed also received two boxes during the same winter. Some unfortunate souls would expect none at all, and would depend on the generosity of their better-supplied comrades.

### *The Wish List*

When asking for a box, the soldier also normally listed some items that he especially desired. One particularly detailed list was sent in the autumn of 1862 by a soldier in the 85th Pennsylvania and included the following,

A pair of boots  
A pair of mittens  
His bible  
Some thin cream  
A dozen onions  
Canned butter

Baking soda  
2 plugs of sweet tobacco  
“Willison’s Afflicted Man’s Companion”  
His shaving apparatus  
2 or three bottles of Davis’ Pain Killer  
A chunk of home-made cheese  
A Blacking Can full of snuff  
Some buckwheat flour  
Some chestnuts and hickory nuts

He also instructed his parents not to send any canned fruit, but to send dried fruit instead, since it would take up less room. He instructed his family to send the whole box by Adams’ Express.<sup>3</sup>

Dreaming up the contents for a box was obviously a bright spot in the dreary life of a Civil War soldier. Sergeant John Hartwell wrote, “Oh! It makes my mouth water every time I think of what I am likely to get in my box.”<sup>4</sup>

In an uncharacteristic and probably rude manner of opening a letter to his sister, Andrew Chestnut skipped over the usual pleasantries and launched into his wish list for the winter of 1863-1864,

“Dear Sister,

Having made up my mind to have some things sent as i had no other way to have my boots and vest sent. I thought best to have them all sent together. I wish you would send me an old Quilt do not send a good one for I will have to throw it away in the spring send me a portfolio if you can get one and some needles & thread. Send me all the Butter you can if Ma hasn’t but a little to spare I wish you would buy some. I am willing to pay my own money for all the things you have to buy for me. Send some cheese. Some buckwheat flour if you have any some onions and all the eatables that you can send. William said he would send me a pair of gloves tell him to send me a nice pipe and some smoking tobacco. I wish you would send me a necktie and a couple of pocket

handkerchiefs don't send white ones. Send me a nice lot of cakes and all the eatables you wish to send me. I will be expecting a nice box."<sup>5</sup>

### *Typical Contents*

What were the typical contents of a box? In general terms, the most popular contents fell into two categories: cold- or wet-weather clothing, and foodstuffs.

Foodstuffs were very popular due to the monotony of army food and the images of home it inspired. One soldier wrote that he wanted to be sent "lots of nice things to eat." The most common foodstuffs sent in boxes included:

- Honey
- Dried peaches and apples.
- Dried berries
- Prunes and raisins
- Butter and Cheese
- Flour, especially buckwheat flour
- Cakes, especially sweet cakes: molasses, ginger, fruit, and sugar cakes.
- Pies, especially mincemeat pie.
- Jellies
- Crackers
- Fruit preserves of all kinds, canned in glass jars: cherries, pears, peaches, and plums were very popular.

The following items were less commonly delivered, but are documented nonetheless:

- Tea
- Sausage
- Pickles
- Sardines
- Ham
- Dried beef
- Molasses

Sometimes soldiers asked for homemade versions of foodstuffs that were available to them in other forms. Milton McJunkin asked for "home-made" cheese, instructing his family not to send store-bought cheese as he could get plenty of that kind in camp, probably from a sutler or local peddlers.<sup>6</sup>

Some items were totally unavailable in the regions occupied by Federal troops. Eugene Kingman of the 12th Maine longed for a product of his home state: "I want...such little things as spruce gum...very acceptable out here where we can not get it for love or money."<sup>7</sup>

Although the cold-weather items most frequently encountered were gloves and mittens, other soldiers were sent scarves, quilts, extra socks, and wool shirts. Boots were another commonly requested item.

Some very poignant letters detail the attempts made by families of limited means to provide for their soldier-boys. Andrew Chestnut's family worried about his welfare after they had heard horror stories about soldiers freezing to death during the winter. They sent him the following in a barrel: a quilt they had borrowed from an elderly aunt, a pair of used woolen mittens his sister purchased at the store, and a set of ear covers to be sewn to his cap. They intended to send some bedclothes in a future shipment. Andrew responded, "i don't want you to send me any bed clothes for i have got enough to carry around with me."

