

# THE STRAGGLER

NEWSLETTER OF THE TEXAS RIFLES

ISSUE NO. 27

April 1990



"To The Tyrants Never Yield!"



## COMMANDER'S DISPATCH

The reenactment of the Army of Tennessee's surrender was one of the highlights of Bentonville. As a participant in the emotional surrender ceremony, I found myself doing what I thought I'd never do: cutting up a battleflag. I have always regretted that some regiments avoided the disgrace of surrendering their flags by destroying them since in the process they also inadvertently deprived future generations.

It then occurred to me why the flags were treated in this fashion. The surrendering soldiers would be able to carry with them a piece of the banner they had fought under for so long. They had suffered so much! Their flag could never mean more to anyone than to the surviving members of the regiment. It would be a small, but meaningful, consolation for each man to carry a piece of the flag home. As it was done 125 years ago, it was done again. Lest we forget.

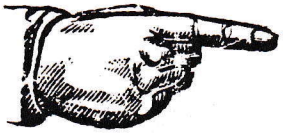
Pleasant Hill is right around the corner (April 20 - 22). This is a battalion wing event and a Texas Rifles MAXIMUM EFFORT EVENT! Another Texas Rifles MAXIMUM EFFORT EVENT, Palmetto Ranch, follows soon thereafter (May 11-13). I am counting on The Texas Rifles to turn out in force...at least 40 men...at each of these reenactments -- please don't let me down! Both events are very near to home and will be lots of fun. Make every effort to attend!

And one last word on Bentonville. Saturday, the company fought and marched all day. We ate rations in the field and marched back to camp in a driving rainstorm. It was a tough day but the Rifles met the challenge. All the hardy souls who participated should be proud of their efforts. On Sunday, the Rifles won an informal stacking contest among the companies of the battalion and a formal stacking contest between the best comrades-in-battle from each company. Ray Siegmund, Mack Frazier, Ed Grandle and Chad Frazier took the honors for The Texas Rifles. Until we are again under the banner of the right,

I have the honor to be your most obedient servant,

*B. Gill Eastland*

B. Gill Eastland  
Captain



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Please let your Regional Director know which events you plan to attend -- this information is essential for proper planning!

\*BATTLE OF PLEASANT HILL: April 20 - 22 at Pleasant Hill, Louisiana. Battalion Wing Event. See article on page 4 for details.

S.E. TEXAS REGION PARTY: May 5 at the home of David Hall and Kate Payne from 2:00 - 6:00 p.m., 9830 Pine Lake Drive between Bunker Hill & Gessner, 3 blocks north of I-10. This will be a general "get together" -- cartridge-rolling is welcome and encouraged but will not necessarily be the main feature of this event. Kate will play the piano and we can get in some much-needed song practice. Coincidentally, May 5 is also "Derby Day": appropriate snacks will be provided and, if you bring your bourbon, we can concoct some mint juleps! To R.S.V.P., please call Kate or Dave at (713) 932-1084 or Vince Draa at (713) 896-1023.

\*BATTLE OF PALMETTO RANCH: May 11 - 13 at Bee Caves near Austin. 125th Anniversary event. See article on page 4 for details.

SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC FT. SAM HOUSTON VICTORIAN BALL: May 19 in San Antonio. Norman Hughes, who made dancing fun for all of us clay-footed infantrymen at The Texas Rifles Ball, will be the Master of Ceremonies. \$15.00/person or \$30.00/couple. Call B. Jan Zirkle (512) 221-6117 for details.

BATTLE OF CHAMPION HILL: May 18 - 20 near Edwards, Mississippi. Call Jay Jackson at (816) 336-4441 for details.

FT. MARTIN SCOTT: May 25-27 near Fredricksburg, Texas. 1850's living history event. Impressions needed: U.S. Dragoons, Infantry, Recruits, Civilians & Indians. Call (512) 997-9895 for details.

SIEGE OF VICKSBURG: June 29 - July 1 at Vicksburg, MS. Living history; life in the trenches. Saturday and Sunday battles. More details later.

