



CHARGE BAYONETS!



Fifth Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers Inc.

A non-profit volunteer organization incorporated to promote, educate and develop the Civil War heritage of our nation and state, representing in style and equipment an authentic Union Civil War Infantry Regiment.

"The Union Forever!"

www.fifthnhvol.org

March/April 2006

Address: PO Box 962 Amherst, NH 03031-9998

Established 1981

LOOKIN' GOOD

Observations and Commentary on Civil War Period Eyeglasses

by Mr. David A. Nelson

One serious and peculiar breach of an individual's personal impression is to spend a modest fortune on cap, trousers, brogans, coat, accoutrements and rifle and then don a pair of modern glasses. When I first entered this hobby I even saw plastic frame glasses which is even more difficult to comprehend. The hobby has improved in overall quality in these twenty-five years and the more serious anachronisms have disappeared. Still there are the occasional transgressions.

There may be excuses for this. An individual may not know what is correct for eyeglasses, can't find an original pair or worse simply doesn't care.

My attempt here is not to chastise or reprimand but to provide the knowledge about the correct type of eyeglasses and if required the positive encouragement to make the step towards completing the overall impression.

The individual who requires corrective lenses in his normal modern day-to-day activities should ask himself the following questions as to eyeglasses when he considers his civil war soldier impression:

1-Can I wear contact lenses? 2-Can I go without? In considering these two questions one can consider the historical evidence for soldiers wearing eyeglasses. The few articles on the subject (included with this article for reference) have the same conclusion. That there is little evidence of soldiers wearing glasses. There are no images of soldiers in ranks and few CDVs of soldiers wearing glasses. The only images I could find in all my Civil War references was Figure 13, Lt Slemmer, Us Army and Figure 11, Lt William Keeler, USN.

There are several theories about this. One, soldiers were averse to wearing glasses. Perhaps they thought one cannot strike a very truculent pose wearing a pair of glasses. Another theory is that glasses were expensive and fragile and therefore not many soldiers had them. Indeed, reference 1 states that in 1830 there were only 30 men engaged in making spectacle frames in the entire country!! Many were imported and almost all optical lenses came from

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Coming Events

March 19 St Patrick's day parade in Manchester. Contact Jim Feindel or Jim Blake

April drill date to be determined

May 27 Memorial Day Parade in Woodstock, VT. Contact Greg Chase

Executive Board:

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Chairman's Letter

Greetings Fellow Fifth members:

I've just a few words to share this month. First, recently we set up a preservation page on the 5th website (fifthnhvol.org). Our first course of preservation business is to have the Sgt. Phelps headstone repaired and/or replaced. See the article within this newsletter or at the website for more details. I think you'd agree this is a worthwhile endeavor.

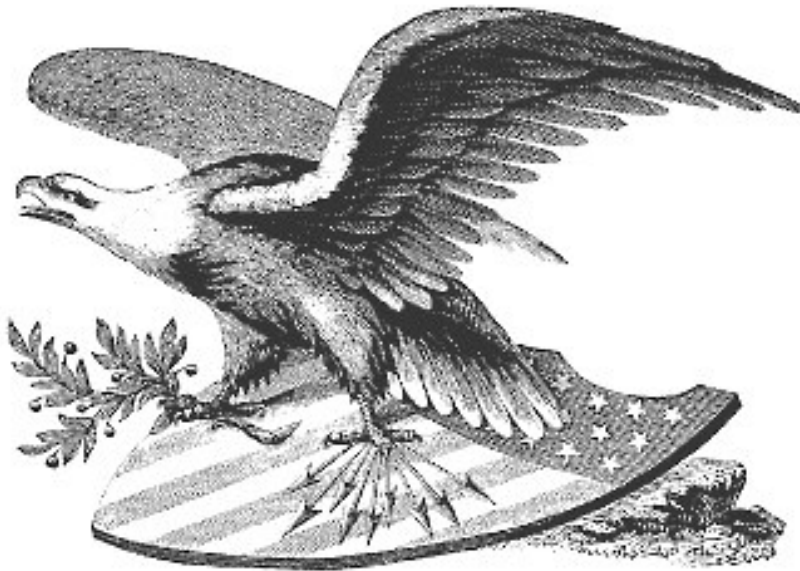
Additionally this is an opportunity for me to ask each and everyone of you to participate in the St. Patrick's Day parade to be held Sunday, March 19 in Manchester at 1200 (noon). Detail directions will be sent at a not too distant date.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

Jim Blake, Chairman

Fifth Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers



(Continued from page 1)

Europe until shortly after the Civil War.

