



Battle Lines



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

• Mustered-in March 17, 2002 •
• *Issue No. 39 • December 5, 2021* •



A Merry Christmas to All!

Merry Christmas to all members of Co. H, Fifth New Hampshire, and to your families! I feel very fortunate to be a small part of this group that has such an important role to play in sharing Canada's history. I was a teacher all my adult life, having spent 32 years in the New Brunswick public school system, and, with the Fifth New Hampshire I am able to continue in that role; a role in which we all serve as active members.

As a teacher, then, even as recently as our encampment at Kings Landing, I was greeted several times by surprised visitors who had no knowledge of Canada's involvement in what is perceived as an American conflict that took place in a different place and a different time. Further, I had the opportunity to view the backs of visitors as they maneuvered to get the best view, and the best photograph or video, of a musket volley; or to see their wonder at the mysteries of Civil War commands that move troops from line to column and back into line, to fire crisp volleys that echo off the woods beyond. It demonstrates their thirst to experience and to learn.

I have watched as crowds stare in fascinated horror as Steve Norman describes the purpose of a bullet probe, or demonstrates the terror of the bone saw. What may begin for some as a curious "sideshow" of our encampment quickly transforms faces into expressions of horror and empathy, and ultimately, to respect for the untold sacrifices made by so many.

I have also watched as 1st Sergeant Gavel takes a visitor "under his wing", putting him into uniform and running him through the manual of arms; or Dave Adams, who claims he doesn't much like to talk with the public, stand to explain in detail the brass on his forage cap, or the details of the dog tent. Meanwhile, Suzanne Guay, demonstrating her wealth of reenacting experience, effortlessly speaks with visitors of what is cooking for lunch over the open fire, or what she is sewing.

The list could go on, and in the coming years, it will. For, despite nearly two years of a global pandemic, we have not only survived as a group, we have thrived. So, we have much more teaching ahead of us. In order to continue teaching about this too little-known part of Canadian history, we must both work to retain our membership and seek to grow with new members. How do we do this? We must remain relevant – *fun* – for current members and be even more visible to the public; most of whom still don't even know we exist. Both are greater tasks than they appear.

Finally, it is easy to teach when you are proud of who we represent, and I, for one, am. Foremost, there is General Caldwell, buried in St. Stephen, New Brunswick. I feel a special bond – a kinship – with General Caldwell that I find difficult to explain. He experienced the war, he struggled through it, he was wounded in it, he was there. Second, as a company in a Union regiment, we represent those who fought to preserve a great nation. Yes, the United States has its issues, but it remains a beacon of hope for millions around the world. Third, the Union victory eradicated slavery from American soil. While its legacy is one of blood, discrimination and misery, and whether individual soldiers believed in the cause or not, the Civil War also left a legacy of freedom. We, as living historians portraying a Union regiment, help people to reach an understanding that the past, however uncomfortable it might be, shapes our present, and is our path to the future. Those are great, although difficult goals, but they are worth pursuing.

Thank you, all, for everything you do in Co. H, and a very Merry Christmas! (*L. Titus*)

“O Holy Night” – A Christmas Carol Embraced by Abolitionists



Last Christmas, as well as at Christmas 2018, we examined the connections between the Christmas carol, “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day”, written by Henry W. Longfellow, and the Civil War (“Battle Lines” issues no’s. 3 & 27). “O Holy Night”, another classic Christmas carol, is also connected with the Civil War. It was popular among many in the pre-war North, for it contains lyrics that made it a favourite among abolitionists.

As with “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day”, “O Holy Night” began life as a poem, written by French poet, Placide Cappeau and entitled, “Minuit, chrétiens”. The poem was written into song in French by Adolphe Adam in 1847, sometimes called, “Cantique de Noël”, but also often still known as “Minuit, chrétiens”.

Meanwhile, in 1855, John Sullivan Dwight of Boston translated the song into English and it became “O Holy Night”, with its lyrics so widely used today. In the third verse, we hear the words,

*Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother;
And in His name all oppression shall cease.*

These two lines, coupled with the stirring and powerful music, made the song especially popular among abolitionists, and today remains a favourite of the Christmas season.

Military Muster at Kings Landing 2022: Father’s Day Weekend

At the meeting held during the company drill on Saturday, August 28, in Sussex, members present voted to approach Kings Landing officials with the date of June 17-19, 2022 for a second annual Military Muster at Kings Landing, thus leaving September free for the potential of an Antietam anniversary event. The date in June is the Father’s Day weekend.

The date was approved and confirmed by Kings Landing CEO, Mary Baruth and by Kings Landing executive and Co. H member, Evelyn Fidler, during our recent September encampment there. The student day on June 17 was also confirmed. This is indeed excellent news, and all Co. H members are urged to make plans to participate. Co. I, 20th Maine; Co. B, 20th Maine and DeLancey’s Brigade have already been invited to this event.