\*SECOND ANNUAL TEXAS RIFLES BALL: Tentatively scheduled to be held in February, 1991 at the Driskill Hotel in Austin. More details later.

BATTLE OF WILSON'S CREEK: Missouri, August 1991. It's not too early to begin thinking about this one! More details later.

(NOTE: An asterisk "\*" denotes a MAXIMUM EFFORT event. Most members, officers & NCO's will be present. At all other events, the attendance is usually smaller; you may be on your own.)



# TR TID BITS

## NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to our new members! They are as follows: James Early, Katy Gilbert, David Glasgow, James Martin, Lyndall Maxwell and Dave Stieghan.

## BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations to James and Lisa Hesse on the birth Mary Rebecca Dowdy AND to Nancy (Gray) Pretzer and her husband on the birth of Ashley Nicole Danielle. Both baby girls are healthy and weighed 7lb 9 oz.

## COUNTRY CLOTH -- by Scott Swenson

I am excited to report that Country Cloth has dropped the price of their fabric to \$21/yard! This very high quality cotton/wool jean material is even cheaper than cadet grey wool and much more appropriate. Country Cloth's new address is 101-C West Park Ave., Columbiana, Ohio 44408.

## PRE-BENTONVILLE CARTRIDGE ROLLING

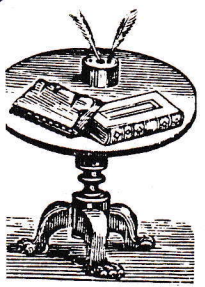
On March 10, S.E. Texas TR members Jack Bell, Ed Grandle, Chris Strzelecki, Mike Powell, Ana Draa and Vince Draa along with Ron Fuller (a new recruit who lives in Katy, Texas) attended a cartridge-rolling party at the Draa's home. Over 500 cartridges were rolled and put into arsenal packs. Additionally, 150 tubes were rolled to be filled later. Ron, a veteran reenactor who previously belonged to a Wyoming-based unit that specializes in portraying galvanized Yankees, should be ready to take the field with us at Pleasant Hill.

## DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

In some copies of Issue No. 26 of The Straggler, Gil Vollmering's address was listed incorrectly. His correct address appears on the back page of this issue. Sorry for any inconveniences this may have caused!

## CLARIFICATION -- by Vince Draa

Several readers have expressed concern regarding the deviant behavior of my "brother" George. In Issue No. 26 of The Straggler, he was reported to have "viciously assaulted" two deputy sheriffs in Olustee, Florida. George is a four-year old cairn terrier who is occasionally aggressive to an extent disproportionate to his size. Regardless of his species, George did survive, without significant retaliation, his confrontation with the "thin green line" of Baker County Florida.



## ARTICLES FROM THE MEMBERSHIP

### PLEASANT HILL -- by Vince Draa

All members should exert their utmost efforts to attend this reenactment of the battle which caused U.S. General Banks to abandon his 1864 attempt to invade Texas. The Texas Rifles are being expected to field a company of 40 men or more at this event, which will be held April 20 - 22 on a portion of the original battlefield in western Louisiana (see map). Given that Pleasant Hill is the best annual reenactment in this region and that we want to make a good showing within our wing of the battalion, there shouldn't be any reason for falling short of our attendance goal. Besides, Pleasant Hill is usually a low pressure, "fun" event which gives us the opportunity to ease back into reenacting after a long winter of inactivity. Plan to arrive at the site Friday evening or no later than Saturday morning. There should be an opportunity for galvanizing so, if you're interested, bring your Federal impressions. The ladies are planning a camp kitchen which will provide breakfast on Saturday and Sunday. They are also preparing haversack rations for lunch on Saturday. The price is \$7 for all meals. Please call Ana Draa immediately if you're interested in participating in the camp kitchen and above all, let your Regional Director know if you plan to attend the event! Hope to see you there!

