

**Report of Brig. General Darrell N. Markijohn, USV, commanding
OCTOBER 14-15, 2017--The BATTLE OF FIRST WINCHESTER AND CEDAR CREEK,**

**HDQRS. USV Brigade,
Middletown, Va. October 17, 2017**

The USV returns from the Cedar Creek Fall Campaign with much to talk about and remember. Cedar Creek is an event that we attend every year. We sometimes complain that CC is the “same ole, same ole.” Well..... it was anything but that this year!

The USV Brigade mustered 188 rifles from all three of its infantry Regiments. Overall Commander, Maj. Gen. Ted Brennan designated the USV as the 1st Brigade. It was the largest Federal Brigade on the field. Col. Childs and Col Young, and all of their Field Grade officers and adjutants were present. We assigned two companies of the 3rd USV to Col. Young’s 2nd USV Regiment giving us a balanced two regiment Brigade.

The USV Artillery Regiment was also in force and a significant part of the US Artillery Reserve under the command of Col. Rick Dennis.

Battle of 1st Winchester

For Saturday’s battle, the USV Brigade was positioned on the far right of the union line. General Brennan placed us along the ditch south of the Heater House. We sent skirmishers forward on top of the hill in our front to keep an eye on the enemy. They weren’t there long.

A large force of CS infantry pushed against our front. The CS mounted and dismounted cavalry harassed our right flank, but were held back by our own Cavalry. As the CS army pressed us, we were ordered to fall back. The Brigade did so in order, and continually positioned itself to pour fire into the enemy. We were able to slow down the enemy’s advance significantly, and at about the time that we fell back to the top of the hillside north of the Heater House, the scenario was stopped.

Historically, the Federal Army was pushed back hard by the CS Valley Army, and the USV Brigade did its historical roll in fine order. Colonels Childs and Young handled their regiments very well, and gave up ground grudgingly. It was a good fight.

Saturday Evening Pipe Bomb Evacuation

Obviously, any after action report for 2017 Cedar Creek has to include the unfortunate incident that forced the entire CS army to evacuate their campsite. It is so significant however, that it deserves its own AAR. Please see the supplemental report on that topic.

Sunday Morning Cedar Creek Battle

The Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation cancelled all of Sunday’s scheduled events “for spectators” for obvious reasons. Much credit is given to US General Brennan and CS General Shelton for making the decision to go forward with the Cedar Creek battle. They secured

permission from the Foundation, and since there would be no spectators, moved the battle to 10:30am.

The USV Brigade marched out onto the field to the top of the hill facing the Confederate Camp. Since there were no spectators, it was eerily quiet. I don't think I will ever forget that feeling. We were placed in the middle of the Federal line. The 2nd Brigade was to our right, and the 3rd Brigade was to our left.

The engagement opened with a cavalry assault on the right flank of the Union line. Our cavalry fought it off. Immediately thereafter, a large line of Confederate Infantry emerged directly in our front. They marched through their artillery line and from about 200 yards, opened fire with a resounding rebel yell. The battle was on.

As the CS troops advanced, the Union line began to fall back. After securing three separate lines of defense, we decided to hold our ground. At about that moment, led by companies in the USV Brigade, Federal Troops began to charge the CS line. Once it started, groups of US soldiers up and down the line double quick' d into the Confederate Lines. When about half the army had done the same, we decided to end the scenario.

The battle ended a little earlier than planned. Yet as I looked at the troops, now totally commingled with their Confederate Counterparts, it was easy to see why. After all of the crap that we all had to deal with the night before, including an entire evacuation of the Confederate Army from their camps for over 5 hours, it was a very fitting end. It was clear that our troops charged the enemy not to engage it, but rather to embrace their brothers in arms. It was one of the most emotional moments I have ever experienced. Men were sobbing. Shouts of USA... USA... USA... erupted up and down both lines. We quieted the troops, and I asked the Federal band to strike up the Star Spangled Banner. EVERYONE placed their hand over their heart and SANG. General Shelton asked his bugler to play Dixie. Hugs were a plenty, and well wishes were exchanged everywhere.

As we walked off the field, I was inundated with comments from fellow soldiers saying this was the RIGHT thing to do, and that this was the greatest battle EVER.

Aftermath

153rd Cedar Creek will be discussed for years to come. Our hobby, which already had a number of issues to deal with, now has new and more foreboding challenges to address. It is hard to know how the events from this past weekend will shape the future of this hobby. All I can say is that I have never seen the Hobby more UNITED than I did this past Sunday. And trust me, we are going to need every bit of this unanimity to overcome this new assault.

I commend the USV Regimental Commanders, their field grade officers, their company commander, the non-commissioned officers, and every soldier and civilian. While we are only an army on the weekend, it was because we were an army THIS past weekend that allowed us to resolve a very serious situation. Your thorough search of your camp, and the written reports that you assembled were the sole reasons that the Union Army was not forced to evacuate the site. The men and women leaders of the USV DID THEIR JOBS, and did them well. You all deserve to step back and take pride in this extraordinary effort.

Next up.... Remembrance Day. WE WILL NOT STAND DOWN. We have already had a number of discussions with law enforcement and safety organizations in Gettysburg and the PARADE IS A GO. Security is obviously an issue, and TOP MEN are working on it. In the meantime, get the word out. Let's send a message to the entire Country that this hobby will endure. I cannot think of a better way to do that than to swell the streets at Gettysburg with three regiments of USV infantry, USV Cavalry, USV Artillery, USV Sharpshooters, and USV Civilians.

Very Respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. MARKIJOHN

Brig. General, United States Volunteers, 1st Brigade at Cedar Creek, Comdg