Notice! Two Spring Drills Planned!

With our return to Kings Landing in June 2022, we are hoping to hold two pre-event drills in the spring of the new year. These events will, of course, be subject to suitable weather and ground conditions, but are intended to “clear the cobwebs” of the winter layoff, in part as preparation for the Military Muster at Kings Landing, but also as preparation for the 2022 season in general.

The tentative location for the drills is Sussex, New Brunswick, but that is subject to change, depending upon the will of the membership. The dates are Saturday, April 30, and Saturday, May 28, 2022, so members are urged to put those dates on their calendar. The start time will be 12 noon, to allow time for members to travel. A planning meeting for the new season will form part of the day’s activities in April; and a planning meeting for Kings Landing will form part of the day at the May drill. First Sergeant Leigh Gavel has already confirmed his availability for these two dates.

A New Enfield in the Ranks

In a telephone call to Captain Titus on Wednesday, November 3, Sylvain Tétrault said that the 1853 Enfield rifle musket ordered from Loyalist Arms in Halifax by his son, Nicolas, had arrived at the Tétrault home in Memramcook. At the time of the phone call, Nicolas had not yet seen the musket, but was coming from Moncton to Memramcook that evening. Sylvain stated that Nicolas also received a sling, bayonet, scabbard and a couple of extra nipples for the musket. This is all great news, both for Nicolas and for the company as a whole, as it is another sign of growth. Sylvain added that he (Sylvain) hopes to purchase a greatcoat sometime this winter. Congratulations, Nicolas!

Canadians in the Ranks of the Fifth New Hampshire

Octave Labarre was born in Trois-Rivières, Quebec, and was a resident there when, at age 28, he enlisted in Co. C on September 12, 1861. He was mustered-in as a private one month later, on October 12, 1861. Labarre was wounded at Antietam on September 17, 1862 and discharged for disability on February 13, 1863, near Alexandria, Virginia.

James Wightman • A Civil War Surgeon from PEI

The Civil War touched communities large and small all across Atlantic Canada. An example of this may be found at the grave of Dr. James Wightman, located near Montague, Prince Edward Island. James Wightman served briefly as Assistant Surgeon of the 2nd Massachusetts Infantry. This was the regiment in which Robert Gould Shaw served until being named colonel of the famed 54th Massachusetts, as portrayed in the movie, “Glory”.

Wightman was originally from Georgetown, Prince Edward Island, located on the Island’s eastern shore in Kings County, near Montague. His father, Joseph Wightman, was a prominent farmer, shipbuilder, merchant, politician and officeholder, who had immigrated to PEI from Dumfries, Scotland, and settled on Lot 59 in the area. James left PEI to get his medical training at the Massachusetts Medical College, graduating in 1862. On March 19, 1863, he enlisted in the 2nd Massachusetts Infantry, serving as the regiment’s Assistant Surgeon. His muster-sheet lists him as being from Boston.

The 2nd Massachusetts was a veteran regiment by the time Wightman joined, having formed in May 1861 and serving in Maryland and Virginia. In 1862, the regiment was engaged at Winchester, Cedar Mountain, in the Cornfield at Antietam, in the Fredericksburg campaign and in several other campaigns and marches. What action Wightman saw is unclear. The regiment was involved at Stafford Court House (January-April, 1863), Germania Ford (April 29), Chancellorsville (May 1-5) and Brandy Station (June 9) while Wightman was assigned to the regiment, but at some point he contracted typhoid fever and was sent to the Armory Hospital in Washington, DC, where he died on June 16, 1863 (one source says June 15), having served with the regiment for just three months.

Since he was an officer, his body was returned home to Prince Edward Island and buried in Saint Andrew’s Point Pioneer Cemetery, near Lower Montague. This cemetery is located at 643 Saint Andrew’s Point Road, an area known locally as Wightman’s Point.

The cemetery, like many shoreline cemeteries throughout the Maritimes, has suffered from coastal erosion, and so some graves have been lost. Remaining, however, are five headstones and “several worn sandstone markers”. One of the surviving headstones is that of James Wightman (*above, right*). A 1929 article in “The Evening Patriot” by James Westaway McCue, said, “Not long ago some Grand Army Veterans sent a man to Lower Montague to find the remains of James Wightman so that his name could be recorded on the roll of the 2nd Massachusetts and that his final resting place could be honoured.”



About “Battle Lines”

Care is taken with each issue of “Battle Lines”, that spelling, punctuation, grammar and formatting are all correct, that margins, spacing and fonts all meet the standards of a worthwhile publication. This is done by computer, and so the best viewing is also on a computer or from the printed page. Those viewing on a tablet or on the small screen of a cell phone may find the newsletter difficult to read, and thus less valuable as a communications tool. I receive very little feedback about the newsletters, so it is difficult to rate its value to members, or even if they are read.

