



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF CO. D, FIRST MINNESOTA REGIMENT, RECREATED

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### Upcoming Events

March 25, 2006

Unit Drill, Gettysburg, PA

**Combined Drill  
53<sup>rd</sup> and 83<sup>rd</sup> PA**

Our next unit event will be a combined drill with the 53<sup>rd</sup> and 83<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania regiments at Speros Marinos farm outside Gettysburg. A map to the farm is included at the end of this newsletter.

The idea of having this combined drill is to assemble enough manpower so that practice can be gained in the school of the company and other maneuvers. This has been difficult for many units to accomplish due to number they typically put on the field. Activities start at 10:00 and run till 3:30. A schedule is included elsewhere in this newsletter. In addition to your basic uniform, musket & accouterments be sure to have you haversack and a full canteen. In addition to the above equipment, there will be a special talk on packing the knapsack, and participants are request to bring their packs complete

with the normal items they would carry inside them.

There is no water on the site, so everyone is asked to bring a jug of tap water to help clean up the cooking equipment.

Since lunch is being provided, a head count is needed. **Please contact James at [jdo@npmhu.org](mailto:jdo@npmhu.org), or (301) 681-7462, with a yes or no on your attendance by March 20.**

### Chantilly Civil War Show April 8-9, 2006.

This event will be an entirely new one for the 1<sup>st</sup> Minnesota. We will be manning a recruiting & display table during the show. Sine this is a Civil War relic show, it is hoped that we will make contact with some possible recruits.

While this is not the most glamorous activity, it is essential if our unit is to grow and prosper. Also, this is show is one of the best Civil War shows in the east, with outstanding arms, equipment, and books.

At present, volunteers to man the table are Fleming, Owens, and Penrod. We could use a couple of more volunteers. You do not have to volunteer for both days. Also you get free admission to the show.

If you can volunteer to help man out table at the show, please contact James at [jdo@npmhu.org](mailto:jdo@npmhu.org), or (301) 681-7462

### **Batter Up!**

Jo and Dan Houde of Orchard Hill Sutlery have period baseball kits available. Bats, balls, and bases are available at great prices. Spring is on the horizon and Summer is not far behind. Be the first man in your mess to have all the latest gear for this new and exciting sport.

Please visit the Houde's site at <http://dahoude.tripod.com/baseball.htm>



### **For Sale**

Offered by James Owens. Contact him directly for more information.

- ♣ Trigger Finger Mittens. Blue-gray wool, never used, will fit all but super large hands. Have four pair at \$3.50 each.
- ♣ US Issue Cloth Canteen slings made of folded & sewn cotton drill like numerous originals. 6' long X .75 wide. Have two at \$8.00 each.
- ♣ .58 musket worm by Taylor & Company, never used, still in package \$8.00.
- ♣ Spike candle made by Nick Sekela copied after original patented in November 1861. Originals can be seen at White Oak Museum. Normally \$25 plus postage from Jersey Skillet Licker, this one is only \$20.00.
- ♣ Pocket Hardee's Tactics, reprint of J. O. Kane Edition, published in New York in 1862, never used, \$3.00.
- ♣ Original pale green glass Inkwell. Has chip out of neck, but is still usable, \$5.00.
- ♣ Original Iron Large Kitchen Spoon. Typical of those found in winter camps. Handle has been flattened but overall in good condition, \$3.00

**CIVIL WAR PRESERVATION TRUST**

**MOST ENDANGERED BATTLEFIELDS**

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania  
Shenandoah Valley of Virginia  
Glorieta Pass, New Mexico  
Chattahoochee River Line, Georgia  
Circle Forts, Washington, D.C.  
Fort Morgan, Alabama  
Glendale, Virginia  
New Orleans Forts, Louisiana.  
Raymond, Mississippi  
Wilderness, Virginia

For more information go to:

<http://www.civilwar.org/index.php>

Or you can write to them at

**The Civil War Preservation Trust**

1331 H Street N.W. Suite 1001  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
202-367-1861

**BUDGET CUTS HIT HARD AT SOUTH**

**MOUNTAIN STATE BATTLEFIELD**

Many members of the First Minnesota are familiar with South Mountain State Battlefield in western Maryland, from our attendance at living history programs in the park and our participation in the 2001 and 2005, Engagement at Burkittsville events.

