

# Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association  
2019 - June - Edition VI

## Upcoming Events

### Civil War

#### Sponsored

**Beverly Heritage Days**, July 12-14

#### Sanctioned

None

### Other Events recommended by WVRA members

**Fort Mulligan**, August 17, Petersburg, WV -

Contact David Judy at

ranger749@yahoo.com or 304-749-7657

**Shenandoah 1864**, Oct. 4-6 (USV)

**Burlington**, WV Oct. 4-6 - 304-749-7657

Contact David Judy at

ranger749@yahoo.com or 304-749-7657

**155th Cedar Creek**, Oct. 18-20, 2019 (USV)

### Other Events

**Phillipi**, May 30 - June 2,

[www.blueandgrayreunion.org](http://www.blueandgrayreunion.org)

**Droop Mountain**, October 11-13, 2019

<https://battleofdroopmountain.com>

### Other Time Periods.

#### World War II

June 7-9 Butler PA Jeep Fest

June 22-23 PA Trolley Museum

September 6-8 **Brooke County WV Fair**

WW II Battle Reenactments:

August 2-4 **Operation Market Garden**,

Tidioute, PA

August 16-18 **D-Day**, Conneaut, Ohio.

#### 18th Century:

July 5-7 Siege of Fort Niagara, Niagara State Park, NY

August 23-25, **French and Indian War Muster**, Fort Frederick MD

Labor Day Weekend - **Siege of Fort**

**Henry**, Oglebay Park, Wheeling, WV.

#### Miscellaneous

June 21-23, **Wild West Weekend**, Old Bedford Village, Bedford, PA.

(Editor's Note: All events listed under the heading "Other Time Periods" were suggested by Jim Barnes and questions about those events should be directed to Jim.)

## Next Meeting

At this time no meeting has been scheduled.

## Official Records of the War of the Rebellion

The Waldomore in Clarksburg has accepted our offer. I met with Cathy Norko a representative of the Waldomore library in April and she expressed an interest in receiving our donation. We will work on transferring the books from my possession to Waldomore in May. UPDATE - we unfortunately have not been able to work out a date quite yet due to her schedule and mine.

-- C. L. Critchfield

## Treasurer's Report

April 1-30, 2019

Beginning balance \$2944.05

Credits

Memberships \$105.00

Ending Balance \$3049.05

Submitted by Jack Rush

## Insurance

There have been several inquiries about insurance. Jack Rush has received the Certificate of Liability Insurance and will bring a copy to the next meeting of the WVRA.

## Upcoming Events

### Phillipi

I have received no inquires nor any information about Phillipi (May 30-June 2). Information can be found at [www.blueandgrayreunion.org](http://www.blueandgrayreunion.org).

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## **Beverly Heritage Days: Centuries of History**

**July 12, 13, 14, 2019**

**Beverly, West Virginia**

Living Historians and Reenactors from 1750 through 1950 are invited to join the Beverly Heritage Center for our timeline heritage event to share the history of settlement, conflict, and daily life in the Tygart Valley. Living history camps will include Native American, Pioneer, Civil War, and World War II eras with scenarios welcome for any part of our timeline, military and civilian. Living history, first person impressions, demonstrations, heritage crafts and displays are all welcome. Planned scenarios and demonstrations are strongly encouraged. This event is FREE with pre-registration, and includes camp amenities and one meal. For information and registration see [www.beverlyheritagecenter.org](http://www.beverlyheritagecenter.org) or call 304-637-7424.

Detailed information is now available at the website mentioned above.

## **Grafton**

We are aware of no ceremonies at Grafton National Cemetery this Memorial Day weekend.

## **Event Reviews**

### **New Market**

The weather at the annual New Market reenactment is hard to predict. We've experienced frost and 90 degree temperatures over the past three decades. This year, at the 155th anniversary of New Market, near 90 degree temperatures and a scorching sun won the day.