He made a similar statement regarding the quilt. Strangely enough, quilts seem to have been an item that many families wanted to send their soldiers, but the reactions from the intended recipients were often the same. James Ford of the 109th New York received a feather comforter from his mother and wrote in a letter dated October 14, 1862, "I don't hardly know whether I can keep the comforter with me or not but if I get it I will keep it as long as I can."<sup>8</sup>

Andrew Chestnut actually asked for a quilt the following winter, but specified an "old one" since he would have to throw it away the following spring.

An item that was forbidden but often sent anyway was alcohol. Andrew Chestnut received a bottle of brandy during the winter of 1862-1863, but the

odds of this being repeated later in the war were slight because packages were subject to increasingly strict inspection as the war progressed. Even this did not totally cut off the supply of liquor shipped in the boxes, as various subterfuges were developed to get the booze to the men. Sometimes the peaches canned in glass jars were really swimming in liquor and not sugar water. Some bottles of patent medicines were emptied of their original contents and filled with something more potent. Still another method was to ship the package to an officer of the soldier's company because booze was *not* off limits to officers. Of course, this last one only worked when the officer was sympathetic!

### *The Box and How it was Packed*

There were two general types of vessels used to ship goods to the soldiers: wooden boxes and barrels. Milton McJunkin provided his family with some ideas of how he thought his box should be constructed, "a small [box]; one foot square is plenty big enough...nail a hoop around each end....nail it up so that it will bear a good deal of handling."<sup>9</sup>

McJunkin proceeded to describe the hoped-for contents of this one-cubic-foot box: a roll of butter, some sugar cakes, some honey, a little poke of elderberries and a pound of home-made cheese. He told his folks to fill out the box with "what ever you please." He also requested that they *not* send any doughnuts because a previous shipment had proved that the fried pastry did not travel well.<sup>10</sup>

John Billings recalled that boxes were rarely under a peck in capacity.<sup>11</sup> A box holding slightly more than a peck would have interior dimensions of roughly 10 inches by 10 inches by 6 inches.

To judge from the list of contents reviewed for this article, most boxes were probably larger than the ones that McJunkin and the minimum size that Billings described. In fact, Billings also said that boxes were *usually* of good

size, “often either a shoe-case or a common soap-box.”<sup>12</sup>

Barrels were also used, and these had the advantages of being strong, easy to procure, and convenient to handle because they could be rolled. John Hartwell advised his family to either have a box made, or use a flour barrel.<sup>13</sup>

The efficient packing of boxes and barrels was a talent that some soldiers commented on years after the war. Not only did the senders have to efficiently use the space in the container, the contents had to be packed in such a way to withstand shipment. It is much more difficult to appreciate the trials that awaited the “homespun” contents of a wooden box or barrel in these days of packaged goods. John Billings remembered:

“I think the art of box-packing must have culminated during the war. It was simply wonderful, delightfully so, to see how each little corner and crevice was utilized. Not stuffed with paper by those who understood their business, thus wasting space, but filled with a potato, an apple, an onion, a pinch of dried apples, a handful of peanuts, or some other edible substance.... If there was a new pair of boots among the contents, the feet were filled with little notions of convenience.”<sup>14</sup>

Some contents were placed inside small cloth poke sacks, custom-made for the purpose – such sacks were often received as welcome additions to the soldiers’ kit and found employment in the haversack carrying sugar and coffee.<sup>15</sup>

Although most boxes were packed so tightly that there was little vacant space, packing material was sometimes needed to fill up empty space to prevent the contents from shifting or to cushion them from the sides of the box. Such packing materials included hay, straw, sawdust, or even moss.<sup>16</sup>

### *Shipment*

The most common way of sending boxes to the camps was by “expressing” them via some ancestor of today’s parcel carriers like UPS and Federal Express. The most popular express service was Adam’s Express, and rates varied depending on the distance. The express charge for a box shipped from upstate New York to Tennessee, for example, was \$7.25 per hundred pounds during the winter of 1863-1864.<sup>17</sup>

Some smaller boxes were carried back to the camps by soldiers who were home on furlough or other reasons. Most boxes were probably much too large to be delivered in this fashion.

Some families would send goodies to their soldier-boys in boxes intended for other men, and thus save the express money. As time went on, however, and the hard realities of war began to make people more callous, this community spirit dwindled. Andrew Chestnut wrote,

“When you send my box I don’t want you to put in anything that Baker’s folks wants to send let them send a box to Eugene they are as able to pay Express as I am they had the impudence to stick in a lot of things in Henry’s Barrell.”<sup>18</sup>

Ironically, when Andrew Chestnut was killed a few months later, it was this same Eugene Baker who went through great lengths to have Andrew’s body sent home for burial.

