



## Winter at the Kernstown Battlefield

by Gary Crawford

Three seasons have gone. The battlefield and farm lie at rest. Gone are the children's shouts of glee as they flew their kites trying to keep them from the trees. And the pounding footsteps of the hundreds of runners as they challenged the hills and plains of this premier course. Momentarily gone, too, are the words and stories shared by the tour guides as they related this land's historic events to the almost countless visitors wishing to learn more about our country's history.

Now it's time for a winter rest; for the land to rejuvenate itself as it has for millions of years in preparation for new seasons of warmth; and for new seasons of visitors. The battlefield is once more quiet and peaceful reflecting back the night's bright moon and stars.

This is perhaps the most solemn and peaceful time when one can stand upon the consecrated land and feel the history seemingly rise up around you, immersing you in its stories. When no one is around to interrupt the messages ... not to be heard, but instead ... to be felt. It's there for us, as if the land and all the people who have lived there – who have died there – are offering up their stories for you.

It reminds one of the hauntingly beautiful military bugle call that we call "Taps". It's not a song; only a 59-second-long paean. There are no official lyrics but the often-offered words seem to fit well.

*Day is done  
Gone the sun  
From the hills, from the lakes, from the sky  
All is well, safely rest  
God is nigh.  
Thanks and praise  
For our days  
'Neath the sun; 'neath the stars; 'neath the sky  
As we go, this we know  
God is nigh.*

If you have been to the Kernstown Battlefield, we thank you and invite you to come back and immerse yourself in its stories. If, perchance, you have not had the opportunity to visit, we hope that you will come to this hallowed land soon and sense the history all around you. ■



from Gary Sheppard ...

## The President's Corner

Our 2023 Season is over and what a wonderful season we had. It started early with an historical architectural evaluation of the Pritchard Cabin, dated to the 1794 time frame. This building was the target of arsonists in October 2000, and has been boarded up to protect the remaining structure. We are now looking for ways to renovate the upper floors so we can open this historic building to the public. However, this will take substantial funding.

We are also looking at replacing at least nine shutters on the Pritchard House. These shutters can't be bought from a box store. They will have to be specially made and will be expensive. But they are needed.

Work continued with reverence on the Pritchard Family Cemetery with care taken to minimize soil erosion by planting vinca as it was historically-used as ground cover. Our conservation fields bloomed with wildflowers this year after two years of extensive cultivation removing the non-native plants to encourage the growth of native plants for a better habitat.

We hosted two author-led battle tours again this season with Gary Ecelbarger (1<sup>st</sup> Kernstown) and Scott Patchan (2<sup>nd</sup> Kernstown). For the second time, we hosted a Sunset Program. This year, the topic was "The Life and Death of Colonel James Mulligan."

The big news, after five years of effort, was our acquisition of 37.5 acres on Sandy Ridge which played an important role in First Kernstown. We forest-mulched a huge area because of the overgrowth of non-native vegetation. This was a costly, but necessary effort. We created five informative signs and placed them at their historical locations. On June 17, 2023, we held a celebration to open that area to the public. This was accompanied by a cannon duel (blank charges only) between Sandy Ridge and Pritchard's Hill, representing action of the original battle.

Partnerships continued throughout the season. With Frederick County Parks & Recreation we helped to host the Kite Fest in April and the Battlefield Half Marathon in November. The Winchester-Frederick County Convention & Visitors Bureau sponsored the Hungary for History program. Mike Cannane, a chef and one of our KBA Board Members, presented the History of Cornbread.

The Shenandoah University continues to practice and compete on the property for their cross country program. John Handley High School also uses the property for their cross country team and held two major meets this year.

On October 22, 2023, we held our Annual Membership Meeting. We did our best to publicize this event through Constant Contact emails and our website. We had a great program with Susi Weston, one of our Volunteers, as the main speaker giving a presentation of herbal medicines and the Field Hospital during the Civil War. We had a nice turnout but this was a very good program that more members would have enjoyed.



Recipients of the awards for Outstanding Volunteer for 2023 presented by KBA president Gary Sheppard (center) to Susi Weston on the left and Steve Cantu on the right.

During the meeting, I presented two President's Awards to Board Members/Volunteers. To receive the awards, I consider the efforts and contributions over several years. This year the award was earned by Steve Cantu, our KBA Treasurer, for his dedicated bookkeeping work. The second award was earned by Susi Weston for developing the Field Hospital exhibit in the Pritchard House over the past four years.

