

## 2011 Manassas Report -

Arrived at Manassas registration at 7:45 pm on Wednesday.

Some of my group had arrived an hour earlier and were waiting on me to register and move to the encampment so we could be together.

Also Major Dubiel had 11 guys from the 6th. Kentucky coming to form up with us so we could have a company on the field.

Registration was quick and the encampment/ battlefield was only a couple miles down the road.

The area was a nice place for this battle... pretty much natural looking...tall grass with very little shade to be had.

The battlefield looked more like a football field with many high bleachers at the far end going length wise along with the field.

This looked like a sporting event to me and the guys...but it was what it was.

Giant tents were set up along side and around the battlefield area with giant air conditioners being hooked up to them.

We past a huge EMT setup area as well close to the bleachers.

We stopped at a check point and asked for directions but the person only knew that the encampment was still down the dirt road we were on.

A second event person appeared with a clip board and I asked him where the 2nd. Brigade - Jackson Corps. was located.

He looked puzzled, so I told him we were with Gen. Dave Cornett / Ken Wilt and Col. James Carver.

He looked at me like he didn't have a clue who these folks were.

So again I asked him...where are the Confederates at out here? He then pointed and said...follow this path all the way down and turn left

there should be someone there that can help you.

Great I told him...

Got to the end of the road and sure enough there was a guy standing there and I asked him the same thing as before.

Now he knew Ken Wilt but not the others...so he said that we were must be with the Cav unit over yonder.

Over yonder as way, way over yonder, as far back as you could go on this encampment.

The guys and me pondered this and came to the same conclusion...man...always the furthest away from everything.

By this time we were losing light and then drove over to the Cav area.

Once there I met a Col. Mike Brown and he told us that Cav and dis-mounted Cav for the Jackson's Corps was here.

So...rushing against the light clock we proceeded to set up camp.

It was hot and humid and we were soaking wet in a matter of minutes ... and as luck would have it ... I was setting up in the dark and not a happy

camper for I had to do most of the work because everyone was bitching about how hot they were.

That night was horrible. We were wet, tired from the 10 hour drive and dealing with stupid event people.

We didn't get much sleep due to the heat ( 91 at night ) and no breeze to boot.

We got up to look at our surroundings and seen that we were very close to the tree line which was great for there was not cover if we had to be out

in the field like most people that were there and hung out in the woods just to stay cool.

We ate breakfast and I went to look for officers that might know something in my area.

Again...no one knew very much about anything and they told me to wait till later that day ( Thur. ) to follow up on what was going on.

The guys and I decided to walk the area and see if we could come across someone we might know from other companies.

We came across an event person and we ask him what they had for the reenactors...like wood,water and ice.

He told us that ice was \$4 a bag and that we would have to purchase the wood as well. The water for us was a long, long, long rubber hose that was connected to a very large plastic water tank that was out in the sun all day along with the hose. This was for the horses and us. I told him that he must be mistaken and he told me he was not. Well...I was pissed at this and so were the guys... hot water to drink!

It cost us money in tolls and entrance fees and now this! I felt like leaving, but the guys wanted to stay since we came all this way. Being that it was Thursday... the fields were mostly bare of tents except for Union camp which had a great spot...close to everything.

I was still looking for James Carver or Ken Wilt but no luck... I tried to call Captain Coots of the 6th. Kentucky, but no luck, so we decided to kill time and go sight seeing in the area. Parking was 2 miles from our camp and being that at 9:30 am, it was already 93 degrees and humid, it seemed like 5 miles of walking. We spent some time doing this and then returned back to camp with our bags of ice and water. I got a cell phone call from the rest of my guys saying that they would be here later that evening...so we waited for them. They called again once they got into the camp area, but we never seen them that evening. We tried to sleep...but it was too hot. Maybe we got 2-3 hours sleep going on day 2 of our adventure.

Friday morning the guys that I have been waiting on showed up at my tent. They told me that they were told to camp on the other side of the field even though I needed them in my camp. So I walked back to where they were set up and they took me to the officer that was there. The officer happened to be Col. James Carver... the very guy I had been looking for. We talked about the situation and he told me that he had lost over half of his command and has no idea where in the hell they were out here. He asked me to set my tents over by him and I told him in no way am I going to tear anything down in this heat and setup up again. So he agreed to where I was and I told him that I would see him later that day. He needed men real bad.

The camp on Friday was filling up fast...real fast. The heat just kept on cooking us and we were feeling worn out and the battle was on Saturday. By 10:00am. event personal called all officers to let them know that all events had been canceled between 10am to 5pm because of extreme heat. So we decide to visit the Manassas battlefield and Sharpsburg battle field to kill time.

Friday evening after getting back from the battlefields the Colonel for the Cav ( I can't remember his name ) came over and told me what was in store for Saturday's battleplan. My guys were to fall in with dismounted Cav and be the first ones on the field by 8:30 am. holding off Sheridan's forces while the companies form up behind us. I told the Col. that I had to be with Col. James Carver for he had no men for the company that I was suppose to be with. The Col. of the Cav told me that my men had been put on his roster and had be turned in to command so this is what they expect to have for dismounted in the morning. He also told me that during the battle that we would be joining up with Col James Carver ( which we did ) and he would command from there out of the dismounted Cav.

I sent one of my guys to tell Col. Carver that we were already rostered in for the Saturday battle and that I would join him on Sunday. I figured that I would split hairs here to be with both companies. The Cav. for Saturday and Col Carver on Sunday.

