



Battle Lines



Newsletter of Co. H, 5th Reg't. New Hampshire Vol's.

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After-Action Report • Sussex Drill

On Saturday, August 15, company drill was held in Sussex, New Brunswick, at the home of Lieutenant Titus. Getting underway at 12 noon, it was the first event of a season that has been so disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Although participation was lower than anticipated, the drill, led by Sergeant Gavel, was thorough, beginning with military decorum and the position of the soldier.

In attendance were Dave Adams, Leigh Gavel, Steve Norman, Nicolas Tétrault, Sylvain Tétrault and Lindsay Titus. Nicolas has decided to return to the ranks of the Fifth New Hampshire, following a brief "furlough". The weather cooperated all day, bringing bright sun, a slight breeze and no rain.

Significantly, we picked up two new members after drill concluded, with Sylvain's wife, Suzanne, and Nicolas' girlfriend, Emilie, joining the company. Suzanne is a historical seamstress and has volunteered to be the company cook, a role she has taken on for troops of other eras! Together, the two ladies have volunteered to keep watch on the camp while firing demonstrations or drill is underway. Leigh Gavel said he knows of another potential recruit, and if that individual joins, that could bring us to a total of 21 members. Welcome!

Steve Norman doesn't really have to participate in drill. In his role as hospital steward, he does not need to march and carry an Enfield, but he knows that his presence in the ranks helps with everybody's understanding of drill, so his participation is especially appreciated.

Sergeant Gavel put the troops through their paces with particular work on the basics of Order Arms, Shoulder Arms, Right Shoulder Shift, Port Arms, Present Arms, Trail Arms, Secure Arms, fixing and unfixing bayonets, Inspection Arms, oblique facings and saluting. A big thank-you goes out to Leigh for the fine work and leadership shown throughout the day. Starting from the Position of the Soldier, he shared that members should show a military manner whenever the public is present, not just out on the field.

Thank you, too, to Dave Adams, for the morning coffee, the sounding board that you provide, and for participating in drill despite a debilitating shoulder injury.

What a great find the Tétrault family has been for Co. H. Including Emilie, Nicolas' girlfriend, we now have four members of that family in our group, and three of them have extensive reenacting experience!

A special thank-you must also go to Denise Titus, who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to help carry equipment downstairs and into the yard, set up tents, assemble a table, purchase ice, and clean the bathroom – most of which was accomplished on Friday afternoon.

In a mid-day meeting of members, a number of topics were discussed and some decisions were reached. Among them:

- Everyone agreed that we should hold a September drill, and that it should again be held at the home of Lt. Titus in Sussex. A date was not confirmed during drill, but follow-up emails established Saturday, September 12, as the date for the next drill. This date will provide a two-week gap between the September drill and the Tomlinson Lake Hike to Freedom on October 3.
- It was agreed that officers and NCO's (and those aspiring to be) should be held to a higher attendance standard at Co. H events, and that those of rank (or aspiring to be) should be in uniform in the ranks. There are two main reasons for this: (a) it is for the good of the company, and (b) experience is how we learn. There were no dissenting voices in this discussion.
- There was also discussion regarding the need for "official" safety officers. It was felt that (a) we are all safety officers; (b) NCO's and officers should serve as safety officers; (c) a telephone call to a certified safety official revealed that there seem to be no provincial standard (at least in New Brunswick) for such a position, although certainly turning to someone with training would be helpful in a critical situation and the position is good to have for reasons public relations; and (d) it was agreed that Inspection Arms shall be carried out

as was done in the Union army of 1861-65, by NCO's or officers. However, the concept of Safety Officers is given in our Company Regulations.

- According to all comments, the Sussex drill was an excellent day for Co. H. Thank you to all who were able to make the drive, and to those who sent their regrets. It all helps with organizing such a day.

The last car left Jonah Court at 4:45, making it a long, but excellent and worthwhile day.

