

Rock County Volunteer

The Newsletter of the 33rd Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry

May 2001
Volume 17, Issue 3

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Rock County Volunteer
Mark Reitz, Editor
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APPLETON SCHOOL EVENT

Our second major school event will occur on Friday, May 25, in Appleton at the McKinley Elementary School. As with our other appearances at this event, we will be drilling the students near the school by companies, with a soldier being assigned as drill instructor for each class. Due to a mix-up at the school, we will not be marching to the park for the individual talks, as a teacher failed to make arrangements for the use of the park.

Please plan to arrive at the school by 8:30 am. Directions: Hwy. 41 to the Fox Valley. Exit onto Hwy. 441 and take that to the Onieda Exit. At the stop, turn Left onto Onieda, proceed to Hoover and turn right. Hoover takes a turn left and puts you at the intersection of Taft. Turn Right on Taft and proceed to McKinley Elementary School, which will be on your right. Lost? The school's phone is 920-832-6285.

POC is Kres Peckham, phone 920 738-9033, e mail to kbpeckham@aol.com. Kres is still looking for confirmations to attend from a few soldiers yet. If you can attend, please let Kres know immediately. We need to have eight soldiers for this event.

Memorial Day : Stoughton

At our Winter Meeting, we determined to pass on attending the Fulton Cemetery Memorial Day ceremony in favor of going to the Stoughton parade and cemetery service instead. Memorial Day is May 28 this year. Please plan to

attend so that we have a good showing for this important day. Stoughton is centrally located, so all should have minimal difficulty in making it to Stoughton.

We need the Flags for the parade and ceremony. If you have the flags, please be sure to attend, get the flags to someone who is attending, or contact John Wedeward so that arrangements for the flags can be made.

Please plan to arrive at John Wedeward's house and the parking lot next door by 8:30. From there, we will pool to get downtown for the start of the parade. The parade is fairly large, and we must be downtown by 9:00 for queuing; the parade begins at 10:00. After the parade there will be a ceremony at the cemetery, which will include a fly over by the Wisconsin Air National Guard.

John's house is located at 1900 Pleasant View Drive, on the west side of Stoughton. From Milwaukee area: take I-94 to Madison, take I-90 south to Hwys 12/18 and take this west to Stoughton Road. Exit Right and take to Stoughton. Just as you are coming into Stoughton, at the big curve at Hwy 138, turn right on Hoel Ave (if you go past Wal-Mart, you've gone to far) take the first left on Hoel (Pleasant View Dr.) and my house is the 5th on the left 1900 Pleasant View. There is a parking lot next door.

From the south: Take I-90 north to the first Stoughton exit (Highway 51) take Hwy 51 thru Stoughton to Hoel Ave. (go past Wal-Mart) and turn left on Hoel Ave. Take First Right (Pleasant

View Drive) We are the 5th house on the left 1900 Pleasant View Drive

Telephone John at 608 873-8503. E mail to jwedeward@inxcess.net.

Fort Snelling

The 33rd Wisconsin plans to send a contingent of militia to attend this year's Ft. Snelling event with the 1st Minnesota. This year the Fort will be doing an early war impression. the event is set to take place on Saturday June 9 through Sunday June 10. You may plan to arrive at the Fort on Friday evening. Our event is June 1861, with the 1st Minnesota in its final organization and training before leaving for Bull Run. We have purchased red woolen overshirts from overseas so most of our boys will be so clad (along with dark blue or black trousers and black hats – all other gear standard Federal issue). Civilian attire would be fine for guests, or the dark trousers and slouch hat, with period shirt - with red shirt to be added as supplies at Snelling allow.

John Wedeward and a couple of us are planning on going in as prospective recruits thinking about enlisting. We are coming dressed as civilians with the appropriate firearms of the period. This is a great chance to brush up on your 1st person. From a civilian point of view, what you do now (farmer, preacher, etc), your families thoughts about your joining up to fight the "rebels." etc., etc, etc. It is going to be a fun time and the people at the fort always feed us well. There is usually a dance in the evening.

POC is John Atkinson, who may be contacted at: Phone 414-764-0875, e mail to: badgerboyjjea@aol.com. You should also contact John Wedeward if you want to make arrangements to carry a different weapon, such as a '42 or flintlock. John may be contacted at: 608 873-8503, e mail to: jwedeward@inxcess.net.

Please let John Atkinson know ASAP if you intend to attend so that the Fort can have adequate quantities of rations. Plan on sleeping in Sibley tents until you 'enlist', at which time the barracks will become available for you.