### PLANS FOR THE BATTLE OF PALMETTO RANCH -- by Jeff Hunt

This reenactment is being sponsored by Terry's Texas Rangers (Terry's) and will be held May 11 - 13. I recently finished researching my article on this battle (due for publication in the Southwestern Historical Quarterly) and Terry's used my findings to modify their battle scenario, making it more authentic and accurate.

The event is to be held at Bee Caves, about 20 miles northwest of Austin. Although this is quite a distance from the original site which is near Brownsville, our event will still be fairly accurate and loosely based on the original see-saw running skirmish between Brownsville and Brazos Island. There are several reasons for doing this event despite the location problem. First, it is near to home -- a nice change! We will be able to do some serious recruiting in our own back yards as well as have us a chance to show our families what we do. This will not be a FARB fest, as most small events usually are. Most of our worries can be put to rest. Terry's has done a good job in obtaining support for this event. They have arranged for the following: feed for horses; straw for troops; water; Sunday meal; Saturday night dance; and powder for the artillery. They have secured camp sites and a battleground of good size -- away from all modern activities and eye sores. Terry's has worked hard to make this event as authentic as possible.

They have not been alone in their efforts. Since Bee Caves is so close, we have the opportunity to do some things The Texas Rifles have always wanted to do, but found difficult after driving half way across the country. The command staff of our company has come up with a very exiting program which we have sold to Terry's. Basically what we have planned is this. A 14 mile march will begin the afternoon of Friday,

May 11, and end around 4 pm, Saturday the 12th. The march will be over a route that avoids modern roads and other non-period obstructions. We will bivouac on Friday night and resume the march at a leisurely pace on Saturday. A horse drawn ordnance and supply wagon will accompany us on the march, as will some horse drawn artillery and mounted cavalry. There are a lot of people interested in the march so it is possible that we could have 50 to 60 participants. This should provide us with the rare opportunity to march with a mixed force of arms. Water, tentage and ammo will be carried in the wagon, and any one whose legs give out will be able to hitch a ride as well. But this will not be just a march. Terry's has agreed to galvanize and oppose us in a running skirmish toward the battle site on Saturday. The march will culminate in a tactical at 4 pm on the event site -- our column moving forward, dropping packs and going into combat.

We will camp on the reenactment site Saturday night. There will be separate Union and Confederate camps. The actual reenactment will take place at 2 pm on Sunday. Captain Eastland will be the overall Confederate infantry commander. At least six full scale artillery pieces will be on the field, with a fair number of cavalry and perhaps up to one hundred Confederate infantry. The Rifles alone should be able to put 40 to 50 men into the field. Specific information on the route of march will be provided at Pleasant Hill. There will be no problem leaving our cars at the place selected for the start of the march and getting everyone back to them later. Also, people should feel free to join the command along the route of march if they can't be there for the whole thing.

Response from other units for this event has been good. The 27th Texas and 11th Texas cavalry, the 7th Texas Infantry as well as the 1st Louisiana Infantry have registered. Elements of the Confederate Guard and the Southern Volunteers are also expected to attend. Bruce Frazier will be bringing some Yankees, as well as Bruce Smith (who is associated with Ft. Martin Scott). Elements of The Union Rifles and the 54th Massachusetts are also planning to attend. We are also trying to get the Lone Star Living History and Crossroads people in San Antonio to play Federals. This is a good event for anyone who wants to galvanize, as one of the Federal units at Plametto Ranch -- the 2nd Texas, U.S. Cavalry (dismounted) -- was made up of men primarily from Travis County.

This is shaping up to be something truly unique and will be a Maximum Effort Texas Rifles event. It will give us a chance to show our stuff to the people of Texas, to experience rare aspects of reenacting, recruit new members and to meet with our fellow Texas reenactors. This is not an event to miss! So make your plans to attend now. Let your regional directors know if you plan to come. All regional directors should get a list of interested members to Capt. Eastland as soon as possible. There is no "official" registration fee for this event, but at Pleasant Hill, we will ask those who intend to participate to contribute \$2 towards the cost of the wagon and the artillery piece which will accompany us on the march. So get your best Texas State Troop impressions ready; clean your Enfield and let's prepare to drive the Yankees out of Texas instead of Virginia for a change!