Friday, the weather was moderate as I arrived in the beautiful Valley of Virginia. Determined to visit the Piedmont Battlefield, since the 155th anniversary of that struggle was approaching, and because the 1st was there, I passed New Market driving below Harrisonburg. Here the Valley really

opens wide as Massanutten terminates about 10 miles north of the farm land I was searching. Eventually I find a couple of roadside markers commemorating the battle along a back road. With not even a place to pull off, I had to make a moving survey of the rolling farmlands where Grumble Jones attempted to check David Hunter's Federal army.

I returned to New Market by 7, located Ross and DJ Wetherell and set up camp. The view as always was magnificent from the backside of Bushong Hill. The Valley stretched out before us to the foot of Massanutten which dominated the eastern viewscape. Mt. Jackson as always, peered down at all the puny humans scampering around beneath its gaze.

Saturday, the USV 1st Regiment was up by 7 and drilling by 10 am. Since Kevin Skaggs had been elevated to overall command of the Federal reenactors, his second in command Lt. Col. Ray Manzi was in charge of 1st Regiment. The heat began to build as the sun rose. The three of us were assigned to a tiny color company, with DJ carrying colors, Ross 1st sargeant and I as captain. We fell in for inspection at 1:30 for a 3:00 battle. Not the best strategy considering the heat of the day and the age of the reenactors.

We began the battle on the far side of the Bushong house in the normal spot. Even with about 1,000 reenactors, this field is just too small to fit everyone, so we began the fight at close quarters. Before the ball opened, soldiers began to fall prey to heat related conditions and things were delayed. The battle was stopped twice and by; the time the Confederates pushed us through the orchard to the field, even more reenactors were down. At this point Saturday's reenactment was done.

We straggled back to camp, wilted and baked by the heat. With no energy left in the army, we postponed our annual commemoration of the 1st West Virginia's sacrifices on these fields and ridges. We prepared for dinner, except I left on a great quest, in search of the ravine described in Thoburn's report of the battle. He had found our regiment in a ravine after they had been pushed back from the forward position of the previous night.

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Walking through the Sutlers to the tunnel under the interstate (81) I emerged into the fields between 81 and US 11. We have reenacted here before. But no Saturday morning tactical clogged this year's schedule. Walking northward toward the 54th Pennsylvania monument I passed over the ground that I often forget about while trying to envision the battle. Here the larger portion of the 1st fought. Not in the groomed battlefield park. But over the ground that I stood -- and the right-of-way for I-81 -- the remaining companies of the 1st advanced and retreated 155 years earlier. And somewhere here, Sergeant Burns earned the Medal of honor. And here I finally found the Bloody Cedars referenced in many histories of the battle, where the 54th Pa. fought.



The monument of the 54th Pa. overlooking the Valley Pike (US Route 11) with the Bloody Cedars in the background. The 54th fought on the left flank of the 1st West Virginia.

Sunday's dawn led to predictions of another hot one. However, the wind kicked up and gust all day long, providing some relief from the near-90 temperatures. But providing much consternation

from the flag bearers (me) trying to remain attached to Mother Earth.

At morning dress parade, we preformed the annual tribute to the men of the First who fought and died here. Myself and Ross doing the honors, as Kevin was tied up with the duties of commanding the entire army. The Sunday assembly revealed that the heat of the prior day had thinned the ranks to the dedicated and fit soldiers. Yet we still had a few hundred infantry. The enemy ranks would likewise be thinned from the gray horde to a force that actually fit on the field.



General Kevin Skaggs astride his steed, overlooking his assembling army on Sunday at the 155th anniversary of New Market reenactment.

Sunday's battle reenactment was to be a repeat of Saturday's. A reenactment of the actual battle. But the commanders wisely cut out a few steps to accommodate for their worn out troops, who were not ready for the full scenario. Basically we cut out the fighting retreat through the Bushong orchard - where we always get too close anyway. This, along with the steady wind allowed us to finish the reenactment all the way to reenacting Sgt. Burns rescue of the color guard and corporal, without losing folks to the heat.

