

# The Tyrants' Foe

## The Newsletter Of The Texas Rifles

Vol. XI, No.9 \*\*\*\*\*

December 1997

---

---

### COMMANDERS DISPATCH

Well, here it is, at last. The final issue for 1997. As most everyone knows by now, I will not be standing for reelection at Winedale in January. Therefore, this is also my last issue as Captain & Editor.

In preparing for this issue, I've been glancing through issues from the last three years. They've brought back a lot of good memories. We had some really great events from 1995-1997. Pea Ridge (where it rained), Nashville-Franklin (where it rained), Shiloh (where it rained), and finally, Antietam (hey! What's wrong with those Easterners? They forgot to order the rain!)

Even though our entire hobby revolves around the past, this is no time to be looking back. There are some fantastic events ahead for the Texas Rifles! The two largest events presently planned for 1998 are a Campaign event at Vicksburg, MS in May, and the 135th Anniv. Gettysburg event in July. But, before all that can happen, first there is the little matter of electing our officers for 1998 at Winedale. (Has everyone figured out yet where our 1998 Business Meeting & Muster will be held?)

The vote was a close one, but the result is clear, we gather again in Winedale. Thank you to everyone who participated in the vote. We really want EVERYONE to participate with the Company for the great events coming up. So, let's start off right at Winedale. Plan now to attend, and call your pards who haven't been with us in a while, and bring them, too!

Some time back, I started a feature that appears in this newsletter from time to time: Magic Moment stories. I have experienced several of those "special moments in/of time" throughout the past several years. Some of them were enlightening to me in a historical perspective type way. Some of them were rather poignant. Some of them were pretty miserable while I was going through them, and some of them were just downright funny. By far, however, my most special Magic Moment has been the time I got to spend as Captain of the Texas Rifles, and I owe that "moment" to all of you. Thank You All.

**To Tyrants Never Yield!**

**Your Most Obedient Servant,**

**James L. Bain**

**Captain, Texas Rifles**

---

---

### MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Over the years our annual muster has had some great slide shows. I am currently putting together this years slide show. However, I need photos to include in the show. So look through all of the pictures you took this year and send me the best of the best. Please put your name on them so I can return them to you. I will make a slide of the photos so they will be returned to you without damage. Funny pictures of course are the best. Why should I do this you may ask yourself?

## **BECAUSE THE SERGEANT SAYS SO, THAT IS WHY !!**

**Chris Strzelecki**

**Membership Chairman**

---

### **DRILL BITS**

Well boys it has been a short two years. As your first sergeant I have really enjoyed being the "teacher" to my men. Every First Sergeant of the Texas Rifles has always had their own style. Mine was as a teacher. That is what I know best. If I had been alive during the great conflict I hope I would have conducted myself in much the same manner. With elections coming upon us, it is time to consider moving on in responsibility. I hope, if elected, I will learn the role of an officer and help the Texas Rifles grow through the next several years. The men of the Civil War took responsibility for their messmates and their company. I want to urge all of you to think about the leadership responsibility we all have to the Texas Rifles. Whether we are officers, NCOs , privates , or civilians we can all lead the company to great accomplishments in the reenacting community. So if the membership chooses to elect me to Lieutenant, I will be writing " From the Lieutenant's Inkwell".

**Chris Strzelecki, 1st Sgt.**

---

### **CIVILIAN REPORT**

A few very short weeks from now, we will once again gather for our annual muster at Winedale. There we will review the passage of our 10th year, witness the changing of command and set our course for the coming year. This will also be a perfect time to take a group picture to go on the Civilian page of our new Website. Vicki, whose excellent idea this was, will be bringing her camera setup to take our image. Please come prepared to be photographed sometime during the day Saturday, probably a bit before or right after the business meeting. This picture is going to give prospective recruits their first impression of us, so please dress in work clothes rather than fancy clothes, as our primary impressions are "in the field" as opposed to "in town." If you have an item or two (i.e. stuff that we use while refugeeing) that will enhance the photo, please bring it along. Lastly, if anybody has the Antietam tape and can bring it to Winedale, there are several folks who'd appreciate getting to view it. May a safe and joyous Holiday Season grace all our homes. Froliche Weihnachten! (I \*think\* I spelled that right...)

**Vivian Schroeder**

---

### **REGIONAL REPORTS**

#### **Houston Regional Report**

Those of you Bayou Boys with InterNet access already know this, but I have been really busy lately with the web site. If you have InterNet access, and know about the web site and have not checked it out yet, you suck. Anyway, I hope to see all of you at the Drill and Firing at Rebel Arms on New Years Eve Day. I know we just had a drill session (I am writing this before that drill session but am assuming SOMEBODY showed up), but we need to take every advantage at some drill that we can to get ready for Gettysburg. So, even if you were at the drill last weekend, I hope you will try to come to the one New Years Day. I will make it worth your while, I promise!

WE NEED TO RECRUIT!!!. Remember, Winedale will be a perfect chance to bring that friend or loved one not in the hobby out to meet the Rifles and do a little reenacting. Also, we have a gun show Jan. 20-21 (and hopefully another one later) to recruit at before Gettysburg . It is not to early to start thinking about vacation time for this event. Best case scenario has everyone leaving Tuesday night and being gone until the next Monday. I know that everyone will not be able to do this, but plan ahead so you can get the most out of the event as possible. I am looking forward to Winedale and the year to come as I know you are. It is already shaping up to be a great one!