I have my own observation regarding the prevalence of period eyeglasses. I own at this time four pair of period eyeglasses plus I have had several other pair purchased reasonably that I have passed on to others. Not one of these glasses was for distance sight. They were/are all reading glasses. That's not a large sampling statistically and it may be dangerous to draw conclusions from it yet that is the evidence. I think there were very few if any corrective lenses made of that prescription hence the reason why they are not seen on soldiers. This is also the opinion of McEvoy in Reference 1. So what did people do is a reasonable question? And they answer may be simply that they went without for all the reasons. Expense, fragility, vanity.

Whatever the real answer might be what do we do here in the 21st century. I'm not such a hard-liner that I would say go without, however, if you cannot go without, and cannot wear contacts then you should at least wear the right style for the period and the remainder of this article will be devoted to those details.

Pre-Revolutionary War period Eyeglass shapes were round and of heavy gage metal. Refer to Figure 1 which are the bifocal glasses invented by Benjamin Franklin.



Figure 1

Revolutionary War to 1820 The shape of frames became oval and a sliding temple was introduced. The gage of the frames was still somewhat heavy. This type of construction is shown in Figure 2 which appear in *The Civil War Chronicle* represent what would be an old style of glasses by the time of the Civil War.

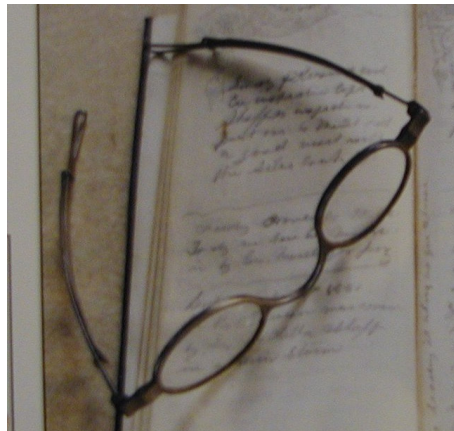


Figure 2

(Continued on page 5)

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Pre-Civil War through the Civil War

From approximately 1820 through 1860 frame construction became considerably lighter in weight and the sliding temple was eliminated. Shapes were oval, rectangular, hexagons and octagons (Reference 1) although by the time of the Civil War the shape of glasses had pretty much standardized into the oval shape of Figures 3, 5 and 8 and the numerous images included in the photo gallery.

Frames were constructed of gold, silver, steel and plated brass.

The temples were straight and terminated at the ends in two basic configurations. A loop as in Figures 3 and 7 and flattened as in Figure 9.

Also included here for reference are two types of glass cases. The type shown in Figures 5 and 8 are of stiffened pasteboard, painted and lacquered. That of Figure 6 being of tinplated sheet iron and hinged in a clam shell type of design. These can still be found at flea markets if you know what you are looking for.