I would guess that about 1,000 reenactors participated over the weekend and that includes all categories. Crowds were normal for New Market. We camped in the usual places. Firewood was



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short and the sutlers closed early. But other than that, there were no complaints. The scenarios were managed a bit better this year. Sunday's fight took place without the cluster of the orchard that we normally experience. But in the end, the 1st fought there. Eight died there. And Burns displayed his heroism there. And that will always make New Market special.

-- C. L. Critchfield

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## Other Features

### 155 Years Ago (May 1864)

*My continuing effort to remember the men who fought with the 1st and 12th West Virginia through the writing of **Joshua Winters, Joseph Thoburn and Thomas Jefferson Orr.***

In June of 1864, the 1st and 12th remained in the same brigade - the brigade commanded by and named for Col. Joseph Thoburn. And Thoburn's Brigade remained part of the First Division (Brig. Gen. Jeremiah Sullivan) which remained part of the Army of the Shenandoah which was now commanded by Major General David Hunter. And the Army remained camped along the north bank of Cedar Creek north of Strasburg at the northern end of the Massanutten. Here the Army rested and refreshed after the stinging defeat at New Market.

Hunter knew his job was to head back south in the Shenandoah Valley to continue pressure on the Southern armies. He received word that the Southern force under Breckinridge had vacated the Valley to join Robert E. Lee's forces before Richmond. Hunter soon grabbed the initiative and headed towards Staunton. In what must seem like a repeat of the previous campaign, the new Commander, it was Grumble Jones this campaign, who had to scour the Shenandoah for troops. Eventually, he

cobbled together 5500 soldiers from existing Confederate forces, militia and home guard.

In the first few days of June Hunter pressed forward reaching Harrisonburg without serious opposition. Jones meanwhile was assembling forces in an effort to keep Hunter's army from reaching Staunton. While the natural path to Staunton lay along the Valley Pike, Hunter selected a more eastern route along the Port Republic Road. Once the Confederates realized and reacted, skirmishing began between cavalry in the area of Mt. Meridian on the Staunton Road.

The morning of the battle, June 5, 1864, Confederate resistance began to stiffen to allow General Jones to bring up his infantry. Jones and the Confederate hierarchy were confident that once prepared, they could repulse yet another Union attempt to capture the Shenandoah Valley. Eventually Hunter's cavalry pushed the Southern horsemen back upon their main line spread out along a tree line on a ridge near the village of Piedmont.

Hunter sent August Moor's Brigade forward to probe the Confederate line. The Northern infantry was easily repulsed. As Moor's men licked its wounds in a swale out of sight, Hunter sent the 28th Ohio and Colonel Jacob Weddle and the part of the 1st West Virginia not on the skirmish line to reinforce the second frontal assault.

Meanwhile on the left flank Thoburn moved his brigade in a column of battalions. The 12th West Virginia was the middle regiment. Thoburn's men were not committed to the attack but listened as Moor's men attacked the Confederate line a second time. The 1st moved about 100 yards forward when Weddle ordered a halt to deliver a regimental volley. But before they could fire the 36th and 45th Virginia delivered a volley of their own. The 1st retreated to the tree line from whence they came and exchanged fire.

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Grumble Jones now took troops from his right flank, opposite Thoburn's Brigade, to his left flank, to prepare to counterattack Moor's Brigade. The Federals spotted this movement and realized that the Confederate right flank would be weakened. Additionally this move created a gap in the line between the advanced left wing and recessed right wing. Hunter ordered Thoburn's remaining regiments to wheel to their right and attack the exposed right flank of the Confederate line. Hewitt writes that the 12th moved to within 100 yards, lied down, fired and drew the "Rebel fire....Most of the enemy's rifles are empty. Springing to their feet and cheering wildly the men rush forward and over the parapet." Hewitt added that the 12th's colors were first into the Confederate line in the woods. Hewitt added that the "character of the conflict is attested by bayoneted Rebel dead."