Membership Grows Again!

At our drill on Saturday, August 15 in Sussex, Sylvain Tétrault brought with him his wife, Suzanne, his son, Nicolas, and Nicolas' girlfriend, Emilie McDonald. The two ladies headed to St. Martins for the day, while Nicolas joined the ranks. Before the afternoon was done, Nicolas had decided to return to Co. H, after earlier determining that school would keep him from events. We certainly welcome Nicolas back to the Fifth; he is young, yet has a wealth of reenacting experience. Upon the return of the two women from the Bay of Fundy shore, they, too, had decided to join us. Suzanne, Sylvain's wife, also has reenacting experience (albeit in other eras) and volunteered to serve as Company Cook! Huzzah! She and Emilie will also keep an eye on our camp when the "boys" are away doing firing demonstrations, and so on. This is indeed great news!

On Monday, August 17, an email from Sgt. Gavel was received, stating that his brother, Loran Gavel, has decided to join the ranks of the Fifth New Hampshire. Like Leigh, Loran also has a long record of Civil War reenacting, much of it with the 20th Maine. This is also excellent news!

On Friday, August 14, we had seventeen members, a healthy number by all accounts. By Monday morning we were up to twenty-one!

On Tuesday, Leigh emailed that he had received contact from other people in the Halifax area who were curious about joining our ranks. We also have Evelyn Fidler in New Brunswick, who has shown great interest, and we thank Greg Fekner for making initial contact with Evelyn.

Little Chance for Halifax Citadel Encampment in 2020

An email from Hal Thompson at the Halifax Citadel was received August 5, 2020. It informed Lt. Titus of the following, with regard to a potential Civil War encampment this season: *"We've been playing it by ear a little this season, given that the situation has been changing. Right now we're in what we call Phase III opening, which is limited staff and only partial access to most interiors. All volunteer and special events are cancelled for Phase III."*

"Phase IV will be a return to normal operations, which would include encampments. I've been holding back a little in case we make this jump, but as of Aug 1, it doesn't look like it will happen this year. As it stands, even with the Atlantic Bubble, visitation has been pretty low. I'll let you know if anything changes."

Contact Made with MacDonald Farm

On August 6, Lt. Titus emailed administrators of MacDonald Farm concerning the possibility of setting up a weekend encampment – a School of the Soldier, perhaps – at this historic site. The farm was established in 1820 by Alexander MacDonald, and was the site of at least three Co. H encampments back in the early 2000's. The farm consists of a beautiful stone house, a barn and a couple of outbuildings, and the grounds are perfect for an encampment and for marching. The echo of volley fire out over the Miramichi River is a sound to remember! As of press time, no response has been received, although due to Covid-19, the site may not be open to the public. A second attempt will be made in a few weeks. The hope is to set up an encampment there sometime during the 2021 season.

Two Years of Publication

This issue, number 24 (September 2020), marks two consecutive years of publication of our monthly Co. H newsletter, "Battle Lines". No month has been missed since the first issue was emailed to members and friends of the company, on October 5, 2018. Prior to that, thirteen issues of an earlier newsletter, "The Fighting Fifth", were printed for Co. H between 2002-2004.

Canadians in the Ranks of the Fifth New Hampshire

James Walker was born in Canada and was residing there, when, at age 19, he enlisted in Co. E and was mustered-in as a private on October 22, 1863. Enlisting as a substitute, he was credited to Campton. Walker was captured at Cold Harbor, Virginia on June 3, 1864, and served over eight months as a prisoner of war until he was returned on February 21, 1865. He mustered-out with the regiment on June 28, 1865.