## LET'S CHAT ABOUT YOUR HAT -- by Scott Swenson

Research suggests that the slouch predominated over all other Confederate hats by a 10:1 ratio. Its ability to protect the wearer from the ill effects of both sunshine and rain can't be beat. Therefore it is the recommended hat for the Texas Rifles' basic Confederate infantry impression.

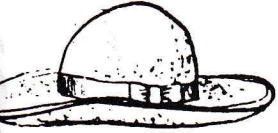
The first step in selecting a hat is to use a primary source to document style, shape and color. Original photographs, drawings/paintings by civil war veterans, first person accounts and, of course, existing original hats are all excellent primary sources. Obviously, these sources cannot document every hat worn, but they do indicate which were the more common and popular styles.

As authenticity chairman, I find that most of our hats are correct. However, I have seen some hats that are questionable in style, color and trim. Although I will not officially state that these hats did not have original counterparts, research indicates that they were not common between the years of 1861 to 1865. The most obvious offenders are:

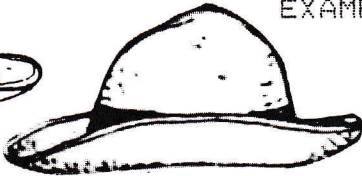
1. **White, off-white or modern silver belly colored hats:** Most are conversions of modern cowboy hats to Confederate slouch hats. This style is more appropriate to a "John Wayne Indian War Impression" than that of a Confederate Infantryman. The incorrect shape and the non-period color stick out like a sore thumb. Primary sources indicate that the most common slouch hat colors were black, tan, brown and grey.
2. **U.S. brass Infantry bugles and U.S. Infantry cords on C.S. Slouch Hats:** I have never witnessed a primary source that gives examples of these.
3. **Strange hat bands:** It appears that most C.S. slouch hat bands were ribbon or painted cloth that was hand sewn onto the crown and many times onto the edge of the brim. If your hat came with an undesirable band, take it off and replace it with a better one or do without. However, authentically and practically speaking, all slouch hats need an interior sweat band, to help the crown keep its shape, if for no other reason. If you want to go a step further you can replace the usually modern sweat band with a thin piece of leather and sew in a liner made of muslin. Hat maker's labels did exist and reproductions of them are available. These add a nice touch but probably didn't last very long on campaign.
4. **Modern creases in the Crown:** Some people have a front sharp crease in the crown of their hat similar to a 1920's-30's fedora. Once again this gives a John Wayne appearance. The crease is just like anything else on the hat -- it should be documented from a primary source. Regardless, hats should not appear to have just been taken out of the store window. Your headgear should have a campaigned-in look. The best way to accomplish this is to go to events and wear your hat. If this doesn't work fast enough for you, soak your hat in water, set it in the sun and get it dirty, repeat proces, etc,

Your hat should fit you well enough that it won't blow off in an average wind. I haven't been able to document hurricane straps but they must have been around since their function was so practical.

If you still have any questions, please contact me. My phone numbers are: home (817) 751-0568 and work (817) 662-1400 or write Scott Swenson, P.O. Box 23344, Waco, Texas 76702. Until next time, go out and make your best impression.



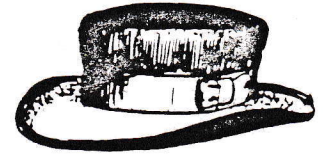
Sugarloaf - \$25



Dirty Billy Special - \$50



Low Bowler - \$25



Sam Clark - \$30

EXAMPLES OF SUGGESTED HEADGEAR

Source for headgear: Dirty Billy's, 102 E. Hanmaker Street, Thurmont, MD 21788, Bill & Fran Wickham, Proprietors. Or if you want to "do it yourself" buy a heavy felt hat blank from a sutler and install your own hat bands, sweat band, brim trim etc.

