

The Tyrants' Foe

The Newsletter Of The Texas Rifles

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Commanders Dispatch

Greetings from Georgia! Through the wonders of modern technology, I'm writing this around the beginning of my trip, while you're reading it near the end. First of all, I want to thank Phil Ulbrich for putting the newsletter together while I'm away. Already, this trip (coming right on the heels of going to Antietam and visiting Gettysburg) has allowed me to experience a few things that have really got me thinking. So, sit back, and let's see where this goes. Atlanta is a pretty interesting place: steeped in history, yet a modern city; a true and thorough mixture of the old and the new. The site where I'm working is just a short drive from, and within sight of Kennesaw Mountain. I'm not the first enginner from my group in Fort Worth to be on loan here. Two of my coworkers have already been here and paved the way for me. So, it wasn't too surprising that when I was first introduced around, one comment was: "Oh, you're the Civil War buff. Well, you're going to love it here." Everyone in that cubicle then proceeded to offer up their own opinion on the War. Finally one old sage proclaimed: "Well, all I have to say is, that war was a huge waste of time, money, and men." (Please show me the war that wasn't!)

It's not at all surprising that the local folks have opinions on the war. Historical markers are pretty much everywhere. Kennesaw Mountain is directly northeast of where I'm sitting right now. Stone Mountain is a few miles south. Big Shanty, with the original locomotive "The General" is right up the road. I've already heard a local radio station refer to Sherman burning the city as part of a promotional gag. They don't have a lot of reenactments; around here they're called "continuations." Without a doubt, it's different than being at Gettysburg or Sharpsburg, as we were just a few short weeks ago, but these people are just as immersed in history as those folks up North.

It's sometimes amusing, sometimes frustrating, but always enlightening to listen to different peoples' views of the war. As reenactors, we sometimes view the war as our special little province. We need to constantly remind ourselves that the war and its history belong to everyone. A lot of what we do when we're at an event is done just for ourselves to increase our knowledge and understanding, and to give ourselves a more meaningful historical experience. Yet, if we neglect being interpreters of that knowledge and experience for the public, then we miss out on a lot of what reenacting is about. And when we deal with the public, that also means dealing with their knowledge, and their opinions about the war as well. After leaving the Antietam event, Chuck Prack, Laura Fitzpatrick & I drove over to the National Park. We visited the actual Miller's Cornfield. Then we walked along Bloody Lane.

While there, a tourist (a man in his 50's - 60's) approached us because he wanted to talk about the finer details he had studied about the battle. As he leaned against the fence, he mentioned what a bad defensive position it was; how there was practically no field of fire. He went on to explain how he would have changed his troop dispositions if he had been in command. Woe unto the Southland that this Master Strategist & Tactician was born 130 years too late! I wanted to tell him that I found it disrespectful to stand on the very spot where so many men had died and blithely condemn their commander for posting them in an "inferior position." I wanted to point out that Lee had the benefit of a distinguished career at West Point, and years of military experience, not to mention being on the actual ground with troops to command, in the face of a real enemy, with real guns. (as opposed to sitting in an easy chair with books and maps) If he ordered his men to hold this "inferior" position, he must have had good reason to do so. But instead, I just smiled and nodded; and soon as it was polite to do so, walked away. It took some doing, but I had to remind myself that the war, and Antietam, belonged to him just as much as it belongs to me. The war is big enough, it belongs to all of us.

To the Tyrants Never Yield

James L. Bain,

Captain, Texas Rifles

From The Lieutenants Inkwell

Texian Market Days is past, and the only thing that prevents me from reporting to HQ that my first command was routed from the field by elements of the combined Mexican & Union Expeditionary Force is my fortunate mortal wounding in the encounter. See Corporal Williamson's report for more details on the event. As always it was an enjoyable time and some potential recruits picked up information from us. Captain Bain is not only an accomplished Officer of Infantry, but a world renowned engineer as well. He has been called to Atlanta and is helping oversee the works in the heart of Georgia in order to assist the defense of that important rail junction. Part of his duty is to study the breastworks there and appreciate their deployment, and an occasional redoubt doubtless comes under his scrutiny. Hence I have the newsletter duty.

Now, on to new bidniss. A new year looms mere months away, and we must consider new events. The Invasion of Galveston is in the works for next January. It will very possibly involve a naval force. We will let you know more as soon as plans are finalized.

Do not forget to send in your vote for the location of the next Annual Business Meeting. Postcards are provided with this copy of the newsletter. Just cast your vote and drop it in the mail.

The biggest event next year will be Gettysburg, with rumors of record setting reenactor attendance. Miss Vicki has been keeping me informed of the developments for that Battle. As it turns out, there are two events taking place. Our parent unit, the Texas Brigade, will be going to the one with the most and best terrain for our purposes of engaging our adversaries. Contact your old friends who have not been active and shout "Gettysburg!" Regions need to get together and roll cartridge and drill. How long has it been since a Regional drill? Regional directors, see to it. Military personnel need to get their Five Dollars into Ray Siegmund for the Brigade newsletter, in addition there are enlistment forms for the Texas Rifles, Co. G, First Volunteer Infantry Regiment available.