Company Buys Tent from Dave Adams

A day after our company drill in Sussex, Dave Adams decided to sell his wedge tent. His first choice was to sell it to Company H, and after word was put out to the membership, the purchase was made. As a gesture of good-will to Company H, Dave lowered the selling price to the company to \$200.00, a price well below its original value. The tent, made by Tentsmiths in New Hampshire, is in excellent condition and comes with four iron pegs (more will be required) a peg bag, and the tent is stored in a bag of its own. The ridge pole and posts are included. The tent is very large for a wedge tent. At its peak, it is about 7' high, about 8' 4" deep, and over 7' wide. It should fit our needs well as a company tent, using it as an area for storing anachronisms (like coolers), for sleeping, and for use as a changing area. This marks our first purchase with company funds, and it is something we can all share.

A Civil War Connection to Saint John's Loyalist House

On July 29, Greg Fekner sent a text message which included information about Loyalist House in Saint John. Greg later texted that he found the information in an issue of the newsletter of the New Brunswick Historical Society. That information read, in part: *"Dr. David Merritt [was] a member of the family associated with Loyalist House in the 19th century. The son of David Jabez Merritt and Fanny Cornwall Smith, he was born in Saint John in 1829 and moved, against his father's wishes, to Philadelphia, when he was 19, where he studied medicine. He signed on as chief surgeon of the 55th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers in 1861, serving in the Southern theatre [mostly in South Carolina; but was with the Army of the Potomac at Cold Harbor and Petersburg]. He resigned in 1864 after contracting malaria."*

October 3 • Tomlinson Lake Hike to Freedom

The Tomlinson Lake Hike to Freedom is still scheduled. Although scaled back due to Covid-19, head organizer and Co. H member Joe Gee wants the Fifth New Hampshire to be there. Here is the event information (as of August 22).

- Date: Saturday, October 3
- Address: 250 Glenburn Road; Carlingford, NB (*near Perth-Andover*); follow the signs.
- Starting Time: 11:00 (but Joe says to come early).
- Break Camp at: 6:00 (although those traveling long distances may leave earlier, as you decide).
- There will be no food offered to the public this year.
- There will be no pop-up museum this year.
- Hikers are expected to social-distance.
- Masks may be worn, but are not required.
- Joe Gee tells Co. H to set up camp, fire our muskets and "have fun".
- He adds that he can put up signs, asking people to stay six feet away.
- Joe says that he can set up a cooking area for us, if we so wish.
- The nearest motel to the Hike location is the Perth-Andover Motor Inn, at 560 Route 190; Carlingford, NB. Their phone numbers are 1-506-273-2224 or 1-888-273-2226. Though basic, the rooms were clean and the rates were, by today's standards, reasonable. A phone call to them confirmed that they will be open.
- Joe Gee also informed *Battle Lines* that members of Co. H would be given a discount at the Castle Inn, located at 21 Brentwood Drive, overlooking Perth-Andover. This inn has a restaurant attached. Their phone number is 1-506-273-9495.

Emancipation Day

The Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 ended slavery in the British Empire on August 1, 1834, and thus also ended slavery in Canada. This event is celebrated in various parts of the Commonwealth on a variety of dates, including in some Canadian provinces. Now, there is a move to mark August 1 of each year as Emancipation Day throughout Canada. Following is the text of Bill M-36, which is before the 1st session of the 43rd Parliament of Canada:

That the House recognize that: (a) the British Parliament abolished slavery in the British Empire as of August 1, 1834; (b) slavery existed in British North America prior to its abolition in 1834; (c) abolitionists and others who struggled against slavery, including those who arrived in Upper and Lower Canada by the Underground Railroad, have historically celebrated August 1 as Emancipation Day; (d) the Government of Canada announced on January 30, 2018, that it would officially recognize the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent to highlight the important contributions that people of African descent have made to Canadian society, and to provide a platform for confronting anti-Black racism; and (e) the heritage of Canada's people of African descent and the contributions they have made and continue to make to Canada; and that, in the opinion of the House, the government should designate August 1 of every year as "Emancipation Day" in Canada.

! News of the War in the East !