Finally, on Saturday, the Fort will have a riverboat excursion. The cost is \$20.00, which includes a meal, with additional costs underwritten by the 1st MN. The boat boards at 5:30 PM below the fort along the Mississippi, and returns around 8:30 PM. Note also that pre-registered participants in costume are offered a 25% discount in the Historic Fort Snelling gift and book shop and Sutler Store.

33RD WISCONSIN AT RAYMOND

A contingent of 33rd Wisconsin boys attended the Raymond, Mississippi, reenactment while falling in with Dom Dal Bello and the Army of the Pacific. To say the least, it was an exciting weekend. There was marching enough to satisfy even the most hard core among us. Couple that with a *real* shooting incident in the tactical on Saturday morning, John Wedeward's loaned haversack exploding, and the Reitz-Laspa-Cole-Davis van hitting deer on the way back through Illinois, and there are enough stories to last a long time.



Dave Laspa on picket

For those of you who do not read the cwreenactors.com forum, you missed these excerpts from posts:

Maybe the AoP and the RIB can do an event together again. I enjoyed getting to talk with members of the 33rd Wis. Inf. at Raymond on Sunday morning, hate that Bob Braun was not able to attend.

Attended the event with the AOP and was proud to meet Col. Dal Bello, serve with Maj. Chad Greene, and camped with Capt. Forman and the parads of the 6th Ohio and 33rd Wis. When we marched and camped, it was distilled history.

For more information on the exploding haversack, look for the article later in this edition.

THE GRUB LINE

By Christopher Goetz

Welcome to the Grub Line. I would like to share with all of you something that came about at the 2000 Wade House event. I believe that something took place, not only of interest to this article, but to the reenactor's experience in general.

For those not able to attend the event, let me briefly paint a picture of something that occurred. Dave Gerow had come across a description in *Hardtack and Coffee*, described by John D. Billings, of a procedure used by company cooks to bake the army bean in the ground, using mess kettles. Dave not only had the procedure, but took the initiative to bring to the event, all the ingredients needed to put it together.

It was at this point that I came into the picture. On arrival, Dave informed me of his project, and asked if I would care to help. I agreed, not realizing what a major task lay before us.

The procedure called for digging a rectangular hole in the ground big enough for the mess kettle, with ample room around it. This meant a hole about 18" deep, and 24 x 18" on the sides. A flat rock was to be placed in the bottom of the hole, then a fire built in the hole and kept burning for some hours. The beans were also being prepared for baking during this time. When all was ready, the coals were to be shoveled out, the kettle of beans set in with a board over the top, and then the coals were to be shoveled back around the kettle and all was covered with dirt and left until the next day.

We started to put our plan into action, and is so often the case, nothing went as planned. The hole was dug with no small effort, for Mother Nature had her input in our project. It had been raining for a couple of days, and the ground was wet and sticky. We persevered as we were on a mission. After the hole was dug, we placed the rock in the bottom and proceeded to build a fire as our instructions called for. At first the fire burned well, but much to our dismay the fire went out and the bottom of the hole began to fill with water. So we moved on to plan B. To make a long story short, plan B didn't work either, nor did plans C, D or even E. Finally hours later we sat down wet, muddy and very discouraged. We looked at our project and said, "that will have to do." We had no idea if it was going to work or not. I felt at that moment I had come all that way to find some history, and all I had managed to accomplish was a big waste of time.; The next day we went to check our beans, and much to our surprise, they were wonderful.

After stepping back and evaluating our project, I came to the realization that I had come to the event looking for history, but in fact, history had found me. Our set backs were not at all unlike situations the soldiers of the 1860's dealt with all the time. Also, not giving up, and making due with what worked, was very much the soldier's way of life.

I would like to thank Dave and all who helped in making a little bit of history come alive in a pot of the Army Bean.

I hope you have enjoyed these Grub Lines. Any input from you, or ideas for future articles would be appreciated. Place contact me at: Chris Goetz, PO Box 132, Lakewood, WI 54138. E mail cgoetz@cybrzn.com.

MEMBERSHIP VOTES FOR FOOD

The last issue of the *Rock County Volunteer* asked members to respond as to whether we should use \$100 of company funds in order to purchase food for the North Freedom event in July. As you may recall, Mark Reitz has previously hosted a picnic at his house, but in anticipation of increased numbers in attendance, it was proposed that we expend funds for the catering of brats and fixings.

The vote is now in, and for those who expressed an opinion, the decision is unanimous. As a result, Mark will make final arrangements with Kurt at the La Rue tavern for food on Saturday night.

As an update to the event, we are expecting a larger than normal crowd. In addition to our own boys and those from the 3rd Wisconsin, there will also be a contingent of rebs from the 24th Michigan, and Fred Green's group plans to field another eight. We also expect a few from the 1st Minnesota, possibly a couple from Kansas who are AoP boys, and possibly another couple from Indiana. All in all, it is shaping up to be a grand time, and it is hoped that all of you can make it.

