

54th Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Company

A By-Laws Revision: January 27, 2024

ARTICLE I – NAME, STRUCTURE, AND LIABILITY

- A. The name of this unit is 54th Pa Infantry, Co. A (hereafter known as "the Unit").
- B. Members and prospective members of the Unit are required to serve together in a cooperative and cordial manner, working towards the desired historical impression.
- C. The members will function as one Unit in the field when appropriate and at the discretion of the Commanding Officer.
- D. We will not discriminate. Membership is open to any individual willing to portray an accurate impression of the Civil War time period.
- E. The Unit is a social club open to anyone who voluntarily wishes to join and abide by the By-Laws as prescribed herein. While the Unit does endeavor to instruct the membership in proper safety, health and protection habits and will enforce same, the Unit cannot and will not assume any liability for injury, sickness and/or theft of or damage to personal property.

ARTICLE II - OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSES

- A. To reflect the highest standards of American Civil War reenacting and to historically portray authenticity in conduct, dress, grooming and equipment of all members of the Unit.
- B. To provide an educational outlet, not only for fellow members, but for the general public.
- C. To work with other Civil War reenactment organizations to help further this education.
- D. To portray, to the best of our ability, the 54th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry and civilians of the time period. If the opportunity arises to portray a different impression at an event, the opportunity will be presented to the Field Commander who will put the impression up to vote to the members in attendance. A simple majority will be sufficient for determination.

ARTICLE III - GOVERNMENT

- A. The Unit will be governed as a Democracy under the principle of "one member, one vote."
- B. Only members in good standing are eligible to vote. To be a member in good standing, you must have been accepted as a member, paid your yearly dues, and participated in three (3) 54th reenacting events in the previous 12 months. Minor children under the age of 16 will be classified as dependents and will not have voting rights.
- C. The governing body of the Unit will have the power to promote or demote any person or rank at any time it feels necessary after notifying the member in writing of grievances and problems pertaining to their impression or behavior in camp or on the field. Their word in these matters will be final.

D. The general membership may call for a general election at any time by submitting to the Unit officers a petition calling for the same, signed by two-thirds of the members listed on the Unit roster. The officers have 30 days in order to carry out this election. If said election is not carried out within the specified time, all officers will be considered removed and the general membership will replace all members at the earliest possible time.

ARTICLE IV -UNIT OFFICERS

A. The Unit shall be run by the Unit officers consisting of **four** members. They shall be responsible for the daily operation of the Unit. All decisions made by the Unit officers will be determined by the democratic vote of its members.

These officers are:

1. President: Chief overseer of administrative duties, presides over meetings of general membership, responsible for all Unit paperwork, and will cast deciding vote in the case of a tie. Attends all umbrella organization meetings at or away from reenactments in the absence of the Field Commander.

2. Field Commander: Responsible for coordinating all military impressions, senior drill instructor and commander of Unit on the reenactment battlefield and in the military camp. He has the final say on the battlefield as well as the structure of the encampment. Attends all umbrella organization meetings at or away from reenactments. Presides over meetings in the absence of the president. The Field Commander can hold a rank no less than 1st Lieutenant.

3. Treasurer: Responsible for all accounting and bookkeeping of money. Also, authorized to pay all bills created by Unit.

4. Civilian Coordinator: Responsible for coordinating all civilian impressions at living histories and in camp. For all unit events, their word is final concerning civilian impressions. Responsible for coordinating civilian camp structure and tasks.

B. All officers will be elected by a simple majority of the members at the yearly meeting. Decision making criteria should be on the individual's attitude, participation, and demonstrated leadership capabilities. Candidates must also be a member in good standing.

C. Unit officer terms will be for one year and they will be elected annually at the general membership meeting

D. The Field Commander will handle all military matters and will represent (or his designee) the Unit at all Brigade meetings.

