

Good Afternoon:

Yesterday I met with Ranger Tracy Chernault at Petersburg National Battlefield. We hammered out the final schedule and logistical details for the event and here are the details:

Date: March 26-28, 2010

Location: Five Forks Unit, Petersburg National Battlefield, Dinwiddie County, Virginia.

Description: The Five Forks Unit preserves and interprets the April 1, 1865 battle in which broke the CS lines around Petersburg, resulting in the fall of the city and the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia nine day later. It is located approximately 10 miles southwest of the city of Petersburg and is composed of approximately 900 acres of almost pristine battlefield. The land is mostly flat, except where cut by streams. Much of the ground is covered with second growth timber or open agricultural fields. The only modern buildings on the park (aside from the visitor center) are a small may barn and a log tobacco barn, both built in the mid 20th century. The site has an extensive trail network that connects the major points. The Federal participants will be using this during their march on Saturday.

Five Forks is three hours from Washington, DC, using I-95 to Petersburg, and then taking either Route 460 west or I-85 south. For a detailed map of the park, please go to the park website <http://www.nps.gov/pete>.

Schedule (subject to minor revisions)

Friday, March 26

15:00 Friday campsite near Five Forks visitor center opens to participants

Saturday, March 27

7:00 Reveille

9:00 Formation & roll call, NPS weapons inspection

10:00 Federal troops depart on march (lunch break will take place on march, also water re-supply)

11:30 CS Artillery demo

12:00 CS Infantry demo

14:00 CS Artillery demo

15:00 US Infantry demo

16:00 CS Artillery demo

17:00 Retreat & Evening Meal

Sunday, March 28

7:00 Reveille

9:00 Roll call & inspection

10:00 Bayonet drill
11:00 To be announced
11:30 CS Artillery demo
12:30 US Infantry demo
14:00 CS Infantry demo
15:00 CS Artillery demo

Federal participants will be dismissed after the 12:30 demo on Sunday.

Participant Parking and Check in: Participant parking at check in will be at the Five Forks visitor center (see park map on website). The site has been used for parking before and the ground is well compacted. Participants can arrive anytime after 15:00 (3pm) Friday.

Camps: We will be using camp sites during the weekend. The Friday evening campsite will be in a field near the visitor center, which is located ½ mile south of the forks. The Saturday evening camp will be on the north side of the field at the actual Five Forks. Water, toilets, and firewood will be provided at both sites by the NPS.

Foul Weather Shelter: In the event of foul weather, the park will open its maintenance building to participants. The building will be a short distance from participants parking and the visitor center. It has flush toilets and potable water.

The March: During Saturday a march of four (4) miles is planned for Federal participants. The march will utilize the park trail system to cover much of the ground which was covered by the 3rd Division of 5th Corps during the battle. The trails are wide enough to march two abreast and are generally flat. Much of the route is shaded. A lunch break will be taken around 12 noon and water re-supply will be made after the first mile, and again before the last mile.

Impression: Our impression for the weekend will be the 121st Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, Third Brigade, Third Division, 5th Army Corps. The history of the regiment, as written in Bate's History of the Pennsylvania Volunteers can be found online at <http://www.pa-roots.com/pacw/infantry.121st/121storg.html>. The 121st led the division in its final advance on the rear of the CS position at Five Forks. As more information on the 121st is uncovered it will be passed on to participants.

Suggested Reading: The Virginia Campaign of 1864-1865 by A. A. Humphries and, Out of the Storm, April to June 1865 by Noah Adrea Trudeau.

Uniform and Equipment: The uniform for the weekend will be the US fatigue uniform with full marching order. Slouch hats are optional. Accouterments need to be US regulation and in good repair. The same applies to haversacks and canteens. US double bag knapsacks are preferred but blankets rolls are permitted if you do not have one. All items are expected to be quality reproductions and not cheap trash.

You may bring overcoats, but if the weather is mild you need not carry them. Most of the Army of the Potomac had placed their overcoats in storage during the month of March in anticipation of active campaigning.

Make sure your brogans are in good repair. If you have never marched far in them, you may wish to add inserts for this one. Also, no canvass camp shoes! They are not made for marching. You

will not get any brownie points if the Rangers have to come pick you up out on the trail due to a foot/ankle injury!

Weapons: The weapon for this event is a 3 band rifle musket with bayonet. Please avoid bringing a .69 musket if you have any other option. Your musket needs to be clean and in good repair.

Ammunition: Each participant will need to bring 40 rounds of properly constructed musket cartridges. Please limit the powder charge to 65 grains for a .58 musket.

Rations: Participants will need to bring proper period rations to sustain themselves for duration of the event. Please make sure you have what you need before you come. There are few stores near Five Forks.

Rank Assignments: When the final number of participants is know, rank assignments will be made. If you are interested in a certain rank, please let me know when register.

How to register to participate: Individuals may contact me directly at jdo@npmhu.org. For groups I ask that you appoint one person to act as point of contact (POC) and have them forward a list of individuals from that group. For each individual I need the following information:

Name
E-mail
Phone
Emergency contact
Any medical conditions

There is no registration fee. All I need is the basic info listed above.

Questions: If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at jdo@npmhu.org or (301) 681-7462 evenings after 8pm.

Thank you and I look forward to seeing you all at Five Forks.

Sincerely,
James Owens