

1ST Nebraska Volunteer Infantry

June 2009 Newsletter



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Civilian Coordinator:	Janet Tucker

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1 st Sergeant:	T.J. Howard
2 nd Sergeant:	Rex Wright
1 st Corporal:	Bill Deardoff
2 nd Corporal:	Gage Stermensky
Chaplain:	Paul Lahowetz

Authenticity Committee

Larry Angle	Bill Deardoff
Paul Lahowetz	Rex Wright

COMMANDERS CORNER

It doesn't seem possible that the year is half over. This past weekend we celebrated our Nation's birthday and Pawnee City is only three months away. It has been a good year so far. We have several new members that have joined the unit and have become very active. In addition, some of the "Old Members" have come to some of the events. Both of these have contributed to increased numbers at our events. I'd like to take this opportunity to give a special thanks to those that have been able to show up at the regimental events. I realize that work and family activities have kept some away but our numbers are up and hopefully that will continue through the rest of the year. Event reports for the re enactments are included in a later section of this newsletter.

NCO Corner:

Compiled By TJ Howard with assistance by
Lloyd Coates)

Battle of Seven Pines
Dates: May 31 and June 1, 1862

Source: John MacDonald's Great Battles of
the Civil War.

In May, 1862 General George McClellan had
pushed on up the peninsula from



Williamsburg with the bulk of his army along the north bank of the Chickahominy River, a tributary of the James River. Toward the end of May the Confederates were alarmed to learn that General McDowell was now moving south to unite with the right wing of the Army of the Potomac. This corps under the command of General McDowell had been withheld to protect Washington. General Johnston wanted to strike the main Union Force north of the Chickahominy on May 29 before it could be reinforced. General Johnston then learned that McDowell was retiring and called off the assault on McClellan's main army and turned his attention to the two Union corps lying south of the Chickahominy. May 31st was set as the date for the attack. The night before the 31st a drenching rain fell that swelled the Chickahominy, flooding bridges and isolating two Union corps lying south of the Chickahominy. The Federal positions south of the river were scattered. Brigadier General Keys IV Corps was in the van, his picket line just six miles from Richmond, extending northward from the White Oak Swamp to the Chickahominy. Half a mile behind his skirmishers, on the main road from Richmond to Williamsburg, lay Brigadier Casey's division with its rifle-pits and artillery emplacement protected by an abatis, a defensive tangle of felled trees. Another half-mile behind Casey was Brigadier General Couch's division, occupying an entrenched position at Seven Pines, the intersection of the Williamsburg Road with Nine Mile Road. The union left was protected by White Oak Swamp; and its right was exposed. Four regiments and some artillery were grouped around Fair Oaks Station on the Richmond & York River Railroad, a mile north of Seven Pines on the Nine Mile Road. There was nothing between them and the Chickahominy two miles farther on. Two miles behind the Seven Pines earthworks was an incomplete and unmanned third line of defense and three miles beyond that was the III Corps of Brigadier General Heintzelman.

It seems that General Johnston intended to launch a two-pronged attack early on May 31 under the direction of Major General James Longstreet. General Hill's division was to advance along the Williamsburg Road, supported on his right by General Huger's division marching by the Charles City Road which branched off the Williamsburg Road.

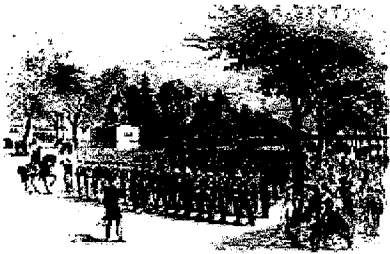
Longstreet's division was to move on the Nine Mile Road, followed by General Whiting's division and give support to Hill's left flank. Hill was to open the attack when Huger arrived on his right and Longstreet was to join in as soon as he heard their firing. That was the plan but a "misunderstanding" about its execution developed between Johnston and Longstreet on the eve of the battle, resulting in the Confederate effort dissolving into a fiasco. So what went wrong: Longstreet got off to a slow start and advanced along a different route and in the process had to bridge and cross flooded Gillis Creek; and in doing so he got in front of Huger and delayed him for several hours thus delaying the start of the assault. At 1:00 P.M. General Hill decided to open the assault alone without Huger's support on his right. He drove into the Federal pickets and pushed Casey out of his entrenchments and back to Couch's second line at Seven Pines, where the battle escalated around mid-afternoon. General Keyes's corps and part of General Heintzelman's fought off Hill's men, who were supported by only one brigade out of a possible nine from General Longstreet. The remainder of his men were crowded behind the narrow front at Seven Pines due to conflicting orders, now following plans and General Johnston not keeping in contact with Longstreet and had no idea of how the battle was progressing.

