



# THE STRAGGLER

NEWSLETTER OF THE TEXAS RIFLES  
ISSUE NO. 28 JUNE 1990



"To The Tyrants Never Yield!"



## COMMANDER'S DISPATCH

It has been a very busy 1990 so far...Winedale, Bentonville, Pleasant Hill, Palmetto Ranch...not to mention the Ft. Sam Houston Ball, two movies and Ft. Martin Scott. This Summer should be a time for you to relax and stay close to home with your families. There are no Texas Rifles maximum effort events currently planned until Texian Market Days in October. I want you to spend so much time with your family, job, etc. that they'll demand you go out reenacting next fall and on into 1991. But if you can't fight the desire to get into your furry clothes in the meantime, the schedule of events sets out several opportunities for you to do so.

Most of you were at Pleasant Hill! If you weren't you missed the best P.H. reenactment yet. It did have its moments, however, and was not without some controversy (see the letters elsewhere in this issue). The event was good primarily because there were so many T.R. members there! It was a joy to see a 45-man company again. Thanks for your participation.

Palmetto Ranch also turned out to be a good little event. The Rifles made a good showing. What was most pleasing to me was the dedication of the men who went on the march on Friday and Saturday. We were able to bushwhack the Union cavalry a couple of times and got the chance to cool off in Barton Creek on several occasions. Camping by the creek was another highlight of the weekend. On Sunday, as Confederate infantry commander, I was able to observe the Rifles do skirmish drill in the face of the enemy.

In closing, let me thank those of you who participated in the events this spring. A special thanks to the ladies of The Texas Rifles who made both Pleasant Hill and Palmetto Ranch more enjoyable with their food, drink and kindness. Let no one doubt you are an important part of this organization. Until we are again on the field of honor, 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!!

**TEXAS CONFEDERATE MUSEUM OPENING:** July 14-15 at Waco. Living history (Confederate, Federal, Civilian) and camping on the grounds of Helen Marie Taylor Museum Complex. See T.R. Tidbits for details.

**FT. WASHITA:** August 1990 at Ft. Washita, OK. Mexican War event. Contact Steve Abolt 1856 Carl, Ft. Worth 76103 (817) 535-2359 for more information.

**FT. SCOTT:** September 6-9, 1990 at Ft. Scott KS. Mexican War-era living history. Impressions needed: U.S. Regular Infantry and Dragons; Volunteers; Civilians. Contact Steve Abolt 1856 Carl Ft. Worth 76103, (817) 535-2359 for more information.

**FT. BEND COUNTY PARADE:** September 28. Contact Don Drachenberg 1014 Horace Mann Rosenberg (713) 342-2477 for information.

**GONZALES "COME AND TAKE IT" DAYS:** September 29. More details to come.

**SIEGE OF FOME:** October 19-21 at Rome, Georgia. Reenactment of 1863 and 1864 battles. Call John Carruth (404) 232-4567 for details.

**\*TEXIAN MARKET DAYS:** October 27-28 at the George Ranch near Richmond, TX. Otto Haardt and Don Drachenberg are chairmen of the Confederate area; Mike Moore is in charge overall. More details later.

**\*SECOND ANNUAL TEXAS RIFLES BALL:** February 1991 at the Driskill Hotel in Austin. This event will recreate the heady period surrounding secession in February 1861. Militia, CS or civilian impressions will be correct. More details will be forthcoming.

**\*BATTLE OF WILSON'S CREEK:** August 1991 in Missouri. See T.R. Tidbits for details.

(NOTE: An asterisk "\*" denotes a MAXIMUM EFFORT EVENT. Most members, officers & NO's will be present. At all other events the attendance is usually smaller; you may be on your own.)



## TR TID BITS

### PRE-PLEASANT HILL CARTRIDGE ROLLING

On Saturday April 14 TR Southeast Regional members Jack Bell, Mike Powell, Ron Fuller, Ana Draa and Vince Draa gathered at the Draa's home to roll cartridges and view Jack's copy of the Franklin video. 100 cartridges were rolled and placed in arsenal packs and everyone enjoyed Ana's excellent chocolate malts.



#### WILSON'S CREEK by Gill Eastland

Although it is more than a year away, it is not too early to be making plans for Wilson's Creek (August 10, 1991). This is especially true if you weren't at Manassas in 1986. So what did you miss at Manassas? We were part of the largest, most authentic Confederate regiment there. We were authentically outfitted in the uniform of the 7th Louisiana—the unit we portrayed. We showed the "Easterners" what real Confederate "BY GOD" INFANTRY was when we marched into camp. I can still remember the sea of white tents and the road lined with troops watching us as we marched into camp singing "The Bonnie Blue Flag". It was a very moving and proud moment for all the members who were there.

Wilson's Creek has the potential to catch the same kind of magic. The Rifles can not only improve on what we did at Manassas but can also be part of a larger organization—a division in Missouri as opposed to a single regiment in Virginia.

Research is continuing on exactly the types of uniforms and arms we will be employing, however every company in the battalion will be uniformed differently but each individual member of a company will be uniformed the same. Also since Wilson's Creek was fought early in the war, bring your "A" tents and camp furniture. We should be able to field a 50 man company, so we should present an impressive sight.