This is your KBA at work and we are very pleased with our accomplishments during this past season. To maintain this wonderful property, and tell its rich history, requires your continued financial support through memberships and donations. We are closed, but we do not doze. Work and planning continues during the off season. Please review our website, [www.kernstownbattle.org](http://www.kernstownbattle.org), as we update our events for the 2024 Season. Also, although closed, tours by appointment can be arranged by emailing or calling our main number on the website.

Hope to see you in 2024! ■

# KBA Receives Preliminary Approval for Historical Register Listing

by Dan Heim

Good news! The KBA was recently recommended for approval by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) on its preliminary application to be listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR) and the National Register of Historic Places. Listings in these registers honor and officially recognize the historic significance of a place, a building, a site, or an area and open up the possibility of future large preservation grants from state and federal governments and private funders.

Earlier this year, the KBA's Historical and Education Committee filed a preliminary application with the DHR to have our property listed on the state and federal registers. At its Sept. 21, 2023 meeting, the Virginia State Review Board unanimously approved the KBA's preliminary application, and invited the KBA to submit a full application to the DHR and the National Park Service (NPS) for listing as a historic district on both registers.

Historical and Education Committee members have begun the painstaking process of assembling the detailed nomination application, which we plan to submit during

the first half of 2024. Listing on these registers is critically important to gain access to large state and federal historical preservation grants that could be used for such purposes as restoring the fire damaged Pritchard Cabin, which dates from the early 1790s.

The VLR was created in 1965 by the General Assembly in the Code of Virginia, and is the Commonwealth's official list of places of historic, architectural, archaeological and/or cultural significance. It is managed by the DHR and is designed to educate the public about the significance of listed places, and has the same criteria and nomination process as the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Register was established in 1966 by the National Historic Preservation Act. It is the official list of structures, sites, objects, and districts that embody the historical and cultural foundations of the United States, and includes places of local, state, and national significance. The National Register is managed by the DHR in partnership with the NPS for properties in Virginia. ■



Above is pictured the Pritchard Cabin after being set ablaze by vandals on October 30, 2000, just 30 days after the KBA took possession of the property. Since the burning, the cabin has been encased in plywood to preserve the remains. Being listed on the State and National Historic Registers will aid us in obtaining restoration grants for this and other important projects.

# Closed for the season but work on the battlefield never ends

by Gary Crawford

Oft-heard comments from visitors to the battlefield are "How green and how beautiful!" and "It's a green oasis amid the urban sprawl." And it truly is.

But that very neatly-kept green island doesn't just happen by itself. Nature tends to want to keep growing and the Kernstown Battlefield property is a great example of nature's work. Constant mowing of its many lawn areas and the hiking/cross-country trails is a "must" priority for our volunteers. And, as is probably appropriate for a large Civil War battlefield, the historic acres are regularly "invaded" by rapidly growing pest trees and brush that would obscure the trails and viewsheds. At least a couple of times each year our volunteers wade in with chainsaws and long-handled pruners to trim back the lush wild growth.

Such was the case during the fall days of Nov. 15 to 18 when thirteen of our staffers counter-attacked the heavy growth. During those bright sunny days the sawing people were cutting away many hundreds of invasive trees and lots of other woody growth. Others were busy lopping the branches and dragging away the debris creating large mounds of cut brush.

Then on that Saturday, local Winchester Boy Scout Troop 3, with 14 or 15 young men, turned out to help

in picking up and hauling the many piles of cuttings to our out-of-sight debris and compost area. Can you see the tremendous amount of work that has been done?

Probably not. And that's the point. All that obscuring growth has been removed allowing visitors to better see and appreciate the clear views of history.



The very compatible arrangement with Troop 3 has been going on for quite a few years and is a real plus for both organizations. The Scouts come to the battlefield for a weekend of camping each fall and while here help us with numerous needed projects. And, at the same time, they are contributing to their community service goal. It should be noted too, that over the years, at least four Scouts have earned their highly-coveted Eagle Scout awards with very useful tangible projects at Kernstown Battlefield. And one more citizenship plus; they know they are on hallowed ground and the experience adds to their respect for history and for our country.