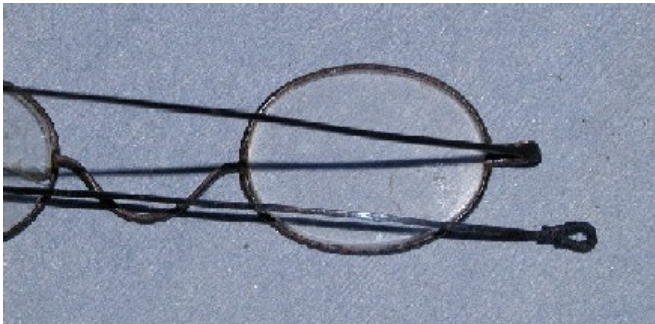


Figure 3



Figure 4

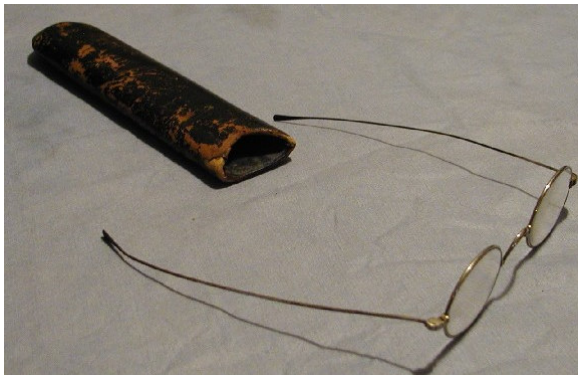


Figure 5



Figure 6

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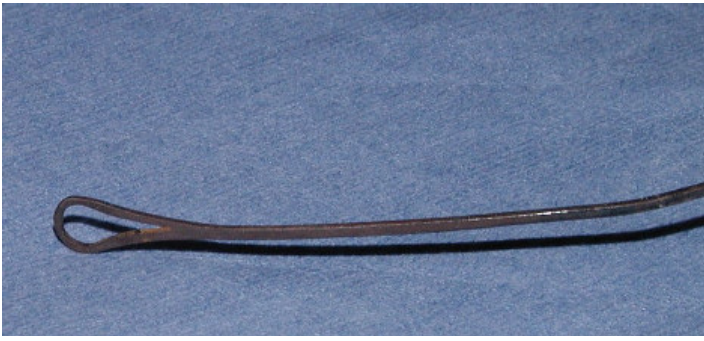


Figure 7



Figure 8

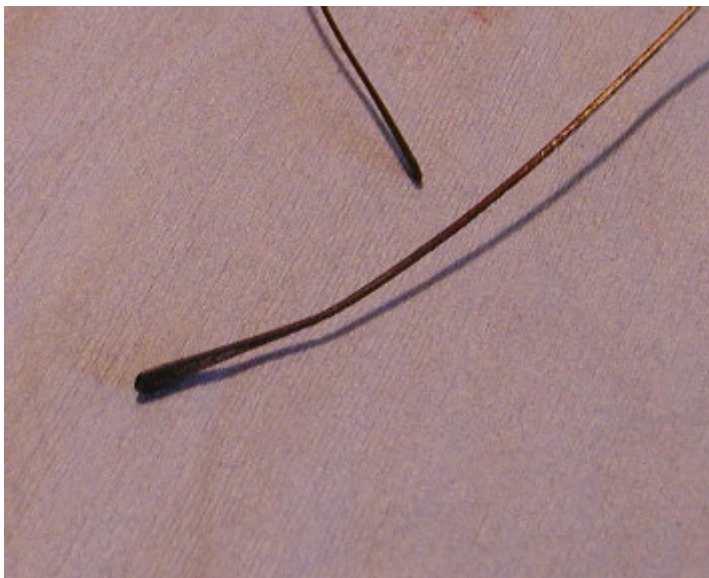


Figure 9

If one were to set out to acquire a pair of glasses most representative for the Civil War here is your shopping list.

- Oval shape
- No nose pads
- Straight single piece temple with loop or flattened end
- Silver or silver plated. Blued steel frames as in Figure 3 are also acceptable but not as common.
- Figure 8 is most representative.
- Price: I have never paid more than \$10 for a pair of period frames although I have seen them in antique shops for \$25 and higher. Stick to the flea markets. They are still out there in surprising numbers.

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Musical Interlude

We Are Coming, Father Abr'am

Lyrics-James Gibbons 1862

Tune- Stephen Foster 1862

We are coming, Father Abr'am, three hundred thousand more,
from Mississippi's winding stream and from New England's shore;
we leave our plows and workshops, our wives and children dear,
with hearts too full for utterance, with but a silent tear,
we dare not look behind us, but steadfastly before,
we are coming Father Abr'am, three hundred thousand more.

Chorus:

*We are coming, we are coming, our Union to restore,
we are coming Father Abr'am, with three hundred thousand more,*

If you look across the hilltops
that meet the Northern sky,
long moving lines of rising dust
your vision may descry;
and now the wind, an instant,
tears the cloudy veil aside,
and floats aloft our spangled flag
in glory and in pride;
and bayonets in the sunlight gleam,
and bands brave music pour.
We are coming, Father Abr'am,
three hundred thousand more!

Chorus:

If you look all up our valleys
where the growing harvests shine,
you may see our sturdy farmer boys
fast forming into line;
and children from their mother's knees
are pulling at the weeds,
and learning how to reap and sow
against their country's needs;
and a farewell group stands weeping
at every cottage door.
We are coming, Father Abr'am,
three hundred thousand more!

Chorus:

You have called us and we're coming
by Richmond's bloody tide,
to lay us down for Freedom's sake,
our brothers' bones beside;
or from foul treason's savage group,
to wrench the murderous blade;
and in the face of foreign foes
its fragments to parade;
six hundred thousand loyal men
and true have gone before.
We are coming Father Abr'am,
three hundred thousand more!

