

# Fifty-Seventh Virginia Infantry Regiment

COMPANY "B"

FOUNDED 1987

## LONGSTREET'S CORPS

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### ORGANIZATION BY-LAWS

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#### --PREAMBLE--

Reflections upon our forefathers inspire and empower our modern efforts as re-enactors. Although our efforts are at best a pale shadow of their accomplishments, we will nevertheless strive at all times when on duty to act as true and faithful Confederate soldiers. We will, through excellence in drill, impression, and deportment, honor those brave men of Virginia who served in Company B, 57<sup>th</sup> Va., Inf'y during the war for southern independence, and whose sacrifice shall be engraved as a mark of honor in our country's ledger until the end of time.

1. **Workings** of the Unit are discussed among the members and voted upon by the voting members.
2. **A Recruit's right to vote** shall be conferred upon him upon completion of one continuous year of unbroken, full membership. However, a recruit may be granted status as a voting member before completion of recruit status by a majority vote.
3. In the field, all members will **conduct** themselves with strict military bearing. Orders of Officers and NCOs will be adhered to immediately and fully, with discernible respect. Failure will result in being placed On Report. Constant failure will result in expulsion.

Behavioral Guidelines and Discipline are important to a well-run organization, and are mentioned here for the purpose of completeness. Improper public behavior reflects on the entire Unit, harms our reputation may subject us to expulsion or exclusion from events and even cause serious financial loss. It may also generate adverse publicity and at worst litigation against the Unit, its members, and its leaders. Therefore, the Unit will not tolerate illegal activity or possession of controlled substances by any member(s) while on duty. Some behavior may be so egregious that disciplinary measures will be imposed even if the alleged offense occurs while the accused is not officially on duty. For example, in the event of an accusation for any felony, the accused shall be deemed automatically suspended from all Unit activities. The suspension will remain in effect until the criminal charges are resolved in favor of the accused through acquittal or discontinuance of prosecution. Conviction of a felony is a non-appealable ground for immediate separation.

Prohibited activities while with the Unit include, but are not limited to:

- a) use or possession of controlled substances or illegal firearms.
- b) stealing, intentionally damaging or destroying the property of others inside or outside the Unit.

- c) endangering the safety of others through reckless behavior evincing a lack of concern for the health and welfare of Unit members, members of other units, and the general public.
4. All members except Reserve, Veteran, and Associates must **attend** at least 50%+1 of scheduled events (ex: if 10 events are scheduled, you must make 6), and at least 4 out of 5 consecutive drills. A Recruit, in order to achieve the status of voting member, must attend at least ONE Unit event outside the State of New York.

Additionally, the Unit makes paid appearances (school tutorials, living histories, lectures, parades, etc.). The proceeds of these activities pay unit expenses and do not pass to the rank and file. Being mindful of this, all members except Reserve, Veteran and Associates must attend as many as possible, with a minimum of one (1). However, Reserve, Veteran and Associate Members are urged to do their best to participate at paid appearances.

A year-end meeting of the CO and NCOs will determine if members subject to this Article have met its minimum requirements. If the CO, in consultation with his NCOs, determines that a member has not met attendance standards for the past reenacting season, that member shall, at the discretion of the CO, forfeit rank, voting privileges, and the right to run for any unit office for the following reenacting season. A member deemed in forfeiture shall be notified in writing by the Adjutant and shall have the right to respond to the Adjutant, in writing, within thirty days of the Adjutant's sending out the notice of forfeiture, a request for restoration of voting rights and privileges that sets forth extenuating circumstances for his failure to meet the standard. Failure to request reconsideration shall be deemed acceptance of forfeiture. Upon the Adjutant's receiving a request for reconsideration, the CO shall review the record and shall determine if voting rights and privileges should be restored. The CO's decision, in writing, shall be mailed to the petitioning member and the Adjutant, and shall be unappealable. If a member has forfeited voting privileges and rights under this paragraph, but during the following season maintains his attendance obligations to the Unit, said member's voting rights and privileges shall be restored. However, if forfeiture has also caused a loss of rank, restoration of voting rights and privileges shall not carry with it restoration of lost rank. However, should the CO, in consultation with his NCOs, find that a member who has forfeited voting privileges and rights has for a second year in a row failed to meet the standards imposed by Article 4 of the bylaws, that member shall be reduced to the rank of "recruit" with "probationary" status effective immediately following the commander's decision.

5. Recruits, who, after their first year of service, who have not met Unit attendance requirements, but in all other ways, in the opinion of the CO, have fulfilled their responsibilities to the Unit, may remain as Recruits for the following reenactment season.
6. The event **schedule** is formulated over the winter by membership vote. Both local and national events are scheduled. Unplanned opportunities for events will be voted upon as they arise. (Exception: Paid Living Histories and appearances for school programs that arise mid-season will be scheduled for that season at the discretion of the CO.
7. All new members (Recruits) and new Associate Members will pay **dues** to the Unit at a cost to be determined at the first meeting of each year. The dues requirement is waived for

continuing members except for Associate Members after the initial first year payment. Our dues pay for registration fees for events, postage, unit social events, copying and all other sundry costs the Unit incurs.