### *Receipt: Damage and Thievery*

Not all boxes came to their intended soldiers in one piece. Rough handling damaged the contents of some, and others were the target of thieves or ham-fisted inspectors.

It was the practice in some units to inspect the contents of boxes “to assure that that no intoxicating liquors were smuggled into camp.”<sup>19</sup> Soldiers occasionally would comment on how such inspection deranged the contents

of a neatly packed box. Some units, however, only inspected boxes intended for soldiers who were known to be drinkers.<sup>20</sup>

Improper packaging accounted for other losses. Andrew Chestnut received a box in which his sister packed a bowl of jam that was covered by paper. The covering broke and the jam spilled on two shirts and a pair of gloves that were packed around the bowl. Billings recalled having two or three broken bottles among the boxes he received.<sup>21</sup>

Occasionally, the items received in camp were a disappointment to the soldier. To Andrew Chestnut’s dismay, a pair of gloves he received was mismatched in addition to being stained.<sup>22</sup> Andrew’s brother offered the following advice regarding the gloves, “I am sorry that I mismatched those gloves You must turn one wrong side out do the best you can for a while & I will send you another pair this winter that will be booly.”<sup>23</sup>

Some of the boxes were lightened by thieves. Cyrus Smith wrote to his mother,

“I received that box last week but every thing was not in it [...] there was hardly any thing in it [...] some villain is enjoying the things you sent for me damn him [...] he even took the preserves but left the jar [...] the same has happened to the other boys [...] the captain is going to look into it.”<sup>24</sup>

### *Consumption*

The receipt of a box or barrel was a boon to the soldiers who were living a dog’s life in the army. It seems that the contents of many, if not most of these boxes, were shared with a man’s comrades. A common quotation would say something to the extent that so-and-so had received a package and they had all enjoyed a “feast”.

There were always a few selfish men who hoarded the contents of their boxes. Billings recalled men who would

“keep their precious box and precious contents away from sight, smell, and taste of all outsiders.”<sup>25</sup>

### **Boxes for Reenactors**

Obviously, the creation and receipt of “boxes from home” can be an enjoyable living-history vignette. Here are some tips for pulling it off...

**Timing:** Troops did not normally receive boxes while they were on campaign, so arranging to receive them while during an impression of troops shortly before or after a “battle” will usually be inappropriate. A better scenario would be during winter quarters, garrison events, or any other scenarios that portray static troops.

**The Box:** Like the original folks at home, you can use a small barrel or a purpose-built wooden box. For a barrel, you can obtain one of the small “nail kegs” that are sold by some farm-supply houses. For a box, the easiest thing is to get 1-inch pine boards from your local lumberyard and, using nails and glue, make up a small wooden box about 16 inches long, 12 inches wide, and 10 inches deep. Be sure and use the period “cut” nails. Glue and nail the sides and bottom together, and fastened the lid with nails only. The “address” should be painted on the box using a paintbrush. The destination of a box would look much like the address of a letter written to a soldier:

Private John Doe  
Co. A, 108th Regt. Rhode Island  
Volunteers,  
Washington D.C.  
Care of Captain Smith

**Contents:** This is the fun part, obviously. Almost anything could go into a box, but great care should be taken to ensure the historical accuracy of the items and their wrapping or packaging, if any. Fruit or produce should be of a period variety and in a state appropriate to the season. Fresh apples would be incorrect for a box delivered in March, but dried apples would be proper.

