The Cannoneer January/February 2020

Greetings and warm tidings to all. I hope that the warmer weather and the holidays were enjoyed by all. As many of us sit on the couch and wonder how to lose the few extra pounds that we gained by eating one or five too many cookies and sweets, the 2020 schedule of events continue to grow, evolve and solidify. In about sixty days many of us will be thinking that we need to get out and start practicing if not sooner. There is a certain feeling when a target disappears that you were aiming at and after pulling the trigger. But that feeling would not be the same if you were on the firing line without the other members of the Battery. So as this year progressives, we hope that you can find time to make smoke and break targets with the rest of us.

**2020 Skirmish Schedule:** Please note that these dates are pretty well set in stone but as we know, nothing is guaranteed.

April 25-26 Lefthanders club skirmish, Loami Illinois

May Spring Nationals

June 6-7 Twin cities rod and gun Club, Wisconsin

June 27-28 Frank V Matuszek memorial Skirmish, Streator Illinois

July 18-19 Bristol Conservation Club

August 15-16 Location to be determined.

September 19-20 Bristol Conservation Club

October Fall Nationals

**Two New Ranges:** Last year the 29th Wisconsin at the last minute added an additional skirmish to the calendar. They were slow to confirm and give out information about this skirmish causing the Battery to be unable to attend. This year we have the date and hopefully we will get the details in a respectable amount of time. In addition the 46th Illinois have been struggling to make a profit at their Sandyford Skirmish the last several years due to poor attendance and the high range fees. They have been trying unsuccessfully to get the Sandyford Club to lower their range fees. This lack of action has forced them to look for a new range and they may have found one just over the Wisconsin boarder near Beloit. It has been reported that this is a very nice range which is looking to attract more shooters to it. We hope to get more details about these changes and we hope that the 46th can keep the same dates.

Being that we share the Sandyford range with the 46th we also share a lot of equipment with them as well. So their possible move has created several questions. The Battery is committed to hold a special skirmish there in June to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Western Region. Afterwards, a discussion will need to be had as to continue as before or move with the 46th. There is also the question of the equipment such as target frames, PA systems, etc and their storage. But before we go through all this, the 46th will need to have the new range approved by the N-SSA and until that happens, the Battery will hold pat and continue on its present course.

**Future possible events**

**NRA Days** IN 2018 the Battery was invited and participated in the NRA Day event at the ISRA range in Kankakee. It was very hot but those guests that attended seemed to show interest in the sport of Skirmishing. The event was cancelled in 2019. At the last Relic Show the Commander talked to several people involved and they were looking to move it to a cooler time of the year would like to see us in 2020. The Commander would like to see the program changed to allow for a demonstration of some type. This would be a great way to display the types of weapons used in the war and try to recruit new members for the Battery or the N-SSA. Depending on the situation, the Battery might need assistance from other Western Region units. More follow up is needed.

**Wauconda Civil War Days**. After the embarrassing and ignorant actions of the Head of the Lake County Conservation District, it was reported that they would bring back the Civil War Day event. This is another good event to educate and recruit. Normally we set up an encampment with the cannon or gattling gun as the center piece. The Battery will not be firing either but is trying to gain access to the event. Presently this event will occur on the July 12 -13 weekend. Scott Hamilton is the contact person and hopefully will get more information on this event as it progresses.

**Brookfield 4th of July Parade.** This may not be a great way to recruit or educate but it is a nice way to make $185 for the Battery. The Commander will again be looking for three or more volunteers who are willing to march the route. The last two years the Battery lead the parade and were back in the AC after 45 minutes. There is no guarantee this will be the case again in 2020.

**Grayling Long Range Artillery Match.** Loom’s Battery, at last September’s event, stated that they would make the effort to host another event in 2020. They did not give a date. If the Battery is interested in attending they will need to obtain materials for projectiles, by powder and all that other stuff. Last year Loom’s Battery could not confirm the event until 90 days prior. Hopefully they have the right contact information and the Battery will be informed better than last year. Yes there were issues.

**The 142nd National is not a possible event**. IT WILL BE HAPPENING. And the Battery will again be working with the 46th Illinois as part of the Sanitation Crew, or the Privy Patrol. It is expected that the Battery have people out in Virginia the weekend prior to the shoot to clean and prep the bathrooms. Then over the week, maintain them. The Battery cannot officially participate in any of the shooting events but the Commander has volunteered to help run a fun shoot for those hosting and maybe a few other selected shooters by invite only. This is something different to make the trip more palatable. This will be held on the Tuesday before the official skirmish events start. The Battery will need as many people who are able and willing to travel out there. Stan and the Commander are thinking about a week long menu. If they get enough members out there, people can be given a day off to go sightseeing. Also as the saying goes, many hands make for light work. Members do not need to spend the whole week, it would be nice, but any days they can work will be much appreciated. Plus the Battery will receive credit even for non-members who show up and help.