The font used for the main text is almost always “Georgia” in a 10-point print size. The headlines are from a set of authentic Civil War-era fonts purchased for the purpose of using them in newsletters, posters and on other company documents. The two that I most often use are referred to simply as Type 8 and Type 9, the latter of which looks much like *italic* print. They are usually printed in a size-14 font. Some computers may not display these fonts correctly in their proper format, although when sent to you as a PDF file, it is the hope that they would maintain the formatting that was sent to you.

If you are experiencing difficulty in reading your newsletters, it may be that you are viewing them on a cell phone or other small screen, or it may be that the fonts or spacing are being changed by the receiving device.

The newsletter serves as a communications link within Co. H, as a recruiting tool, and as an archive of Co. H events and achievements. However, if members are experiencing strange spacing, single lines overlapping onto the next page (called “widows” and “orphans” in the print world), or strange, indecipherable lettering, please know that they do not leave the office of “Battle Lines” that way. Please consider using a computer, or reading the newsletter from a printed page. If too many people are not reading the newsletters because of difficulties in reacting to print on a small screen, or due to indecipherable type, then the critical communication role of the newsletter is lost. Perhaps

we should revert to communication exclusively by email so that everybody will have the opportunity to read all information, or there may be other solutions, including reading it from our website. Your thoughts about the future of the newsletter are sought and encouraged. (*L. Titus*)

! News of the War in the East !

- **The Battle of Cedar Creek** – An email received from Regimental Quartermaster, the sutler based in Gettysburg, reported that the annual reenactment of the Battle of Cedar Creek was going ahead as planned for 2021. The email stated, “In commemoration of the 157th anniversary of the Battle of Cedar Creek, originally fought on October 19, 1864, the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation will host the reenactment event on the original fields in Middletown, Virginia.” The event took place on October 15-17, and always receives positive reviews from participants. It is a unique event in that the reenactment takes place on an original battlefield.
- **Black Powder Safety** – The shocking and mysterious events that occurred on the set of the western-themed movie, “Rust” on October 21 in New Mexico, resulted in the death of a noted cinematographer and a serious injury to the movie’s director. The shot was allegedly fired by actor Alec Baldwin from what he was told was a “cold gun” – meaning it was empty. For our purposes, this tragic incident serves as a reminder, and illustrates the need for constant safety when we handle black powder firearms – even when shooting blanks, as they are supposed to do in the movie industry.
- **Carrying a Firearm** – We receive periodic emails from the National Firearms Association as part of our group membership. In the “In the News” section of October 22, the question was asked, “Is a gun sock considered encased when walking to and from your stand outside of legal shooting times?” Although the question is not about transporting black powder firearms, it may still relate to those of us who use a gun case made of canvas or other soft material to transport our musket. The answer, from David Critchlow, an Ontario Provincial Enforcement Specialist with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, read, “A firearm that is completely encased within a gun sock is considered to be encased. The firearm cannot be partially sticking out of the gun sock. Also, remember that the firearm needs to be unloaded.” (*I would add that it also requires a trigger lock.* – *L. Titus*)
- **“Facebook” Becomes “Meta”** – In late October it was announced that Facebook was rebranding itself to become “Meta”, a sign of changing times in the expanding “metaverse” and the future of the Internet. What this means for Facebook pages such as ours, if anything, is as yet unknown.
- **Fortress Louisbourg** – Although not a Civil War story, it is one which troubles the historically-minded. CTV News in Halifax reported on November 3 that employees at the Fortress of Louisbourg in Nova Scotia had examined their collection of about 600 cannon balls found over the years on the National Historic Site and found about 100 of them to be unexploded case shot or shells, meaning they still contained black powder and had the potential to explode. The report continued to say that the Canadian Army was called, and that a team identified the potentially dangerous ordnance, separating it from solid shot. The worrisome shot and shells were transported to Base Gagetown in New Brunswick, where they were destroyed. So much for history, although some fragments were to be returned to the Louisbourg archives and a sample of eighteenth century black powder was to be studied in an RCMP lab.
- **Change of Company H Formation Date** – Those with a keen eye may have noticed that on the banner of “Battle Lines”, beginning with the November 2021 issue, the mustering-in date for Company H was changed. It has long read “September 9, 2018”, for this is the date when the present era of Co. H, 5th New Hampshire was formed. However, this organization can trace its roots back to a meeting held at the home of Dave Adams in Salisbury, New Brunswick on March 17, 2002, when Dave Adams, Colin Lynch (of Miramichi, NB) and Lindsay Titus first formed Co. K, 5th New Hampshire, a designation that soon changed to Co. H to reflect the much stronger Canadian and Atlantic Canadian representation within its ranks. Plus, Co. H was the only company in the regiment with at least one soldier from each of the four Atlantic Provinces. To honour these roots, the date change on the banner was made to reflect the original founding of the company.

