

Marching



Along



"Thank God for Michigan!"

Official Publication of the 21st Michigan Volunteer Infantry, Co. H. Inc.

Volume V, No. 5

<http://www.21stmichigan.org>

Publisher Wendi Schroeder

July 2008

**Board of Directors**

President – Mike Gillett  
Treasurer – Judy Rock  
Sec.– Wendi Schroeder  
Military Cmdr. – Erv Rock  
Civ. Co. - Ken Giorlando

*President's  
Report*

*Of Bayonets & Bonnets*

*By Mike Gillett*



This past weekend Karen, Chaela and Nic Schroeder, and I attended Karen's family's reunion in Northwest Pennsylvania. It had been quite a while since I've attended, so I really thought it best I look for no excuse and tag along on this one. To be perfectly candid, I was happily surprised that I had such a wonderful time. This was the nicest Brown family reunion I can recall.

I even commented to on of my in-laws, that this was "the best event ever!" And I told Karen that I wasn't used to having this much fun without being at a reenactment. It was a great time to see everyone and to get caught up with the happenings in everyone's lives... to renew old relationships and start new ones (i.e. Zach, a nephew, Chaela's age, came back with us for the week for a visit. I hadn't seen him since he was a youngster... and he has grown into a likeable and personable young man)... to remember and to laugh. In retrospect, I think the reason I enjoyed myself so much was because it was very much like sitting around the camps at an event after the public leaves (except for lack of wool and smoke, that is).

Karen's brother pastors two Catholic churches there, in Corry, near Erie... a small town of perhaps 6,800. I took a walk Sunday through 'downtown' armed with my ever present camera (Karen went off fishing - if you can imagine such a thing - with some of her family). As usual, I found several interesting things to take pictures of, not the least of which was the obligatory town square Civil War monument.

Another monument that I took pictures of was erected for several volunteer firemen who had been killed in a fire almost forty years ago in Corry. There are four different memorials, I am told, in town. One at each of the two firehouses, one in the town square not far from the Civil War monument and then a beautiful one I'm assuming at the site of the fire. It reads:

***In Appreciation and Recognition  
of Their Supreme Sacrifice***

***David Apps  
Richard Brigham  
Jon Miller  
Dennis Rockafellow  
Lauren Shreve***



The internet can be a wonderful thing and I learned much from it. And was touched much by it. The fire was the evening of Easter Sunday, March 29, 1970 at a Sherwin-Williams Paint store, in the "business district". It was supposed to have been a simple and "ordinary" fire. But apparently the fire - of undetermined cause - had been burning undetected in a partition for a quite a while, long before these volunteer fireman arrived.

The 80 year old, long narrow 2-story building, tucked between an office building and a vacant building, was made of brick and timber and shared walls with the adjacent buildings. It had a false ceiling and it is suspected that hot fire gases collected there, and, along with the flammable paint and thinner and/or the linseed oil fumes given off from the burning linoleum floors, it all made for a deadly combination. Fifteen minutes after the volunteer firemen arrive, the building exploded, blowing out both the front and back walls.

Six firefighters were trapped in the rear, under debris, in the alley way. Five were able to free themselves. The sixth, the fire chief's son, was killed. The toll on the street side was much worse. Over a dozen firefighters were injured; many spectators were rushed to the hospital with injuries from flying glass. Firefighters and spectators fortunately were able to free several trapped victims. But unfortunately four additional young volunteer firemen were crushed to death under the wall.

I don't know these men, or their families. I am not from Corry. But I am compelled to imagine what that horrific night - a holy holiday - must have been like in that small community. Or what the coming days, months and years must have been like. What is today like for many? What is it must be like for those who *remember*. I can't help to think of the friends and families... especially and poignantly, the fire chief father... what they all must have felt, and numbingly didn't feel, for days, months or years.

The parents of these five young volunteer firefighters must be quite old, I would think, if still alive. Wives would have remarried, girlfriends having moved on, never forgetting these lovers. Young children now grown and perhaps grandparents now, never remembering well these fathers. Faded memories at best for some. Painful memories at worse for others. Imagine being the surviving volunteer firemen, for a moment, and being called to the *next* fire.

I've seen several pictures of the unveiling of the monument... with those firemen, wives, children, family and community all present. I cannot fully imagine what that day was like. The emotions. The sky was gray and I am sure hearts were as well.

