

# Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association  
2014 – Edition 6 – Monthly, Edition – October, 2014

## IMPORTANT!!! NEXT MEETING

President Mark Tennant has called a meeting for Saturday, Sept. 27 at 3 pm at the Weston Steakhouse off of exit 99 of Interstate 79. This meeting is to replace the meeting originally scheduled for Bulltown. According to Mark, the agenda will include: Bulltown, Droop Mountain, Rich Mountain and upcoming elections. If you are not attending, send in your ballot (see September or August editions on the WVRA website).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Bulltown** October 10-12. Important see below for details.
- **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Cedar Creek**, October 17-19. [1<sup>st</sup> W. Va. plans to attend](#). Here is the site I found where I found the registration: [http://ccbf.us/?page\\_id=32](http://ccbf.us/?page_id=32). Registration closes soon.
- **Remembrance Day** - November 15 at Gettysburg
- **USV Annual Meeting** - January 10 at Gettysburg
- **Bentonville 150<sup>th</sup>** - March 20-22
- **Saylors Creek 150<sup>th</sup>** - March 27-29
- **Appomattox 150<sup>th</sup>** - April 10 -12
- **Grand Review 150<sup>th</sup>** - May 17<sup>th</sup>
- **Connellsville?** - May 29
- **Grafton?** - May 30
- **Rich Mountain** (pending approval) - July
- **Droop Mountain** (pending approval) October

## Bulltown

As described in the last EXTRA edition of the Trans-Allegheny Dispatch, our friends in the Stonewall Jackson Reenacting Unit (SJRU) have withdrawn from the Bulltown reenactment , October 10-12. As result the WVRA Executive

Committee cancelled the dance and is no longer considering this a supported event. However, individual members are encouraged to decide on their own if they plan to attend. Please contact Ranger Tommy Smith if you plan to attend so you know what to expect and he is prepared. All interested parties can contact Ranger Smith for information at: 1-304-452-8170

With the SJRU withdrawing and the expected resulting withdrawal of numerous WVRA members, it was expected that the attendance at the dance would not justify the effort needed to put on the dance.

## Reminder

The WVRA voted earlier this year to change the WVRA reenacting year to coincide with the calendar year. This means that memberships expire on Dec. 31, 2014 and the terms of the officers expire on Dec. 31, 2014. Nominations for officer are being accepted now. Contact a current executive committee member if you are interested.

Ballots are due this month. We are voting on whether to sponsor Rich Mountain and/or Droop Mountain next year. Ballots were sent with the last two newsletters and can be found on the WVRA website. Ballots can be returned to me by mail or email. Or, any officer will accept ballots.

## INTELLIGENCE FROM THE TELEGRAPH WIRES

Tonya Daft recommends that you check out Bliptv.com, type 1863 into the search function of the main page. There were a handful of episodes of this series listed, including one title Unfriendly Fire about Grumble Jones at the battle of Fairmont, but I was unable upload the shows to my computer.

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## Carnifex Ferry 2014

On September 13 and 14 dedicated re-enactors from around the region gathered at the Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park to participate in the recreation of the engagement at the Patterson Farm. Friday afternoon saw the usual gathering of groups and individuals from many directions and 'greetings' were extended between the accumulating participants. 'Camp Gauley' was set up in a large field between the Patterson House and the Gauley River overlook approximately in the area of the original Confederate camp. The Union camp was located on the other side of the park between the Ferry Road entrance and the Patterson cornfield in the area where the Federals approached upon Camp Gauley and the Confederate entrenchments. All day Friday and into the night the rebels came pouring in. Much revelry occurred that night and music rang from the strings and voices of the Towers Street String Band.

But the question on everyones mind... where were the Federals?