NOTES ON THE DRILL

By Mark Reitz.

As reenactors, we strive, or should strive, to perform as closely as we can the habits and routines of those we

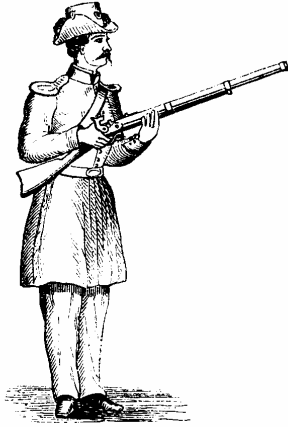
portray. To do so, many of us do, and all of us should, consult period sources of information. Letters, diaries and books, such as Si Klegg and *Hardtack and Coffee*, can offer insights to how the soldier lived in camp and in the field. We can glean methods and practices from these sources on how to behave as the soldiers themselves did.

When it comes to being under arms, we do not have to guess at all on how to act. Specific manuals of instruction were written by those forebears on how to perform the drill. Scott, Hardee, Casey and others all left manuals to which we can refer and from which we can learn.

As a file closer, and when acting as staff on a battalion level with the AoP, I have a superb opportunity to observe what we, as individuals and as units, do and to ask why. I would like to focus on one specific item for the rest of this article, and follow up in future editions with other topics, to see if what we do is correct.

"Prime"

We all know how to load our muskets, right? We all know how to correctly perform the commands for load, and to how to do them properly, right? In my observations, some of the most egregious variances from the drill come during loading. These variances are not only egregious because they are wrong, but because they are unsafe. The worst violations I see are while we prime. Invariably I see solders prime who have already removed the percussion cap from the cone, or who hold the musket vertically before them, with their right hand passing between the lock and their cap pouch. The drill was set up as it is not just so everyone looks the same, but so that we all are safe as well.



The first error made by some is to remove the spent cap immediately after firing. This is wrong and just plain dangerous. The ignition of gunpowder takes place in the presence of oxygen to assist in combustion, though the chemical reaction also provides its own oxygen as well. Once you have fired, all the oxygen in the breech has been consumed and combustion is not possible for any remaining particles of carbon which may remain in the barrel. Once the spent cap is removed though, a pathway is opened for oxygen to enter. Residual combustion is now more likely to occur. Knowing that condition may now exist, who among us would wish to pour fresh powder down the barrel? Some unthinking people do, and ‘cooking off’ of the new powder is a possibility, with consequent injury to your fingers, face or the pards around you.

What does the manual say? In *Casey's Tactics*, School of the Soldier (S.C.) paragraph 163 *et seq*, the descriptions for loading in nine times are found. Read carefully. It is not unit S.C. ¶175, Prime, that the instruction “remove the old cap” is found. It is not until the powder is safely in the breech and closing the airway, and the barrel pointed safely away, that the old cap is removed. Let's be sure we all remain safe and do it this way.

The second error commonly seen while priming is to not hold the musket in the proper position. I often see soldiers prime while holding the musket vertically in front of themselves, or by

passing the right hand between the lock and the pouch. Neither of these positions allows the soldier the proper control of his weapon, nor protects the safety of the men around him.

Again, let's refer to *Casey* to see what is described. In S.C. ¶174, the position for prime is set forth: “the right foot behind and at right angles with the left; the hollow of the right foot against the left heel; the piece to the right side, the butt below the right fore-arm – the small of the stock against the body and two inches below the right breast.” In this position, one has total control of the musket, and it will not be swaying about or threatening the pards around you.

To review, the feet should be boxed, the right behind the left, and the musket is against the body, below the right breast, with the butt below the right forearm. From this position, you can control the movement of the gun, and keep it from moving around.

Now if you are in the rear rank especially, but certainly for all, you need to pay attention to the position of the muzzle. In accordance with *Casey*, the muzzle is to be on a level with the eye. It is not canted into the air, nor pointing down, sideways or in any other direction. If you are in the rear rank, it is of the utmost importance that you maintain your close interval to the front rank man. If you drift to the rear, the height of the eye may also be the height of the man's head to your front. Be sure to stay close, and stay safe.

As you reach for your percussion cap, control the stock with your right forearm, and reach down with your hand over the lock and into your cap pouch. The musket at all times stays between you and your hand, firmly against your body and below your breast. Once the cap is placed upon the cone, then move your right hand to grasp the small of the stock.

The manual is designed to provide for uniformity, but also for safety. Be sure that you are not a hazard to yourself or your comrades. Learn the drill, do it

right, each and every time. If you are corrected by a file closer, accept the information with a proper attitude, and with a desire to do it right in the future.

