

7TH MICHIGAN CAVALRY MORNING REPORT

Headquarters: Bay City, Michigan

Newsletter to begin

Each day that the U.S. army has existed, every company clerk has had to submit a morning report to his superiors detailing the number of members present for duty, and the status of those who are not.

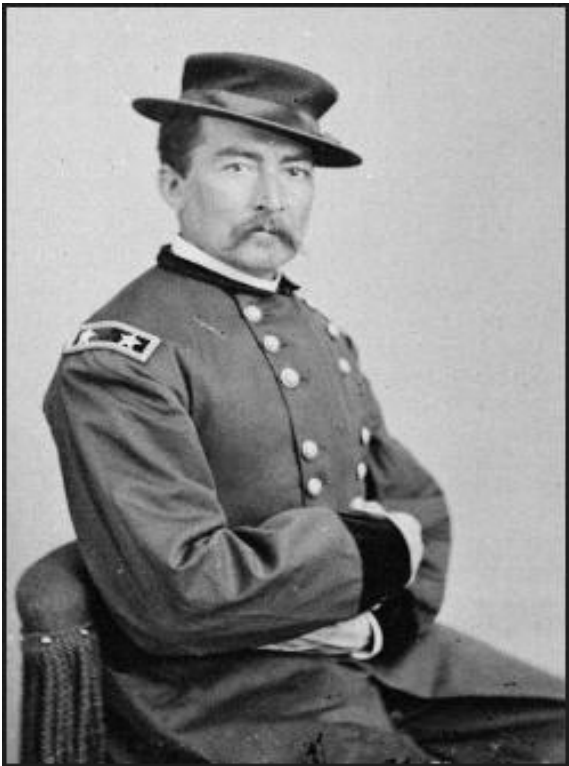
So, I thought that would be a good name for a newsletter for our Civil War roundtable.

I hope to produce one about every other month of two or three pages length and to include notices and short articles of interest. If you are interested in including an article or a notice, contact me at my email address of jpergande@charter.mi.

- Jerry Pergande -

Cavalryman Requirements

Major General Phillip Sheridan, the Union cavalry commander of the Army of the Potomac, said that the ideal cavalryman was not over 5 feet tall, weighed not more than 100 lbs, and was a bachelor and an orphan.



"Little Phil" Sheridan Cavalry Requirements (Cont.)

Their horses appreciated this recommended light weight as they had a lot to carry. A cavalryman carried a pistol (or sometimes two) with 18 rounds of ammunition for each, a saber, a carbine with its ammunition, an overcoat, poncho, bedroll, several day's rations in his saddlebags, tin cup, feed for his horse, a feedbag, and a heavy iron pin to stick into the ground to tether his horse.

The Union army supplied horses to their cavalrymen, but a Confederate cavalryman had to supply his own. If his horse was lost, he often had to take leave to go home to obtain another.

No matter how long a ride, upon stopping, a cavalryman's first duty was to feed and care for his horse. Then he could eat or rest.

The role of the cavalry changed as the Civil War progressed. Initially, each brigade of infantry was assigned a regiment of cavalry (of about 400 men) for scouting and screening its unit from the enemy.

But, Little Phil, as his men called him, saw the cavalry as an attack force that should seek and engage in battles as a large group in its own right. That he did with cavalry attacks including 10,000 men or more.

Oh, and why he thought a cavalryman should be a bachelor and an orphan was because such a person was less distracted by news from home and would be a more aggressive risk-taker as he had less reason to live.

Upcoming Events:

Saginaw River Boat Cruise on the "Princess Wenonah"

**Boarding: 5:30 PM, Thursday, August 21,
2008**

**\$25 per person includes picnic buffet, soft
drinks, coffee, snacks, original Wenonah
Hotel punch, and good company**

**Sponsored by the 7th Michigan Cavalry & the
Bay County Historical Society**

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For info & tickets, call:

(989) 893-5733

Sojourner Truth: She Made Herself Count

Most people in Michigan don't know who she was and the few that do, don't know she lived in Michigan from 1857 until her death in 1883.

Sojourner Truth was born Isabella Baumfree in about 1797 and was raised a slave in New York state, which allowed the practice until 1827.

Before that, her lot was the same as all slaves. She suffered cruelty, beatings, and seeing most of her 13 children sold away from her prior to escape from her master in the 1820's. She lived in hiding with a sympathetic Dutch family until New York's emancipation of its slaves.

Standing 6 feet tall and strong of body and spirit, after becoming free, she discovered that one of her children had been sold south to Alabama after New York's emancipation date. Finding friendly Quakers who assisted her, she sued in federal court and succeeded in freeing him.

In the early 1840's, she felt God had called her, as she explained to Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin", "to travel up and down the land, showing the people their sins and being a sign unto them." She said she changed her name to wipe away the past so she could begin life anew.

She became a nationally known and powerful speaker not only against slavery, but also in support of women's suffrage.