E. No two positions of Unit officer, no matter the reason, shall be held by the same individual.

ARTICLE V -COMMAND STRUCTURE

A. The Field Commander will have the power to promote or demote any person or rank at any time he feels necessary, but only after presenting his recommendation or grievance to a majority of the Unit and receiving approval of the majority after notifying the member in writing of grievances and problems pertaining to their impression or behavior in camp or on the field.

B. All non-commissioned officers and subordinate officers shall be appointed by the Field Commander. These appointments can be made only with verbal approval of members in good standing. H. Any member appointed to these positions by the Field Commander, assuming all other requirements were met, must have completed the following line of succession:

a. A Private must be in good standing and completed two years in rank, post probationary period with the year prior event attendance meeting fifty percent, to be eligible for consideration for Corporal.

b. A Corporal must be in good standing with the year prior event attendance meeting fifty percent and completed one year in rank before being eligible for consideration for Sergeant.

c. A Sergeant must be in good standing with the year prior event attendance meeting fifty percent and completed one year in rank before being eligible for consideration for 1st Sergeant.

d. A 1st Sergeant must be in good standing with the year prior event attendance meeting fifty percent and completed three years in rank before being eligible for consideration for 2nd Lieutenant.

C. Job duties and requirements for officers and non-commissioned officers are but not limited to the following:

a. Corporal: Train soldiers on proper dress and gear, train military etiquette, drill on manual of arms, drill on facings, patrols camp for period correctness, fatigue duties, and other duties as assigned.

b. Sergeant: Leads drill of maneuvering, assists in weapons training and safety, assists in loading and firing training, inspects weapons after cleaning, patrols camp for period correctness, and other duties as assigned.

c. 1st Sergeant: Completes paperwork, oversees other NCOs, carries out company officer's orders, inspects weapons after cleaning, weapons training and safety, loading and firing training, patrols camp for period correctness, and other duties as assigned.

d. Commissioned Officers: See bylaw Article IV, section A2

D. In the absence of the Field Commander for an event, then 1st Sergeant commands the company for the weekend. If both are absent, 2nd Sergeant has command. Arrangements can be made with other officers at least one week prior to an event if agreed upon by all members involved.

ARTICLE VI – MEMBERSHIP AND IMPRESSION STANDARDS

A. All individuals applying for membership in the Unit will be voted on with a simple majority decision of the members present. **This vote will be on a secret ballot, counted and results announced by the President.** All new recruits will be on probation for one year, during which time, the recruit will have limited voting rights and will not be allowed to vote on officers, by-law changes, or individuals requesting membership. **This probationary period may be reduced or exempted if the new recruit is an existing member of a brother company and is well known to the 54th PA. This is at the discretion of the Field Commander.**

B. The President or Field Commander will provide to the new member a copy of the bylaws, a dues payment form, and a volunteer enlistment packet.

C. Prior to the end of the probationary period, Unit Officers and NCOs will evaluate the impression as outlined in Article VI, Section F1 or F2 of the bylaws, behavior, and performance of the recruit in camp and in the field. If applicable, a written notification of concerns pertaining to any of the above will be communicated to the recruit. Based on the recommendation of the Unit Officers and NCOs, the recruit will have the opportunity to demonstrate improvement prior to the membership admittance vote.

D. After the one year probationary period, the Company Commander or Civilian Coordinator, as situation dictates, will present his/her recommendation to a majority of the Unit and receiving approval of the majority as to admit, extend probation, or dismiss the recruit.

E. After the recommendation of Company Commander or Civilian Coordinator is presented; a vote by the majority of members in good standing will be conducted via a secret ballot collected and counted by the Unit President.