Next time: Attention! Assembly! To The Colors!

CONDOLENCES

The father of Robert Pagel passed away on Sunday, April 30, 2001, at Mercy Hospital, Janesville at around 7:35 p.m. from multiple health causes. He was comfortable and surrounded by his family when he passed.

The 33rd Wisconsin sends Bob, Paula and Willie our condolences, prayers and heartfelt thoughts of sympathy for their loss. A floral arrangement was sent by the unit to the funeral, which took place on May 3. To send your support to the Pagel family, please write:

Robert Pagel
314 North Main Street
Orfordville, WI 53576-9740

BOARD OF INQUIRY

As recorded earlier in this newsletter, during the recent Raymond event, John Wedeward was generous enough to loan traps to new member Spencer Davis so that Spencer could attend the big show. During the weekend, the Wedeward haversack mysteriously exploded. John has specifically entrusted his accouterments to my care, and to watch out for Spencer. I was dumb struck that the damage occurred. John was obviously concerned as well.

As a result of John's protestations to determine what happened, a Board of Inquiry was called. As you will see, not only have 33rd Wisconsin boys contributed to the base of knowledge over the incident, but pards in nearby companies in the AoP who had information have stepped forward to provide just the facts. While the Board

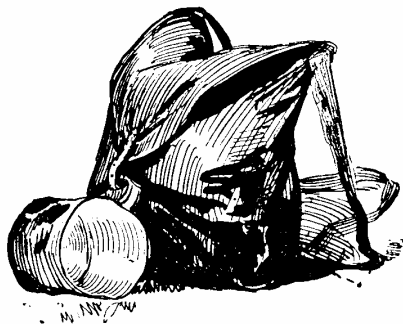
has not yet reached a determination, you can follow the inquiry here.

All of this information was submitted through the 33rd Wisconsin Forum, which is found at: <http://33rdwisconsin.civilwarmuseum.com/>

Wedeward Haversack Explodes!

News Item: John Wedeward loaned equipment to new member Spencer Davis for the Raymond II event. While on campaign, the haversack mysteriously exploded. Sergeant Wedeward has asked for a Board of Inquiry to determine what happened.

Head Quarters
33rd Wis. Vol. Infantry Regiment
Outside Memphis, Tenn. May 9, 1863



Special Orders No 1.

A Board of Survey is hereby ordered to investigate the matter of the reported destruction of public property, namely the haversack of Orderly Sergeant John Wedeward, of "E" Company.

The following officers shall serve on the Board of Survey:

Capt. John Gurley, "C," Chairman,
Lieut. Geo. Carter, "A"
Lieut. Geo. Harrington, "G"
Lieut. Daniel Shea, "K"

Capt. Gurley shall convene his Board at a convenient location within one week of the date of this order. He shall interview witnesses, take testimony, and determine the circumstances

surrounding the incident reported by Lieut, Swift, Co. "E."

The findings of the Board of Survey shall be reported to this Hd Qtrs. by the end of the month.

By Order.....

F. S. Lovell
Lieut. Col., Comdg Reg.

A Board of Survey has been convened in accordance with Special Orders No. 1, Head Quarters, 33d Wisconsin Vol. Inf. Reg. on May 9. 1863, in camp near the city of Memphis Tennessee. In attendance are Lieutenants Carter, Shay, and Harrington.

This Board has been convened to look into the matter of reported destruction of public property, namely the issue haversack of one Orderly Sergeant John Wedeward, of Company "E" of this regiment. This Board has been tasked with conducting a thorough and impartial investigation of this incident.

While this Board is not governed by formal legal procedure, it is empowered to receive the testimony of eyewitnesses, examine evidence, and render a decision based on the findings from such testimony and evidence.

The Board shall commence with the testimony of eyewitnesses to the reported incident, and is ready to receive the testimony of the first witness.

Statement of Pvt. Adromidon Bond Co. B

We were next in line in bivouac to Co. G. at the time in question. I saw an event I feel I must report to fact-finding officers. It happened just as dark was approaching. I think it was a single ray of sunlight that broke through the clouds and focused on a black sack near the cook fire Co. G had kindled. Thinking this was an odd occurrence I kept an eye on the sack. I noticed two by two creatures of the Mississippi woods coming and going from the sack.

Finally I could stand no more and a pard and I went to the sack. We picked it up and looked inside. Its difficult to find the words to express what we saw. There was a writhing ball of matter, with an orange yellow glow at its center. Some partial shapes of objects and animals were recognizable in the somewhat assimilated mass. Parts of big bugs, tobacco plug, 58 cartridges, hardtack from the trip from camp at Racine, a snake head, several rat tails, a juicy mix of coffee, pig fat, and spew congealing to hold it all together. We felt we were viewing the hubs of hell. In mortal fear we flung the sack down the line. I now recall the thud sound when it landed that had the familiar tambour of a drum. The next morning we drew testaments from the Chaplin. After the experience battle will now be a respite for our soles. God help us all.