So, as you've just read, even though the normal visitor season is over, much work is still being done by our volunteers and Scouts to have the battlefield ready for the upcoming 2024 season. ■

## Stay tuned for the 2024 season Here's a preview of coming special events.....

Mar. 23 – Anniversary tour of the First Battle of Kernstown led by the author Gary Ecelbarger.

June 21 – Second annual KBA Golf Classic fundraiser

July 20 – Anniversary tour of the Second Battle of Kernstown led by the author Scott Patchan

Once-monthly – National Park Service presentations on the 1862 and 1864 Valley Campaign overviews

Late July – Extensive "Living History" encampment

Mid-Sept – Third annual "Sunset on the Battlefield" presentation.

Other events are in the works. Stay tuned to our Constant Contact emails and our website to keep abreast of events, dates and times. If you wish to be added to our email list, call 540-450-7835 and leave your email address on the recorder.

[www.kernstownbattle.org](http://www.kernstownbattle.org)

# Battlefield ancestry tourism on the rise!

## Stories of families finding their roots ...

### **Bernard F. Morrow** 12th West Virginia Inf.



Elaine Zeiders, great-great granddaughter of Bernard Morrow.

The KBA was honored by a visit from Elaine Zeiders, great-great granddaughter of Bernard F. Morrow, who served in the Union Army during the Civil War, enlisting in Company F, 12<sup>th</sup> West Virginia Infantry in 1862 and serving with that unit for the entire war.

KBA Board member Larry Turner hosted Elaine and her husband taking them to locations on the battlefield property where the 12<sup>th</sup> West VA infantry saw action and explaining that the 12<sup>th</sup> WV fought in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Winchester on June 13, 1863, primarily on Sandy Ridge, and again in the Second Battle of Kernstown on July 24, 1864, this time advancing (and eventually retreating) across the western slope of Pritchard's Hill. Turner also pointed out the interpretive trail sign that had the 12<sup>th</sup> West VA reunion picture that included her great-great grandfather.

According to an article on him in Wikipedia, Morrow was held in the highest esteem by his comrades. He was in some of the bloodiest and most fiercely contested battles of the war, such as 2<sup>nd</sup> Winchester, Cedar Creek, Petersburg, Richmond and finally it was his privilege to stand with the victorious army at Appomattox Court House and see General Lee hand his sword over to General Grant. ■

### **John Augustus Fiegen** 23rd Illinois Inf.



Jim Fiegen, great-great grandson of John Fiegen

Dr. John Lewis, a long-time supporter of the Kernstown Battlefield, recently called KBA Board member and Past-President Gary Crawford about an upcoming family visit and their expressed desire to tour Kernstown Battlefield to learn about their ancestor who fought and died here.

The ancestor, John Augustus Fiegen, was a member of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Illinois, Col. James Mulligan's brigade. He was wounded during the Second Battle of Kernstown and died two days later. He is buried in Winchester.

The family wanted to know more about him and perhaps where he fought and fell.

Crawford enlisted KBA Board member Mike Cannane to escort the tour. Mike got to work researching Fiegen's military history and found that he was in Co. B of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ill. From the research Cannane knew just where the soldier would have been standing in the lineup. On the day of the tour Cannane and the family set off on an hour and-a-half hike out to the Opequon Church area and then "retreating" back to the stone wall, much as Mulligan's brigade would have done.

Upon returning to the V.C. the family was ecstatic about all the information they had received and about how knowledgeable Mike was about the events here and elsewhere leading up to July 24, 1864. Without knowing the precise square yard of ground where their ancestor had fallen, they had the knowledge of a pretty-well defined area where Co. B had advanced, fallen back, and made a valiant stand at the left end of the stone wall. And that very personal historical knowledge was more than adequate to elicit repeated praise for Cannane and the KBA. ■

### **Lt. Charles Reem** 84th Pennsylvania Vol. Inf.

An extended battlefield tour for three generations of descendants of slain Civil War soldier, Lt. Charles Reem, was con-



Three generations of the Brown family, descendants of Lt. Charles Reem, assembled in the KBA Conference Center for an overview of the story of their ancestor before embarking on the battlefield tour.

ducted by KBA Board members Chuck Maurer and Jim Cutler

this past April. Charles Reem was a 37 year-old father of four serving in the 84<sup>th</sup> PA Vol. Inf. when he was killed at the First Battle of Kernstown, along with his regimental commander, Col. William Murray.

