

July 2013, the 150th anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg. It seemed that if I were ever to pay tribute to those soldiers who fought so bravely July 1 - 3rd 1863, that this might be my opportunity. I had been to the National Park several times and I have always been drawn to Gettysburg, the space is beautiful, the stories and monuments are compelling, and there is always more for me to learn.

We arrived at the camp for the National Regiment on Sunday morning the 30th of June. This was following an all night drive from Swanzey to Gettysburg; we were all tired after getting just a few winks of sleep. But, it was a huge lift to recognize many of the familiar sights in town and about the battlefield. There was a lot of energy and a lot of coffee to be drank.

Our first task was to form a company street right behind the Pennsylvania Monument. We learned that night that we were extremely lucky with where our street was located. The street is the open space between two rows of tents. As thunderstorms moved in around 3 AM, another street found themselves under several inches of water. But in all honesty the storm was really cool to watch with the lightning illuminating part of the field at Gettysburg.

As I think about what the next several days meant to me it can be difficult to put in words, but I will try to describe a few of the highlights. I will never forget marching onto the field as part of the National Regiment in front of thousands of people who were visiting the park as part of the anniversary. I felt a responsibility to work hard to get things right for all of the guys who were teaching me and helping me out. It was incredible to be in a line of battle, to work on firing off clean volleys, to help each other, and to see improvement over the week.

Another favorite memory is that of speaking with so many of the visitors to the park. They were lots of different types of people, families, and even Jim Sutherland's family from California made the trek to Gettysburg! It was nice to make a connection with people who cared about the importance of this anniversary. I know we made a strong impact with visitors walking through camp when we were busy cleaning muskets, or sewing buttons, or playing cards. It is hard to describe, but the public all seemed very appreciative of our dedication and knowledge. There was many a fascinating conversation and what a great group of knowledgeable guys to just listen to. Again I learned so much!

It was also a surprise to speak and visit with John Grant Griffiths a great-great grandson of General and President Ulysses S Grant. We saw John every day; he is in his mid 70's and is a wonderful story teller. My expectations were far surpassed when 2nd Sergeant Rob Tarbox was able to get John to fire a musket at the Pickett's Charge battle reenactment on Sunday. John was very good to let everyone know that his great-great grandfather was at Vicksburg during the actual battle of Gettysburg, but so was the NH 6th, so I guess that worked out for everyone pretty well. I hope I can still shoot a musket when I am 75, I guess I will have my chance at the 175th anniversary!

Speaking of the battle reenactments, they were really amazing. It is hard to describe what the Confederate lines of battle looked like coming across the field, but it was real enough where it kind of put a lump on your throat and made you think about a lot things! I am told there were over 14,000 re-enactors, 300 horses, and lots of artillery. In fact our Union artillery fired right

over our heads for what seemed like 45 minutes, thus simulating the cannon fire preceding Pickett's Charge. I had never experienced that before. The smoke, salt and sweat in our eyes truly blurred our vision, with the noise of the cannons it was comforting to have the leadership and men we had. The 100 degree heat added to the challenges of the week and made me appreciate an occasional breeze, sip from the canteen, or spare piece of ice from someone's hat.

Finally, thank you guys for allowing me to experience the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg with all of you. I can't imagine having as great an experience with a different group of guys. As far as the NH 6th goes we did break 3 ramrods and at least one musket. We were able to avoid a camp uprising in response to our gifted snorer! And we connected with great people from all over the United States and the World. From the wundabar German Regiment, to the guys from England, Hawaii, and Connecticut, I know we made a positive impact on many.

On July 2nd we all saw a double rainbow that extended right over the monument of the 1st Minnesota Regiment and our camp. I remember hoping (or was it feeling) that the spirits of those men who served at Gettysburg 150 years ago knew that we were there!