The Board Finds:

Your account was most interesting, Private Bond. Those of us who have stared death in the face in the maelstrom of battle readily can attest to the comforting words of a good Testament. The Board is most pleased that you have sought solace in the Good Book, rather than sought comfort in more "worldly" pursuits.

However, it is the considered opinion of the Board that you be remanded to the Regimental Surgeon, with a recommendation of furlough for 30 days on a Surgeon's Certificate, in order to recruit your health and peace of mind.

We of the Board fear that the constant campaigning of late, or perhaps noxious effluvia emanating from the reportedly damaged haversack, may have unstrung you to the point of the need for medical care.

Please report yourself on "sick call" at tomorrow's call.

Statement of Private Shrake

If it may please the board,

Though I was not a witness to the incident in question I feel that some details of the matter may have been overlooked.

As a veteran of our honorable regiment I have had the honor of serving with Sgt. Wedeward for many years. however... his haversack has been a considerable danger to the regiment in the past.

True there are stories, well corroborated with fact, of monsters living in the bag...to that I can not say much, though at moments I have witnessed strange rumblings and movements emanating from its deep dark recesses. But rather I refresh the board of the countless times that the good sergeant admittedly out of his kind graces has shared food from his bag with a pard. Now I need not bring forth the sick and death list from the surgeons own reports but the record stands on its own, and is well known. Sgt. Wedeward's haversack has been a serious health risk to the entire regiment, nay even the brigade, for years.

When the officers of this board couple this with the fact that the Sgt. loaned his equipment to an unsuspecting young private...well.. the implications are horrifying.

The Sergeant was negligent at the very least. perhaps there was a proposed plan of foul play. I will not speculate, I just bring this well known fact to the attention of the board.

Sirs, I respectfully suggest, that Sgt. Wedeward be seriously reprimanded for his loaning such a dangerous object to a private under his command. Perhaps a reduction in ranks is in order... such decisions of course are for the board to decide but consider this...if he lends such a dangerous item to a new private now...with out reprimand...what will he do tomorrow.

Respectfully submitted
Pvt. Pete Shrake

The Board Finds:

Your testimony is out of order, sir!
You, by your own admission, were not an eyewitness!

However, the Board is impressed by your passionate argument. I will add your name to the list. If we need character witnesses, you shall be recalled.

You certainly seem to know the nature enough "characters" in this regiment!

Statement of Sgt. Reitz

May it Please this Board:

I am a sergeant within this company, and will present my warrant as evidence of my position. I did personally witness the explosion of the haversack, though I cannot with absolute certainty state its cause.

I was appointed by the colonel to act as battalion sergeant major at the time in question. I had arisen at reveille, 5:00 a.m. local time. I returned to my old company to see to the welfare and comfort of my pards, and to advise them of the orders for the day. While I was standing and speaking with Private Cole, a haversack exploded. At the time I did not know that this was the haversack in question. Only later did it come to my attention that the haversack was the property of Orderly Sergeant Wedeward, and in bailment to the custody of Pvt. Davis.

Now, at the time of the explosion, there was no person in the immediate area of the haversack. Pvt. Davis was not near the haversack nor was he interacting with it in any way. No other person was near the haversack or interacting with it in any way. The haversack was just sitting there, and poof, it exploded.

It would seem to me that there was no action performed upon the haversack which would have caused the explosion. There would also not appear to be any act, nor was there an omission to act, which if performed, or omitted from action, as the case may be, would have prevented the haversack from exploding.

Now, we all know that ordinary haversacks by themselves do not spontaneously combust. But we also know that this was not an ordinary haversack, it having been in service to Orderly Sergeant Wedeward for an extended time. We also are aware of the condition of the inside of the Orderly Sergeant's haversacks, and in fact how one private become deathly ill, and had to spend considerable time in hospital, after sampling the comestibles stored therein. We also know that the good Orderly regularly keeps other personal items in the bag, such as tobacco and matches.

It is my opinion to the Board of Review, that the explosion to said haversack could only have occurred as a result of the original condition Pvt. Davis received the haversack, and not as a result of any action precipitated by the said private.

So Help Me God.

The Board Finds:

Sergeant, the Board is most impressed by your complete and credible testimony. You may step down. However, we do ask you not to leave the confines of camp for the next day or so, in case the Board shall have need of additional testimony to verify facts and incidents.