Chorus:

Civil War Websites You Should Visit

National Civil War Naval Museum at Port Columbus
<http://www.portcolumbus.org/index.htm>

The USS Monitor Center
<http://www.monitorcenter.org/>

Ironclads and Blockade Runners
<http://www.wideopenwest.com/~jenkins/ironclads/ironclad.htm>

Friends of the Hunley
<http://www.hunley.org/>

Corporal John A. Hartshorn Second New Hampshire Volunteers Company G

By George Hall

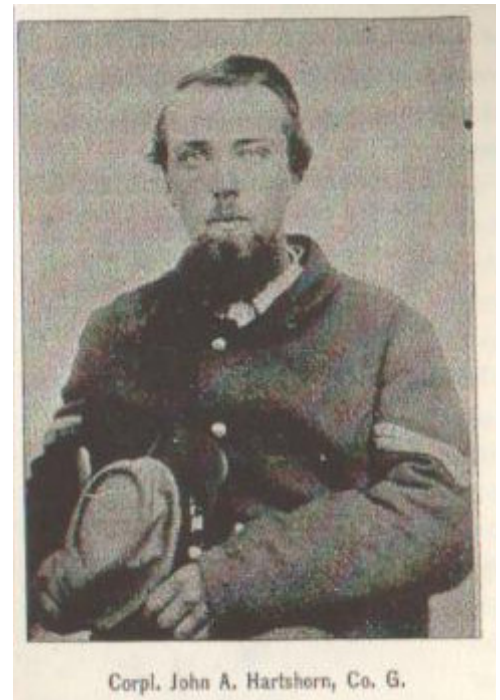
John A Hartshorn, the son of Deacon John & Susannah P, was born on July 14, 1840, in the central New Hampshire town of Lyndeborough. He was the Great-Great-Grandson of two Revolutionary War Soldiers and the grandson of a War of 1812 Veteran. Being a soldier just came naturally for this twenty-one year old 1861 enlistee.

May of 1862 found the Second New Hampshire Regiment in front of the Confederate stronghold called Fort McGruder, near Williamsburg, Virginia. The Peninsula Campaign was underway and the Army of the Potomac was heading toward the Gates of Richmond and the Confederate Army was not going to make it easy. Standing in the way of the Second New Hampshire and it's Brigade were soldiers from Alabama, Florida and Virginia.

According to the History of the Second New Hampshire by Martin Haynes, Company G, moving forward, met resistance from these soldiers and hand to hand fighting ensued between the two armies. In a report filed by Colonel Robert Cowdin of the First Massachusetts Infantry, it is written that he saw Corporal Hartshorn's tragic death. Corporal Hartshorn, moving forward in thick brush, encountered three Confederate soldiers, one whom he shot, the second he bayoneted and the third killed him with a shot. The next day, Corporal Hartshorn's body was found with the two rebels laying dead beside him, just as they had fallen.

He was described by his peers as being devout, conscientious and fearless. Regretfully, it was his first and last battle, as he had been interned in the hospital, missing the First Battle of Bull Run, despite lots of protests by him. He was buried in front of Fort McGruder with the other 15 members of the Second NH, who had been killed there as well.

HARTSHORN, JOHN A Co.G; b. Lyndeborough; age 21; res. Lyndeborough; enl.May 20, 1861; must in June 5 1861; as Corp.;killed May 5, 62, Williamsburg Va.



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Photo Gallery



Figure 10. Father Abraham



Figure 11. A very poor picture of William Keeler, paymaster, U.S.S. Monitor



Figure 12. Catherine Beecher sister of author Harriet Beecher Stowe and an author herself.