Recent budget cuts have had a drastic effect at South Mountain State Battlefield. It has been announced that due to cuts in the park operating budget, the staff would be reduced to one permanent and four seasonal

employees for the rest of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006.

This staffing level is expected to remain the same for the remainder of the calendar year, and possibly FY 2007. As a result of this staffing reduction, the park museums at Gathland and Washington Monument will be open on weekends only. In addition, living history programs, and battlefield tours by park staff will be eliminated. These functions will be carried out by volunteers as available.

While budget cuts to state parks are nothing new, this time it has hit particularly hard. Not only was the SMSB budget cut at the beginning of FY 2006, another cut was made from the remaining balance in February. This resulted in the management at the park being left with no choice but to cut back on services.

Public input can make a difference in the budget process. If you would like to voice your concerns about funding for SMSB, here are some people you can write to:

Maryland Forest & Park Service  
Richard P. Barton, Director  
Tawes State Office Building, E-1  
580 Taylor Avenue  
Annapolis, MD. 21401

Sen. Donald F. Munson  
401 James Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD. 21401

Del. Christopher B. Shank  
302 Lowe House Office Building  
84 College Avenue  
Annapolis, MD. 21401-1991

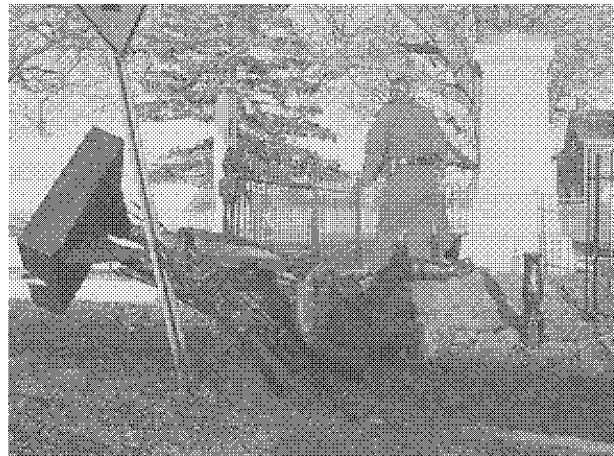
**Gettysburg Monuments Vandalized:****National Park Service Asks Public  
for Information**

Gettysburg National Military Park is looking for information related to the vandalism of civil war monuments on the Gettysburg Battlefield damaged during the night of February 15, 2006 or the early morning hours of February 16, 2006. Vandals pulled the top stone and sculpture off of the 11th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Monument, dedicated on October 8, 1885. The 11th Massachusetts monument is located on Emmitsburg Road at the intersection of Sickles Avenue. Vandals pulled down the bronze sculpture of a Zouave infantryman from the pedestal of the 114th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Monument, dedicated on July 2, 1886, located at the Sherfy house on Emmitsburg Road. The figure landed on a decorative iron fence that was also damaged.

Vandals also pulled the bronze sculpture of a Civil War Artilleryman from the monument to Smith's battery, also known as the 4th New York battery, located on Devil's Den. The Smith's battery monument was dedicated July 2, 1888.

Anyone with any information is asked to call the National Park Service at 717/ 334-0909.

Gettysburg National Military Park Rangers Laurie Gantz and Brion Fitzgerald are shown in the 114th PA monument photo (next page)



**The Manly Art of Shaving, Part I**

R. Westbrook

As living historians we each spend hours learning the manual of arms, duties of a soldier and even more esoteric things associated with life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, there is one aspect of life in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that we all tend to shrink from, that being the manly art of shaving. It's probably for a lot of reasons that we change the subject when shaving with a straight steel blade is brought up. Most likely it is the pain, suffering, blood loss and anxiety associated with the task that sends our heads reeling.