The Confederates were unable to exploit their success against the Federal left during the first day's fighting. Had the Rebel attack been delivered in concert with the planned hammer blow against the Federal's exposed right

flank, north of Seven Pines, the Confederates might well have won a resounding victory. As it was, Union reinforcements were able to cross the flooded Chickahominy River late on the first day and bolster the Union right.

On June 1 neither side made any effort to attain an advantage and the battle ended in a stalemate with both armies back to more or less their original positions.

Aftermath: During the battle General Johnston was hit in the shoulder by a minie ball and in the chest by a shell splinter and he was carried from the field severely wounded. Union casualties include 980 killed, 4,749 wounded and 405 captured or missing. Confederate casualties included 790 killed, 3,594 wounded and 647 captured or missing.



The Following Article is taken directly from Civil War Collector's Encyclopedia

By Francis A. Lord

Compiled by Larry Angle

Hand Grenades

Scott's Military Dictionary (1864 edition) defined a hand grenade as a "small shell about 2 ½ inches in diameter, which being set on fire by means of a short fuse and cast among the enemy's troops, causes great damage by it's explosion." According to Scott, these grenades could be thrown 26 yards. Rampart

grenades were larger and were use to roll down ramparts. However, Gibbon's Artillerist's Manual (1860) stated that any kind of shell, unfit for firing either from being defective in form or solidity could be used for the purpose. Six-pounder spherical case shot could be used as hand grenades.

Both North and South used hand grenades fairly extensively in siege operations. At Vicksburg the Confederates filled glass bottles with powder and balls, with fuses in the open ends. At Port Hudson Federal soldiers improvised hand grenades from 6-pounder shells. In the defense of fortifications the smaller grenades could be thrown by hand into the head of a sap, trench, or covered way, or upon attackers or besiegers mounting a breach in the works. Larger types, made of artillery shells, could be rolled over the parapet into the defender's trench. In the assault on Port Hudson, June 14, 1863, the skirmishers, from the 8th New Hampshire and 4th Wisconsin, were deployed at intervals of two paces. They were followed by five companies from the 4th Massachusetts and 110th New York, armed with hand grenades. The order for the attack specified: "The hand grenade men carry their pieces on their backs and carry each one grenade. They will march three paces in rear of their line of skirmishers. Having thrown their grenades they will go on as skirmishers. The skirmishers will clamber upon the parapet followed by the carries of hand grenades, which will be thrown over into the works as soon as the skirmishers are on the outer slopes of the parapets."

The results, according to the Confederates, were not too good. In some instances the Federal skirmishers succeeded in getting to the trenches and throwing their grenades over the parapets. Many grenades failed to explode or were thrown back at the assaulting units. The entire engagement lasted about four hours, with heavy losses to the attackers.

Lord's Encyclopedia goes on to say that there were at least three types of hand grenades that were manufactured.

Adam's Hand Grenade was patented in January 1865 by John S. Adams of Taunton Massachusetts. A friction or cannon primer was securely attached to the time fuse inserted in the grenade. When the grenade was thrown a hook activated the friction primer just after the grenade left the hand, and thus ignited the time fuse.

Hanes Hand Grenade was patented in August 1862 by W.W. Hanes of Covington Kentucky. This was a sphere of cast iron with an inner and outer shell. The inner shell contained the powder and had 14 percussion caps embedded on its surface and when even one of these would go off, it that would ignite the powder and cause the grenade to explode. The outer shell was about 3.5 inches in diameter and when the grenade hit something hard, the idea was that the outer shell would act like the hammer on a musket and set off at least one of the percussion caps on the inner shell. Lord's goes on the say that this grenade was so dangerous to handle that only a very few were ever made.

Ketchum Hand Grenade was patented in August 1861 by William F. Ketchum of Buffalo, New York. This was the most common grenade in the Civil War and was oblong in shape. One end had a soft metal tube, which contained a percussion cap. When ready for use a plunger was inserted and when the grenade hit an object, the plunger would hit the percussion cap and ignite the powder. Opposite the tube end was another opening where a stick with fins like a rocket were inserted. This was to make sure that the tube end always traveled in a straight line toward the target.

Event Reports

The following is a summary of the event reports:

The unit has participated in three reenactments so far this year. These have included St. Joseph Missouri, Jefferson City Missouri and Carson Iowa. All three events had two things in common, good participation by members of the unit and **RAIN**. While the rain did not cancel any of the events it made setting up a little interesting at Jefferson City, Missouri and Carson, Iowa. It rained Friday night at St. Joseph but other than a brief shower on Saturday morning we were not impacted. At the St. Joseph event there was a television crew from the Ireland Public Broadcasting Network filming a documentary on Jessie James. They filmed part of our Battalion Drill on Saturday.