Figure 13. Lt Slemmer US Army

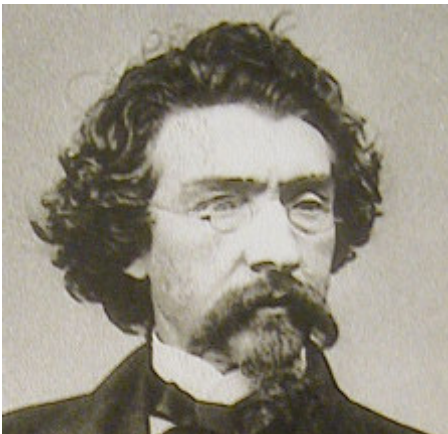


Figure 14. Matthew Brady

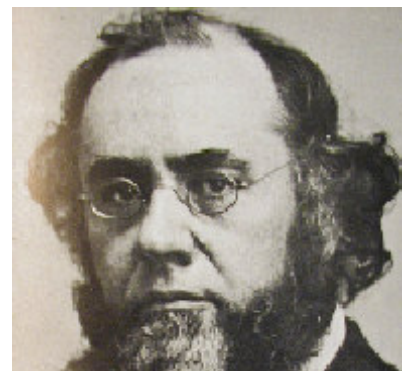


Figure 15. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton

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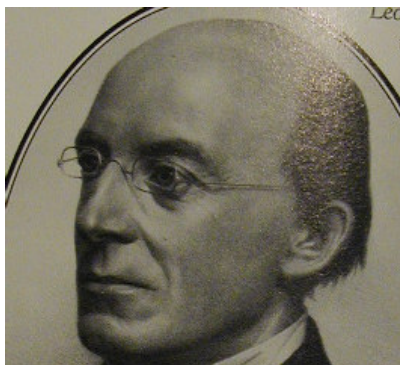


Figure 16. Abolitionist Publisher William Lloyd Garrison wearing long –octagon frames



Figure 17. William Lloyd Garrison wearing a different style Glasses

Calendar of Events for 2006 5th Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers

March 19	St. Patrick's Day Parade\$	Blake/Feindel
April/May?	Drill	Blake/Mantini
May 27	Memorial Day Parade* with 3rd VT Woodstock, VT	Blake
June 2-4	Shenandoah 1862* Harrisonburg, VA	Mantini
July 4	Independence Day Parade\$ Amherst, NH	Blake
July?	Musterfield Farm Museum* Living History	Blake/Mantini
August 11-13	2nd Bull Run* Living History Manassas, VA	Parvis
September	Living History\$ Amherst, NH	Blake
October 14-15	Fort #4 Timeline Charlestown, NH	Blake

* = Maximum Effort

\$ = Paid Event

References:

- 1-*Civil War Glasses-or How Not to Make A Spectacle of Yourself* by Tom McElvoy. Editor's note. Tom was a member of the Western Mudsills who published a large number of early articles and research on uniforms and equipment. There is no publishing date. I believe I acquired this article from Greg Hepe, a member of the Mudsills before he moved to New Hampshire in 1981.
 - 2-*Eyeglasses for Reenactors* by Lewis Newbury published in the Columbia Rifles Research Compendium: Article II.13
 - 3-*The Civil War Chronicle* by Richard A. Sauers.
- The following are also listed as references by the above references although the author does not have the articles.**
- 4-*Civil War Eyeglasses* by John Braden, Camp Chase Gazette.
 - 5-*A Closer Look* by Nicky Hughes, Vol. 3, No. 4 The Watchdog
 - 6-*Ophthalmic Dispensing* by Russell L. Stimpson 2nd edition, Charles G. Thomas, no publishing date.
 - 7-*Early American Specs* by Dr. L.D. Brenson, Occidental Publishing Co. Glendale, CA., no publishing date.

Charles H. Phelps Gravestone Restoration Project Fundraising Goal: \$2,000

By Mr. James Blake

Some years ago, when I was pretty much a "fresh fish" I heard the name of Sergeant Phelps spoken around the campfire at various 5th New Hampshire events. His compelling story took on a greater significance to me while visiting the Gettysburg battlefield when I had a chance to walk the section of field where the 5th New Hampshire monument is located near the Wheatfield. It is here that Charles H. Phelps left his mark as a man, a complete soldier, and a fallen son of Amherst, New Hampshire.



Upon my return from Gettysburg I wanted to learn as much as I could about the Fifth Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers. Some of the reenactment veterans of our unit recommended purchasing the Fifth's Regimental History. In this book, which lists the complete roster of all whom served, I discovered information regarding Phelps' burial site in Amherst, New Hampshire. I have visited his grave many times since that discovery and honor his sacrifice each and every time pledging that someday an effort would be launched to restore the stone marking his grave. That being said it seems altogether fitting to pause here and provide more background on Charles H. Phelps.

It was shortly after President Lincoln's call for "75,000 three-months service volunteers" that the citizens of Amherst, at the Town Hall meeting held Monday, April 23, 1861, decided their course of action. Charles H. Phelps, a young man of nineteen when the war began, attended the meeting. At day's end, he and sixteen other Amherst boys enlisted for service in the United States Army.