This event will kick off the 130th anniversary for The Texas Rifles...so don't miss it! I'll be back with more details soon.

#### GOTTA GRIPE?

Each member is encouraged to let our elected leaders or the appropriate regional director know if she or he has a complaint about any aspect of our organization or its activities. This is the only way our leadership can effectively meet the needs of the membership of The Texas Rifles. Your complaints will be printed in The Straggler (subject to being edited for the sake of clarity and length) only if you accompany your gripe with a proposed solution to the problem you have identified.

#### TEXAS CONFEDERATE MUSEUM GRAND OPENING

On July 14 and 15 the United Daughters of the Confederacy will celebrate the relocation to Waco from Austin of the Texas Confederate Museum. All Confederate and Union reenactors are invited to participate in an encampment on the grounds of the Helen Marie Taylor Museum Complex and to provide living history as part of the grand opening. On Saturday night a banquet (coat and tie or period dress) for \$30.00 per person.

If you wish to participate in the living history encampment contact Capt. Jim Prichard, 6921 Stonewall Rd., Ft. Worth Texas 76109 (817)551-6735 immediately and be sure to let Bruce Winders or your Regional Director know also. If you wish to participate in the banquet contact Cynthia Harriman, 706 Commerce St., Euless, Texas 76040, metro (817) 540-1449.

#### AT THE MOVIES by Kevin Young

For those of you who like to re-live some of your history in the privacy of your own home, but are disappointed by small screen images, there is some good news. John Wayne's "The Alamo", which was shot in Todd-AO 70 MM, is now available in "wide-screen" videocassette. When the film was sold to television in the 1970's, the version used (and later on the CBS videocassettes) was a 35 mm print which featured only the center of the picture. The new videocassette released by MGM/UA gives 20 percent more picture on either side of the screen. The film almost becomes a different picture as more action, characters and depth appear! A plus is the inclusion of the original soundtrack overture, intermission and exit music. The entire sound is improved with the use of Dolby. The price is \$29.95. Other films being produced in "wide-screen" are "The Horse Soldiers" and "Zulu".





## ARTICLES FROM THE MEMBERSHIP

BENJONVILLE AFTER-ACTION REPORT by Mack Frazier

After much strenuous travelling the company began arriving in camp during the night of March 15 and was 75% assembled by noon on the 16th. Our campsite was on a portion of the original battlefield which now is a thinly planted and very sandy wheatfield-not unlike camping on the beach. Very gritty.

We were designated Company B of Moore's Consolidated Regiment and fell in with the rest of the army at 3:00 P.M. We marched about 2 miles to launch an attack on a Yankee position which was established on a small rise on the edge of a large field. After starting the engagement in reserve, we were summoned by General King to reinforce the left flank and we thus became the extreme left unit of the army.

A group of mounted men soon appeared on our left and positioned themselves to view the battlefield and our line. Captain Eastland, thinking they might be enemy cavalry ordered us to "load and come to the ready" and then "on the left oblique aim". The company stood ready to fire until it was brought to Captain Eastland's attention that the intended targets were members of the Confederate General Staff and that they would probably prefer not to be shot by their own troops. The order to "recover arms" was promptly issued and executed.

In due course the Federals extended their line and began to press our front. We then charged the hill, forcing the Union troops to withdraw and leaving the field in our hands.

The march back to camp was uneventful and the evening meal was prepared and enjoyed by all. We were soon informed that on Saturday reville was to sound at 0445, roll call and assembly at 0500 and that the army would be on the march by 0645. Thus, the rest of the evening was spent charging cartridge boxes, crimping caps, cleaning weapons, filling canteens and in general preparation for staying in the field all day Saturday.

During the night the weather was pleasant with but a slight shower to mar it-a great and welcome change from Franklin! The army was on the march in the gray light of dawn on Saturday. The day was warm and humid with strong winds pushing heavy clouds across the sky. We marched 2 miles down the main road and entered an unfinished cut through the thick North Carolina woods. The engineers constructed a corduroy road to get us over a bog and some muddy streams. We marched for about 3 miles through woods and by old trenches. We reached our position on the edge of a large field and began to construct breastworks in anticipation of battle. Soon we heard the crash of battalion volleys from our right and skirmishers from another brigade deployed in our front and moved forward through the field. Artillery fire began to probe our lines, making much noise but doing little harm. The skirmishers engaged the advancing Federals and our company took fighting positions behind the breastworks. Due to the crowded conditions, only the front rank could fire so the rear rank men would load and pass muskets to the front.

The skirmishers were retreating in good order and our line was told to conceal itself and hold our fire until the Federals were in close range. The skirmishers were now streaming back in disarray. The enemy's battle flags were visible but the troops were still concealed behind a rise. On our extreme left the Confederate battleline emerged from the trees and began to flank the Yankee line. This bent the Federals back in a L shape with our brigade facing the lower leg. More Federals began to appear on our right flank and we were ordered to move onto the edge of the field and refuse the right. Our brigade rapidly assembled and repelled the flanking effort.

