

# The Maine Bugle

Number 7

Spring 2004

## Into the Wilderness

"Imagine," a North Carolina soldier, W.A. Smith, later wrote in his book, "a great, dismal forest containing...the worst kind of thicket of second-growth trees...so thick with small pines and scrub oak, cedar, dogwood, and other growth common to the country...(that) one could see barely ten paces." (1)

"The region, which was known as the Wilderness long before the Civil War, lay ten miles west of Fredericksburg, a patch of natural entanglements some twelve miles wide and six miles deep along the south bank of the Rapidan River. German colonists brought over in the the early eighteenth century by Virginia governor Alexander Spotswood had tried to tame the Wilderness and failed ...attempts to establish mining in the area resulted in heavy cutting of timber to plank the roads and fuel iron-smelting operations, such as the one at Catherine Furnace. When the would-be industry was abandoned, the forest returned with a vengeance; by 1860 it had produced almost impenetrable second-growth woodland." (2)

A good overview of the Battle of the Wilderness can be found at this site:[http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/civwar/html/cw\\_008701\\_wildernessvi.htm](http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/civwar/html/cw_008701_wildernessvi.htm)

"The Into the Wilderness event site lies on the preserved Brandy Station Battlefield, and is provided courtesy of the Civil War Preservation Trust. The Trust will receive all direct payments for land use. The specified area...is approximately 2.3 miles long and a mile wide...

The large wooded area in the center is dense second growth approximating the Virginia Wilderness in 1864. The approaches to this area from north and south lie on open hayfields crossed by numerous hedgerows.

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## Schedule - Spring 2004

### March 27-28

Five Forks (md)  
near Petersburg, VA

### April 3-4

School of the Trooper (md)  
Lineboro MD

### April 30-May 2

Recon III -Into the Wilderness (mc)  
Brandy Station VA

### May 29-30

Goose Creek Bridge  
Middleburg VA (md)

### June 12-13

Civil War Days - Rockville, MD (mdc)  
m - mounted d - dismounted c - civilians



## Commander's Call

### The Origins of Our Unit

by Gerald Todd

In 1959, Stevens Bunker formed a unit to take part in the upcoming centennial of the Civil War. Being from Maine, but living, at that time, in Florida, he chose the 2nd Regiment of Maine Cavalry because it had operated in the region and it was a Maine regiment. All through the 60's 2nd Maine took part in reenactments, with a little time out to

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## 2nd Maine in the News!

Bagdad, FL- Union troops' graffiti was recently on view to the public. The Associated Press said that soldiers drew caricatures, flags, and script on the plaster walls of the Thompson House when they captured the Panhandle town of Bagdad. The drawings were discovered during 1970s restoration of the house.

The graffiti, dated October 26, 1864, has been linked to troops commanded by Medal of Honor recipient Andrew Barclay Spurling, a former lieutenant-colonel of the Second Maine Cavalry.

Owners Charles and Pat D'Asaro protect the graffiti with panels painted to match the other walls. The panels were removed for the recent Bagdad Village Preservation Association holiday heritage tour.



Lt-Col Andrew Barclay Spurling

## Sleeping on Campaign

Before setting up your tent, sweep the area with a pine branch. Then, remove any stones that are visible in the ground. If you find any roots, be sure to cushion them with a pile of straw or leaves. Now you're ready to spread your poncho!

## Into the Wilderness (cont)

Roads in the area are unpaved all-weather. There are virtually no modern distractions—none at all within view at most positions.” (3) “A topographic map and photos of the area can be found at this site: <http://www.cwlhi.org/RECON3/Terrain-map.htm>