### **Endnotes/References**

- 1 Andrew Chestnut to “Bella” dated Dec. 22, 1863: unpublished manuscript in the author’s possession.
- 2 John D. Billings, *Hardtack and Coffee* (Boston: George M. Smith & Co. 1887) p.217
- 3 Milton McJunkin. “*The Bloody 85<sup>th</sup>: The Letters of Milton McJunkin, a Western Pennsylvania Soldier in the Civil War.*” (Schroeder Publications, 2000) p. 66.
- 4 John Hartwell, *To My Beloved Wife and Boy at Home* (Associated University Presses, 1997) p.177
- 5 Andrew Chestnut to “Bella”, dated Dec. 25, 1863: unpublished manuscript in the author’s possession.
- 6 McJunkin, p. 66
- 7 Kingman, Eugene, *Tramping out the Vintage*” (Heart of the Lakes Publishing Co., Interlaken, NY 1983) p. 218.
- 8 James Ford to his Mother, October 14, 1862: unpublished manuscript in the author’s possession.
- 9 McJunkin, pp. 22, 75, & 76
- 10 McJunkin, p. 22
- 11 Billings, p. 218
- 12 Billings, p. 218
- 13 Hartwell, p. 177
- 14 Billings, p. 221
- 15 Petit, Ira *Diary of a Dead Man*. letter dated May 2, 1863.
- 16 In a letter written to his parents after receiving a box packed with sawdust, George Green complained that the packing had gotten into some of the eatables. He suggested that the next box be packed with straw or moss, “...as other boys have received boxes filled with the same with good results.” George Green to his mother, letter dated December 14, 1862. Manuscript in the author’s possession.
- 17 VanWyck, *A War to Petrify the Heart* p. 163
- 18 Andrew Chestnut to “Mother” dated Dec. 22, 1863: unpublished manuscript in the author’s possession.
- 19 Billings, p.219
- 20 Ibid, p. 220
- 21 Billings, p.220
- 22 Andrew Chestnut to “Bella” dated Nov. 29, 1862: unpublished manuscript in the author’s possession.
- 23 William to Andrew Chestnut, Nov. 27, 1863: unpublished manuscript in the author’s possession.
- 24 Cyrus Spencer to his mother, letter dated December 10<sup>th</sup> (1863?) unpublished

manuscript in the collection of Frank Andrews.  
25 Billings, p. 222.

### **NEW WEBSITE MANAGER**

After providing years of self-less service to the 33<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin, Mike Thorson has stepped down as the website manager. I am sure that I speak for all in thanking Mike for all that he has done, and for building the national following that our website has attained.

The new address for the site is <http://www.33wis.com/>. Our new web master is Tad Salyards. Please be sure to visit the new site and provide Tad with your comments and suggestions.

### **NORTH FREEDOM – LARUE MID-CONTINENT RAILWAY MUSEUM EVENT**

The time is nearly upon us for our annual event at the Mid-continent Railway Museum in North Freedom, Wisconsin. The event will be held the weekend of July 12-14. The military encampment will be in LaRue, as it was last year. Civilians will be setting up their Sanitary Commission in North Freedom in the depot area.

While the event is an invitation only event, our numbers have grown over the years. We are anticipating approximately 85 military reenactors to populate the area around the rails this year. The military will consist of both Union and rebel forces. The 24<sup>th</sup> Michigan will once again be putting on their alternate impression in order to provide an opposition force during the event.

Based upon the research of Robert Braun, the general location and time period for the event will be Devall's Bluff, Arkansas, late summer of 1864. At that time, the historic Thirty-third Wisconsin was ordered north via riverboat Tycoon from St. Charles, Ark. to Devall's Bluff in preparation for an expedition against the incursions of Confederate General Shelby.

At that location, there was proximity to colored troops, plus plenty of excitement as the troops are assembled for the expedition. [We are once again expecting a contingent of the 29<sup>th</sup> USCT

\$4.00 Sunday breakfast for anyone who wishes to keep their fry pans clean.

A new opportunity has presented itself for this year's event as well, in

Saint Charles, Ark.

We are seeking to give the area around the camp in LaRue a supply depot look. John Wedeward will be bringing various boxes, barrels and crates, as well as a fly. Jim Hulbert will debut the 33<sup>rd</sup> water cart that he is in the process of restoring. If you have camp impedimenta, please bring it along for the event.

North Freedom and LaRue are located in Sauk County Wisconsin. From points south and east, take I-90/94 north from Madison to Hwy 33, Exit 106. Travel west on 33 about 15 miles to Baraboo. Go through town on 33, until you reach Hwy 12. This is a major intersection and is guarded by traffic lights. Continue straight (west) on Hwy 136. Watch for the signs directing you to the Mid-continent Railway Museum. About 5 miles from Baraboo, turn left on CTH PF, and follow it into North Freedom. From the stop sign (the only one on the main street) you can continue straight (west) to the Museum. To reach LaRue, turn left (south) at the stop sign, and proceed out of the village. Continue for about 3 miles to LaRue. If you cross the train tracks, you have gone too far. Please park at the highway shop located just west of the tracks.

