



28th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Company B

TO: Membership
FROM: Rob Calhelha, Secretary
DATE: January 24, 2025

Secretary's Report

Board Votes

The board took five major on-line votes in 2025 –

- Becoming a HistoryFix affiliate (Passed)
- Purchase of bass drum and misc. slings (Passed)
- Ordering 28th Massachusetts National and Tiffany Flags (Passed)
- Ordering 28th Massachusetts PVC Patches and Stickers (Passed)
- A way to honor Bob Heath (Decision split, no action taken)

The board took two major in-person votes in 2025 –

- Sibley tripod purchase
- Members who join after September 1 will have their dues applied to both the current year and the following year.

Current Membership

The unit ended 2025 with 90 members on the roster broken down to 44 Regular, 13 Family, and 8 Associate plans. This is compared to 57 registered members this time last year, almost double.

Statistics

Most of the unit now resides in Northern Virginia, the center-of-mass for members having moved north from the Fredericksburg area. While most members live in Virginia, we have members in twelve other states.

Swag

As of 1/1/2026, the unit purchased \$488 worth of swag and has recouped 79% of that through sales. Once fully paid off, all sales will result in a profit to the company.

Recruiting Sub-Report

The unit continues to experience modest growth as new members offset attrition; however, a noticeable percentage of membership loss is projected over the next five years.

Recruiting across the hobby remains active and increasingly competitive, requiring sustained time and follow-up for each inquiry. While units continue to cooperate, competition for prospective members remains a consistent factor.

The 28th Massachusetts emphasizes quality programming, effective outreach, an established reputation, solid web-based presence, and a cohesive, historically grounded unit culture as its primary recruiting strengths, aligning with broader trends in the hobby.

Social Media Sub-Report

The unit maintains a strong and active online presence across TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and its website, exceeding the visibility of most peer units.

Throughout the year, social media was used deliberately to support recruiting, public engagement, and unit identity, emphasizing high-quality imagery, clear messaging, and historically grounded content. These efforts increased visibility and reinforced the 28th Massachusetts as a serious and active unit. Social media continues to serve as an effective force multiplier when paired with quality events and consistent follow-up.

Most new members first learned about the unit through social media, with Instagram generating the majority of inquiries.

Member-submitted high-quality photos and videos are encouraged, preferably in vertical (portrait) format for effective use across platforms. Please send to the Secretary.

Event Committee Sub-Report

As voted last year, the Event Committee is a five-member body responsible for identifying, evaluating, and recommending events for the annual calendar. It is meant to streamline the event selection process and be responsive to pop-up events. It is chaired by a Board-appointed Chair serving a one-year term, with standing members including the Captain, First Sergeant, and Secretary, and additional volunteers as needed. The committee gathers potential events, solicits member input, and presents a recommended slate to the Board for approval. Once approved, the Secretary disseminates the finalized calendar.

For 2026, the unit simplified event planning by eliminating multiple event categories which was assessed to dilute attendance. The goal is to average two event days per month through a balanced mix of parades, living histories, and tactical events, along with three specialty events discussed below.

The unit currently has 17 confirmed or working events, including two core “tent-pole” events - School of the Soldier (April) and Gettysburg (June) - which are strongly encouraged for all members. Parades remain a priority due to their public visibility, with the year-end goal of fielding enough members to march independently under the 28th’s flag at Gettysburg Remembrance Day.

The unit will participate in one Third Regiment maximum-effort event, 1st Bull Run in July, portraying the 69th NYSM in red shirts. Due to changes in event structure, the 28th will now lead its own company within a Third Regiment battalion and aims to field at least 25 participants, requiring aggressive recruiting and unit member participation.

October is unique, in that it presents three high-quality events in MD, WV, and TN, providing member flexibility while ensuring unit representation at each. Additional venues, including Blenheim in Fairfax, are being explored to fill remaining calendar gaps with living histories and potential Christmas/seasonal events.

All events are open to non-members with a walk-on fee and are not exclusive to the 28th Massachusetts, making them effective recruiting opportunities.

Specialty Events

In addition to the regular event calendar, the unit will conduct specialty events designed to enhance skills, fitness, and historical understanding. We have three scheduled for this year –

- A live fire in May, which will require a fee and have capped attendance for safety, with participation prioritized first for regular members by seniority, followed by associate members, and then friends of the unit as space allows.
- 17-mile Commemorative Hike on the Appalachian Trail in September, which is free but attendance-limited due to physical demands. (There is a shorter 5-mile conditioning hike at Manassas in February that is open to all)
- A private battlefield tour on September 5 in observance of the Ox Hill anniversary, led by former 28th member and literal author of the book David Welker.

Next Event

Our next event is a 1-day drill day and 5-mile hike at Manassas National Battlefield Park on February 21.