



Federal Volunteer Brigade



Volume 1, Issue 1

Brig. Gen. Ron Palese, Commanding

October /November 2008

*Welcome to the
Federal Volunteer
Brigade
newsletter.*

**This is a communication
for all company command-
ers of the new Brigade.
Please e-mail your com-
pany news and information
to Lt. Col. Jay Henson at
CoA7MD@aol.com**

*I am looking forward to
hearing from you all and
spreading the word about
the new Brigade.*

**Please let me hear from
you , and let's get the word
out.**

Brittany's Hope

Rain. But, it wasn't our fault. Rain, on the way to the event on Friday evening, but it wasn't raining hard...then. Rain...

Just after midnight, it came in buckets. Rain... it slowed to a trickle in the early morning hours. Then, again increased in intensity. Rain...

Canvas. Ah ha! Keeps rain from making an event a total washout...for us. Canvas.. A welcome place to seek shelter from any downpour.

Confederates, not totally prepared for the amount of rain. Thoroughly soaked by

Saturday morning, were up for the start of the two-day tactical. But, faced with the withering fire and relentless pursuit of the "semi-dry" Federal forces, called a halt to their side of the event early Saturday afternoon.

The grounds of the Elizabethtown, PA, site are magnificent! Plenty of room to work, varied and interesting terrain and most welcoming hosts made this event one for the books! *Not to mention legends!*

The Federal forces were camped in an apple orchard, among trees loaded with ripe fruit for the picking. Some-

times, the fruit fell at your feet for the taking.

The tactical got underway on Saturday morning at 9:30 AM, as both sides maneuvered to their previously arranged starting points. Led by Col. Ron Palese, two companies of the finest Federals pursued the Confederates through briars, railroad cuts, to behind stone walls in a fast-paced battle that raged for well over two hours. Then the rains came...again. The Rebs had had enough, low on ammo and especially low on water, and drenched from the night before, they respectfully declined to return to the field of battle. The Federals, remained for the rest of the wet weekend, and enjoyed each others wonderful company.

From the General...



As General, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for all the hard work in making this brigade the best brigade in reenacting!

I can see that all of you support me, and the formation of this new brigade. I will need

each you to do a few things to make us grow even bigger.

First, we need each organization to find another new organization, or company, to join us. This will help us grow another new

Regiment within the brigade.

Also, we need to look at our company schedules and try to consolidate the events, so we have good turn-outs at least once a month.

To this end, I propose three events that we make next year, maximum events. The first is New Market, in May. Second, Brittany's Campaign, which is a 48 hour tactical event in September. Thirdly, Cedar Creek, in Octo-

ber. Two of these are 145th Anniversary events, and the other is an exciting tactical, which will let commanders, and company officers use all the tactics we have learned over these many years.

I hope that all of you will support this and we can talk about these, and other things, at the annual planning meeting in January.

Coming Campaigns

October
17-19th

**144th Battle of Cedar Creek
Middletown, VA
(Company)**

144th Anniversary Reenactment of the Battle of Cedar Creek on original battlefield in Middletown. Camps open 9 a.m. Daily battles, demonstrations, living history camps, symposia, more. *Proceeds benefit the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation.* Reenactor registration \$20 by Sept. 8, \$30 walk-on. Spectators: Adults \$15 day, \$26 weekend; 5 & under free. Free parking & shuttle.

For more information, contact: (540) 869-2064, cedarcreek@visuallink.com; www.cedarcreekbattlefield.org

November

Saturday, 22nd

**Remembrance Day
Ceremonies, Parade, Dinner
Gettysburg, PA
(Company)**

Remembrance Day Parade and Ceremonies. Annual event in conjunction with Gettysburg Address anniversary. Parade of Civil War living history groups begins at 1 p.m. Sponsored by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

The Federal Volunteer Brigade will meet at 8:00 AM in the old Visitor's Center (Cyclorama) parking lot. Be ready to step off at 8:30 AM for ceremonies in the National Cemetery. Each company will be offered the chance to offer remarks as the Brigade stops at each representative state. Remember, ***absolutely no caps, rounds, or weapons*** are permitted within the cemetery. Swords and bayonets are best left behind, but must be ***sheathed at all times.***

Parade through town will follow, starting at about 12:30 PM.

For more information, contact: (717) 334-1124, ext. 431; www.nps.gov/gett

Tips for a Pleasurable Night's Rest

The foremost requirement for bedding is that it afford you a comfortable, warm night's rest. Nothing is harder than staying in character and thinking straight if you have been tossing, turning and freezing all night.

It is of utmost importance though that your bed look period correct for the viewing public during the day's event. And be assured, people will peek into your tent even when it is tied closed. So one of your first buys should be a period correct wool blanket or quilt. If you are sleeping in a down sleeping bag you can cover it up, if you are sleeping on a straw filled ticking, it will keep you warm. A blanket can be used to hide all manner of "farbiness" no matter what you are sleeping on.

Should be easy, no? No, a wool blanket with the words US Navy on it is not period correct. A nice, new Hudson Bay blanket would not be period correct either. Even though they were of the time period, they were produced for trading at the Hudson Bay stores in Canada. It would not be likely that a civilian in Maryland would have one.

Another good choice is a woven coverlet. These were very fashionable at the time and can still be bought at stores and through catalogues although they are not inexpensive. Make sure the pattern is period correct. Research, research, research! At right is a fine example of a woven coverlet. Is it period correct? This is the bed on which President Lincoln died, in the house across the street from the Ford Theater. Note the period spindle bed as well.

If you bring a quilt it must have a pattern that is appropriate to the time as well as the right fabric and colors. There are many books that show quilts from this period. Take a look or talk to the civilian coordinator, or talk to someone who is a fervent quilter. Quilts need not be expensive. A very nice quilt that can be purchased at Gottschalks (www.gottschalks.com) during one of their quarterly sales, any size for \$30. They are hand-made in China from patterns supplied by the Smithsonian, but some designs are post ACW so do some research. A good source is the book *Quilts*

of the Civil War by Barbara Brackman, available at many sewing stores.

Sleeping on the Ground

If you have a canvas tent floor you can throw a pad on the ground and make it up with a few blankets and a quilt. Some of the soldiers will fill a large burlap bag with straw and sleep on that, wrapped in a blanket. Others use a foam rubber pad covered in ticking to give that period look.

A feather bed is period correct and comfortable. Some civilians have even hand-made a queen size mattress from sheep's wool. All is wonderfully warm and comfortable when cuddled under the feather comforter and quilt. When hand-made feather pillows are added, and a warm infantry soldier, it is a very cozy night's sleep.

Sleeping on a Cot

Some people prefer to sleep off the ground and use cots. Cots are period correct. Old WWII wooden army cots are popular and if the modern parts are well covered, they look pretty good. If you plan to bring an aluminum cot, bring blankets long enough to cover up the legs.

Cots are also a great help in de-farbing your tent. Just shove your modern gear underneath and throw the blanket over. The only draw back is cots are single beds and prevent spooning which is the best way to keep warm.

Sleeping on a Bed

Some enterprising reenactors bring period correct bed frames. These are wooden rope beds or metal campaign beds which are easy to take apart. The wooden bed you can make and for a more comfortable sleep you can use a plywood bottom. Just drill holes in the side of the frame and run the rope through for the proper look. The metal beds you will have to search for in antique stores.

Adapted from Miss Vera and Miss Fannie's Civilian Website