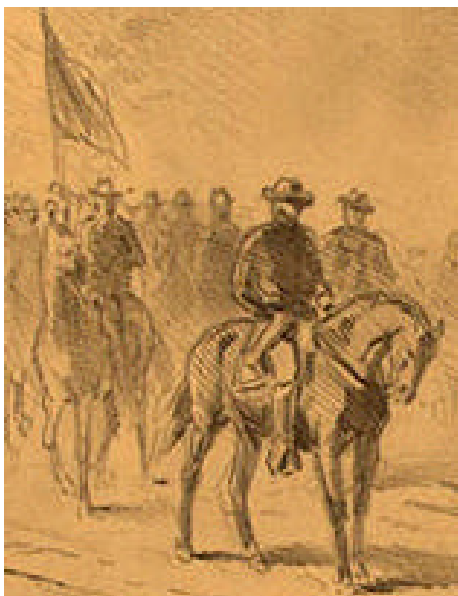
The 1st Maine Cavalry, Co. A, will be portraying the 8th Pennsylvania Cavalry, Co. A, for this event, along with reenactors from other cavalry units. Information about the historical 8th Pennsylvania can be found at this site: <http://www.pa-roots.com/~pacw/8thcavorg.html>

At the time of this battle, Co. A was detached for duty as the HQ Escort for General John Sedgwick, Commander of the Union Army Sixth Corps, so Company A was likely a well-disciplined outfit.

Although they were used as an escort, it is likely that they participated in some fighting during the battle because Gen. Sedgwick himself came under fire on the second day of the battle “when the Union Army was flanked on the north by General Gordon’s command as night fell. A near-panic ensued. Gen. Sedgwick rode to restore his lines and an aide next to him “was shot off of his horse. The general was able to stop the panic and as night fell the Union Army’s line was stabilized.

Notes: (1) & (2)- Houghton Mifflin, Civil War Battlefield Guide

Note: (3)- Recon 3 Website.



**Gen. Grant at the Wilderness**

## Origins (cont.)

vist South-East Asia, and even there 2nd Maine was represented in a Civil War reenactment!

State-side again, where ever Bunker went, a bit of 2nd Maine cropped up. Company A in Florida, K in Tennessee, D in Louisiana, and F sorta everywhere and no where at once. Eventually in the mid 70’s Bunker landed in Baltimore Maryland. Much of the old unit faded away to ones and twos here and there, but a new core began to form in Baltimore. Originally part of Company F we became, for whatever reason, Company A.

2nd Maine was never typical. In 1976 2nd Maine drilled and operated as a unit when other “dismounted cavalry” were simply gaudy mobs running around yelling and shooting. We gained a reputation for bringing together the strays and still operate as an orderly unit. We were safe, reliable, and looked good, often being invited to events that had advertised “No Dismounted Cavalry.”

The unit cruised on into the 80’s and through the 125th anniversary series of events. Then, as the 90’s came along many folks moved on and the company began to dwindle.

The 90’s were a roller coaster ride. The unit grew and increasingly did events mounted! No sooner were we putting 6-8 people in the saddle then it all fell down again and by 1996 only two or three of us were turning out at all.

In September of 96 we registered for the event at Monmouth New Jersey for the first time as 1st Maine Cavalry. The original 2nd Maine never served in the mid-Atlantic region and the recent movie Gettysburg had folks confusing us with the “mutineers” of the 2nd Maine Infantry. No one was doing 1st Maine any more - so it seemed the sensible thing to do. It was a fresh start for an old unit a unit that was, in many ways, new.

**To be continued...**



## Meet a Trooper

As the new editor of The Bugle, I would like to begin a new feature called Meet a Trooper! that will appear in each issue. If you send me a brief bio, I will publish it here.” Joe Bordonaro- Joe has been a member of the 1st Maine Cavalry since last Fall. Joe is also new to cavalry reenacting, although he has been reenacting CW infantry since Jan. 1999. Joe lives in Mt. Laurel, NJ, and teaches in Mullica Township, NJ, in Grades 2,4,5,6,7, & 8. In addition to reenacting, Joe likes to play guitar. He has a period-correct banjo and is beginning to learn how to play. He is married. His wife Karen is a homemaker who enjoys swimming and photography.



## New Cavalry Forum Online

Jerry has set up a new cavalry forum online. This is a valuable resource, as people from all over the country who are interested in Civil War cavalry reenacting are posting information. If you want to check it out, here is the website:

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