This collapsed Grumble Jones defense and killed Jones as he attempted to rally his troops. Also Moor's line moved forward to complete the rout of the Southern army. According to Rawlings, Colonel Weddle saw the collapsing line and called to the regiment "Boys, there's Colonel Thoburn doubling up on the right, let us meet him in the defences. Charge!"

Hewitt described the Southerners fleeing in an "utter rout." "Often a soldier would press forward so furiously as to be enclosed single-handed among a mass of Rebels, surrendering to be recaptured instantly by his advancing comrades." The 12th's color bearer fell during this melee after leading the brigade of "that terrific charge into the jaws of death." According to Thomas J. Orr, who was quoting a letter from his company commander, the color bearer, Corporal Joseph Halstead, was killed while "planting his collors on the enemy works..." Sergeant Hart Marks (K) captured a Confederate lieutenant and passed him to the rear. "The Rebel drew a revolver from under his coat

and shot him, fortunately slightly, in the back, yet our boys spared him."

The Federals including the 1st and 12th chased the Southerners to bluffs above the river and the over the bluffs and into the river. The 1st captured the flag and 151 prisoners from the 36th Virginia in the retreat.

Joshua Winters of the 1st was one of the wounded suffering a gunshot wound to his right hand. His diary entries stop on June 5, the date of the battle so the injury likely occurred during the battle. His descendants remember Joshua saying it was an accident and not the result of enemy fire. After the battle he walked to Grafton, caught the train to Parkersburg where he convalesced.

In the 12th, after the battle, the men began to care for the wounded including the Confederates. "All evening you could see Union soldiers feeding wounded Rebels, and food was scarce with us then, having to come all in the shape of forage."

With the way now open, Hunter occupied Staunton the next day, destroying public property, military stores and rolling stock. The 1st suffered seven killed, 36 wounded and 17 captured in the battle. The 12th which participated in the attack that collapsed the Confederate line, lost 18 killed, 41 wounded and 2 captured. As author Scott Patchan wrote, "More men died at Piedmont than in any battle of Stonewall Jackson's 1862 Valley Campaign." Lt. Colonel Thomas F. Wildes of the wrote: "The battle is scarcely more than mentioned in any of the histories of the war, and yet the regiments engaged suffered as terribly and fought as bravely as any equal body of troops in any battle of the war."

Thomas Jefferson Orr summed his paragraph on the battle in a letter to his "Esteemed Friend Sallie" by writing "They are gone to sing that everlasting song of praise before

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the throne of God where sin and sorrow can never come. I feel for thier poor mothers it will be a sad sad blow to them. But such sacrifices have been made, and such must yet be made before this accursed (excuse that inelegant expresion) Rebellion is over."

The rest of June, 1864, was very eventful in the Valley, but time and space limit my discussion to the terrific battle of Piedmont. Possibly the fiercest battle the 1st fought and certainly one of the 12th's most victorious experiences.

*The Forgotten Fury - The Battle of Piedmont* by Scott C. Patchan. *Civil War Letters and Diary of Joshua Winters* Edited by WVRA member Elizabeth Davis Swiger. *History of the First Regiment West Virginia Infantry*, by C. J. RAwling. *A Company of Boys in Blue* by Mark Paul and Thomas Jefferson Orr. *History of the 12th West Virginia Volunteer Infantry* by William Hewitt

## Other Time Periods

Jim Barnes submitted a list of suggested events seen above.

## Cowan's Ford

While visiting family in North Carolina, I finally ventured out to see a nearby Revolutionary War site. The Battle of Cowan's Ford. The actual site or ford is now under the waters or the dam of Lake Norman near Huntersville. Here in 1781, a few hundred American soldiers under North Carolina militia leader General William Lee Davidson, faced over 5,000 British and Loyalist American trying to cross the Catawba River.