One hundred and sixty-one years later, eleven of his descendants, including four children ages 4-17, visited Kernstown to learn about the service and sacrifice of their Union officer ancestor. Many details were provided to the group about this March 1862 battle with the tour concluding in the general area where Lt. Reem received his fatal wound. ■

## Just wondering?

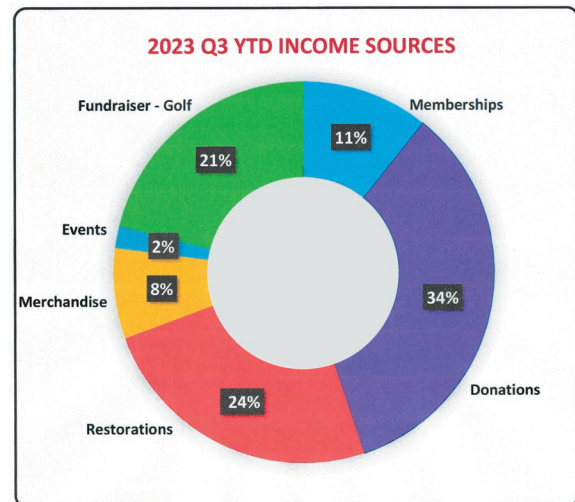
by Steve Cantu

Have you ever wondered what the various sources of income are for the KBA? This graph displays the sources for the first three quarters of 2023. Fifty-eight percent of the income is from gifts that fall into two types:

- 1) Donations - used as needed for the general operation and maintenance of the property and,
- 2) Restorations - where funds are provided for a specified purpose such as the replacement of shutters for the Pritchard House, or signage to interpret the history and events that took place.

The successful initial KBA golf tournament held this past summer generated 21% of the total, and will take place again on June 21, 2024, so mark your calendars to participate. Membership dues, gift shop sales, and events make up the balance that have brought in a combined total of 21% of the YTD total.

Interestingly, from a geographical picture, we are supported by individuals who reside in 38 different



states! Not surprisingly, most residents are Virginians (59%), with the states of Pennsylvania (8%), Maryland and West Virginia (each making up 3%) combining for a total of 73%. From a proximity standpoint, we have donors who are from as far away as Maine, South Dakota, Oregon, and Alaska! As stewards of this property, we are most grateful for each and every one of you for your contributions which allows us to do the required work and tasks.. ■

## Supporting Preservation, History and Greenspace

At a conference this past summer it was announced that Winchester is one of the fastest growing cities in Virginia. Of course, this is obvious to most of us who live here as we drive around Winchester and Frederick County dealing with ever increasing traffic and the seemingly never-ending development. Many of you know that if it hadn't been for a few concerned citizens back in the 1990's, the Kernstown Battlefield would have been a victim to development. Without going into the details, the historical and pristine battlefield, the approximately 5 miles of hiking/walking trails, the historic stone fence, and the Pritchard House would have all been destroyed and replaced with residential development.

The Kernstown Battlefield is truly a nature oasis inhabited by deer, turkey, fox, raccoons, skunk, hawks, and an occasional bald eagle. It is a place where people can come to reflect on the enormous history of the property, take part in tours from noted historians and authors such as Scott Patchan, Gary Ecelbarger, and Scott Mingus, enjoy a leisurely hike, picnic with family and friends, and enjoy the peace and serenity that the property offers.

It takes many hours of hard work by our many volunteers to keep this property in pristine shape for our visitors to enjoy. It also requires donations from our many visitors and financial support from all our wonderful members. We realize that at this time of year you are bombarded with requests for donations from many worthy causes and organizations. As you consider where to make your year-end donations, PLEASE keep the Kernstown Battlefield Association in mind. We have no paid staff and every dollar you donate goes to preservation of this important property.

**To donate just visit our website at [www.kernstownbattle.org](http://www.kernstownbattle.org).**

Thank you for all your past support. Have a wonderful holiday season, and keep an eye out for future notices on the many exciting projects, tours, and preservation efforts we have planned for 2024.

# Kernstown nurtures women's cross country champs

by Andrew Marrocco

It's December 2023, and it marks the 3<sup>rd</sup> straight year, and the 6<sup>th</sup> time since 2007, that the Kernstown Battlefield has not only been a preservation site for the history of our national heritage, but has also served as the main training venue for some of the best runners in the country.