FIGHTING FOR THE CONFEDERACY: THE PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF GENERAL EDWARD PORTER ALEXANDER -- Reviewed by Vince Draa

This remarkable book, which was written by E.P. Alexander during the period 1897 - 1907, remained unpublished in its original form until 1989, although an expurgated version appeared in 1907. It is an intensely personal account of Alexander's experiences as ordnance officer, artillery battalion commander and, ultimately, chief of artillery of Longstreet's Corps in the Army of Northern Virginia (ANV). Alexander participated in all the major campaigns and battles of the ANV from Second Manassass to Appomattox, as well as with Longstreet in the Chickamauga campaign, and he offers a frank and critical analysis of the strategies employed by both the Confederacy and the Union. Additionally, General Alexander's book gives insights into important Confederate personages including Lee, Jackson and Longstreet, based on Alexander's dealings with them.

Fighting for the Confederacy is also chock-full of descriptions of campaign and camp life that ring true to any Civil War reenactor, such as the following:

1. "All around us men were going into bivouac for the night. Men loaded with bunches of canteens, which rattled as they walked, were wandering about...Company cooks were kindling their fires and impatient mules were braying for their suppers."
2. "Four men would reverse their muskets and stick the bayonets deep in the ground for four corner posts and let the hammers pinch down on the four corners of a blanket. This would hold a blanket spread about three feet above the bottom of the ditch and under it the four men would shelter from the sun and doze and sleep."
3. "(A) thunder squall...came up just as we were going to sleep and blew the tent clear away from over us and drenched everything we had."

Written in a conversational style, the book displays rare a combination of attributes: a highly readable volume which analyzes the high level strategy of the war, while providing a wealth of minute descriptions of everyday army life. Fighting for the Confederacy has something for everyone and I recommend it to anyone even remotely interested in the military history of the Civil War.

THE LIVING HISTORIAN'S LIBRARY -- by Gill Eastland

Someone once said, "It's not what you look like, it's who you are on the inside that matters". A living historian might comment that the statement was only half correct. (A dead historian might not say much on that matter, or anything else, however.) The Rifles have done a good job with their physical impressions, but where do we find information on the day-to-day life of the C.W. soldier? Most of the answers can be found in the following books:

The Life of Johnny Reb by Bell Wiley -- The definitive book on the common soldier. A must read for anyone attempting a Confederate impression. (Wiley also wrote Billy Yank for the Yankee boys)

Detailed Minutiae of a Soldier's Life by Carton McCarthy -- Excellent book! Great for information on uniforms, camp life, rations and marches. McCarthy was in the Richmond Howitzers of the A.N.V.

Hard Tack and Coffee by John D. Billings -- Although a Yankee, Billings' book is an excellent work about the common soldier in our C.W.

The Fighting Men of the Civil War William C. Davis -- Excellent photos of the equipment and personal items of the soldier.