Thank you, Sergeant.

Statement of Corporal Gerow

As I remember the events of may 4 a battle line was formed in the face of the confederate artillery. The piece was centered on G company. At the order the battalion fired on the crew of the gun. At first it appeared the crew withdrew. Then the number four appeared from his prone position. Just as the order came to charge the gunner reached for the primer cord. Seeing this, one young private broke ranks and run forward. Hoping to fowl the charge he pulled his loaned haversack from his neck. He thrust it right into the barrel of the artillery piece. Not a second passed before the charge went off!! All heads obliqued up to see the smoking tarred

linen projectile ach over the mounted officers behind the line. The blood welled in the privates face as he realized this was the famed haversack on loan from Sgt. Wedeward who was on sick call. With quick action Sgt. Atkinson who soaked the sack with water from the privates canteen further danger was avoided. This deed saved most of the sack. Neither life nor limb was injured in the act of bravery but the Wedeward haversack now has an extra aperture to help it stand out from the rest. No doubt this will added to the long list duty under arduous conditions for this accoutrement. I would also recommend to higher authority the establishment of the Order-Of-The-Tarred-Linen- Badge for brave use of an accoutrement in the face of the enemy man or bacterial. And further this be presented to Pvt, Spencer Davis. For his use of this haversack on May 4th.

The Board Finds:

Your testimony has been noted by the Board. While such an occurrence in action sounds fantastic, the Board will consider other testimony to confirm or deny the facts as you have presented them.

You may step down. However, do not leave the confines of camp for the next day or so, in the event the Board shall recall you to ask additional questions or render additional testimony.

Statement of Co. G Pard

Captain,

I do solemnly swear that what I am about to state is wholly true before God. I refer this Board to my statement as set forth in another section of this Forum, and which is reprinted here. I truly believe these facts to be correct.

Eye Witness, Co. G

I know that there was a haversack rat living in the equipment. The kid would feel the sack churning and moving on its own, and he would dump everything out on the ground, but nothing would be found. But after every time, you could still see the haversack writhing around on its own. He must have been hiding in

there somewhere between the canvas fibers or something.

Well anyway, John always keeps chew in the haversack, but this new kid doesn't chew. So the rat is poking around to find that Black Moriah he knows has to be in there. Being unable to find it, the rat lights a match to see better. Only problem is, the match was right under two arsenal packs of cartridges. All of a sudden, ph-whoom!, and the explosion occurs. Blew the haversack rat clean out of the bag, and left a hole the size of your fist in the haversack.

I know it sounds crazy, but honest to God, this is what happened. I don't blame the new kid. John just has to learn to set up better housekeeping for his gear -- and always keep a chaw handy for those varmints that need it.

The Board Finds:

Private... are you expecting this Board, comprised of learned officers of your own regiment, to believe that an invisible rat lived within the confines of a haversack?

Moreover, are you honestly expecting the Board to believe that a rat, one of God's more inane creatures placed by his infinite wisdom on this Earth, actually possesses the mental agility and physical wherewithal to open a match safe, withdraw a single match, and strike it against a surface with sufficient force to cause ignition of same?

Is THIS what you are asking this Board to believe?

The Board seriously doubts your testimony as inconsistent with that of previous, credible witnesses. Unless you can offer other material proof of your "claim," the Board sees no other option but to remand you to the Surgeon, for a full examination to see if you have been dipping into the officer's Commissary Whiskey!

You may step down, sir!

Statement of Private Calloway

Down the line in Company C, 31st Illinois my comrades and I might be the only ones yet living who know what

really occurred to Sgt. Wedeward's haversack on that fateful day. I've been trying to forget that black day and erase it from my memory. However, in the interest of justice and sanctimony in the 31st Illinois I feel it is important to speak the truth.

As the sun set on the fields of Raymond in the evening of May the 4th, our boys of Company C were busying ourselves setting our camps and cooking our rations. Darkness was quickly approaching and nary a man had eaten a morsel of food. A drummer name of Frank had just completed his dinner and had set his haversack aside a moment to wash his dinner plate. Another comrade from a company up the line sauntered by and stopped to jaw a minute with our Fourth Sergeant.

He must have set his own haversack down beside ole Franks... as near as I can figure. Because when Frank came back he picked up what he thought was his haversack ... and what a fateful mistake that was.

It must have been about 2 am the next morning when it all started. I was sleeping peacefully and dreaming of the pleasures of home when I was brought to consciousness by the sound of a screeching animal. Several of us sprang to our feet searching for the rifle stacks and grasping at anything that we could use to defend ourselves.

It was at that moment that I saw the strangest thing mine eyes have ever beheld.