Serious casualties were incurred as our brigade began a giant wheel to push the Yankees back from the point of the L. We were kept at right shoulder shift while 3 Federal cannons opened up not 130 yards to our front. Our officers held a conference while the line was continually whipped by



canister charges. The veteran troops began to lie down on their own accord and invited the officers to absorb the canister by themselves. 125 men became casualties while the officers tried to make up their minds what to do. Finally the order to charge was given and the brigade arose with a roar, swept the enemy position with a volley and overran the guns killing the entire complement of gunners and officers.

The brigade was reformed and placed in reserve of the main battleline which was now driving the Yankees from the field. The firing ended as the enemy withdrew. We cleaned our rifles of sand and fouled powder as fast as we could. The left wing of the army pursued the Yankees over the horizon, while our right wing continued to press the retreating Federals to our front and right.

We then learned that Colonel Moore had been wounded and our Captain Eastland assumed command of the regiment. We plunged back into the woods and narrow roads at the route step, all the while cleaning our guns and preparing for the next fight. As we passed down into a small dip and past a pond of dirty water, we began to hear heavy fighting to our front. We started up an incline and watched the preceding units turn left and disappear behind the thick trees. A messenger informed Captain Eastland that we were to turn right instead and to drive any Yankees he found from the field. As we emerged from the woods at the double-quick we observed the Federal troops in the midst of changing their line to face the other Confederates which had turned left. This placed our running, sweating line on the Yankees' flank and rear. This was an opportunity not to be missed. We moved by company into line on the run and with a scream of rebel yells we charged straight into them. In surprise and shock, some Federals turned and fired, many ran away and the balance surrendered. The Yankees who had fled into the woods emerged with a white flag, saying we had scared them badly and that they never wanted to face a charge by Texans again.

It was now 1:00 P.M. and we had marched over 11 miles and participated in several small engagements, three major fights and two all out charges. It was time to grab a bite of food, rearm, fill our cartridge boxes and rest. We were desperately short of water but canteen details found a farm house nearby where we could supplement the water transported to the field by the brigade staff.

After lunch, we were on the road again. Almost immediately we began to hear distant gunfire. It was first an occasional rifle shot, then skirmish fire, a cannon boom, then brigade volleys. As we marched to the sounds of the guns, our column of gray clad troops stepped out refreshed with each company trying to out march the rest. We crossed over abandoned tobacco fields and unplanted corn fields. The guides took us back into the deep woods and swamps.

Our army was being called upon to assault an entrenched position. The gallant boys in gray deployed along the tree line as the CS artillery shelled the Yankee trenches. Our brigade was placed in reserve off the unfinished road out where we could hear the roar of combat and smell the burned powder as it rolled through the trees. We knew from the slackening of the cannon fire that the main assault was about to begin. The rebel line moved off in parade ground fashion. As it advanced, the Federals came to life and began to fire. The charge advanced to within 50 yards of the trenches when the awesome sound of repeating rifles was heard. It is a unique sound that is not a crash or individual in nature, but is a sickening roar that goes on and on until the charge is broken. The first assault was repulsed, as was the second which as surely broke against the entrenchments as the ocean does on the shore. Everyone who had faced repeating rifles at Franklin knew the futility of fighting with muskets against such infernal devices. This lesson was relearned at Bentonville, as the stacks of gray clad bodies and the unbroken line of Yankees stood in mute testimony to.

We were soon given the opportunity to avenge this bloody repulse as we marched to engage the enemy which was deployed along a rise in a large wheatfield. Our first assault was repulsed. The brigade was reformed and we went up the hill again. We volleyed at 200, 100 and 50 yards from the enemy line and they suffered great casualties. We made one final rush and the hill was ours.

A hush fell over the place and the wind began to blow as dark rain clouds boiled over us. Then, with a roll of thunder and a flash of lightning, the skies opened up. Every man was soaked to the skin, even those with rubber blankets and ponchos. It was a sad sight as we marched back into camp and found that the majority of the tents had been blown down in the storm. A wet night was ahead for what was left of the army.



Rumors swept the camp that night as the men huddled around sodden camp fires. First came word that Lincoln had been shot, then that General Lee had surrendered. Finally, we learned that we were to stack arms for the last time at dawn and surrender. We had survived. The night was damp and dark as the men tried to sort out the conflicting emotions washing over them.

#### THE SURRENDER OF AN ARMY by Jeff Hunt

Reveille was earlier than usual on the morning of April 26. The day was bright and beautiful, in marked contrast to the rain of the previous night. The men prepared their breakfast, if they had anything to cook (as for me a cup of coffee was all there was) and attempted to dry themselves and their belongings. Our wet belongings hung on a clothesline strung up along our short row of shelter tents. Some men hung their socks on their ramrods and held them above the fire in an attempt to dry them more quickly. The troops cleaned their muskets this morning, the force of habit after four years of service unbreakable even on a day such as this one.

We were quiet as we all knew what events the forenoon held for us. For the past week General Johnston and General Sherman had been in a series of meetings concerning the conclusion of hostilities between the Union and Confederate armies in North Carolina. A great many men had already decided to leave for home, having no taste for surrender. As a result, our ranks, which had been sadly thinned to begin with, were pathetically shrunken now. Hardly a skeleton of the regiment remained; only 18 officers and men answered the roll that April morning.