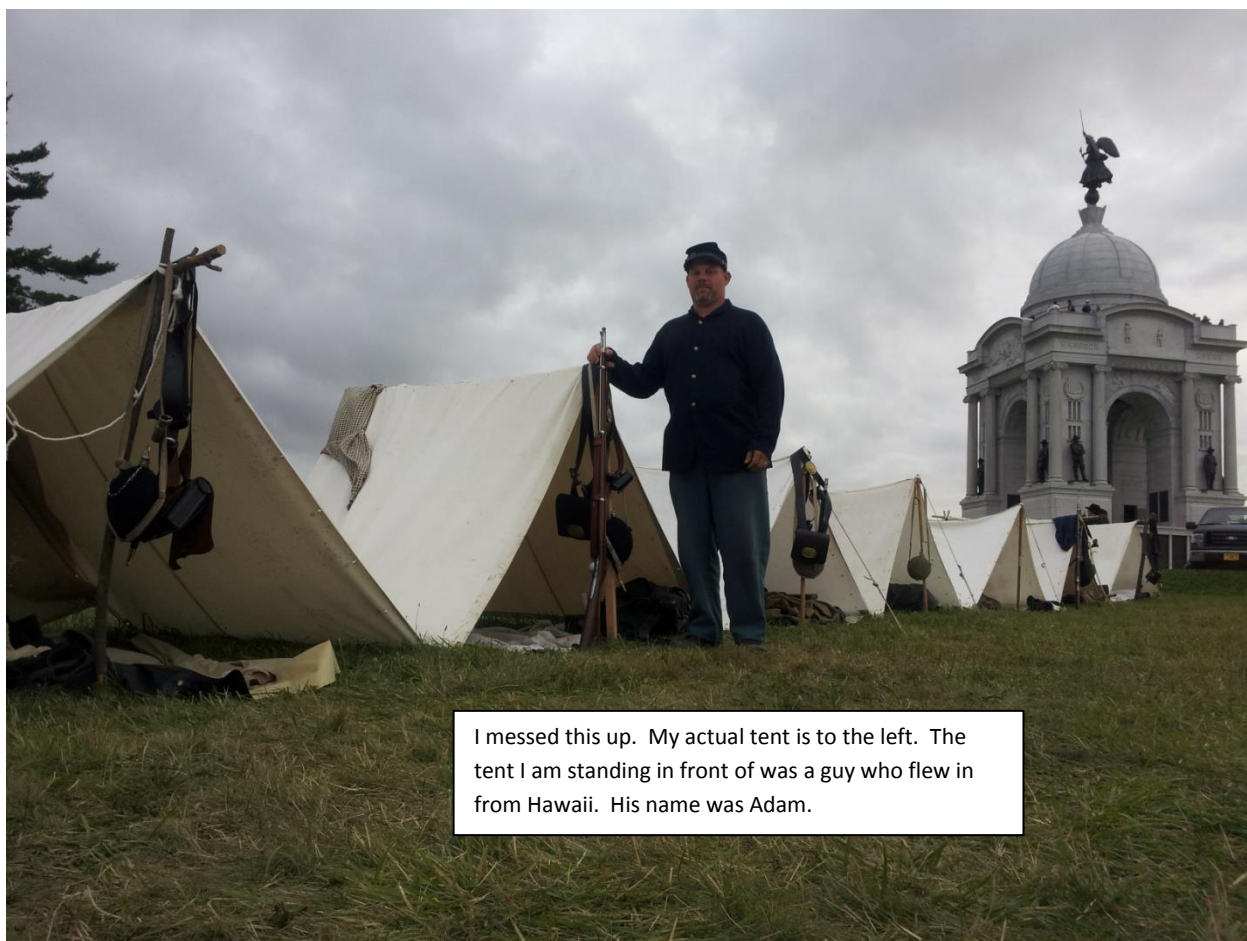
Respectfully Submitted by Private Jeremy Robinson, CO E, 6th NH Reg.







John Grant Griffiths with Private Sleeper



I messed this up. My actual tent is to the left. The tent I am standing in front of was a guy who flew in from Hawaii. His name was Adam.