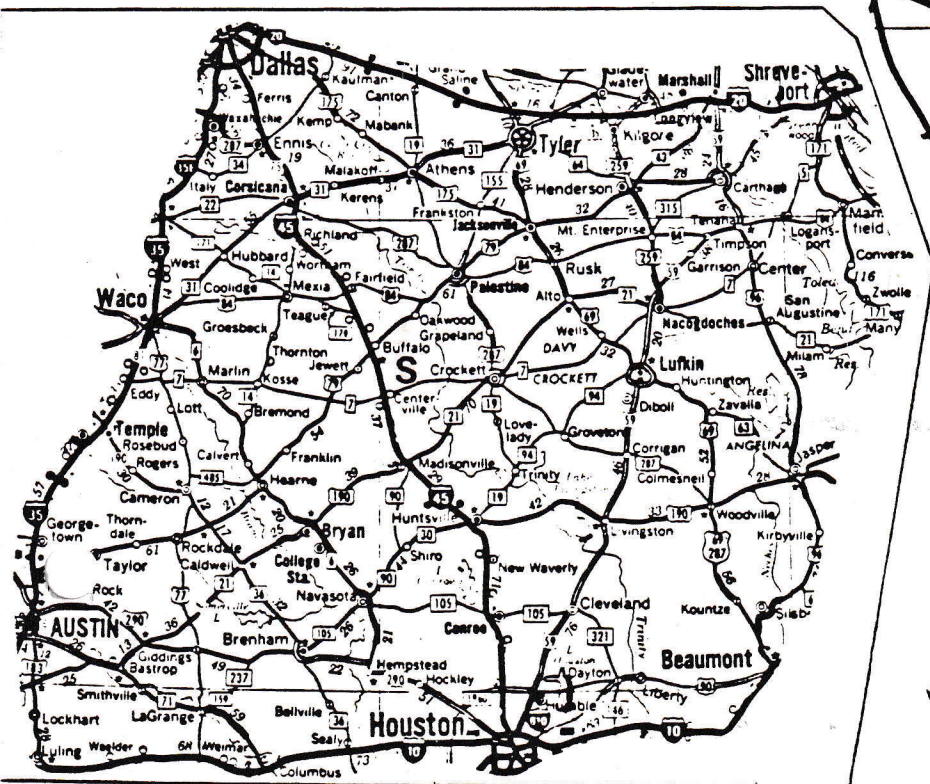
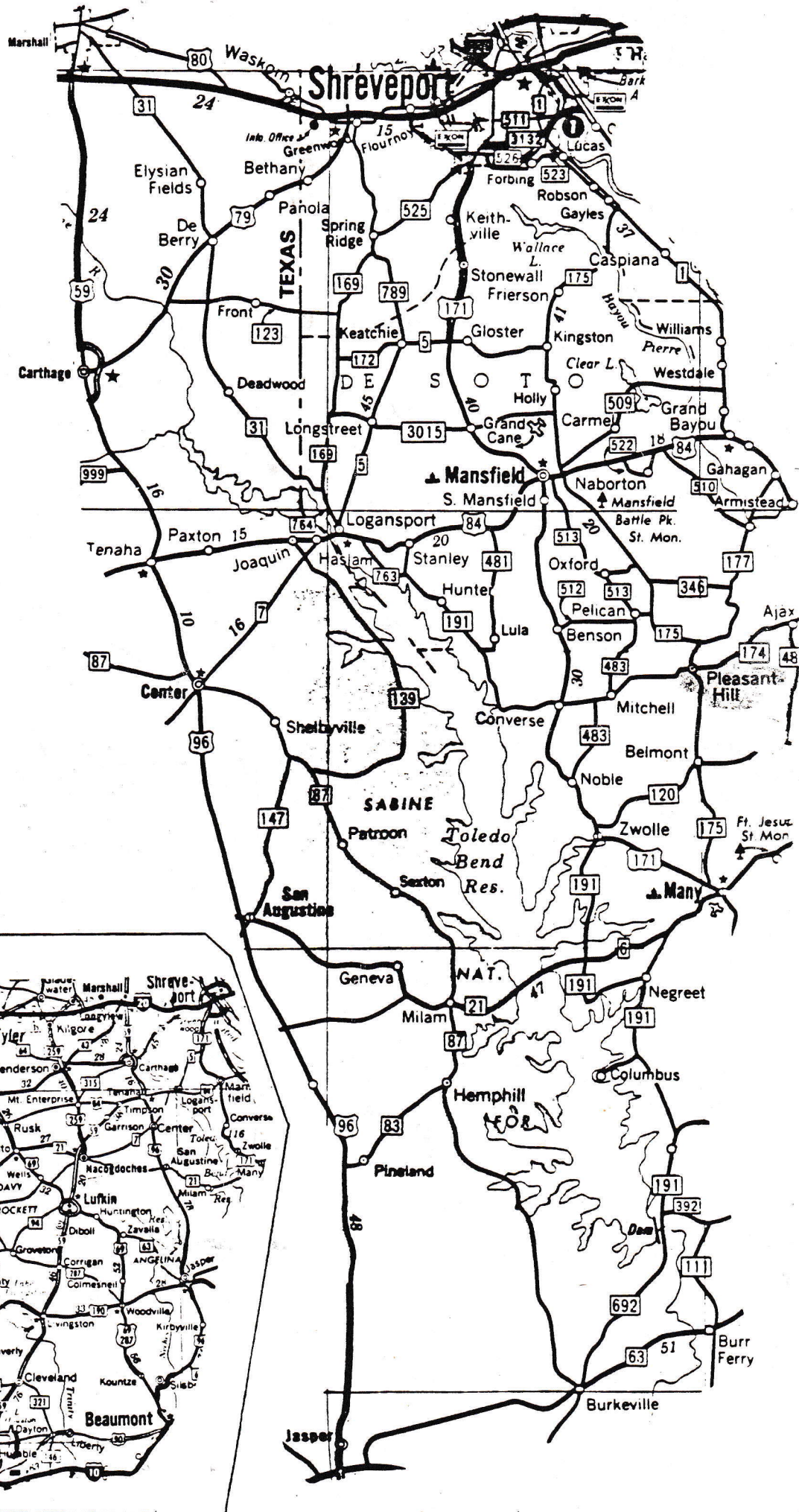
All of these books are well written and easy to find. There are, of course, more books on the common soldiers out there but these are hard to beat! Call me if you can't locate any of these books.