The assembly was soon sounded and we fell in on the color line as we had done so many times before. But now it was different, for this was the last time duty would require us to heed the sound of the drum and bugle and form ourselves around the flag that had gallantly waved over us for the last four years. As the remnants of the brigade assembled, Colonel Sessums moved to the front of the command. Before us on horseback were Generals King and Gatlin, whom we had followed for so long, their faces downcast and grim. The flags of the brigade hung limply in the still air, as if they too were heavy with the melancholy nature of the morning's program.

The men in the ranks were silent, all knew what was about to happen, and the knowledge layed heavy on their hearts and minds. In the commanding tone that had elicited obedience on so many a battlefield, Col. Sessums read to us the terms of our surrender. The army was to give up its arms and accoutrements. The officers would be allowed to retain their swords and side arms. The men would be paroled and allowed to return home, where they were to remain (undisturbed by Federal authorities) until properly exchanged. The terms were generous and eased the minds of many who had not known what to expect from the devil Sherman, whose army had burned its way through the heartland of the Confederacy. The men in blue had been our implacable enemies for so long, our struggle had been so bitter, and the recent murder of Lincoln—still fresh in the Northern mind—all were perhaps calculated to visit upon us a mean spirit of revenge. Some of us had expected to be arrested and imprisoned as traitors, but such was not to be the case.

We were to be allowed to return home. Home. For so long now that word had been like a distant dream that many of us had come to believe would never be realized. Now the fighting was over. We had survived. The fact was too fantastic to be believed, our minds were unable to comprehend its meaning, the news left us not happy or thankful but numb. As the men contemplated this revelation, Col. Sessums read to us General Johnston's farewell address to the army. I do not recall his precise words now, but they were eloquent and very moving.

Then for the last time the order was given—"Battalion, Attention!" and the veterans of a score of battles brought their tattered and worn frames erect and rigid. Then once more we formed a column of march and began to move toward our appointment with destiny. The sun was bright, the day warm and beautiful, the grass and the trees green with the birth of spring; at any other time these would have lifted the morale of the men and lightened our spirits. But not this day. As we moved toward Durham Station our band struck up a dirge, and rather than march at the typical quick time, we marched at the must slower common time, remaining in step the entire way. No one in the ranks spoke a word. It was as if we were going to a funeral, and indeed we were—our own.

We moved past a Federal camp, and the men who had until today been our enemies came out to line the side of the road and watch us pass. They did not jeer or poke fun at us. There was not a harsh or bitter word exchanged. Rather, they stood silently and watched us march by, some of them removing



their hats in show or respect. They seemed as much impressed with the solemnity of the occasion as we were. Our march was not long but throughout it all I could not help but reflect on the last four years.

The names of our engagements echoed through my mind—Manassas, where we had first gone under fire and Col. Sessums had been painfully wounded when his mount was hit. Where we lost half of our numbers before we were pulled into reserve behind the lines.

Pittsburg Landing, where the cold had been intense, the rations short, the wind harsh. Here we had attacked the Hornets' Nest and been repulsed, before moving through the woods to flank the enemy line. I remembered the frightened doe that had fled along our line, driven mad by the tempest of battle. Who could forget the exhilarating moment when our brigade stormed out of the woods and crushed the flank of the surprised Federal line?

Gettysburg: where for three days we fought like demons, the lines rolling back and forth, the men putting forth the best performances of their lives as soldiers and Texans. On those fields we had proudly watched the Lone Star flag whipping in the breeze as we drove the enemy back on the second day, our command antushing an entire Union brigade and crushing its flank. Who could forget the fields so thickly strewn with bodies that it was only through the greatest effort that we found Lt. Eastland, who had been wounded in our advance?

Then had come Chickamauga, where a much smaller company and regiment had endured mud and rain to once again come to grips with our enemies. The bitter fighting of that field seemed distant yet immediate to my mind as we marched forward to the surrender site this day. The desperate struggle in the woods, the confusion, the final horrible assault on Snodgrass Hill, where the smoke hung so thickly that we could barely see, where the Federals evened the score for Gettysburg and surprised us—shooting down a third of our command in a single volley.

And the battles that had followed: The confused, frustrating battle in the Wilderness, where the sound of the combat was so loud that the men could not hear my voice from a foot away, although I was screaming at the top of my lungs. Then had come Laurel Hill, where we had swept forth from the woods across a flat open plain, the brigade moving forward into line as though we were on the parade ground. A maneuver so perfect that even Sergeant Major Keehey could do nothing but praise it. And then that nightmarish night in the trenches at Spotsylvania. Where the cold had come once again, while the men worked like an army of ants to throw up a line of works. That night when there was no sleep to be had as Federal skirmishers and sharpshooters harassed us with a constant fire. And that dawn, when our lines had been broken and the regiment had been pressed as it never had been before. The Yankees pushing us back, turning our flank again and again, as Gen. King desperately sought to reinforce our brigade. The anger and indignation of being driven from the field, until finally the men decided there would be no further retreat, that we would stand or die, but would not go back. We had held, counterattacking to drive the bluecoats out of our works, moving over a field so covered with bodies that one might have walked from body to body for a mile without once touching the ground.