As you drive through small town America, in addition to the cemeteries I've mentioned in past articles, there are many, many monuments in city parks and town squares. Almost all are driven by unseen. Many, I am sure, are seen so frequently by the residents that they are unseen as well. That grieves me. That anyone could be forgotten in a few years. And, sadly, it doesn't have to be generations. I have seen idiot tourists posing for pictures with dopey grins and rabbit ears at Ground Zero in NYC.

I think I was a one-note pastor (two sermons continually given over the years, in different packages: "Do you *know* Christ?" and then, "What are you doing *with* Him?"). Over the last two years, my letters would have me think that I am a one-note president. Again, I am certainly not a military historian, neither am I any kind of a social historian of the Civil War era. Many of you put me to shame. I can't pretend.

But I am both a Civil War Nut and a Genealogy Nut. And two things about reenacting I seem to write, as president, time and time again - and are inseparable - is about is finding and savoring those moments where we could almost have traveled back to 1863 for a few seconds (maybe, just maybe, we have). The other is appreciating and recognizing that the people we portray and emulate and research were real, flesh and blood people.

No different, really, than you or I today. We someday all will be but gradually fading memories as well. So my letters are along the same line as my sermons were. Do we "know" those we depict? What do we "do" with that knowledge? Do we appreciate and recognize?

Corry was established in 1861, I am told, although it had been settled for longer.

The Civil War began soon thereafter and many residents left to fight. Fewer, I am sure, returned. Thus the monument in the town square. I cannot read the inscription in the photograph I took. But I imagine it is no different than any other Civil War monument's. And for me, and you, it is unnecessary.

The statue of the soldier, with his musket, wearing his kepi and great coat, brings to our minds quickly the men and the sacrifice - theirs and the people left at home. We understand. Nothing needs to be read. Or said.

Again, I can't read when it was erected, but would assume that many present that day knew those whom it was set there to honor. Some veterans, wives, children, family, friends and community. Imagine the emotions that day.

Forgive me if I offend and if I am incorrect. While Karen's family is Catholic, and a brother a priest, I was only one for a year and a half (Catholic, not a priest). So I might be off a bit here... or perhaps... I might be ineloquent at best. While at the reunion, we slept in the rectory, Tom's home, attached to one of the churches.

It was pretty much impossible to forget where we were. There were constant reminders of Tom's faith and vocation. The Pope watched us sleep from his framed picture above the dresser. Several other Holy pictures were peppered in each room.

Catholicism is identifiable to Protestants as having armies of statues (Jesus, his mom and step-dad along with Saints galore in every nook and cranny), the "Stations of the Cross" and Christ "still" on the Cross in every shape and size. And some would incorrectly assume that they are prayed to... even adored.

But they are more reminders than anything else. Monuments if you would. We are a both a forgetful and easily distracted race. We need to have helps to recall and to focus. To appreciate and recognize.

So we erect monuments and statues and headstones.

Places like Gettysburg are filled with each. And truly, and ultimately, this is why we reenact - military and civilians both - to appreciate and recognize.

We are living historians and living monuments

### *Publisher's Note*

I don't generally comment on the president's letter...however this one time I will.

Michael, speaking as a life long Catholic who has been asked about why Catholic churches are replete with statues, I must tell you that your explanation is one of the most complete I have ever read. Thank you.

We can talk about the crucifix later... ☺





I had a very pleasant surprise recently. It happened at the Lexington, Michigan living history event on June 14 and 15. In fact, it WAS the Lexington, Michigan living history event! It was also one of the most stressful events I have ever coordinated.

Getting folks to come – especially after the many that voted for it at our annual meeting back in February – was like pulling teeth. I do understand that things happen that can necessitate a change in plans. But, there are some in our civilian contingent that, for whatever reason, rarely (if ever) make these living history events. And that's a shame.

Besides the opportunity to make the unit some much needed money that the majority of the larger events rarely do, it's also an excellent time to educate the public – one on one in many cases – of not only life during the Civil War, but of what we do and who we are as re-enactors.

This first ever event in Lexington was a very nice affair. Mrs. Keeney, as she did at Oakwood, made butter with a butter churn, much to the public's delight. A number of patrons gave the churning a try and were quite surprised at how difficult the job was.

Mrs. Cary, as Laura Smith Haviland, did the Quaker abolitionist proud as she spoke of the dedication this 19th century Michigan woman put forth to free the slaves.