Phil Ulbrich, Lt.

Drill Bits

By the time we get this newsletter TMD will be history. Since we are serving with some newcomers I thought we should go over the question we seem to ask at each event. Do we stay at cast about when we fix or unfix bayonets? Also what is with that salute we do sometimes while at cast about?

These questions are easily answered and we will live by these guidelines. When fixing or unfixing bayonet the key to these questions rests in the arms position we were in prior to cast about. If we are at the shoulder then we return to the shoulder. I assume the reason for that is so we can quickly go about our business. For example, we may be marching off and that will save the officers from issuing one more command. If we happen to be at

order arms we will stay at cast about after fixing or unfixing the bayonet. The left arm holds the musket , rammer up. The butt of the musket is near the left foot and the barrel of the weapon is brought to the middle of your chest. The right arm is held up perpendicular to the barrel and the fingers touch the tip of the barrel. This is really simple: if we are at the order give the hand salute, if we are at the shoulder return to the shoulder. Even though other companies may not do this same salute , Company G will look great and our officers will give us the command to go to shoulder arms. We will practice this in our manual of arms until we have it just right. Remember the simple rule: at the shoulder return to the shoulder, from the order give the salute and wait for your officer to give the command to go to the order or shoulder.

Thoughts on the winter muster :

A discussion of the winter muster will have already taken place at TMD when this newsletter is mailed. I thought I would summarize some of the points already discussed at Antietam and at Granbury. Should we move the muster to Doc's place at Marrow Bone Springs?

Pro - For ten years the event has been held at Winedale and for ten years the Austin and Houston folks have had the relatively easy drive to Winedale. Maybe it is time we as a company think of the folks from Tyler, Waco ,and the Dallas area.

Con - For ten years the event has been held at Winedale and it has been a great site. Why change it ? The majority of the company lives closer to Winedale so lets take advantage of the distance and meet there again.

Con - Winedale has the facilities for us to hold a successful muster. There really isn't time to work in first person impressions with all the business and elections that take place.

Pro - The Marrow Bone Springs site is closer to Dallas and may encourage more new recruits to attend.

Con - The Houston and Austin regions have sent more recruits to Winedale than Dallas in the past. Moving the site may make it harder for some of the newer folks to attend thus lowering our recruiting efforts.

Pro - We have been doing things at Winedale for ten years. Lets change things and try something different.

Con - If it ain't broke don't fix it !!

Pro - The new site would provide excellent areas to drill and practice guard mount. Folks say there is plenty of room for a drill session.

Con - Others say there isn't enough room and our drill time would be less effective.

Whatever your decision is it is important that you vote on this issue. Discuss it with your friends and keep an open mind. Choose wisely, Grasshopper

Chris Strzelecki, 1st Sgt.

Regional Reports

Austin Regional Report

By the time you read this, my Austin friends, Muster Day at Camp Mabry should be staring back at you in the rear view mirror. And what a great turnout we had!! We recruited over 20 new members into our Regional ranks, Phil broke his new sword cutting weeds, and no one from the militia showed up! I hope you didn't miss it! I know I won't.

So, what have you been doing since Antietam? I heard a report that Mike Lucas attended Texian Market Days joined by Lt. Phil and Mark Wong from the Austin Region. Roger, did you get the postcard that Lee, Pete and I sent you from Hagerstown? I ordered a video for you so you can see what you missed! And yes, it is true, Pete is now making some kind of drink from root extract (actually it is quite good!). It is not known at this time if he will serve in the ranks with us at Gettysburg or sell "Evans' Elixir" to an unsuspecting crowd of thirsty tourists.

I would tell you about the great time had by G Company members at Operation Pacific Fury, but I'm not allowed to talk about non-period subjects by order of the editor.

Bob "Bunz" Huey

Metroplex Regional Report

After surviving the two "mega" events of this year (Shiloh & Antietam), it felt real good to go to a small event for a change, especially one that is literally in our own back yard and that could be driven to in under an hour. Uncomplicated scenarios, free (& pretty decent) food, good site, lots of firewood (just ask Rob Williamson), although less participants than last year. Attending from the Metroplex was Pat Dupont, Andy Maclehain, Gary Roselle, Captain Bain, Doc Enger (who was looking for the chuckwagon) and myself. The thing about Grandbury however that will make it stand out for me was the singing around the campfire and the first, although hopefully not the last, use of the songbooks and appearance of the TR Choir & Balladeers. Two renditions of Rose of Alabama, one of which was accompanied by a guitar player who wandered over, Yellow Rose, Dixie, Bonnie Blue Flag and a few Irish tunes. The favorite however seemed to be Noggy Noggy Grog, getting several repeats, including once before going into action on Sunday. Also heard round the campfire were cries of "why isn't (this or that song) in here? Hopefully, we can compile a second edition between now and the

Muster in January. I think everyone by now has a book, however if you don't have one, please see me. Forward to Texian Market Days!