Conversely we all know someone who claims to have all sorts of knowledge on the subject and yet never seems to be around to demonstrate the art first hand. I propose that we dispense with that most useless fellow all together and concern ourselves with real demonstrations of shaving. What I am prepared to offer is a first hand experience to those who are interested in observing. At future events I will come fully equipped and prepared to demonstrate the art of shaving on a daily basis. There will be no more allowing the stubble to accumulate on Sunday, or skulking off to find a sink and mirror in a comfy restroom.

With that said let's face our fears together and begin to learn what every young man learned from his father and in turn passed on to his own son when the time came. I will tell you that the actual practice of shaving with a straight razor is not as difficult as you might suppose. There

is a certain amount of minor danger involved and you should use caution when handling a razor. While quite forgiving if handled carefully, a razor will most certainly punish an inattentive user. Trust me when I tell you it is not merely the pain of the nick and the trickle of blood oozing from a cut that is painful. No, more painful are the questions of friends and family when they query the source of the new dueling scar that has appeared on your face.

Let's begin with a description of the tools of the trade. There are several items that are indispensable for a good shave. Obviously a good sharp razor is the most vital part of the equation. You will also need a mirror, shaving soap, shaving brush, shaving cup, strop, a bucket or other wash basin, and a hone. It is also advisable to have some sort of alcohol-based aftershave product. The latter is more for its sealing properties than anything to do with smelling pretty.

Your selection of a good quality razor is absolutely essential to a comfortable and efficient shave. Among other factors, you should consider; how frequently you plan on using the razor; personal preferences; how much money you want to invest.

Straight razors are classic shaving implements and have fallen into disuse with the advent of the safety razor in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One advantage of the straight razor is that if properly cared for, it will last for generations. Keep this in mind as we get into the discussion of how much to expect to spend for a good razor. When you do go shopping for a razor, it's best to buy it from a seller that specializes in

shaving implements. I know, the knife shop in the mall has them too as do many sutlers.

Like any other product, there are plenty of bargains that are anything but a bargain. As an example, any number of sutlers sell razors ranging in price between \$6 and \$15. Most of these are cheap junk better relegated to your housewife than your face. At least one sutler offers a word of warning about his product. Most vendors, probably through ignorance, don't even bother telling you that the item is probably made out of old spring steel from derelict cars in Pakistan or some such place.

For those devotees of the antique markets in our midst caveat emptor that little gem you found in the antique den on the way to wherever may indeed be scads better than anything produced today in terms of authenticity, the period correct gouges it will put in your face will hurt like gunshot wounds. Yes, you can have the blade re ground to a fine sharp edge. Though you may find that the money, you spend refurbishing an old blade could have netted you a nice new one that is perfectly serviceable and not nearly as dangerous to your face.

If you choose to throw caution to the wind and not heed my advice at least consider having your blade honed by someone with experience in honing shaving blades. Asking your buddy to hit it with his grinding wheel is not the answer. There are several competent shops both in our area and online that specialize in this sort of work. Also, pay attention to what the blade tells you about itself. On the

tang of many razors you may find some makers mark indicating the type of steel used Sheffield and Solingen are preferable to Karachi for example. Many period razors do not bear such markings. Even in the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were plenty of cheap razors. Will you scrape your cheeks with a new blade or an old one? I think this is best answered with a question. How many of you scavenge through the garbage for used razor blades right now? If you do, go right ahead and use that wonderful antique you found for \$5. It's your face. I prefer to use a newer blade simply because I don't want to end up looking like a veteran of the Prussian fencing team.

It all comes down to how much you are willing to invest in this thing. Using an older blade can be quite a savings. I have seen antique blades from \$2 to \$20 depending on quality and dealer. Honing can also run the gamut of prices too. My advice, price out how much that antique will cost you to restore versus purchasing a good new blade. You may be surprised.