Mrs. Cook explained her occupation as the military laundress – how the cleaning process takes place and how much she charges per garment - and had plenty of help from Rosalia in showing the interested patrons just how tough an job she had.

Miss Weakland did a wonderful job as the fashion show coordinator and hostess, which took place on the grounds of an 1870 Bed and Breakfast, and explained to a standing room only crowd of people the whys and wherefores of period dress. The question and answer period was a particular favorite both days.

2nd Cpl. Tom Giorlando's vocal group, Simply Dickens, entertained the audience before and after the fashion show with such musical numbers as "Shady Grove," "The Moustache Song," "Just Before the Battle Mother," and "Goober Peas." They also performed at various locations about the Village.

The event coordinators from Lexington that put this living history encampment on were very impressed and pleased, even with the lower turn out. Anita Ruffini and Carol Watson had already told us they wanted us back for next year. And, Greg Alexander, a man running for the office of County Commissioner, spoke with JEB and I about putting together a full-fledged battle for next year.

Now I know some of you are saying, "Yeah! That's when I'll attend! When there's a battle! And sutlers!" And to that I say, "Yes! Please come!"

But please make a sincere effort to come to these smaller – but fun and very important – living history events. You are needed here every bit as much as you are needed at the larger battle-filled events.



## *Lexington After Action Report*

People,

Those of you who did not attend the Lexington Michigan event a few weeks ago missed a real good time.

IT WAS THE BEST EVENT EVER (sorry Preacher).

It was typical small town USA, friendly people, free ice cream and quite a few good places to eat.

We had a radio station right by camp interviewing some of our people; we also drilled some Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts.

This was the kind of event where we needed a good showing of both military and civilian.

We had a decent turnout of military on Saturday but we lost a few for Sunday because of it being Father's Day.

This was the kind of event that was perfect for drilling our troops.

When I hear that some military don't like attending events with no battle, that, in my opinion is crap.



This was perfect for recruiting and training. I think we picked up 3 fresh fish and maybe a new camp cook.

There are plenty of Bed and Breakfasts nearby if you didn't want to stay in your tent.

My wife and I stayed at The Captains Quarters a block from our camp site.

This place was FANTASTIC; the house was built in 1859 and was the summer home of Gov. Albert Sleeper.

To make things even better a Dairy Queen was only a block away (ah, the small things in life).

I already have my reservations made for next year's event which I have been told will not be held on Father's Day weekend.

I hope more of us can make this event next year.

Your Servant, JEB

# *Hastings Event*

July 18, 19, & 20, 2008

Event Coordinator: Ray Berels

I want to thank all of you who responded to the two articles I put in our newsletter about the Hastings event.

Those who signed up for the event are:

Bruce Robere,  
Jeb Bednarz,  
Gary Cuttler,  
Mark Bonekowski,  
Tom Spanski,  
the entire Schroeder family,  
and of course, myself.

Pre-registration is now closed, so anyone choosing to attend this event will be charged \$10 per person.

Directions and information about this event can be found in the April and May editions of our newsletter.

If you have any questions you can e-mail me at [rberels@comcast.net](mailto:rberels@comcast.net).

## *Fort Wayne Detroit*

July 11, 12, 13 2008

Event Coordinator: John Bednarz (JEB)

People,

July's event at Fort Wayne seems to be a busy one.

Those of us who are going should try to get there by at least 8:00 am both mornings or you can spend the night.

The fort is open to the public starting at 9:00 am till 5:00 pm both days.

Flag raising is at 9:00 am both days, morning drill both days, battle begins at 2:00 both days.

Memorial service on Saturday, also a potluck dinner, troop revue on Saturday also.

Church will be 9:30 am on Sunday.

Ice will be available on Saturday till 5:00 pm and on Sunday till 2:00 pm at the Coalition tent.

On Saturday night only; a candle tour and night firing will take place for the public from 8:30 till 9:30 pm.

Tour guides will bring the public through at 11:00am, 1:00pm and 3:00 pm. Also, at least 4 sutler's will be in attendance. I hope to see you all at the fort...

Your Servant, JEB



## 1. Fire by company. 2. Company. 3. READY. 4. AIM. 5. FIRE

On the command fire the commander, spectators, and even the soldiers are all anticipating the loud thunder of musket fire. However, at a recent event the only sound was the pop and snap of caps going off. How embarrassing for everyone. Not a single musket fired.