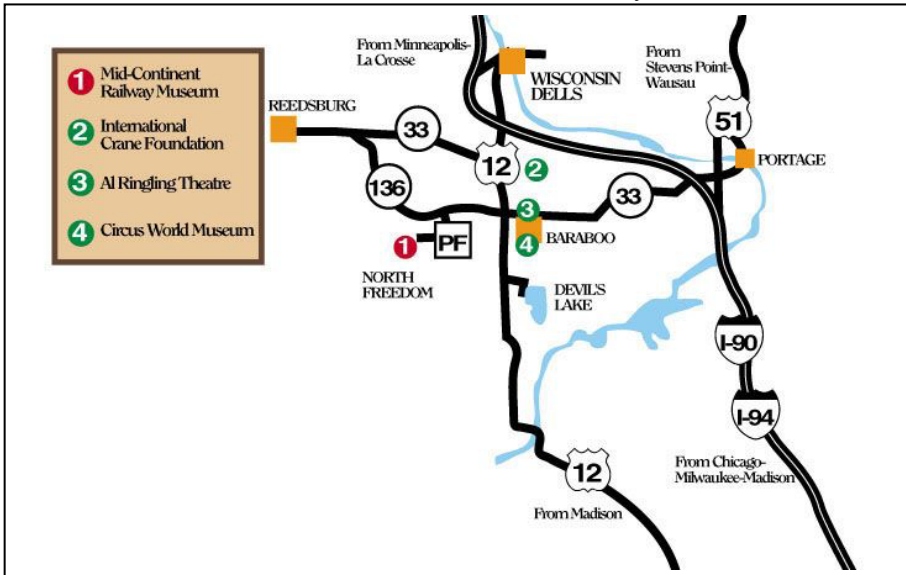
POC is Mark Reitz. For questions or directions, contact Mark at 608 356-3129, [mreitz@baraboo.com](mailto:mreitz@baraboo.com).

**CONDOLENCES**

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin offers its condolences and prayers to the family of member Peter Shrake, whose father, Warren, died on May 27, 2002, after a long illness.

**GOOD BYE TO APPLETON**

The 33<sup>rd</sup> participated in the LAST school program to be offered in Appleton on May 23. Kres Peckham has been our only POC for the event over the years, and the 33<sup>rd</sup> expresses appreciation to Kres for his efforts. The



to attend the event.] There was plenty of telegraphy from Union headquarters at Little Rock, and proximity to railroads. [It is unclear if the historic Thirty-third was actually involved with guarding the railroads, though.] There were also plenty of fortifications [our pioneer friends are once again attending as well, and plan to bring along their picks, shovels and axes]; a fixed camp concept is accurate as to the historical record. The weather was hot and sultry.

This year will also feature something not previously seen at any reenacting event that I have ever been a part of – telegraphy! Debuted at our spring muster in Cooksville, the 33<sup>rd</sup> has acquired telegraph keys, sounders and 1,000 feet of cable. A telegraph station will be set up in LaRue, and the cable will run to the trestle at Seeley Creek. We expect that telegraph traffic will be sent between the two locations. Anyone who wishes to have the chance to work the key will have the opportunity to do so.

Amenities of the event will include a soup lunch on Saturday, a brat-fest Saturday night courtesy of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin and Mark Reitz at the LaRue tavern, and the tavern will also feature a

that we have been granted permission and access to approximately 100 acres of bluff land at the end of the rail line. We plan to hold a tactical on Sunday morning between the two forces, as a Union skirmish line seeks out the rebel force that has been plaguing the rail line.

We will also be featuring a mail call for the event. It is asked that you please write letters to your chums, and bring them to the event for posting. We will be trying to have a piece of mail for every participant that we know, in advance, is coming. You can also write letters to anyone who has registered for mail on the 33<sup>rd</sup> Forum, located through and from the NEW website. Find it at: <http://www.33wis.com/>.

Letters should be addressed as follows:

*Soldier's Name*  
33<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin VI  
Moore's Brigade  
Detachment, XVII Corps  
Saint Charles, Ark.

If writing to one of LeRoy Martin's comrades, please address to:

*Soldier's Name*  
29<sup>th</sup> USCT

event has been a paying event and helped to fund the other works and needs of the unit.