"Give me one coffee pot and I will take that hill"

"Give me one coffee cup and I will take that hill"

"Give me one coffee bean!, and I will take that hill"

The Boilers.

Chas. Prack

Houston Regional Report

Houston Regional Report For those of you who could not make it, I can tell you that a Wonderful time was had by all at Texian Market days. It was a beautiful weekend, with good company and a great organizer. We were pleased to see several military and civilian reenactors from other groups. The wedding and battle were done several times over the weekend and went very well. For those of you who could not make it, the scenario had a wedding ceremony that would be interrupted by a Yankee foraging party that had worked their way into the area. The soldiers rushed to don their gear and repel the Yankee swine. This scenario was repeated throughout the weekend until it became time to do the last battle on Sunday. Now you see, the soldiers had spent most of the night out fighting the Mexicans who camped across the river. Yes, Confederates and Federals taking up arms together to crush the common enemy! This brings me to a magic moment of sorts. We always have fun when we reenact, but I fondly look back on some of the funnier moments we have experienced. These funny moments for me now have a King. The idea was to have the confederate soldiers grab their arms, hit the field and march toward where they had heard the enemy was approaching. The Federals would then surprise them from the dense brush along the river with a volley, more volleys would be exchanged, and finally the Confederates would be vanquished, their Captain shot in the back as he tried to rally his fleeing troops. A couple of hours before the battle, I decided to really surprise the confederates by incorporating the focus of most of our conversations that morning - the Mexicans. You see, they had sneaked into the weeds with us, while the Confederates were busy with the wedding. When the Confederates marched into the field, our Yankee troops fired on them as expected, and they reeled and began to spread out against our position. Then a bugle sounded from the weeds, the Mexican army rose and at the command of FUEGO, they pored a terrible volley of fire into the outnumbered Confederates, and the battle was ours! As we all charged into the field from our positions, I came up upon the Lieutenant in command of the Confederate company. Though I was sure he was dead from the minnie ball I put through his back, his chest was convulsing uncontrollably with the giggles. Thank you Phil, I will never forget that.

Seriously though, I want to thank all of you who attended for doing such a great job with the event and the spectators. The civilians did a great job with the wedding scenario and

the medicine show was better than ever. I thoroughly enjoyed the weekend and look forward to having an even better time next year.

As far as our region, we need to start thinking about recruiting for next year. We have a gun show I would like to do at the end of November and we may have made some promising contacts at the event last weekend. I will keep you informed of the local happenings and look forward to seeing all of you at the Company muster in January if not sooner.

Rob Williamson

Unit Knapsack Material

For those of you who want one of the Texas Rifles official unit knapsacks, your chance is coming soon. John Keahey can make a knapsack for you, or you can attend a "knapsack clinic" and make your own. John has leather, the proper buckles, and the pattern. If you already have a knapsack, John now has the stencils to paint on the "TR", company letter, and company number (assigned by Capt. Bain). The bill of goods required to make a knapsack include the following:

Black paint (enough for three coats)

Two yards (approx.) of plain 10 ounce cotton canvas

Leather for straps

Four 1-1/4" black roller buckles

One 1" black roller buckle

Three bone, wood, or pewter 5/8" buttons

30" of heavy cotton string or cord

It should take portions of three weekends to paint the cloth with three coats of paint, cut, assemble, and strap the knapsacks.

Maryland Letter

John wrote the following letter as a response to the lady who wrote him in Maryland.

Near Baltimore

September 26, 1862

Dear sister Beth,

Your letter reached just before we entered battle near a town in western Maryland called Sharpsburg. I just had time to read it before we were called to arms. It is difficult for me to express how much your letter meant to me. When about to enter perilous battle, as if by magic came this message from home, as if to remind me of where my heart and peace reside. I carried your letter into battle over my heart in my jacket pocket. Perhaps it helped protect me. The fighting was as fierce as ever I hope to see. I have never heard of a fight in which everybody was shot, but most of our Texas boys were hit. I was shot in the leg and captured. I must tell you that our regiment lost its flags and that many of our friends and neighbors lie dead, but no yankees got across that cornfield!

Please don't worry about me. My wound is healing and we are being treated well, considering that we are prisoners of the yankees. I hope to be exchanged before Christmas. Your letter is a great comfort and I read it over constantly. Kiss Ma and Pa for me and tell Aunt Bessie that I often think about her apple pie. May God bless you and all our family.

Your loving brother,

Marion

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