Who could not recall this day the tragic gallantry of our men at Franklin, where we had moved to the assault with a yell that would have driven demons from hell, flushing rabbits and Federals before us, storming into their works, only to have our men shot down or captured moments later? Franklin, where the old Army of Tennessee had been broken, but not destroyed as we soon rose like a Phoenix to march and fight again at Bentonville, a whirlwind of combat and maneuver.

I am sure I was not alone in these thoughts as the column moved slowly onward, turning into a large field near a small house, going into battle for the last time by the front. Our officers gave us the command to stack arms and then to furl the flags. They commended us for our dedication, our honor, our fortitude, or victories and our loyalty. Then they dismounted and began to move among us. We had decided our colors would not be surrendered. Sergeant Draa brought our tattered banner within the ranks of our company. Every man reached out to grab it and pull it taut. Captain Eastland took out his pocket knife and held it poised over the starred emblem of our gallant struggle.

We knew what we had to do, but it was no easy task. The thought of plunging the blade into the symbol that was the soul of our regiment was no easy thing to contemplate. There was a moment's



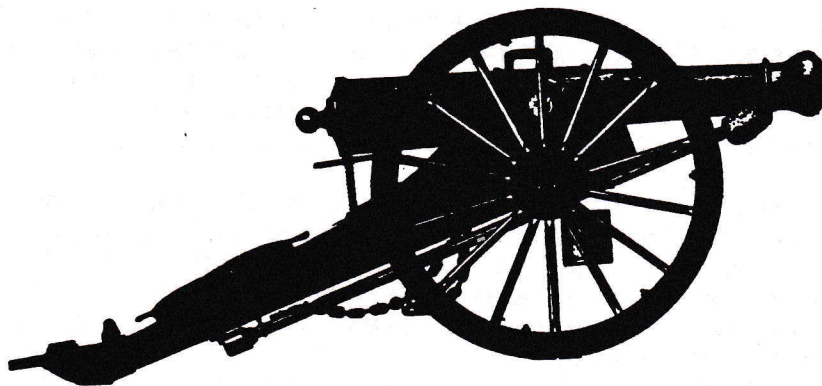
hesitation, and then the steel sliced downwards. The flag was torn into enough pieces to give every man a worn and faded reminder of our years of trial. The way the men clutched at those little shreds of cloth brought tears to many an eye. Pvt. Mack Frazier, who stood beside me, was overcome by the moment and we embraced each other. Words were not necessary. All of us felt the same agony, the same pain. Our officers moved down our ranks, shaking hands with each man, as did the men amongst themselves. The handshakes lasted longer than usual, and each of them was like a vise, as though we were trying to cement the brotherhood that we felt for each other by pressing our souls together through our palms.

When this was done, the final order to dismiss was given. The companies about-faced and marched away from their stacked arms, heading for the road and woods behind us. As we began to move to the rear we stayed in formation a moment, but then slowly, gradually, reluctantly, almost painfully the ranks began to break apart until there was only a mass of broken-hearted men moving toward the woods. There were no words spoken, each man seemed lost in his own thoughts. When we reached the woods, the men paused and mingled. Some threw their accoutrements into the woods in bitterness and frustration. Others, myself among them, simply sat in the road and tried to hold back the tears.

Behind us the Federals deployed pickets between us and our weapons. The Yankees had shown the greatest respect throughout our ordeal, coming to present arms, and uncovering in sign of respect for us. But it was a great shock to turn around and see the men in blue between us and our rifles. It was then that the reality of the situation finally dawned on me. We had been surrendered! The war for us was over.

Somewhere down the line a bagpipe began to play Amazing Grace, which was followed by a moving rendition of Dixie. My heart felt as though it might burst and the tears welled into my eyes as the thought of all my comrades who were not here to see the end overwhelmed me as it did others. Our struggle was at an end; the sacrifices, the courage, the blood of our gallant band of brothers had been for naught. The dream of Southern independence was no more. A preacher made a short sermon, reminding us that we had fought the good fight, that we had stayed the course, that we had maintained our honor and our manhood. There was some solace in the reminder that the Lord works in mysterious ways and that man can not often divine his purposes, but can only trust in faith that all that passes does so for a reason.

Alone with our thoughts and our pain, we moved back to our camps to collect our belongings and to prepare ourselves for the long journey back to Texas and the beginning of a new life and the attempt to salvage what remained of the old. We had indeed proven ourselves in those last four years to be soldiers and men, we had upheld the honor of the Lone Star State, we had completed our duty as we had seen it and although our contest had not been successful, no one could ever deny that the Texans had covered themselves in honor and glory. As long as men remember and revere honor and duty they shall not be forgotten.





## PLEASANT HILL 1990 by Vince Draa

More members (45+) attended this reenactment than any event since Gettysburg. Our size and our performance-in camp, at drill and in battle-made The Texas Rifles the stars of Pleasant Hill.

Individual achievements by our members were also recognized. Gill Eastland won an award for the best Confederate infantry impression and Ana Draa took home a second-place ribbon for her camp dress.

The weather was cooperative (unlike in recent years) and was particularly delightful at night.