All of this blathering brings us to sources of blades. They are really too numerous to name. However, I can recommend some sources that I have used. Heavenly Harvest sells a nice plain, straight razor for \$45 through their website. They also sell most every other period shaving item you might want. Another terrific source is Classic Shaving, literally the superstore of shaving items. Razors run the gamut from \$30 to the hundreds on their site. A typical daily use razor from this vendor is around \$50-\$70.

The act of shaving in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was considerably more labor intensive than it is today. There was preparing the soap, wetting the beard, placing all of the tools for use and of course ensuring the blade was ready for use. Before and after each shave your razor should be stropped thoroughly. Contrary to some folk's notions the strop does not actually sharpen the blade. Passing the blade over the leather of the strop aligns and straightens the edge. For those with tough beards you might find that you need to strop your razor during shaving too. There are several types of strops available with the paddle and belt style being the most common. What type you use is up to you. The difference in the versions is quite basic. Belts normally have a leather and a linen side, while paddles can have the same configuration or may have two leather surfaces. You are also going to need some strop paste at some point.

Strop Paste? The paste is a leather conditioner that protects the leather of the strop while also creating a slight drag on the blade. This helps align the blade more quickly.

While I am talking about sharpening let's talk about a hone. Everyone needs a hone. Even orphaned razors must find a hone of their own. Nauseated yet? You should be. Everyone should have a hone for their razor(s). Even with daily stropping your razor will eventually dull. You will have to restore the edge with the help of a hone. What's the difference between stropping and honing? Stropping merely realigns the existing blade. Honing actually removes metal from

the blade and reestablishes the edge.

One last word on razor care, most of the blades that we are dealing with are not likely to rust or corrode if taken care of properly. This is probably the easiest part of the process. Once you have finished shaving, rinse the blade in clear water and allow it to air dry before returning it to its case. From time to time you should also apply a thin coat of very light oil to the metal surfaces.

The next subject is the soap you'll use and the brush that spreads it on your face. Soaps are really a personal preference and there are many correct versions available for the period. You can even use some of the finer hand soaps of the day to lather. Castile soap as an example lathers nicely. Stay away from granny's lye soap. The sting you will feel on your face will remind you of a nasty sunburn.

You may be surprised to discover that all shaving brushes were not created equal. I know, and I shook my head in amazement too when I found this out. I was certain the little \$5 one I had bought was just perfect. It probably is for portraying the cheap stuff available to most soldiers through sutlers. A really nice looking brush is available from Herban Cowboy, that's really the name of the store, for around \$7. Most of the other ones out there have obvious plastic or incorrect parts/logos on them. That particular brush is made of boar bristle. The epitome of style and comfort is said to be a badger bristle brush. A word of warning, you can expect to pay as much, or more, than you did for your razor for a new badger brush.

This is where the antique shoppers can have a field day. Period correct shaving brushes can be found in many antique malls for very reasonable prices and many are badger bristle. Let the shopping begin.

The co-conspirator to the shaving brush is the cup. No, there is absolutely no need to buy any sort of fancy cup or receptacle. Any cup will do. Well, any cup you really don't plan on drinking from immediately anyhow. The sole purpose of the cup is to hold the lather, soap and a small bit of water. Period correct examples are available all over the area in antique malls and elsewhere. Several tinsmiths make period shaving mugs for a not so period correct price. A simple porcelain cup, wooden bowl, or even your tin drinking cup will work. Yes, a peach can be used too.

Top consideration with the mirror is size, it does matter. The location is also very important. As

they say in business location, location, location. Your mirror should be large enough for you to see yourself as you shave. The resulting position should be comfortable. That brings us to location. Whether you prefer to stand or sit while you shave is your choice. In either case you should give careful thought to where you position your mirror. It should be high enough that you don't find yourself positioned uncomfortably. Nailed to a tree or a tent pole is a good choice. The possibilities are endless. Many beginners find sitting, particularly at a table, to be more stable more comfortable. A table will also support the washbasin.

Finally, you are going to need water, preferably hot water. All sorts of basins can be used. Buckets, mess pans, wash basins and even china bowls from the lady of the plantation's collection can be used.