There is a group of middle school students from Huntington (WV) Middle School that bears mention. This 'Living History Exploratory', sponsored by Mr. Michael L Sheets, a 6th grade Social Studies teacher at that school, consist of The Western Virginia Military Academy. The students (ages 10-15) portray cadets of a fictitious military academy located in Cabell County, Virginia during the late 1850s and early 1860s. In the 2011-2012 school year a sister organization was founded. Lizzie Cabell's Finishing School for Young Ladies, under the sponsorship of Ms. Leann Haines, a science teacher at Huntington Middle School, is an exploratory group who's focus is the life of young ladies during the mid-19th century. Both of these groups should be commended for the efforts they bring to educating our young people

about the American Civil War and that period in American History.

Saturday morning's reveille came with the banging of the pan and the drum's roll. The slumbering camp came to life and morning mess commenced. After several cups of rio and breakfast, the morning drill and living history began for the gathering public. Summersville, WV was having it's annual 'Potato Festival' and a select few were bussed into town to participate in the parade through town. With 'Marse' Robert and the officers of the 36th Virginia leading the troops we marched in line of battle through the street to the applause of the crowd. But the real excitement came when the 'parade detail' halted in front of the courthouse and fired a salute... the crowd went wild!

A sumptuous dinner Saturday evening gave way to a night tactical in the woods behind the camp. Exhilarating! The night's events finished with a dance at the Patterson House lawn and there was many a soul 'shaking a leg' to the fine period music provided by the Towers Street String Band. I must say... for one tired rebel, I was sure 'flat-foot'n' my way to a sound sleep that night.

Sunday beamed bright and the morning was relaxed. The public came out 'in numbers' and the living history commenced. Later that day the plans turned to the pending recreation of the Battle of Carnifex Ferry. Since the Federal were in short supply, (only one showed), it was left up to the 'host unit', the 36th Virginia Volunteer Infantry, to 'Galvanize' Union for the sake of 'The Boys of 61-65'.

As a Federal soldier I gave it my 'all' to drive the Rebel host from the field. After a short Artillery bombardment the Yankee Infantry approached the Graycoats in line of battle. The Rebel

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skirmishers resisted then fell back to the line of Confederate Infantry approaching from Camp Gauley. Volleys of musketry were exchanged and many a brave lad fell in their place. The Bluecoats pressed the stubborn Confederates back into their breastworks and a 'deadly' exchange ensued which further added to the rolls of the 'dead and wounded'. With 'fixed' bayonets gleaming the Federal line approached, then charged the Rebels to drive them from their fortifications, and their retreat to the Gauley commenced!

The crowd was very much engaged during the battle and was much appreciative at the cessation of hostilities. The 'combatants' formed up in line of battle and then with 'charge bayonets' approached the crowd to their resounding applause!

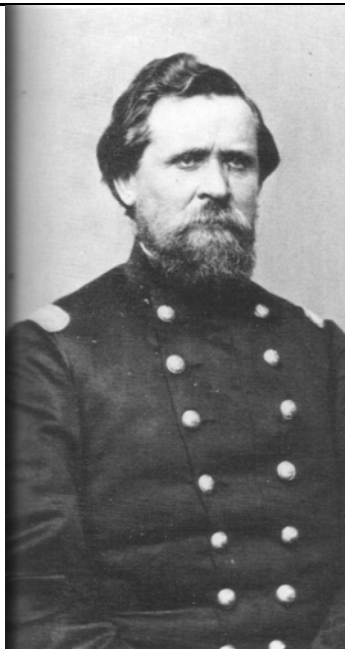
This being my first reenactment at Carnifex Ferry, I was pleased that I could be a part in the recreation of this 'History of West Virginia'. Many thanks to those of the 25th Virginia who made the effort to attend. A special thanks to the West Virginia State Parks, Ranger Sam Cowell, and the 36th Virginia Vol. Inf'y of Wise's Legion for hosting this Living History event. "Well Done!"