In addition, to providing a company to support the battalion at the St. Joseph event Eric Frank filled his role as the Battalion's Sergeant Major and Marc Witkovski and Steve Bauermeister served as Provost Marshall.

The Jefferson City event included a hand-to-hand combat on Saturday and Sunday and some of the unit's members were involved in that scenario. You all need to ask Paul if he wore his uniform home after Sunday's battle. He was part of the hand-to-hand scenario and fell into one of the mud puddles left over from Friday's rain. He was covered in mud and wet wool. Due to the rain we were not able to get to the campsites for setup on Friday evening. We had to walk our gear in on Saturday morning. Good thing we all packed light.

We galvanized at the Carson Iowa event as a Confederate unit. While this was a small event it was close to home and the Carson community provided food and a powder ration for us.

2009 Survey Status

I am still working on the results of the survey. Hopefully will have them completed by the time I publish the next newsletter.

New Members

Since our last newsletter the following individuals were added to our membership roster as a new member or someone that has renewed their membership. Please welcome the following to our unit:

Janet Bosler	Trent Bosler
Steve Bowman	Everett Brailey
Ashley Frerichs	Mark Glaubius
John McQueney	Jack Williams
Cody Williams	

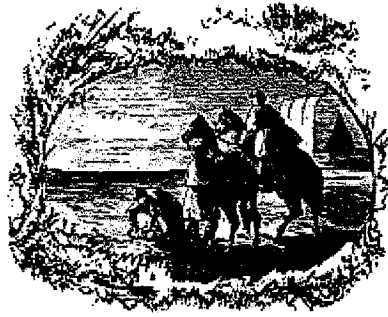
In addition, some of us took part in the Living History at the National Homestead Monument and hopefully some of the contacts that were made during this event will result in additional new members.

Membership List

An updated membership list has been included with the newsletter. Please let me know if there are any additions or corrections that need to be made to this list.

2009 Event Schedule

The event schedule is included at the end of the newsletter. Plans are currently underway for the Pawnee City event. Initial numbers on the Federal side are looking really good so hopefully this will continue and we will have a good number of Rebs to fight. The battle will be on some new ground this year and the Federal camp will be on the old battleground with the civilians camped in and around the buildings at the Historical Site. The Confederate Camp will be adjacent to the new battlefield.



Conclusion

I know I'm a little late in getting this out but hopefully late is better than never. I am looking to have the next newsletter out the first part of September prior to the Pawnee City event. Again this is your newsletter so if you have something you would like to include please submit to me. Electronically is preferred. Saves time because I do not have to retype. I would like any articles submitted by August 15, 2009.

Please excuse any grammar or typo errors you may find in this newsletter. Proof reading my own work has never been a strong point for me.

Your Most Humble and Obedient Servant,
Captain Lloyd Coates

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**1st Nebraska
2009 Event Schedule
(Events in Bold are Regimental "Max" Effort Events)**

Event	Location	Dates
Spring Muster (Muster)	Glenwood Iowa (Rex Wright's Place)	March 28th - 29th
St. Joseph Days of the Civil War (Re-enactment)	St. Joseph Missouri	April 18th - 19th
Keokuk - Re-enactment	Keokuk, Iowa	April 25 th - 26 th
Annual Pathfinder Tactical	Verdigre, Nebraska	May 2 nd - 3 rd
Jefferson City - Re-enactment	Jefferson City, Missouri	May 15 th - 16 th
Memorial Day Celebrations	Prospect Hill Cemetery, Omaha Wyuka Cemetery, Lincoln	May 25 th
Carson - Re-enactment	Carson, Iowa	June 13th - 14th
Nebraska Homestead Monument (Living History)	Beatrice, Nebraska	June 20 th - 21 st
Ralston Parade (Parade)	Ralston, Nebraska	July 4 th
Diller - Re-enactment	Diller, Nebraska	July 11th - 12th
Burwell, Fort Hartsuff Living History	Burwell, Nebraska	July 25 th - 26 th
Fort Snelling Living History	St. Paul, Minnesota	Aug 1 st - 2 nd
Lamoni - Re-enactment	Lamoni, Iowa	Sept 5 th - 6 th
Pawnee City - Re-enactment	Pawnee City, Nebraska	Sept 26th - 27th
Fortesque - Re-enactment	Fortesque, Missouri	Oct 17th - 18th