The schedule of events was relaxed and, thanks to Rhonda Hall, Jo Mc Mahan and Ana Draa, who operated the company mess, we didn't have to take up a lot of time cooking food and washing dishes. The resulting free hours were not wasted, however. On Friday and Saturday evenings a sizable contingent of TR members journeyed across the road from the reenactment site to the local American Legion Hall. While there, we extensively sampled the proprietors' supply of chilled carbonated malt beverages (which made up in quantity what it lacked in diversity) and evaluated the (widely!) varying degrees of pulchritude embodied by the members of the opposite sex also ensconced at the establishment. The more adventurous of us were later observed tripping the light fantastic with some of the locals on the dance floor. When an interruption in electrical power temporarily silenced the band on Saturday night, the other patrons were treated to renditions of The Bonnie Blue Flag and The Yellow Rose of Texas by The Texas Rifles Mixed Chorus and Glee Club. Despite our lengthy presence at the American Legion Hall over the two night period, only one TR member was asked by the management to leave the premises !

During the battle on Sunday, we employed a new feature which looks like it may catch on. Each man drew a chit from a hat which indicated if and when during the battle he was to be wounded, killed or routed. The percentage of casualties was determined in accordance with the type of engagement we expected to be in. This procedure resulted in a much more authentic feel to the battle and it may be employed on a battalion-wide basis from now on.

Mike Enger and Bob Williams added to the authenticity of the reenactment by setting up a gruesomely realistic field hospital to treat the wounded while Jo, Ana and Rhonda were veritable angels of mercy in their roles as nurses.

All in all Pleasant Hill was fun and served as the perfect warm up for Palmetto Ranch.

## PALMETTO RANCH by Vince Draa

On May 11-13 Bee Cave, Texas was the site of the final 125th Anniversary event, a reenactment of the last land battle of the civil war-Palmetto Ranch.

On Friday afternoon, TR members Gill Eastland, Jeff Hunt, Vince Draa, Jack Bell, Chris Strzelecki, Dwight Hall, James Martin, Kevin Young, Phil Ulbrich, James Early and Ray Siegmund (along with a few non-members) set out on an approximately 10-mile march to the event site. Alerted by scouts (Ana Draa and Rhonda Hall) that a Union cavalry column was approaching, the company quickly constructed breastworks along the treeline parallel to the road and set an ambush for the unsuspecting Yankees. Distracted by the sacrificial efforts of Privates Bell, Hall and Siegmund (whom the cavalry assumed made up our entire force), the enemy rode straight into our trap and took heavy casualties. The rout was complete when Confederate cavalry, riding to the sounds of the guns, overran the remaining bluecoats.

Following the successful bushwhack, the company continued on its way toward Fitzhugh Church, our scheduled bivouac location for the night. However, upon reaching Barton Creek, a beautiful, cool spring-fed body of water, that place was unanimously chosen as our camp for the night. The remaining daylight hours were spent enjoying the creek and the scenery and setting up camp. After a dinner of Hopping John prepared by Ana, Rhonda and Jo Mc Mahan, we retired for the evening only to have a vicious thunderstorm interrupt our plans to sleep under the stars. As many men as possible crowded under a makeshift tent constructed of six shelter halves. Luckily, the rain did not last long but



everyone got wet to one degree or another. The company arose prior to daybreak and was on the road by 6:30 A.M. Joining us at camp or along the route of march were Bruce Winders, Gil Vollmering, Kevin Stork, Mark Bryant, Cary Wilkins and James Trainor. The heat, humidity and hills provided the most difficult challenges for the company on its march, but frequent stops, liberal applications of moleskin to blister-prone feet and repeated deliveries of gatorade, apples and oranges by Ana helped us along the way. The march, which featured another successful ambush of the Union cavalry, was completed by 11:30 A.M. During the free time between the end of the march and the tactical engagement scheduled late in the afternoon, most of the company returned to the creek for an afternoon of swimming. Jeff Hunt acted as a human diving board for the ladies as they used a rope swing located on the bank and the ladies also participated in an inadvertant wet chemise contest.

Refreshed by the afternoon at the creek, the company took the field back at the reenactment site. Joining the company for the tactical were Scott Wilkey, Ed Grandle, Don Drachenberg, Troy Fogle, Jim Garrett (of the 7th Texas Volunteers), Larry Mc Mahan and Mark Wong. Kevin Young, Pal Tigert and Brian Bosworth participated as French artillerymen while several TR members galvanized to even the odds somewhat. Jim Jones commanded the Confederate Cavalry. Captain Eastland commanded the battalion and Lt. Winders was in charge of the company in the short engagement during which we were deployed as skirmishers on several occasions.

Most of the company returned to the creek to spend the night, where a supper of chicken stew was prepared by the ladies. Saturday night was not wet but turned chilly towards dawn.

After breakfast at the reenactment site was served by the ladies, the company took to the parade ground to practice skirmish drill. The troops formed up at 1:30 P.M. for the battle. We were sent out as skirmishers to cover the advance of the battalion as it sought to retake breastworks that the Yankees had just captured. We continued to advance, supported by French and CSA artillery until the Federals were successfully weakened. With a final rush, our company poured into the enemy-occupied works and the Yankees retreated from the field in disarray.