Your Obedient Servant,

Pvt. Chris "CW" Johnson  
25th Va. Inf'y Reg't  
Co. 'B'

## Colonel Joseph Thoburn

Pictured below is the brave Colonel, shot down at the Battle of Cedar Creek, 150 years ago next month. Born in Northern Ireland, but brought at an early age to North America, his family ended up in St. Clairsville, Ohio. He was a physician in Wheeling when the war broke out.



Joseph Thoburn, April 29, 1825-Oct. 19, 1864. A f

Colonel Joseph Thoburn, surgeon of the 90-day 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Regiment and first Colonel of the 3-year troops, later brigade and division commander. Commander of the 1st Division Army of West Virginia at the Battle of Cedar Creek, he was killed in Middletown during the battle. Below is reprinted the obituary, which the reader will note, is of a different time and sensibility.

### Col. Joseph Thoburn's Obituary *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* October 24, 1864

We announced on Saturday morning that the remains of our lamented fellow citizen, Colonel Joseph Thoburn, might be expected by the evening train. Accordingly, before the time for its arrival, a considerable crowd of citizens, including civilians and military, and also including women and children, had assembled at the depot of the Baltimore and Ohio Road, all seemingly drawn together by a warm sympathetic interest in the untimely fate of the gallant deceased. The train came in promptly on time, and the remains were found in the baggage car in a rough coffin, and were at once taken carried into the passenger room of the depot,

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in order that they might be properly dressed and afterwards transferred to the metallic coffin that was in waiting...the box containing the remains was opened. They were found decently clad in proper undergarments, and the body was as well composed in respect to appearances as could have been expected under the hurried circumstances of the battlefield. Twigs of green boxwood, friendship's last offering and farewell, had been scattered from head to foot, and a clean cloth had been kindly and gently laid over the face. The dead hero seemed to lie as in a sleep, and there was nothing, save a little paleness, and a little glistening hardness of the skin, to show that he was sleeping the sleep that knows no wakening. One would have supposed that he had suffered little or no pain. The nature of his wound, however, as well as the testimony of Capt. Reid, Provost Marshal on his staff, who had accompanied his remains, and who had been with the Colonel during his last hours, indicated that he suffered a great deal. He was shot just under the lower rib, on the left side and the ball passed out a little higher up on the right side, apparently near the junction of the ribs with the spinal column. Capt. Reid informed us that both lungs had been penetrated, and that the loss of blood had been very great.

The circumstances of Colonel Thoburn's death, as related by the Captain are as follows: He was killed about 6 o'clock on Wednesday morning. The enemy had burst in upon his division, which occupied the extreme front, about 3:00 o'clock that morning, and as the dispatches have already had surprised and overpowered it. It had been driven steadily back as far as Middletown, indeed through that place, and Col. Thoburn at the time of his death was busily engaged disentangling and pushing forward his retreating trains. The rebel cavalry had flanked the left of our army and in large numbers had come in on the trains, attacking them fiercely. One of them dressed in our uniform rode up to Col. Thoburn and commanded him to halt. The Colonel not knowing that the rebel was a foe, in fact not knowing that it was himself addressed, did not halt, and accordingly the cavalryman fired, the ball taking effect as we have stated. He fell from his horse at the side of the street, on a vacant lot, and he there remained for a

considerable time according to the statement of a lady who had paid him some attention while lying there. She was compelled to leave him by reason of the danger near her person from exploding shells, and betake herself to her cellar. A gentleman of the placed, after the battle had lulled a little, took the Colonel into his house and had him cared for in a passable way. It was in this house that Capt. Reid found him about dusk in the evening. He was sensible all the time, up to two minutes past 12 that night, at which time he died.