The morning of the battle started early. Everyone was up at 6:00am ...we were marching out by 7:45 am and had to be on line by 8:30am.

The Cav decided to take us up to the battle field usings their pickup trucks so we didn't have to sweat walking all that way.

We got dropped off and had to wait for orders from the General.

We waited...and waited....and waited.... the main body of troops were marching up and there we were...still waiting.

I went up to Captain Steve ( who was our Captain over dismounted ) and told him something is wrong here.

He ran to look for an officer and then we decided to march down to where we should of been...

We finally got to where we were suppose to be...but got put onto a side path and wait it out some more.

The battle had begun and we who suppose to be first on the field were now standing on a hot dusty entrance road...forgotten!

The Captain could tell we were somewhat pissed at this point and marched us onto the battlefield taking the long way around.

Our water was running low ( and we had bottles water in our haversacks ) which we were using as well. As soon as you drank a bottle of water...it was sweated out almost just as fast. Lucky for us..the order for no jackets was given back in camp.

There really wasn't any structure to command once we entered the battlefield. We marched around until we saw our Cav guys waiting along the outer edges of the field. We had about 175 horses and we were their wall of fire each time they ran back and forth off the field.

Total for Confederate Cav was probably 300 horses to about 190 Union.

Both Union and Confederate forces were about equal in stenght ... I figure about easy 4000 on each side.

Our Captain ordered us out deeper onto the field ( we were 34 dismounted guys ) and told to hold off the Marines that we coming straight for our area. They were a large force and we did what we could do while the Cav commanded was instructing his troop.

Two other large Confederate brigades shifted direction and was headed our way... then an order was given and the Confederate ( 2nd. VA ) Cav raced out to meet the Marines who were now in block formation.

The battle pushed back and forth for about 1 1/2 hours and then a lull in action came about.

We were ordered back with the Cav and rested in a small tree line and hot water was passed out for all to drink from plastic water bottles that had been placed in the hot sun all morning. All the water that was on the field was hot, there was no ice anywhere. You could make coffee with this water and never heat it up. Everyone complained about this. The horses wouldn't even drink this water...it was " HOT! "

Now...guys were falling out because of heat and nothing to cool them down...what ice that was on the field went quick, the ice angels kept on giving us more hot water to drink.

I guess to the event hosts...water is water even if you can't drink it.

Ice was called for but never brought out...it was all for the "taters" because they paid \$45 to \$75 a ticket just to watch us bake.

About 20 minutes went by and the battle started again with us now joining Col James Carver at a clump of trees with his small band of men.

Most of the Confederate Cav joined together and didn't need our help for the rest of the battle.

We reformed on the Unions right and pushed forward again toward the Union which now was in force on the field.

The Union pushed hard and the forward Confederate companies began to fall apart.

Way in the rear we could see Jackson and his company all dressed in blue waiting to move forward.

Our Commander give us an order not to shoot anything blue coming up behind us for it was Gen.

Jackson. ( This Jackson was from Florida )

The retreating Confederate forces from the field were now forming up again when Jackson started to move forward.

Jackson was facing the Union Marines across the field and then stopped. We wanted to be part of this and see it since we were on the field close...but Col. Carver pulled us off the field and back down to where we entered the field. Boy....were the guys pissed!!!!!! We were told that we could go watch...but by the time we got back to where we were, it was too late. The battle lasted another hour and the heat was taking its toll on everything on that field.

The guys on the field rushed to the cooling stations that were set up only to be sprayed with hot water and stand in front of large fans. These were not enough for them so they walked to the Gaint tents that had air inside but were told they could not enter...it was for V.I.P. only. Tempers were about to boil at that point, but being professional like they were they went back to camp hoping for the ice to come around.

Things were looking ugly and Sunday would probably be worst. My feet were swollen and blistered ( first time ever! ) and water didn't cool use down at all. Everything was hot! We sat down and poured what cool water we had in our coolers on us and talked about leaving because we heard that they wouldn't let us leave until 4:00 pm on Sunday even though the battle would be over by 11:30am. It was too far to walk back to our vehicles because it was 2 miles away and we were burning hot and tired from the heat for 3 days before.

So we waited till 8:00pm to pull up our camp, get our vehicles ,and hit the road back home. About 1/4 of the encampment was packing it up and getting out of there too...I guess we all had enough. As it turned out...it was a good call! Email from folks that stayed told me that the battle was much better but they had problems with the police and fire department and staff. After the battle, folks wanted to leave because of the heat, but police and the fire department blocked all exit roads to keep folks in until 4:00pm. They asked for more water and ice...but none was brought to them until much later... they wanted to cool down in the air tents...but were turned away again. Things were turning ugly...riot ugly!

The battle was over by 11:30am and finally after much yelling and bitching...the fire department moved their trucks to let folks leave by 1:00pm. Talk now from the Blue & Gray is to boycott 150th. events if they are going to be operated like this Manassas event.

EMT while we were there told us that they had over 400 heat related cases, 8 Copperhead snake bites, dozens of Hornets stings and other injuries just during the first three days there... plus one horse died from the heat... ticks everywhere! No warnings were ever given about what would be out in the fields where we would be camping.

There you have it General...  
Now I know how the guys felt back then...really I do!!!

Major D.A. Zarr  
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