Although the Palmetto Ranch event was a relatively small reenactment, the march, Barton Creek, and the significance of the end of the 125th Anniversary campaign made the weekend one that the participants will never forget. Special thanks must go to Jo, Rhonda and Ana, who did triple duty gathering intelligence while also acting as the company commissary and teamsters and to Mike Moore for the use of his truck.

#### MARCHING MEMORIES by Gill Eastland

To those on the Palmetto Ranch march (excerpts from Mc Carthy's "Detailed Minutiae of Soldier Life"):

Do you remember?....." Who does not know all about the marching of soldiers? Those who have never marched with them and some who have. The varied experience of thousands would not tell the whole story of the march. The first hour or so of the march was generally quite orderly, the men perserving their places in ranks and marching in solid colum; but soon some lively fellow whistles an air, somebody else starts a song, the whole colum breaks out with roars of laughter, 'Route Step' takes the place of order, and the jolly singing, laughing, talking and joking that follows no one can describe. The infantry seemed to know exactly what to say to torment cavalry and artillery, and generally said it. In the summertime, the dust, combined with heat, caused great suffering. Their heavy woolen clothes were a great annoyance. Sitting down for a few minutes on a long march is pleasant, but it does not always pay; when the march is resumed the limbs are stiff and sore, and the man rather worsted by the halt. In very hot weather, when the neossities of the service permitted, there was a halt about noon, of an hour or so...some took the opportunity, if water was near to bathe their feet, hands and face, and nothing could be more enjoyable.

After all, the march had more pleasure than pain. Chosen friends walked and talked and smoked together; the hills and valleys made themselves a panarama for the feasting of the soldiers' eyes; and it was sweet to think that "camp" was near at hand, and rest, and the journey almost ended."

Lest we forget....



## THE HAZARDS OF DUKE ?

Following is correspondence between Gill Eastland and Captain Donnie Kennedy concerning the appearance of David Duke at Pleasant Hill this year:

Capt. Donnie Kennedy  
P.O. Box 46  
Simsboro, La. 71275

Sir,

I wanted to write you about a concern with the last Pleasant Hill event.

First, let me say the event was a very good one. The officers and men of The Texas Rifles believed this was the best Pleasant Hill event ever done. I have received many compliments on the way the event was organized. All in all it was a good time for the men.

Unfortunately, there was one thing that concerns myself and many members. Sunday, David Duke was introduced to the company during the inspection. I also understand he spoke to the crowd before the battle and had a political table set up with bumper stickers to give out.

I have had several people complain to me of these actions. There is concern his appearance turned the event into a political opportunity for Mr. Duke. I, personally, must agree that today's politicians and politics have no place at a reenactment of the War Between the States. It does not make a difference if he (she) is politically right, left or whatever. I don't believe a political association is good for the event or those who participate in the event. The politics of the other side will use it against the event and the hobby.

I do not know if his appearance will have any fallout with next year's event. I will keep you informed if there is any problem. We liked the event, but were not happy with the political overtones that a politician brings to the event.

Besides, Texans have enough crazy politicians to worry about, let alone to be introduced to ones from Louisiana.

I felt it was my duty as Captain of the Rifles to let you know how my company feels. I wrote to you specifically because of our friendship and my respect for you and your company. Please let me add, I find no fault with you because of this concern. Thus, until our companies are side by side in a line of battle in our Battalion, I remain Sir,

Your most obedient servant,  
Gill Eastland  
Captain, Texas Rifles

5-24-90

Capt. Gill Eastland  
The Texas Rifles  
San Antonio Texas

Dear Capt. Eastland,

Thank you for your most courteous letter just received. As the Commander of one of the four Sons of Confederate Veterans Camps that sponsored the reenactment of the Battle of Pleasant Hill, La. I would like to reply to your letter.

As you may know, the S.C.V. is a non-political organization. We do not support or show favor to any one political group or candidate. This is true regardless of party affiliation, color or popularity within the S.C.V. of a politician.

In an effort to build support among our elected officials for those things for which the S.C.V. is chartered to defend, we do very often invite elected officials to some of our events. When doing so, we use the utmost care to be sure that all elected officials are invited so as not to slight any one group. This means that regardless how an official has voted or what he has said about our Southern Heritage, he must be invited. To do less would be a "political" jester of contempt.



These efforts have paid off. In Baton Rouge this past Month, the Henry Watkin Allen Camp had a "Southern History" display at the largest public library in the city. Some students from an all black University saw it and demanded it be removed, because it offended them. Now note that in the month of February they had an African-American display up for the whole month. We did not demand its removal. Their demand was not heeded, because the leadership of the city knew us and what we stand for. We had invited them to many "living histories" and reenactments in and around the Baton Rouge area. They knew that we were open minded and not narrow minded bigots.

Now let me face your one complaint. The presence of Rep. David Duke.

Please be informed, that Rep. Duke was not the only politician invited to the event. As you may know there are two other men in the race for U.S. Senator from La. They are Sen. Bennett Johnston, and Sen. Ben Baggart. BOTH men were invited to the event and offered the same opportunities to see the camps and make a 2.5 min. address on the need to preserve our history and heritage.

So that there is no doubt let me say once again, that all three candidates were given the same opportunity to be at the reenactment. We are very sorry that only one man (Rep. David Duke) could make the event. We feel this is not the fault of any of the sponsors of the event, but is solely the actions of those politicians who prefer to ignore those of us who are fighting to maintain our heritage as Southerners.

