

2018 Hastings/Charlton Park After Action Report

Thanks to everyone who was able to attend. I arrived on site in the early evening due to some significant construction, weather, and traffic delays. Ultimately the weather forecast would scare some public as well as some re-enactors into likely not attending, but overall, we managed through the weather well.

Over the weekend I was summoned to a meeting with the 3rd Michigan Infantry Co. F regarding some unresolved issues from Gettysburg. I walked over to their camp (it was about 1.25 miles away) and was presented with the chair I discarded at Gettysburg, completely reconditioned (see pictures below). What a great gift, thanks 3rd Michigan Infantry Co. F!

We started off the weekend with drill on Saturday which went very well. At the end of the drill, we participated in a ceremony for Jim Newkirk and John Clark, which included all the re-enactors on parade at the Village Green. Thanks to everyone who attended. We later rolled into the battle on the High Meadows. Our march went quicker than it has in the past (perhaps due to cooler temperatures) and we had some downtime while out on the field. Compliments to our Wing Commander Denny Whiting and 5th Company / Jeremy Buschlen for doing an outstanding job leading the way as skirmishers. Unfortunately, he suffered heavy casualties and it became the job of 4th Company and Robbie Giorlando to secure our left flank as we pressed the Rebels. We pushed them all the way to the tree line before they decided to punch back, and they pushed us back a bit before finally surrendering. It was, as always, a great job by Bill Adams and his men.

We marched back to camp to prepare for the evening parade. Thanks to Tom Emerick for walking the Sergeants through the parade. We conducted it on the Village Green and want to recognize the fifers that joined us for the march and parade, thank you. Special note to 1st Company (Marty Walker, who didn't run over anyone with his company this weekend!), and 2nd Company (Douglas McComas) for their men wearing white gloves for the Parade.

We had the tactical Saturday morning, and it was the typical tactical. We could not have done as well as we did without the great support of Kevin Yeager and his boys on horseback, thank you. About the tactical, I'll provide a snippet of the same speech I gave on Sunday here in my AAR, as it relates to the tactical. I am a fan of tacticals? Nope. Who is? The Rebs, apparently, and our brothers in the Cav. The battle in the High Meadows and the tactical is the primary reason (I believe) the Cav goes to Hastings. So to support the hobby means supporting key events. To support key events, sometimes we need to do things we might otherwise not want to do during the event. So next year, if you did sit the tactical out, please don't. Please realize (also from a prior speech), any event is successful on three pillars, spectators, re-enactors, and sutlers. If we don't support an activity or formation, we give other re-enactors a reason to not go to the event, it then reduces our overall numbers. When our numbers reduce, so do spectators. Lowered re-enactors and spectators mean less revenue for sutlers. If any of them pull out, we possibly lose more re-enactors, and so it goes around the circle. Less re-enactors, less public, the event can't support itself. I know this is a voluntary hobby, but please support

the formations, please engage the public, please visit Andy Fulks at Fall Creek Suttlers and ALL the other sutlers at the event. I'm certainly not saying this event is going anywhere, but let's keep it from going anywhere. I would also encourage company commanders to set the example in attending all the formations, including the tactical. You lead, your men will follow. (ok, off soap box).

I could not say enough about the drumming of TJ Berlucchi. We all know how difficult it is to march when you have a mediocre drummer, but TJ just knocked the cover off the ball this weekend. Great job. Also, thanks to Russ Paul who was the Chief of Staff and all around go-to guy, thanks Russ.

After the tactical we geared up for one more drill, and obviously the Drill Gods were smiling on us (even though Dave Bauman made the lady in the walker move 3 times....). Because the rain started just as drill was finished. Nice job by 3rd Company (combo Nick Miner / Scot Spiekerman) on managing the colors the weekend. As Sgt. Major, John Vohlken was a huge help in getting our lines set and marked.

The weather for the battle looked tenuous, but (again...) we threaded the needle on the rain and we were able to put on a good show. 1st Company / Marty Walker led the way by stirring up a hornet's nest of Rebs. We had to take a lot of casualties (the 1st Michigan just did not want to stop with those Henrys!) to open the door for the Confederate Army, including trying to expose our left flank for them to take. We finally gave up the fight and the Rebs were victorious on Sunday.

Thanks again, and we will see you at Jackson!!

Colonel Van