Pleasant Hill, Louisiana, is located almost equidistant between Many and Mansfield and is east of Mitchell (see map). There are several ways to get to Pleasant Hill. This map may help you select the best route for you.

The encampment is located a few miles north of Pleasant Hill on HWY 175. There should be a sign at the entrance to the reenactment site indicating where the camps are, and the tents should be visible from the highway. Remember not to exceed the speed limit especially in Louisiana where you pay cash on the spot or go straight to jail.





# FOR SALE, TRADE, LOST OR FOUND

Found at Camp Ford: U.S. Bayonet without scabbard. Call Vince Draa.

x x

MIA at Winedale: Period bourbon bottle with nice label, empty (what did you expect?). Contact Bill Eastland

x x

Scott Swenson: 1. Now taking orders for a bulk order from Dirty Billy's hats. Sugar loaf hat, a recommended style, for \$25.00. Please send your hat size and color preference (black, brown & grey).

2. Very Nice, new 4-Button Shirt, \$39; hand-woven material/hand sewn button holes/cuffs/collar; Mother of pearl buttons; Med. size, 15 1/2-34

3. Matching handkerchief to above shirt - hand woven material and hand rolled edges. Also very nice! 22" x 24" dimensions \$7.00

4. Scott is also taking orders for hand-woven plaid men's shirts similar to the above advertised and on-hand at Winedale. A stand and full collar can be added, if desired. Send normal collar & sleeve size. \$39 PPD. Allow three weeks for delivery. NOTE: While these shirts are more expensive than those which most sutlers carry, they are of superior quality and will last longer, be more comfortable and more authentic!

5. Caded Grey Ensemble: (For officer or dress ball impression only!) shell jacket -- 7 button, hand sewn button holes, not trim, size 39-40 \$49 ppd; military vest -- 3 pockets 9 U.S. buttons, hand sewn button holes, brown polished cotton back, white muslin lining, \$26 ppd; trousers -- mule ear button pockets, size 32 w -- 33 L, \$26 ppd; Kepi -- correctly attached brim, no trim, size 7 1/4 - 7 3/8, \$11 ppd; All in very good shape; sold as set \$99 ppd

6. White muslin shirt: stand & full collar, size 15 1/2 x 33, \$10 ppd

7. .31 Pocket Revolver; never fired -- \$80

x x

Joe Walker: 1. Officers double-breasted frock coat; Cadet grey with dark blue collar and cuff facings; black lining w/2 inside pockets; 14 CS staff officer's buttons; would fit a gent 5'7" to 5'9" (sleeves can be let out), chest size 39", waist size 34"; seen on James Watson at the TR Ball. (817) 776-4256, 8205 Woodcreek, Waco, Texas 76712

2. Cadet grey shell jacket; hand sewn; no lining; size 38/40; \$48

x x

John Keahey: The list of items found on the next 2 pages are for sale. You can contact John at (713) 261-0665.