8. **Concurrent membership** in other Civil War reenactment units is not allowed, except for Associate Members of the Unit, as this will be divisive and deplete Esprit de Corps (membership in the National Rifle Association is suggested because it causes no such conflict and offers insurance for you and your musket or rifle).
9. **Elections** for Officers and NCOs take place at the first meeting for the following calendar year by secret ballot of eligible voters as described in rule 2. During campaign season, the Company Commander has the authority to appoint or promote members to certain ranks as needed at any given event.
10. **Candidates for Office** must have been in compliance with Rules 3, 4, 6 & 7 over the past year. Additional minimum requirements are as follows:
  - Captain or Lieutenant: 3 years in the 57<sup>th</sup> as NCO; 1 of those as Corporal, and 2 as 1<sup>st</sup> .  
Sergeant
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant: 2 years in 57<sup>th</sup>, 1 of those as Corporal.
  - Corporal: 1 year as full Private.
  - Private: 1 year as recruit; has acquired uniform and all equipment.
  - Recruit: Non-elected rank; new to service, learning skills and actively acquiring equipment.
11. **Dismissal** from the 57<sup>th</sup> of recruits or Associate Members may be ordered by the CO at any time for any infraction of the Unit standards, which, in his judgment, calls for such action. Dismissal of any other rank or status is by Unit vote. Special cases, such as recruits with prior re-enactor experience, will be adjudicated on a case-by-case basis.
12. **Uniforms and equipment**, as formulated, must be strictly followed by all members so that the Unit presents an authentic, accurate appearance. This appearance is not generic Confederate, but that of soldiers of Virginia in this specific Unit of General Armistead's Brigade. Note: Rank insignia can be worn only by officers and NCOs, and hat trim can be worn only by the Company Commander.
13. **Inspection** of members in uniform and their equipment will take place at the beginning of each season and at each event. The CO will be the final judge of what is appropriate.

Soldiers in American Armies have always been subject to having their gear checked for conformity to regulations. This means that the soldier at an event not only consents to inspection of all required accoutrements required by the bylaws, but also to any search by the CO or NCO of his person, his gear, or his tent, for contraband of any kind, including but not limited to, illegal firearms or controlled substances. This waiver is voluntarily given by all members upon enlistment to protect the integrity, good name, and reputation of Co. B., 57<sup>th</sup> VA Infantry.

**Penalties**, depending on the gravity of the offense, are at the sole discretion of the CO, or in his absence, at the discretion of his immediate subordinate and can include being placed on report, ejection from an event, loss of rank, suspension from the unit, return to probationary

status, or immediate dismissal. Punishment shall commence when the commander, or his immediate subordinate when the commander is not present, gives face-to-face notification of the charges. Recruits have no right of appeal, and the decision of the CO as to any punishment shall be absolute and binding. For all other unit members, the only appealable punishments shall be immediate dismissal, suspension from the Unit, or return to probationary status. All other punishments shall be absolute and binding at the discretion of the commander.

14. Members must be 18 years of **age** to carry a weapon on the field. However, upon consent of the CO, and from a parent or legal guardian in a writing prepared by the Adjutant, minors 15 through 17 years old may take the field under arms as recruits provided that (a) the minor has an immediate family member in the Unit, or (b) has an immediate family member who has attained Veteran status or has resigned honorably, or (c) has an immediate family member who although not on the roster has had, in the opinion of the CO, contributed significantly to the progress and growth of the Unit.
15. Members are **required to drill and perform** as riflemen. Since Company “B” represents a Confederate company in the line, it has no non-military impressions unless specifically authorized by the CO for specified local events.
16. The Company always seeks **recruiting** of new members. At events, interested parties should be directed to one of the Officers or NCOs for information. Prospective recruits should observe the Unit before joining, become familiar with its bylaws, and be reminded that they although they are joining the Unit, the Unit is not joining them. Once on the roster, recruits may participate in Company events at the discretion of the CO.
17. All **inquiries** about Unit availability for events and appearances must be directed to the CO without comment on the likelihood of acceptance or non-acceptance. Any and all inquiries are subject to CO’s approval only.
18. Unit members whose **female** significant other wishes to partake in Unit activities in the field may do so provided she is a period-dressed female civilian. The Unit will accord females a safe civilian camping area. No females may carry arms, appear in military uniform, take the field for purposes of drill or battle, or tent within the perimeter of the Company street.
19. **Detached Service** – Any voted member who requires a Leave of Absence for (1) season will be automatically granted the privilege, provided a written reason is tendered to the CO. Any extensions of Detached Service beyond the time remaining in the season in which the request is made and the following season are subject to approval by a majority vote of the Unit. Any member entering the military service of the United States shall be automatically deemed on Detached Service during active military service. Members on Detached Service have no voting rights. Members on Detached Service may participate in Unit events with the consent of the CO.
20. **Reserve Status** – Any voted member who through injury or infirmity can safely attend only a certain quality style event may do so without strict adherence to attendance rules. However, a modicum of attendance at drills and meeting is mandatory. Voting rights are sustained in this status.
21. **Veteran Corps** – Any members who have served 3 years with the Unit and can no longer physically serve as a regular rifleman. These members may enjoy all the benefits of the Unit

except voting rights. These members may serve in uniform as camp guards, at living histories, and to a limited extent, with the consent of the CO, at reenactments. Veterans are welcome guests at Unit social events.

22. ***Associate Membership Service***—Persons desiring membership in Co. B of the 57<sup>th</sup> but who reside outside a 110-mile radius of the City of New York, may be granted Associate Membership. Conditions of Associate Membership are: (i) Acceptance of the conditions of these bylaws with the exception of Paragraph (4). (ii) Associate Members in good standing are invited to appear with the Unit at events provided they have prepaid their registration to the event and conduct themselves while on duty in accordance with Unit standards. (iii) Associate Members of other Confederate Units in attendance at an event with the Unit, may wear a generic Confederate uniform providing that it has been approved by The Unit Commander in advance of “Taking –The – Field”.