After it became known that Rep. Duke was to be the only candidate at the event we then had to decide how to proceed. The invitations to the three men had been given in good faith, and did not stipulate that all three men must be present for the other to take advantage of the offer. Therefore, we felt a moral obligation to keep our word to the individual who had made the effort to be with us, and allowed him to speak. Rep. Duke spoke for two mins. on the subject of the mobility of those who were willing to give their lives in defense of their homes and liberty. Nor was he the only politician on the podium. The mayor of the Village of Pleasant Hill, La. was also there. The Mayor you may know is a Black gentleman. We also had invited him (would you have been just as indignant if he had been the only politician there).

As to the allegation that there was a "Duke" table at the reenactment I can say that there was none to my knowledge. If there had been I would have been the first to demand its removal from the reenactment site. If you can let me know who (if indeed there was such an animal) had such a display, I would be most pleased. This was not sanctioned and the individual responsible will be spoken to about this matter. Please remember that we are only talking about the reenactment site. What goes on outside the fence is beyond the control of the S.C.V. Camps.

In closing let me restate that I am speaking as the Commander of only one of the four S.C.V. Camps that put on the reenactment. The other three are: Benton Camp Monroe, La., Taylor Camp Shreveport, La.; Lane Camp Longview, Tx. The four Camps at a very late date took on the sponsorship of this event because no one else would do so. After the work we had to put into this event, and all the headaches commensurate with it, I only hope that someone else does it next year. If not, we of the Sgt. James W. Nicholson Camp, will find many other projects to aid in the defense of our Southern Cause.

Deo Vindice,

Walter D. Kennedy, Commander  
Sgt. James W. Nicholson, Camp S.C.V.

#### AUTHENTICITY CORNER

The following is from the files of Mike Moore (author unknown) and is submitted by our Authenticity Chairman, Scott Swenson:

#### Care of Civil War Shoes

Keeping your civil war gear in repair is often a time consuming job. One area that is often ignored, or even abused is the care of footwear. The most common shoe on the market in the west is either made by Jamagin, serio, or Mace. Most are pegged sole construction.

To understand the caring for pegged soles, one must first understand the principles of how they hold together.



Two pieces of leather are glued together and then holes punched in them with an awl where the pegs will be driven. The glue is primarily a medium to hold the shoe together during construction, as it will not hold the shoe permanently in place.

After the holes are punched, the leather is soaked in water and dry hardwood pegs are driven into the wet leather in the prepunched holes. It is literally placing a square peg in a round hole, with the hole actually being smaller than the peg.

When the shoe dries, the leather contracts around the peg, gripping it firmly. If the shoe gets wet later, both the leather and the peg get wet at the same time and in theory expand together.

many people are using neatsfoot oil on their shoes. THIS SHOULD NOT BE DONE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. Neatsfoot oil overly softens the leather and causes it to lose its grip on the pegs. Also, after hard service, the leather in a well-oiled shoe is more apt to tear. I have repaired many shoes. Those with severe problems invariably have been treated with neatsfoot oil. Shoes that have never had a drop of it on them do not exhibit the same problems.

The best treatment for your civil war shoes is the following:

1. Use plain saddle soap and routinely clean them.
2. Polish with a good grade of paste wax.
3. Coat or seal the shoe with mink oil.
4. Take care of the shoe in general. Avoid wading in them for the fun of it; don't dry them over a fire or any type of moderate "quick" heat. If they are wet, let them dry naturally and then use the process set out above.

Neatsfoot oil is good only for the guy who will sell you a new pair of shoes when you ruin your present ones !



## FOR SALE, TRADE, LOST OR FOUND

FOR SALE: 1 Brown Bess (Jap.); fired 10 times. Plus frizzen cover/flash guard, white buff sling, bayonet w/ shoulder carriage. \$375 or trade. I will pay freight in Texas. Also NCO sword. Contact Randy Bennett, 415 Pickford Drive, Katy, Tx. 77450 (713) 392-2829.

FOR SALE: 2 wool blankets, 1 blue, 1 brown. \$15 each or \$25 for both. Contact Nancy Pretzer 218 Crescent Drive Montgomery, Texas 77356.

FOR SALE: 1) Med. size white machine sewn 3 button shirt (15 1/2-33) \$12. 2) New Med. size 3 button shirt hand sewn w/ hand woven material \$35. Nice! 3) Med. size red & tan hand sewn shirt of hand woven material. \$28. Very good condition. 4) 2 hand woven material handkerchiefs w/ hand sewn/rolled edges. \$6/ea.

5) Hand sewn housewife-copied from original. Made of antique tapestry & other materials. \$13. 6) Cadet Grey Ensemble: (For officer or dress ball impression only!) Shell jacket— 7 button, hand sewn button holes, no 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— 33L, \$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. Send money or first born child to Scott Swenson P.O. Box 23344 Waco, TX 76702.

FOR SALE: 6 volumes of Time/Life Civil War Series: The Blockade, First Blood, Tenting Tonight, War on the Mississippi, Brother Against Brother, The Road to Shiloh. \$5 each or \$25 for all. Contact Vince Draa





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