F. New members will be required, to the best of their abilities, to possess the following items within one calendar year from the date of acceptance of their application for membership:

1. MILITARY IMPRESSION

- i. 4-button navy blue sack coat
- ii. Sky blue trousers with period braces
- iii. Period shirt(s)
- iv. Forage cap or slouch hat
- v. Waist belt with U.S. buckle
- vi. Cartridge box with sling and Eagle plate
- vii. Cap box
- viii. 3-band Enfield or Springfield reproduction musket
- ix. Bayonet and scabbard
- x. Canteen
- xi. Haversack
- xii. Period correct socks
- xiii. 'Jefferson Bootees' or Brogan-style shoes
- xiv. Period eyewear (if required)
- xv. Dog or A-tent
- xvi. White dress gloves

2. CIVILIAN IMPRESSION

- i. Suit of clothing for either man, woman or child
- ii. Necessary undergarments
- iii. Period shoes

iv. Period eyewear (if required)

v. A-tent

G. Every effort will be made by everyone to be in complete period attire (see above) beginning at reveille the first morning of the event and remaining so throughout the entire event. Exceptions can be made at the Field Commanders discretion. Those members who do not dress for the day will not be permitted to remain in camp.

H. Every effort will be made to ensure that non-period items are out of site while the camp is open to the public, this includes but is not limited to modern food items, bottles, cell phones, etc. Any inaccuracies shall be used out of sight of the public, such as in a tent with closed flaps.

I. During the hours that the camp is open to the public, every effort shall be made to use period correct paraphernalia and language in camp and on the field.

J. Period attire will not apply to camp visitors or visiting family members, although, visitors or visiting family remaining in camp overnight should attempt to be in period attire.

K. Individuals applying for membership may be of any age, race, or gender, however, one must be at least 16 with parent or legal guardian approval to handle a weapon.

L. Individuals under the age of 18, applying for membership, must have parent or legal guardian approval and a parent or legal guardian must be present at all attended events.

M. Individuals under the age of 16 will be encouraged to join as a musician, civilian or another form of noncombatant.

N. Any member may at any time voluntarily terminate his membership by tendering a written resignation to the Unit officers.

O. All persons temporarily falling into the ranks of the Unit will comply with all Unit By-Laws.

ARTICLE VII – FINANCES

A. Membership dues will be determined annually at the Unit meeting. Dues are to be paid to the Treasurer prior to the first event of the season without exception.

B. An individual's membership will terminate if the current dues are not paid to the Treasurer by the first Unit event of the new campaign season.

C. Dues and any monetary gifts collected will be put in the Unit treasury, to be maintained by the Treasurer.

D. All dues are charged based on each individual member.

E. There will be no proration of dues.

F. All dues, meal tickets, and registration fees are non-refundable.

G. Unit funds will be used for Unit business only.

H. Any purchases made on behalf of the Unit must have approval of the President, Field Commander, and Treasurer. If a purchase is made without this approval it will be done at one's own expense and will not be reimbursed.

I. Meal payments must be used only for the meals at a certain event to which they are designated. Any money left over after the purchasing of food will be given to the Treasurer and put into the Unit treasury.

J. All purchases approved and made on behalf of the Unit, including but not limited to food for meals, equipment, and weapons, must be accompanied with a receipt(s) regardless of prepayment or reimbursement.

K. Each member is responsible for registering for each event that he/she intends to participate in. Registration for each event is done by contacting the event and paying all applicable fees. This must be done as early as possible. The member is also responsible for notifying the Field Commander, unless otherwise specified, of their intention to attend or not an event as the situation dictates.

L. Each member is responsible for registering for meals that he/she intends to participate in. Payment for each meal ticket must be made at least TWO weeks in advance and is non-refundable. The meals are open to 54th members only.

M. The President will maintain a "Roster" containing the names, addresses and phone numbers of all members that are current with regard to dues.

N. The Treasurer will present a list of dues paying members for the current year to the President following the first Unit event to ensure the "Roster" is up to date.

O. Should a member allow his/her/their dues to lapse in arrears and that member be considered terminated for non-payment of dues, that member must pay one year's dues in order to be reinstated. They will not be required to go through the application process again.

ARTICLE VIII – CONDUCT

A. All members, dependents, and guests will abide by these, any umbrella organization, or event rules and regulations.

B. All members will be required to participate in drill, from Brigade level down, at all events. Those on 'sick call' will be exempted from duty.