In those times, listening to controversial speeches was one of the only forms of entertainment available in a community. People would flock to hear visiting speakers pour out their polished rhetoric.

But, the audience was not necessary silent nor polite. Its members considered themselves participants who were not barred from injecting comments of support or displeasure into the speech at any time the urge struck them.

Thus, a speaker had to be ready for abuse and with a quick-witted reply. Sojourner Truth was up to her vocation.

On one occasion, a pro-slavery heckler chided her saying her strong words against it bothered him no more than the bite of a flea.

"Perhaps not," she retorted, "But God willing, I

will keep you scratching."



Sojourner Truth

In 1851, she attended a women's rights convention in Akron, Ohio. Surprisingly, several white male ministers appeared and spoke about male superiority, how women were frail, and how their place was to be pampered by society.

Against a concern by the white women present that her doing so would turn the issues to abolition of slavery, she rose to answer the ministers.

With great eloquence, she spoke her most remembered "Ain't I a Woman" speech, which is detailed at

<http://www.kyphilom.com/www/truth.html>

During the Civil War, her efforts to obtain supplies for black regiments were recognized by an invitation to the White House and a meeting with Abraham Lincoln. In 1864, she was appointed a leader of the National Freedman's Relief Association, which strove to improve life for freed slaves.

Her first home in Michigan was in the small town of Harmonia. After 10 years, she moved in

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1867 to nearby Battle Creek, where she died in 1883 and is buried.

In 2008, she became the first woman honored with a bust in the U.S. Capital building. A statue of her stands in the lobby of the new Lincoln museum in Springfield, Illinois, but probably not many visitors know the reasons why.

Civil War Military Organization

Quite often, those reading Civil War books about particular battles tell me they cannot follow the author's detailed descriptions of what occurred.

I suspect a good part of the problem is a lack of understanding of the organization of Civil War military units.

If that is the case, the below is a primer:

The North and the South organized their military units alike. The building block of their units was the **regiment**.

Some regiments were created by the federal government but most were brought into being by an individual state's governor authorizing a person with military experience to raise a regiment.

A regiment was lead by its colonel (the person who raised the regiment) assisted by its other field officers - a lieutenant colonel and a major.

A regiment generally contained 1,000 men, organized into 10 **companies** (lettered A through J) of 100 men each. A company was lead by a captain assisted by 2 or 3 lieutenants.

But, illness, desertions, and deaths quickly reduced regiments to an average of 300 to 400 men. (The largest Union regiment at Gettysburg, the 24th Michigan Infantry, contained about 500 men. By coincidence, it squared off against the largest Confederate unit there, the 26th North Carolina Infantry, of more than 700 men. Both units suffered 80% casualties in the battle.)

Four or 5 regiments (or more later in the war as the regiments suffered greater losses) made up a **brigade** commanded by a brigadier (1 star) general (or temporarily a colonel from one of the regiments if the general was away or killed). A typical brigade contained about 1,600 to 2,000 men. (Confederate brigades tended to be slightly

larger.) Union brigades often had regiments within it from several different states while Confederate brigades most likely would have its regiments, along with its commanding general, hail from the same state.

Three or 4 brigades usually made up a **division**, commanded by a major (2 star) general (or temporarily by brigadier general).

Two to 5 divisions made up a **corps** (pronounced "kor"). How large a corps was depended on how many divisions were available

Civil War Military Organization (Cont.)

and how well its commander, a major general, was perceived. A suspect general might only have 2 divisions while a strong one might be given 5.

Three or 4 corps usually made up an **army**. At Gettysburg, the Union had 7 infantry corps present while the South had only 3 – but each was of a much larger size than each of the Union's corps.

The South usually had 3 corps in an army (which created the left flank, right flank, and center) while the North sometimes had 4, the additional corps being kept available as a reserve.

Regiments were usually known by their state designation, i.e., "The 23rd Michigan Infantry". Brigades and divisions, even though they were formally known by a number (the 3rd Brigade of the 2nd Division of the 5th Corps) were most often referred to by the name of their current commander ("Birney's Division").

A Corps could be known by its numeral designation ("the 2nd Corps") or its leader's name ("Hancock's Corps.")

Southern armies were named after areas ("The Army of Northern Virginia") while Union armies were named after rivers ("The Army of the Potomac"). This can be particularly confusing when talking about the southern "Army of Tennessee" and the north's "Army of the Tennessee". (The word "the" is a tip-off that a river is involved and thus refers to a northern army.)

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Confusion also reigns when two generals of a common name command major units on the opposing sides of a battle. Only a close review of the surrounding language in a paragraph will clear up the confusion caused by that circumstance.

Better books about Civil War battles will contain several pages detailing "The Order of Battle". That will show the military organization of each side, including the unit types, names of commanders, & the larger group that each unit is serving under.

When a description gets confusing, a quick look at the order of battle (and the book's maps) for a unit's position within it and its commander's name can go a long way to understanding events.

Hope this helps.