While this can be attributed to several causes, including reenactors firing muskets without reenactor nipples, the most common cause is a dirty musket. In the September 2006 edition of Marching Along I wrote a short article on cleaning muskets. Given all our new members and the continued problems we have with dirty muskets, I thought it would be appropriate to reprint this article with a few updates.

In order to protect and preserve you Musket, you must regularly clean and inspect it. As soon as possible after each event, you should thoroughly clean your musket. This includes scrubbing the musket bore, removing and cleaning the nipple, and disassembly and removal of rust and fouling from all bright metal surfaces.

First, a Musket Cleaning Kit is required. You can either purchase a full kit from a Sutler or you can purchase the necessary supply individually. So of the musket cleaning kit supplies are available from the unit free of charge thanks to member Forster Crowl.

### **Musket Cleaning Kit:**

A good cleaning kit contains all the essentials necessary to maintain your musket in good working order. You may purchase a complete .58 cal musket cleaning kit from a Sutler or you can build your own. In either case, it's a good idea to have the following expendable items on hand:

1. Cotton Patches - The 2 inch by 2 inch shotgun size work best. These can be acquired from Meijer or most other stores with a sporting goods department. Old tee shirts or other cotton material will work as a replacement for store purchased patches.
2. Shop towel or rag – One or two small ones should be sufficient. Again, you can purchase shop towels or use cloth squares from an old tee shirt.
3. Pipe cleaners - These are used to clean the nipple and the firing hole.
4. Ballistol or any good oil based cleaning and preserving agent – I strongly recommend Ballistol – can be obtained from most gun shops or from the internet.
5. Flitz or similar metal polish – can be obtained from Meijer or most other like stores.
6. 0000 Steel Wool – can be obtained from any paint store.



2 by 2 cotton patches



cotton shop rags



0000 steel wool



Flitz



Pipe Cleaners



Ballistol

### **The following non-expendable items are also necessary for your cleaning kit.**

1. Bore rods or you may use your rammer if you have a threaded adapter to thread the patch holder/jag and bore brush or scraper to it.
2. Patch jag or holder
3. Nylon or brass bristle brush – Do not use steel wire brushes, sand paper or any other heavy abrasives.

4. Bore Brush or scraper
5. Nipple wrench - Some nipple wrenches have an attached flat screwdriver for removing the cleaning screw.
6. Nylon or Brass brush
7. 1-2 inch long strip of leather. When you cut your leather belt to length, you should have had enough left over.



bore scraper



bore brush



patch jag



patch holder



Combination Nipple/Wrench/Screwdriver

During events, the unit will be inspected by the First Sergeant and/or Company Commander prior to each drill and battle reenactment. During this inspection a field clean musket is all that is necessary. During an event, you may be required to field clean your musket several times so you are ready for inspection before the next drill or battle reenactment. A quick field cleaning should only take a few minutes. You are free to use your own tried and true field cleaning procedures or you can follow these steps.

#### **Field cleaning the barrel during events:**

1. Boil water.
2. While you are waiting for the water to come to a boil, place a small piece of leather over the nipple and rest the hammer on the leather. This will plug your nipple during this part of the cleaning process.
3. Pour boiling water down the barrel until it is about one half full - just guess.
4. Use the ramrod with bore scraper or bore brush attached to vigorously agitate the water and scrap out all powder fouling.
5. After a few seconds of scraping, remove the bore scraper/brush and dump out the water.
6. Repeat 4. and 5. until the boiling water comes out clean - about 3-5 times.
7. Remove the leather covering the nipple and leave the musket at half cock.
8. Run dry patches using a ramrod worm down the barrel until dry. Also wipe off any water that ran down the outside of the musket barrel.
9. Remove the nipple and the cleanout screw being careful not to loose them. If you are cleaning your musket in tall grass, you may not want to remove these two items. BE CAREFUL!
10. Clean the nipple with a pipe cleaner ensuring the hole is not blocked.
11. Clean inside the bolster with another pipe cleaner ensuring the hole to the barrel is not blocked.
12. Replace the nipple and the cleanout screw.
13. Wipe off the outside of the barrel and ramrod.
14. You can test how clean your musket bore is by inserting the ramrod all the way down the barrel, then raise the ramrod about 3-4 inches and drop it. If it makes a loud metal on metal clanging sound, your musket is clean. Remember this is only field cleaning.