- **Joe Gee** – Private Joe Gee reported on August 18 that he is soon going to purchase his uniform, and is also investigating taking the required firearms safety course to obtain his PAL, providing they are even being offered during these days of Covid-19.
- **Crutches** – Hospital Steward Steve Norman informed Lt. Titus on August 15 that he has been busy making a pair of period-correct crutches to add to his medical display, which just keeps on getting better!
- **Wood Shavings** - Steve Norman reported at the August 15 drill that he had shaved down some wood to make shavings to be used as a fire-starter for the company. That's great thinking! Thank you, Steve!
- **Fire Buckets** – Sylvain Tétrault wrote in an email on August 16 that he has found two metal buckets, and is working on painting them with the red trefoil of the First Brigade, First Division, Second Corps. They will be useful for safety reasons around future campfires.
- **George's Island** – Parks Canada has opened up George's Island to the public on a limited basis. Located in the middle of Halifax Harbour, this historic part of the Halifax defense system has been closed to the public for most of its time under the watch of Parks Canada. The island is rich in military, Acadian and Mi'kmaq history, and might make a great site for a future weekend encampment! It was decided at the August 15 drill to enquire about that possibility.
- **Suggested Reading** – In a text message received on August 19, Greg Fekner recommended the reading of Montreal: City of Secrets by Barry Sheehy, and African Canadians in Union Blue by Richard M. Reid. Both books are available through Chapters. He also recommends In Armageddon's Shadow, by Greg Marquis, who is a professor at the Saint John campus of the University of New Brunswick. Greg Fekner also has plans to read John Boyko's new book, Canadians for the Confederacy.
- **In the Shadow of the Civil War** – While celebrations of the life of the late Representative and civil rights leader John Lewis were happening in Washington, DC, Georgia, and Selma, Alabama, Alabama State Representative Will Dismukes was also in Selma, celebrating the life of Confederate lieutenant general and the first KKK grand wizard, Nathan Bedford Forrest. The latter celebration is an annual event held on Forrest's birthday (July 13) at "Fort Dixie", the home of the leader of a southern heritage organization known as the League of the South. Not only was Forrest the initial leader of the Klan, but he is often named as responsible for the Fort Pillow massacre (April 12, 1864), in which over 300 black Union soldiers and their white officers were killed after attempting to surrender.
- **Rebels at Fort Knox** – In a pair of emails, Co. B, 20th Maine president Paul Dudley called for Union volunteers to encamp at Fort Knox (Prospect, Maine) during the weekend of August 28-30, as their Confederate branch is hosting a weekend living-history event. Of course, with the international border closed to casual traffic, this leaves us out, but in "normal" times, Co. H members are invited to Co. B events.
- **Statue of Sir John A Macdonald Toppled** – Demonstrators in Montreal, calling for the defunding of police, placed ropes around a statue of Canada's first prime minister and sent it crashing to the ground, breaking off the statue's head when it hit the ground. Reaction to this act of vandalism has been varied and swift right across the country. Such protests mimic those occurring in the United States.

Our Membership as of September 5, 2020

Dave Adams – NB
Aaron Bouma – NB
Steven Cochrane – NS
Greg Fekner – NB
Leigh Gavel – NS
Loran Gavel – NS
Joe Gee – NB

Edmond Grenier – PEI
Barry Hippenstall – PEI
Brannson Hippenstall – PEI
Rick Jamer – PEI
Bob Keretschko – NS
Marie Keretschko – NS
Emilie McDonald – NB

Stephen Norman – NB
Nick Skinner (*Recruit*) – NS
Nicolas Tétrault – NB
Suzanne Tétrault – NB
Sylvain Tétrault – NB
Lindsay Titus – NB
Nathan Titus – NB

Events Calendar Update

- **Company Drill** – Sussex, NB – Saturday, September 12; 12 noon.
- **Tomlinson Lake Hike to Freedom** – Carlingford, NB – Saturday, October 3.
- **Annual General Meeting** – Date to be determined.