**Other Basic Information and Operational Changes:**

At the last Western Region Membership Meeting it was voted on and approved to make all the Regional Skirmish team fees the same across the board. In the past, fees ranged from $6 to $10 per shooter. After the discussion it was decided that it was acceptable to ask for $10 per person for each team event. Normally there are only three, maybe four team events thus costing each shooter about $30 for a weekend of target breaking fun. This is within the realm of the cost of a day at a zoo, or museum and even a movie. Members are expected to pay all team fees at the skirmish or soon after.

Teams are required to send in the fees for the National Skirmishes several weeks prior to the event. National team fees will still be $7.50 per team event. In this case, members can pay prior or later. Any member with an outstanding invoice balance over 4 weeks old will not be allowed to participate in shooting events until it is paid.

The Battery has been having success in increasing their ranks. In the past, the Battery would hold monthly meetings and new members were expected to attend a meeting and request to become a probationary member called a recruit. Over the years, as the location of members spread, it became difficult to obtain a quorum for a meeting causing meetings to happen at skirmishes when member numbers are high. The recruiting process has changed to allow people to join the Battery quicker. A change in the By-laws may be required to allow a person to join the Battery with a Volunteer member sponsor and the approval of two of the executive board members.

For those who are new and recently joined the Battery, you are considered as recruit or a probationary member. Recruits cannot hold an office and does not have the ability to vote on Battery matters. Only once a recruit becomes a Volunteer, can they get full rights. To become a Volunteer, after belonging to the Battery for 1 or more years, a recruit must submit a request in writing to the membership requesting the change of status to a Volunteer. A secrete vote will be taken and if a majority agrees, they then become a Volunteer.

With the increase in members attending skirmishes the Commander is happy to be able to field two teams for the same event. In other words there are enough for an A team and a B team. The problem that arises is who makes up the A team and who is placed on the B team. Philosophically the A team should be made up of the best shooters, allowing for the best chance of winning. Yet it is nice to allow for a mix of shooters so to keep things fresh. This decision will be left up to the Commander or Team Captain. This will also be the same as to which members will be farmed out if there is not enough for a B team and too many for just an A team.

To assist the Commander in this decision making, the RSO will ask each member the amounts of hits per event. This will help determine hits per seconds for each individual. Because the Battery has many talented smoothbore shooters, last year the RSO has started to ask for more detailed information of the hits. They will ask for how many hits you got in your first two shots, and then the total after those two shots. Example would be if you hit your first shot, missed your second and then hit two more after that, you would report one and two for a total of three hits. The thought of this is to see if someone has more hits with their first couple shots. This sounds a little more complicated but it is simple and easy to learn.

**Free Information:** Dues we pay helps the three organizations run smoothly. The $10 Battery dues help pay for office supplies, postage and State registration fees. What is left over goes to the care and keep of the Battery equipment, meaning the cannon and two mortars and such. This goes the same with parades, display donations, and skirmish hosting profits.

The $10 yearly fee for the Western Region is spent on the same with the addition of covering the cost of sending the Western Regional Commander out to VA twice a year for the Executive Board meetings.

The $80 yearly fee for the National organization, N-SSA, is a little more elaborate. There are the operational fees as the other two, but you have to add in the cost of the upkeep of Fort Shenandoah, insurance, and the Skirmish Line publication. Fort Shenandoah belongs to the members of the N-SSA. This means we can hold skirmishes there when we want. The Battery has a small lot that is presently ours. We can use it year round, like a time share. You just cannot stay longer than 30 days in a row.

**Wanted:** The Battery in its form now officially started in 1974. The Battery once had an official Historian who started a book with photos and artifacts. Sad to say, the book was lost when a new Historian had took over. Since then the Commander has taken on the role of Historian and has been collecting things in hopes of recreating the History of the Battery. Now that the Commander has space, and a helper, he has started the process. What he has found out is that he lacks photos from the last ten plus years. The advent of digital cameras, smart phones, and being too busy, the Commander has been more of a leader and not a photographer. So check your files and send those team pictures, action shots and such to the Commander so he can incorporate them into the Battery’s Book. If possible please give dates and places the photos were taken.

Did You Know… At age 8 the Commander took part in the first parade that Battery H participated in.

**Travels with members:** Over the years the Commander has been going places and reporting back to as what he thought and if you should check it out. He has been to many places and seen many Civil War related museums. Now he has heard of Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, PA that Randy visited. According to Randy, the museum is very nice and worth a visit. The displays are good and filled with information. He also said there is large book store that has many tempting books on the Civil War for Sale.

Harpers Ferry, late last year, saw the derailment of a train as it was crossing the Potomac River taking out the pedestrian bridge allowing foot traffic to the C&O Canal and scenic views of the river. It is closed to all until fixed.