The British under Charles Cornwallis, were pursuing Nathaniel Greene's Rebel army. Greene wanted to avoid a major battle with the much superior British forces and was retreating towards Virginia. Davidson's forces defended Cowan's Ford in an effort to buy time for Greene's army to slip

northward. While alerting troops along the river bank to withdraw, Davidson was killed instantly and with his death, the man who was the glue keeping the skittish militia together was gone, sending the men into a panicky retreat.

The memorial markers now sit about 1/3 mile southeast of the ford along route 73. His grave was found at a nearby Presbyterian Church graveyard.



The marker near Cowan's Ford. Davidson College is less than 10 miles from this spot and is named for General Davidson.

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## "They Said It (or didn't)"

*"Never interfere with the enemy when he is in the process of destroying himself."*

-- Napoleon

*"I will not detain you long for I stand here a slave - a slave at least in the eyes of the Constitution. It is a slave by the laws of the South who now addresses you. My back is scarred by the lash - that I could show - I would I could make visible the wounds of this system upon my soul."*

-- Frederick Douglas, Faneuil Hall, Boston, February, 1841

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## Other Sites

American Battlefield Trust - [www.battlefields.org](http://www.battlefields.org)  
Beverly Heritage Center -  
[www.beverlyheritagecenter.org](http://www.beverlyheritagecenter.org)  
Mason Dixon Civil War Roundtable  
[www.wvmasondixoncwr.org/](http://www.wvmasondixoncwr.org/)

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## WVRA Officers 2019

Jim Barnes - President  
Ken Connell - Vice President  
Jack Rush - Secretary/Treasurer  
Diane Tennant - Unit Rep (TASAS)  
Mark Tennant - Unit Rep (1st W. Va. Infantry)  
Bill Brisendine - Unit Rep (25th Virginia  
Infantry)  
Unit Rep (artillery) - TBD  
Webmaster - Peter Baxter  
Editor - Chuck Critchfield

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ATTENTION - Please do not send any correspondence to the PO Box in Buckhannon. Membership information can be sent to me. Remember you must be a member of record to qualify for membership benefits. To be covered under the liability insurance policy purchased by the WVRA, you must be a member of record.

There are two Facebook pages currently in use as avenues of communication by WVRA members. One is the WVRA-The Trans-Allegheny Soldiers Aid Society group page. The other group is labeled simply West Virginia Reenactors Association. Tonya Daft is the administrator on the West Virginia Reenactors Association page. Please address all questions to her about that page. I am not sure who is administrator to the WVRA-TASAS page. I continue to use the WVRA-TASAS page to post announcements as it has been the page getting the most use.

As newsletter editor, I encourage submissions from members or readers, that are related to American history. I retain the right as editor to make a final decision on the content of this publication. Abusive or political submissions will not be published.

## Editor's Corner

### The Editor's chance to speak

THANK YOU to Peter Baxter. Thank you to Hunter Lesser, Jack Rush and Lt. Colonel Pete Taylor for their contributions to this edition of the Dispatch

**INSUFFICIENT TIME** - I apologize for the second consecutive month, but I had to throw this issue together quickly. Too many other things going on right now. I have been spending time with my 90-year-old parents in North Carolina.

**PERSONALS** - Please keep Jennifer Smith in your prayers. I ran into former members John and Stormy Brasuk at New Market. John admitted to improved health and seemed his old self. Stormy posted some nice pictures on Facebook.

**SO YOU THINK THE CIVIL WAR IS OVER???** - I read recently in the Elkins newspaper, where there is an effort to rename Robert E. Lee Street in Elkins. Later that week the governmental body considering the change apparently voted to recommend that the name remain unchanged.

**I INVITE MEMBERS** (or non-members) to submit articles or information to the Trans-Allegheny Dispatch. I shy away from copying or reprinting previously published articles, but will summarize such information and write that summary for the newsletter. I do not limit submissions to the American Civil War.

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This newsletter is available free to members by email. It will be mailed by US Mail for \$10 per year fee.

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

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"The lack of a sense of history is the damnation of the modern world - Robert Penn Warren