There stood wispy ole Frank, dressed only in his drawers, dancing in the moonlight with that damn haversack clinging to his head. Frank couldn't weigh more than 110 lbs soaking wet and his bony arms were flailing in the starlit night as he tried to free himself of the sack.

I went to his aid and it was then that I saw it for the first time. Tentacles had emerged from the haversack and wrapped themselves around Frank's head. Frank must have been using that mistook haversack as a pillow as he is oft to do... little did he know that there was a critter inside fixing to make him into a meal.

Having only a spoon from my own haversack with which to defend myself. I tried to scrape back those tentacles from off of Frank's head. Two others were now in our midst and had grappled ole Frank by the ankles. We were going to pull that thing free one way or another. My bunkmate,

Ryan finally got a hold of the haversack strap and started to pull from the opposite end.

We must have been quite the site with Frank there in the moonlight. Two good sized boys were wrapped around his ankles while Ryan pulled on that strap. And there I was prying at that sack with my rusty spoon.

Well Ryan must have lost his grip because the next moment all I know is Frank was going head over heels with that haversack still on his head. His drawers were now down about his ankles and poor Frank was screaming like a school girl.

What happened then can not be explained in polite company. Frank came to his seat square on the face of the first sergeant of company C! I remind you that Frank's drawers were about his ankles and thus his seat was gamey at best. Nathan, our First Sergeant came to his feet swinging a shovel and cursing like the bull. I tried to intercede but in the mix that haversack strap somehow got around my neck and cut off my air.

There I was blue in the face trying to get between the shrieking, naked, haversack bedecked drummer and our first sergeant who was about as mad as a bear with a sore head. Well Sergeant Nathan's shovel must have finally hit it's mark because there was a loud sucking sound and that sack came free of Frank. I could have sworn in that instant that little paws were holding on to Frank's eyelids for all they were worth.

Anyway, that haversack went flying toward the fire pit. That fire pit being about 2 feet wide and 6 feet long. The haversack landed into a hot bed of coals. It wasn't there a second when it hopped up and began a screeching just like what ole Frank had done.

That haversack started to running of it's only accord but not having much ability to see for itself it ran the wrong way, and headed into the fire itself.

About then we heard the first pop. It was a cartridge from within the bag. Someone had been keeping rounds in their haversack. And then there were about a dozen small explosions and we all ducked for cover. Minnie's were zinging all over camp and one of them even hit the blade of the shovel which Sergeant Nathan was still blindly swinging.

Some of you down the line surely heard all this ruckus.

When we finally recovered that haversack there just wasn't much left. Other than a company letter and identification number... we did find some chew in there, I'm sorry that we chewed it up the next day rather than returning it with the bag. Ryan and I snuck that haversack back to the other company an hour or so later and retrieved Franks haversack for him.

What was in that bag we may never know, it was long gone by the time we had found the sack a good 30 feet from that fire pit. All I know for sure is that there were small bloody trails in the dirt which we followed until the moonlight gave out on us behind a cloud.

We're all sure sorry to hear that the haversack was ruined. Frank was real sorry about it especially and Sgt Nathan is still fuming about the manner in which he was brought out of his slumber.

Maybe we can all pitch in and make up the cost for Sgt. Wedeward.

The Board Finds:

Your testimony is sincerely appreciated. We find your comments to be both direct, succinct, and credible. We will take into account your testimony as we move to deliberations.

You may step down, with the proviso that we may contact your Colonel if this Board has additional questions in this matter.

Thank you, Private Calloway.

Testimony of Private Davis:

I first of all would like to thank everyone that has given their account of what they saw.

The following is a true account of what actually occurred on that fateful day of May 5, 1863. I cannot say that it is the EXACT truth, but this is only the event as I remember it.

After a long day of marching under the hot Mississippi sun, we finally stopped for the night. After having drawn rations and eating our supper, everyone had laid down to sleep. After I was finished writing in my diary I proceeded to put out my light and go to sleep. Next thing I know I hear a rustling along side of me. I look over to see the silhouette of a man kneeling beside my lent haversack. As I sat upright the man bolted away. I, being half asleep, was unable to pursue him. So as I knelt down beside the haversack a small explosion occurred on the inside of the haversack. As the flame began to spread I leapt onto the haversack to try and muffle out the fire. Before the fire could be put out an unidentified corporal hoisted me off of the sack and distinguished the flame with the only fluid a man would have available to him at the time. This may seem odd to some, but I will try to explain why the man was there and what he was doing in the haversack.

As everyone knows, the Wedeward haversack has a reputation that reaches far and wide. The way I figure it is that; once the Rebel army got wind of the fact that the famous Wedeward haversack was in the camp across the field, they decided that they wanted to destroy it. By doing this they would demoralize the Federal army (as everyone knows, the whole army loves this haversack) and be able to overrun them the next day.