In a partnership between the Kernstown Battlefield Association and Shenandoah University dating back to June 2007, the historical site has been a weekly training site for the Harriers of Shenandoah's Cross Country program. The university hosts its 'Hornet Harrier Invitational' annually, while also hosting multiple conference and NCAA championships (National Collegiate Athletic Association, the governing body of college athletics) over the course of the years. If you have visited the property in that span of time, and walked, hiked, or ran the trails, it is Shenandoah's athletes keeping the limbs off the trails, the brush trimmed back, the paths mowed and filling ruts and holes.

Madeline Lotts is no stranger to the running trails and hills of Kernstown, as she is a 2021 graduate of Warren County High School. Maddie had opportunities in competing for her high school at Handley High School's annual Judge's Classic, also hosted at Kernstown. The 2020 COVID hiatus in high school and college athletics even offered her the opportunity to still race at Kernstown as she was one of the 300+ participants in the KBA hosted COVID Cross Country League in fall of 2020, which served as an alternate 5-race running season for those athletes who had their school's season shut down.

Little did she know in 2020, that eventually the trails of Kernstown Battlefield would be her primary training grounds in college, and would eventually help escalate her to being one of the top runners in the Old Dominion Athletic Conference, as well as the NCAA South Region.



At left is Maddie Lotts with Makenna Thrush on the right.

The NCAA has the US broken up into 10 regions, and Shenandoah University is part of the South Region, spanning from Virginia, south to Florida, and west to the Mississippi River, essentially the bottom quarter of the US.

In the 2023 NCAA South Regional, Shenandoah's women placed 5<sup>th</sup> as a team overall in the 51-team region, the highest in program history, with Maddie leading SU with a 12<sup>th</sup> place individual finish overall in the 170-woman race. Maddie, along with training partner Makenna Thrush (19<sup>th</sup> overall), were both named All-Region, placing top-35. Both Maddie and Makenna will be named Academic All-Americans at the end of the fall semester for those efforts, coupled with their GPAs of 3.4 and 3.8 as pre-physical therapy and pre-athletic training majors at SU.

Maddie's 6,000-meter time at the regional of 22:22.8 was a personal best for the junior, earning her first trip to the national championship. The 16<sup>th</sup> place finisher was the final national qualifying spot, with Makenna missing the trip by 10.4 seconds with her 6k time of 22:55.8.

Shenandoah's 2024 campaign has the Harriers hosting at Kernstown Battlefield on Friday, September 13<sup>th</sup> for the 'SU Twilight', then two weeks later on Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup> for 'The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Hornet Harrier Invitational and Commonwealth Challenge'.

NCAA National Cross Country Qualifiers  
from Shenandoah University:

2010 – Josiah Renton  
2010 – Amy Smith  
2013 – Ryan Taylor  
2021 – Erin Atkinson  
2022 – Erin Atkinson  
2023 – Madeline Lotts

**Attention all Golfers:**

**“Save the Date”**

**The Second Kernstown Battlefield Golf Classic!**

**June 21, 2024 – Rock Harbor Golf Club, Winchester, VA**

This past June's first-ever event was a blast with over eighty golfers taking part; but if you missed out, take heart! We're doing it again! So mark your calendars – more details to follow.



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\* Deceased

**Thank You  
for Your  
Support**

## Battlefield Historical Trail Markers to Be Updated

by Chuck Maurer

The History and Education Committee of the KBA continues to improve and expand our new color coded, "main campus" historical trail system. Our current effort begins with changing the battle-focused marker just outside of our Visitor Center to a "KBA Story" marker. This revised interpretive panel will tell the critically important, but under-interpreted, story of how the Kernstown Battlefield/historic farm was saved from development. In addition to this new "KBA Story" marker, we are significantly expanding and modifying the Second Kernstown Battle (red) trail. This major part of the trail improvement project will add about a half mile to the Second Kernstown trail and include two new markers: "Confederate Sharpshooters Lead the Attack" and "Mulligan's Forward Positions".

We will also be adding a single new Battle of First Kernstown (blue trail) marker related to maneuvering Union artillery to stem the initial Confederate assault on that fateful day in March 1862. Finally, we will have updated maps available for our visitors along with a large kiosk historical trail map on display just outside of our Conference Center.

In one final note, our thanks to the [Blue and Gray Educational Society](#) for funding the bulk of this trail improvement project.