### Surplus Goods

1	Arkansas toothpick knife sheath	\$ 2.00
1	White cotton duck drop-front trousers, hole in one knee, great for U.S. or soldado use, inseam 26", waist 31", can be lengthened	\$20.00
	Miscellaneous antique brass letters, assorted sizes \$1.00 each or \$20.00 for the lot	
	Linen, beautiful fine white linen suitable for shirts, linings, etc., from discarded maps. Wash the fabric-based map and save the clean linen base, approximately 40" x 72", each	\$ 1.00
1	Bone piece, white, for use as buttons, knife handle, whatever	\$ 2.00
1	Reproduction 12" tin wash basin	\$10.00
1	British "D" two piece mess tin. WWII dated but as used in British army from 1800 some CWP U.S. usage	\$40.00
2	Reproduction tin cups, each	\$ 1.00
1	Wooden pill case	\$ 2.00
2	Reproduction tin plates, 9" diameter, each	\$ 3.00
1	Reproduction musket cap tin with label	\$ 2.00
1	Reproduction tin shaving mug with lather cup and brush	\$15.00
1	Tin platter	\$10.00
1	Repro CWP infantry officer's sash	\$30.00
1	Repro CWP Federal officer's sword belt with eagle plate, shoulder strap and original sabre hooks, black leather	\$25.00
	Set 5 bone handled antique dinner knives, 5 matched forks and 4 matched spoons, civilian or officer grade	\$25.00
	Set 1 dinner knife, 1 salad fork and 1 dinner fork, matched antique civilian or officer grade	\$ 5.00
	Set 2 dinner knives and 2 matched three tined forks, bone handled originals	\$10.00
1	Original U.S. Staff and Field Officer's sword with desirable blued metal scabbard, excellent condition, some gilt still on hilt area	\$350.00

1	Green River Forge drop sleeve shirt pattern for late 1700's to mid-1800's shirt	\$ 5.00
1	Folkwear Victorian shirt pattern	\$ 4.00
1	Leather stitching pony, a padded wooden clamp to hold leather work while stitching	\$10.00
3	Cow horns, straight from the critter for the man who wants to make his own powder horn, cups, spoons, containers, etc., each	\$ 1.00
3	Gourds, great for ladles, scoops, containers, on small side for canteens, each	\$ 1.00
1	M1813 U.S. Infantry shako cord	\$ 5.00
1	Watercolor of British Revolutionary War private, 43rd Regiment of Foote, with matting, ready to frame	\$10.00
1	Wood turning set, unused poor man's lath clamps to table or sawhorse, powered by power drill, with unused gouges and chisel set	\$100.00
1	Iron tripod, trammel and large cast iron pot with handle plus large size cook's ladle and fork	\$100.00
1	Backsword, circa 1625-1700, heavy sword with 1-1/4" straight blade, brass hilt with shell motif, leather grip wrapped with wire, brass trimmed scabbard	\$250.00
1	New Orleans Greys flag, beautiful copy of flag captured by the Mexican army at the Alamo, blue silk with gold fringe	\$250.00
1	U.S. Infantry line officer's frock coat, beautifully done reproduction by J. Covais, size 41 long	\$200.00

#### BOOKS

"Great Historic Places" American Heritage	\$10.00
"The Great Iron Ship" Dugan	\$ 5.00
"Exploring Military America" Thum	\$ 2.00
"Sketchbook 1776" Klinger	\$ 5.00
"Distaff Sketchbook" Klinger	\$ 5.00

John M. Keahey  
2810 W. Pebble Beach  
Missouri City, TX 77459  
713/840-4318 work  
713/261-0665 home  
2/90



# THE TEXAS RIFLES

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Houston 77040  
(713) 896-1023

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