C. All members will cooperate, to the best of their abilities, with others, both on and off the field of battle.

D. There will be no derogatory talk or condemning remarks made toward the Unit, any Unit member, or their dependent(s); this includes, but is not limited to, face to face, online, or social media interactions.

E. All members will be responsible for the behavior and safety of themselves and their dependent(s).

F. All members are expected to follow the laws and rules governing alcohol and prohibited substances. Violation can subject members to expulsion from the Unit

G. Any member under the legal drinking age caught consuming alcohol can have their membership revoked after the Field Commander presents his case, in writing, and receives approval of a majority of the Unit. This rule also applies to anyone who supplies alcohol to anyone under the legal drinking age. Their word in these matters will be final.

H. Any member that engages in physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, theft, or any other serious criminal behavior will be immediately terminated from the Unit and turned over to the proper authorities, if warranted. This notification will come only after considerable deliberation of the Unit officers and the officers have received written grievances from the members. If the issue is concerning a Unit officer, that officer will be exempt from deliberation. Their word in these matters will be final.

I. The Field Commander will have the power to dismiss from the Unit any person at any time he feels necessary for inappropriate conduct, not falling under the above article, after notifying the member in writing of grievances and problems pertaining to their impression, behavior in camp or on the field or on social media. This notification will come only after considerable deliberation of the Unit officers and the officers have received written grievances from the members. If the issue is concerning a Unit officer, that officer will be exempt from deliberation. Their word in these matters will be final.

J. Any non-probationary member can be placed on a six-month probation for conduct not resulting in dismissal. The Field Commander will notify the member in writing of grievances and problems pertaining to their impression or behavior in camp or on the field. This notification will come only after considerable deliberation of the Unit officers and the officers have received written grievances from the members. After six-months the Unit officers will meet to discuss the member's situation and recommend further action. If the issue is concerning a Unit officer, that officer will be exempt from deliberation. Their word in these matters will be final.

K. Any member is encouraged to report the improper conduct of participants to the Unit Officers, without fear of reprisals. These grievances should be written and signed by the complainant. All grievances will be kept in confidence until acted upon.

L. All members are subject to the regulations of Unit, Brigade or Division medical personnel and any and all orders given by medical personnel, regardless of rank, must be followed, up to and including nonparticipation in an event scenario. Their word in these matters will be final.

M. No member of this Unit shall approach a member or potential member of another Unit with the intentions of recruitment. Also, any non-member suspected of trying to recruit a member of the Unit should be reported to the Field Commander.

ARTICLE IX – MEETINGS

A. An annual meeting will be held at the beginning of each year, at a time and place to be announced by the President. The primary purpose of this meeting is the election of Unit officers, the establishment of events the Unit will participate in for the year, and any other business at hand.

B. Additional meetings can be called at any time by a member in good standing wishing to conduct Unit business as long as there is a published meeting date, and a quorum of members attending.

ARTICLE X – ATTENDANCE

A. All members of the Unit will make a reasonable effort to attend all events scheduled for the course of the year.

B. All members of the Unit will make a reasonable effort to attend all scheduled meetings both at and away from events. Unit officers must attend the annual meeting either in person or by call in.

C. All officers and non-commissioned officers will make a reasonable effort to attend at minimum 50 percent of all events scheduled for the course of the year. The Field Commander will notify, by writing, any officer or NCO that is close to missing the number of required events. Failure to achieve a 50 percent attendance will result in loss of rank back to private for the following year. If the position is still open the NCO or officer may petition the Field Commander in writing for a return to the previous rank if the 50 percent requirement is met during the following year. ARTICLE XI - REVISIONS AND AMMENDMENTS A. Changes to the By-Laws may be made only at the annual general membership meeting. Any proposed changes must be submitted to the President in writing no later than December 31st of the preceding year.

These by-laws replace and supersede all previous for the Company