Following the completion of his three-month enlistment with the First New Hampshire Regiment, Charles opted to reenlist and signed on with Lt. Col. Charles Hapgood's Company I for service with the Fifth Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers. Ironically enough Hapgood, himself a citizen of Amherst, had presided as Secretary over the very Town Meeting where Charles Phelps enlisted. Both men earned distinction and favor with the Fifth's commander Colonel Edward E. Cross. For his military bearing and knowledge of drill Phelps was promoted to fourth sergeant.



After fighting in the battle of Antietam and being wounded at Fredericksburg, Phelps was hospitalized and four months later rejoined his unit. On July 2, 1863 Phelps and the rest of the Fifth marched to Gettysburg where they spent the majority of the afternoon on picket duty near the Taneytown Road.

Late in the day the Fifth was ordered to engage the enemy in the woods and assumed the left flank position of the brigade while 148th Pennsylvania advanced on the right. Together both units entered the woods on the east side of the Wheatfield. The Fifth engaged the Fifteenth Georgia and the First Texas at a stone wall running

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along the edge of Wheatfield. Colonel Cross, a second corps brigade commander and formally Colonel of the Fifth, dismounted from his horse at this point, and proceeded to quickly evaluate the situation in order to determine where he would next place his troops on the field. Cross assumed a position behind the line where the Fifth monument stands today. As Cross did so, a sharpshooter's rifle echoed from behind a boulder about forty-five yards to the Fifth NHV's front. Suffering from a mortal wound, Cross died early the next morning. Colonel Hapgood seeing the muzzle flash and smoke ordered Sgt. Phelps to shoot the man who mortally wounded their commander. Phelps carefully studied the towering rock and when the Rebel emerged a second time, he shot and killed the sharpshooter.

By the evening of July 2nd the Fifth's ranks were badly used up. The Third Corps having been anchored in the Peach Orchard in advance of the second corps gave way and the Union line collapsed. As men of the Fifth and the 148th PA, both of the second corps, first division, quickly retreated to the rear, a musket ball struck Sergeant Charles Phelps in the back mortally wounding him.

On the 23rd of July Charles H. Phelps's remains were interred for sepulture, "among demonstrations of sorrow In Amherst as a generation has not witnessed." A large crowd of mourners together with the Milford Band, the Nashua Cadets and the Lawrence Engine Company accompanied Charles to his final resting place at Meadowview Cemetery in Amherst. He was a fallen son. He carried out his duty without question and notably, he was a town hero!

His white marble headstone records all the major battles and above a small bas-relief soldier is the inscription "A young man, but an old soldier," the words taken from the eulogy delivered by the pastor during the funeral held at the Amherst Congregational Church.

Now almost 144 years later Sergeant Phelps is all but forgotten. But of equal importance is his headstone, which has suffered from many years of neglect and varying weather conditions. At some point in time the stone snapped and was reattached by two non-ferrous bolts. Unfortunately this was only the short-term solution to the long-term problem. Significant wear, green stains from the bolts, and cracks have raised considerable alarm requiring immediate attention.



The cracks and losses are alarming. If not repaired soon, the stone will be irreparably damaged.

The Fifth NHV's 2006 historic preservation endeavor involves the conservation (repairing) or if need be, a re-

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production of Phelp's grave marker. The ultimate course of treatment will occur following the thorough assessment by an expert and submission of his findings in a written report. Additionally, the Town of Amherst and the Amherst Historical Society need to approve the final proposal. However preliminary discussions involving the aforementioned, have dictated that we urgently move forward with this effort. Preliminary estimates for the project approach \$1,000 and our best guess is that it may cost closer to \$2,000 or more given the complexities of the bas relief sculptural feature on the grave marker. Thus far, five pledges totaling \$500 have been secured toward our goal.

We ask that you consider making a donation to this worthy cause. We are a 501 (c) 3 tax-exempt organization. Any remaining funds will be earmarked for a perpetual Phelp's headstone care trust fund. Thank you very much for your consideration and generosity.

Please make your check out to: Fifth Regiment NH Volunteers and send it o:

Mr. William Shea
Treasurer
Fifth Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers
PO Box 962
Amherst, NH 03031

For Sale

Nick Sekela seven-rivet scabbard - never used - \$50. Dirty Billy, mouse brown slouch hat - \$50 Contact Paul Parvis



Finis