So in the night the rebs sent a man over to infiltrate our camp and set a charge to go off and destroy the famed haversack. As I arose from my sleep in the night I caught the reb messing with the

haversack and scared him off. So by being able to distinguish the flaming haversack, the unidentified corporal not only saved the famous haversack, but also the moral of the whole Union army. So, I believe that the unidentified corporal(s) should not be punished but, if anything else, promoted.

That is what truthfully happened the night of May 5, 1863, as I remember it. And I hope that you consider the last statement above that I made.

Pvt. Spencer P. Davis

The Board Finds:

The Board appreciates your candor in your testimony. We will consider your account in the balance of other testimony offered by witnesses, and shortly render our findings in this matter.

LETTER HOME

We know that politics is rampant in our society today. For some quaint reason, we seem to forget that even aside from the war, politics was around during the Civil War era. One need only to watch the History Channel to know that for all of human history, being in control meant working behind the scenes, and getting ahead was often a function of who one knew.

Within the 33rd Wisconsin too, there is evidence of such political jostling. The following letter is example of this, and is fascinating to read:

**Eastport Mississippi
January 27, 1865**

Governor Lewis - Dear Sir,

Having leasure [sic] today I have concluded to improve it in writing you a few lines - Since my last our regiment with the Division was out on a [?] to Corinth - We received orders on the 16th inst. to be ready to march the following morning with three days rations in haversacks & 3 on wagons at

an early hour. The following morning we took up our line of march. The expedition was made up of our Div. under command of Col. Moore (of our regt) & 1200 Cavalry & two pieces of artillery, the whole under command of Genl Craxton. We passed through Iuka that day and camped that night within 14 miles of Corinth, making 21 miles. The day following (the 19th) we reached Corinth about noon. The place was occupied by two reb regiments of Cavalry with 2 pieces of artillery but evacuated the place as our cavalry in the advance came in sight, burning the Depot buildings and quite a quantity o Commissary Stores. Remained there about 2 hours, countermarched, camped that night 10 miles from Corinth on the roads to this place making a little over 25 miles.

Nothing of particular note accured [sic] during the rest of our march to camp which we reached on the 21st, after an absence of about 4 days. The weather during the trip was very favorable for the march until the night before we reached camp when it rained nearly all night making the last days march rather tedious on us. It appears the object of the scout was merely a presence to ascertain the enemy's force at Corinth. The country from here to that place is sandy & poor farming country. It is nearly a broken forest rough & hilly and the road crosses many bad swamps - My health since I returned has been very poor; I find my health failing fast and every march appears to come harder on me than the previous one. Nevertheless I am anxious and am determined to serve out my present term of enlistment and hope before it shall expire to see this rebellion crushed out and our government restored.

The night before we started on our last march Lt. Col. Lovell bid us good bye and started the following day for the north to take command of his regiment. By his promotion there will be a vacancy in our regiment of major. So Governor, politically and socially we have always been friends. I have always given you my hearty support where you name was presented to me for my suffrage, and I shall continue to work

[unreadable portion] find a chance to serve you. I would be very sorry to ask anything of you that would serve in any way to create for you more enemys [sic] than friends. The favors I have to ask is the promotion of Capt. John E. Gurley, 1st Lieut. David H. Budlong & myself. Well aware I am you cannot please all who are asking similar favors but we claim to have fairly won such promotion by faithful service in the field and by hard fighting when ever brought before the enemy. As to Capt. John E. Gurley too much cannot be said in his praise. After the experience I have had in the army and of the merits & qualifications required to fill the offices of major of our reg't and I know of no officer in our regiment so well qualified for it as he. He is loved and respected by the entire regiment. As for bravery there is none braver. All I have said or could say in Capt Gurley's favor is equally true of Lieut Budlong. Farther than military merit Budlong has been the ranking 1st Lieut of the regiment for nearly 2 years. I could safely say no man in the regiment passes fewer enemies than does he both as an officer & a man. He is a man of great integrity. He was a member of the M. E. Church up to the time of his enlistment and belonged to the West Wisconsin Conference for nearly 3 years previous to coming to the army. He is a good talker & public speaker, and will make some good speeches for the Union if he lives to return to Wis.

Your obedient servant,

Second Lieutenant William Weir

Source information
*State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
Archives Division. 816 State Street,
Madison, Wis. 53706.*

UPCOMING CAMPAIGN

July Fourth Parade : July 4 this year, earns \$300 for the unit's coffers.

Mid-Continental Railway Museum : July 14 – 15, at North Freedom and La Rue, Wisconsin. This year promises to be Bigger – Better – Stronger.