The final event was attended by Kres, Dave Gerow, Chris Goetz, Jeff Stewart “and a guy named Lucas.”

### SCANDAL AND ATTEMPTED MURDER!?

The editor has learned of scandal involving a member of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin and his spouse. Stoughton police have been investigating the explosion of a massed quantity of gunpowder that occurred in the John and Judy Wedeward home the week of June 10 for evidence of foul play.

According to the police blotter, investigators were called to the Wedeward home by neighbors who called in a report of an explosion, and a small mushroom shaped cloud rising from the Wedeward residence. Upon arriving at the scene, EMT’s found in the still smoking rubble John Wedeward incomprehensively muttering to himself while attempting to light his cigarette from the ashes.

Police were initially suspicious of the circumstances, especially that neither Judy nor Brooke Wedeward were home at the time of the explosion. It was further discovered that recently insurance policies were taken out, and the couple had argued over John chewing tobacco (and spitting) in bed.

Fortunately, an in depth review of the facts of the case have cleared Judy of any wrong-doing. Police discovered, first of all, that John is *always* “incomprehensively muttering to himself.” Second, the renewal of insurance policies appears to have been in the ordinary course of affairs. Third, it is not unusual for John to keep a ton or two of gunpowder in his house. Fourth, and finally, at the time of the explosion, John was reloading brass casings for his Henry rifle, had *vast* quantities of gunpowder strewn about

the room, and was using a full, but leaking, gasoline can as a stool, all while smoking a cigarette.

While there *may* be some question as to the veracity of the above facts, what is clear is that while reloading brass for the Henry, a cartridge exploded, resulting in shrapnel wounds to the neck, and severe trauma to John’s finger, resulting in a hospital stay and IV antibiotics. Twenty-three stitches later, John professes to be ready to take the field again at LaRue. There will be a lottery to see who gets to have John sleep in their tent.

### FORT SNELLING REPORT

On 8 June 2002, elements of the 33<sup>rd</sup> WI supplemented by members of the Hard Head Mess traveled to historic Ft. Snelling to portray the Mankato State Light Guard. These elements were ably led by; John Wedeward, an “old veteran” of many conflicts. His charismatic presence and “old soldier demeanor” blended well with John Atkinson’s stable leadership style in his capacity as the “Guard’s” corporal.

The “Mankato Guard” augmented the 1st Minnesota, which had recently been mustered into federal service. There was also a small contingent of partially armed civilians who were gathered at the fort and from their appearance they were seeking rather than providing protection, as some of them were only armed with farm implements and condemned weapons.

The Mankato Guard was at one point “relieved” of their place in the barracks (I believe to make room for the band), but managed to find a home in the tent camp across from the fort. It plainly became the Mankato Guard’s by right of infestation. It was within this camp that outpost duty, drill (in Scott’s Tactics as adapted to percussion and flint weapons), and general ridicule of passing cavalry was conducted.

A demonstration of the “Mankato Guard’s” drill prowess was given on Ft. Snelling’s drill field under Sgt. John

Wedeward’s command. When Sgt. Wedeward was indisposed due to extensive discourse on period matters (and some not), Cpl. Atkinson displayed command initiative and marched the Mankato Guard back to their camp.

Additionally, the Mankato Guard was called upon to perform guard duty at Ft. Snelling’s main gate when the regular guard was called to other duty in the fort. It was rumored that a dapper member of the Mankato Guard, a cooper by trade, was detailed to a function at the post commander’s residence. The exact circumstances were a mystery, but a secret compartment within the cooper’s walking stick was found later to be lighter by volume.

Due to Sgt. Wedeward’s duty demands he was not able to participate in a bleeding of his old war wound (ankle) at the Post Hospital. The Mankato State Guard was able to reoccupy and retain their previous barracks late on Saturday, and leisure was experienced by all.

The rations as provided by the civilian cooks within Ft. Snelling could only be described as excellent and there was some discussion that they were held forth as a recruiting inducement. This, and Post rumors about pending duty elsewhere, left members of the Mankato Guard suspicious about muster into Federal service. There is no doubt that the Mankato Guard would have done their duty within the highest traditions of the service otherwise. Upon the safe return of all members of the Mankato Guard to their communities, I believe all felt that it was a most enjoyable experience.

It was also nice to see old and new members in attendance – John Dewey and Tad Salyards of the old, and Mike Haskins of the new.