## Complete Cleaning:

On your return from an event, you must not only field clean the musket but also clean the entire musket. This includes:

1. Field Clean your musket. Then,
2. Removing the ramrod, barrel bands, and tang screw so the barrel can be removed from the stock and lock.
3. Thoroughly clean the nipple base to remove all powder fouling.
4. If any rust is present, it can be removed with Flitz or similar metal polish and a cotton rag. If the rust is deep, you can use Flitz with 0000 steel wool. The abrasiveness of steel wool is measured by the number of 0s. Don't use the steel cleaning pads sold for household pots and pan cleaning. Buy 0000 steel wool. It can be found in the paint department of most major home improvement centers.
5. Wipe down the entire barrel with a light coat of Ballistol after all fouling and rust has been removed.
6. Remove rust from all metal parts including the 3 barrel bands, rammer, lock assembly, and buttplate.
7. Wipe down the stock and all metal parts to remove any fouling or rust residue with a dry cotton cloth, then apply a light coat of Ballistol and lightly wipe down all parts.
8. Coat the entire stock with Ballistol. If you choose to use another oil product on your metal parts, **don't use** that oil on the stock. Use Ballistol, Tung Oil, Linseed Oil, or Tru-Oil.
9. Re-assemble the musket.
10. Wipe down entire musket with Ballistol to remove finger prints (the salts from your hands will cause the metal parts to rust) or use a gun metal oil on all metal parts.
11. Clean the bayonet as above with Flitz to remove any rust and coat with Ballistol when clean.

## General Drill Tips

By Bruce Robere

In 1776 the Continental Army was in very poor condition. Soldiers in the Colonial Army lacked much of what was needed to turn them into an effective fighting force. Among the basic necessities, they lacked adequate food, uniforms and training. However, this was soon to change. Baron Friedrich Wilhelm Augustus von Steuben a German born and former Prussian Army Captain would soon join the Continental Army.

Baron von Steuben was appointed Inspector General by General Washington and assigned to draft the first training program for the Army. Published in 1779 and titled *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, Von Steuben standardized the duties and responsibilities of the Non-Commissioned Officer. This regulation, known as the Blue Book, was revised and later replaced by the time of the Civil War. Von Steuben's work described the duties and responsibilities for corporals, sergeants, first sergeants, quartermaster sergeants and sergeants major, which were the

Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) ranks of the period. It also emphasized the importance of selecting quality soldiers for NCO. Baron von Steuben by Ralph Earl

Much of what Von Steuben developed is still in use by the Army today and can easily be recognized by Civil War reenactors. The training program he used at Valley Forge introduced a progressive training system beginning with the school of the soldier, with and without arms, school of the company, and finally the school of the regiment. The best qualified sergeants from each company were made responsible for the training of all new men.

As reenactors we don't attend daily drill. We don't practice marching, musket firing, and bayonet drill each week. It's the responsibility of each reenactor in the 21st Michigan to practice on their own so they are minimally proficient at drill when arriving for a reenactment. Each event provides an opportunity to further practice specific drill maneuvers.

At most events I seem to have a hard time remembering a few requirements of our frequently conducted drill movements. Assuming I'm not alone in this, I've decided to list some of them here. Maybe reviewing this list prior to attending your next event will help you remember the proper drill procedures.

Each of these drill maneuvers come from Casey's.

### INSPECTION ARMS

1. Fix bayonet first – then place rammer in bore.
2. After inspection, **remove rammer then remove bayonet** and resume order arms.

**FIRING**1. At the position of READY, the musket is fully cocked, the barrel is at eye height, and the musket stock is 2 inches below the breast – well above the belt. **FIX BAYONET – FROM SHOULDER ARMS**1. After fixing bayonet grab the musket with both hands and keep the musket in place – out in front of you. **UNFIX BAYONET – FROM SHOULDER ARMS**1. Grab the musket with both hands and keep it in place. **FIX and UNFIX BAYONET – FROM ORDER ARMS**1. Resume the position of Order Arms. **The “Ready” Position**

### FACING MOVEMENTS

1. Never end up looking at the back of your partner. If you are, side step in the direction of the movement and step forward.

### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS ON WHEELING

1. Turn your head slightly to ensure the rank remains in alignment.

### WHEELING FROM A HALT

1. The pivot man turns in place.
2. The wheeling stops on the command: **Squad – Halt**.

### WHEELING WHILE MARCHING

1. The pivot man takes small steps.
2. The wheeling stops on the command: **Forward – March**.

Next month, I'll take a closer look at present arms, right shoulder shift, and support arms.