He suffered excessively toward the last half hour of his life, yet managed to talk at times, and was perfectly resigned and calm...The Surgeon of the 10<sup>th</sup> West Va. Infantry was called in, and he without hesitation decided that the wound was mortal, and the sufferer could not live over night. When this was told Col. Thoburn, he replied that the news did not shock him in the least, that he had known after the first 10 minutes his wound was mortal and that he was ready to meet his fate. In reply to a question whether he had any messages to send home, he directed Captain Reid to take down some directions about his worldly affairs, and then, after they had been penned and read over to him, said, "tell my wife not to grieve for me, and my children to be good and true." These are the last words he spoke. A short time thereafter, just as the toll of midnight had died upon his ear, his brave and unselfish spirit, took its flight. A nobler soldier never fell upon any battlefield.

An affecting incident occurred in the room at the depot, after the rough box containing the remains of Col. Thoburn had been opened and the cloth removed from his face. A young lad of 18 or 19, named, Stockton Cormack, who had been with the Colonel for 3 years as an orderly, and who had been wounded and compelled to leave the army this summer, and who had the reputation of being a gallant boy, burst into convulsive sobs and moans, giving evidence of deep distress, so much so as to excite almost a corresponding feeling in all those who, like the boy, were standing around the bier and gazing at the inanimate face and form of the slain soldier. The scene was quite affecting and

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impressive. The scene was quite affecting and impressive.

The following letter , from the lady at whose house the colonel died, was published Oct. 26, 1864 in the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*:

*Middletown, Frederick County, Va.*

*Dear Friend:*

*It is with a heavy heart I now sit down to drop a few lines. It was the request of your dying husband. I was by his side in about 10 minutes after he fell. I did all I could for him. He asked me to turn him over I did with the assistance of a Confederate soldier, who was very kind to him. When he was turned over he told me to take hold of his hand. He asked me to write to you. I told him I would, he told me that all his regret was to leave his wife and children. O, he said, how I would love to see them here. He said hew as prepared for death, prepared to meet his God. He told me to give you his dying farewell, and for you all to meet him in heaven where there would be no more parting. Your husband did not die for want of care. He has paid the debt we all have to pay and is now a bright Angel around the Throne of our Heavenly Father.*

*Your Friend,*

*Mrs. Mary E. Hoover*

*Taken from Rawlings history of the 1<sup>st</sup> West Virginia.*

## WVRA Officers

President - Mark Tennant

Vice President - Bill Brisendine

Treasurer (interim) - Tim Glaser

Secretary - vacant (Need a volunteer)

Newsletter editor (interim) - Chuck Critchfield

Website - Peter Baxter

25<sup>th</sup> Va. Rep - Chris Johnson

1<sup>st</sup> Va. Cavalary - John Brasuk

Artillery - Connie & Sam Kraft

TASAS - Tonya Daft

## Editor's Corner (October)

Thank you to Chris Johnson, Mark Tennant, Kevin Skaggs and Tonya Daft for their contributions. My apologies to Kevin for being unable to use his information as I ran out of time

to use it.. Again, I rely on your contributions to help make this informative. As always thanks to Peter Baxter.

This edition was rushed to the printers (only figuratively) because the next meeting date was moved up to Sept. 27. I wanted to get this out to the membership a few days before the meeting. If you are not attending, please send your ballot. I have ballots from Barnes, Brasuk, Johnson, Chapdelaine and Ralph McCready.

I received an email from the Army Corps of Engineers stating that the rumor that the SJRU was banned from Bulltown was not true. The email went to 136 people so I am assuming most of you got that email. I have had no communication from the SJRU concerning the event. The WVRA has withdrawn its group support and canceled the dance. Individual members may decide on their own whether to attend See page 1.

Thanks to Chris Johnson for adding 3 missing email addresses to our list. We continue to suffer from lack of email addresses to 30-40 of our members. If you are reading this on the WVRA website and not getting it by email AND are a dues-paying member, we probably don't have an email address.

If you are not attending the meeting Saturday, please send an absentee ballot. I sent ballots with August and September newsletters which can be found on WVRA.org

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The views expressed here are not necessarily the views of the WVRA

WVRA website - [wvra.org](http://wvra.org)

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