**Rob Williamson**

---

## IN PRAISE OF FIRST SERGEANTS

The following is excerpted from *Corporal Si Klegg And His Pard*. *Si Klegg* was written in 1887 by Wilbur Hinman. Hinman was a Captain in a Federal regiment during the war. Afterward, he wrote this novel, using composite characters and incidents he witnessed in his own company. It is a great read. If you're ever so lucky to find a copy, don't let it get away!

I have been privileged to work with two outstanding men who served the Company as First Sergeant over the past 3 years. I'm afraid I can't praise them without sounding sappy. So, I will simply submit this excerpt from *Si Klegg* as a tribute to my two friends, Phil Ulbrich, and Chris Strzelecki.

The orderly sergeant in the army was generally regarded by the other non-commissioned officers and the privates as a necessary evil, but none the less a palpable and unmitigated nuisance.

Next below the grade of a commissioned officer, he outranked all the rest of the enlisted men, so that his authority - unless in its exercise he transcended his legitimate functions - could not be called in question. By his superiors he was held in direct responsibility at all times for the condition of his company and the whereabouts of its members. All must be "present or accounted for." It was his business to see that all orders were duly enforced and obeyed, to draw and issue to his company supplies of rations, clothing and ammunition, to see that the men kept their persons and their clothing clean, and their arms and tents - when they had any - in good condition, and to make all details for fatigue, guard and other duty, besides numberless other minor things that no one can understand or appreciate except those who have served in that thankless and exasperating position.

It was impossible to do all this without more or less friction - generally more. . . Upon the head of the orderly was poured a great deal more than his share of profanity. Scarcely a day passed that he was not deluged with it. If anything went wrong with the company he caught "Hail Columbia" from the officers. When enforcing discipline and making details of men for duty, particularly after fatiguing marches or on rainy days, he rarely failed to provoke the wrath of those whose "turn" it happened to be. The curses and maledictions were not always loud, for prudential reasons, but they were deep and fervent. The longer the men remained in service the more fluent they became in the use of pungent words, making it warmer and warmer for the orderly. Swearing at him was the sovereign balm for the soldier's woes. When the hardtack was wormy, or the bacon maggoty, or the bean-soup too weak, or rations scanty; when the weather was too hot or too cold, or it rained, or the company had to go on picket after a hard day's tramp, or any fatigue duty had to be done; when the buttons flew off their clothes and seams ripped the first time they were worn, or the shapeless "gunboats" scraped the skin from their feet; when the company had to turn out for drill, with the mercury in the nineties, and swelter and charge around capturing imaginary batteries - for all these and much more the persecuted orderly was to blame. He was ground to powder between the upper and nether millstones - the officers and the men. His life was a continual martyrdom.

Then he was expected to be, himself, in every way, an example to the men worthy of their imitation - a pattern of soldierly perfection, in his bearing, his person, and "all appurtenances thereunto belonging," as the lawyers say. The only redeeming feature in the orderly's wretched existence was that he did not have to detail himself to go on guard or chop wood or load the colonel's wagon. From these the "Regulations" exempted him.

---

## MAGIC MOMENTS

Many times comes the feeling, the heart leaps up in the throat and the eyes moisten. When we first marched out at the Cold Franklin event in '89, as a brand spankin' new Private, I glanced back at the long column behind us and the long column ahead. Already the ice was forming in our beards. I looked to my left and saw several women holding a large hand painted banner that read "Free Tennessee or Graves" as they called out to us "God Bless You!" The heart leaps up, the thought of the Cemetery at the Carnton Plantation and the Generals lying dead and wrapped in battle flags on the porch, the eyes moisten. And wide brimmed hats come in handy at such a time.

Just as at Wilson's Creek, as a spankin' new Corporal. We were on the color line and got to watch the Blue Clad Column march past us. Their great silk banners flew proudly in the wind. The solid blue line marching by in their thousands. The heart leaps up. The eyes shine, and the urge comes to pull off your hat and wave it in the air and shout "Hooray! Hooray!"

And my swan song as 1st Sergeant. The Nashville campaign and the hand to hand at the Battle of Nashville. We charged in column over breastworks, the Captain disappeared into the maelstrom. I helped my boys over the brambles and limbs, one slipped and his leg dropped through the obstacle. Fearing his knee would be snapped by the pressure of bodies behind him I threw myself against his chest until the danger passed and he extricated himself. Then I had to fight my way back to my Captain. I became the point of a wedge of blueclad men. With my musket at port arms I pushed my opponents left or right as I churned forward on teutonic legs, battered forward, square head

lowered. Each time some ally on my flank took the Enemy I shoved aside out of action. At one point a man with a piece of lumber held above his head charged me and Corporal Heard fell upon the man and took him down. Suddenly we broke clear and I formed the company in the absence of Officers and had them fire volleys into the retreating Confederates. Before us a dozen thousand men contest the ground. O Glory!  
Is there any wonder why we enjoy this hobby?

**Philip Ulbrich**

**Lieutenant, Co. G**

**The Texas Rifles**

---

## **CREED of LIVING HISTORY**

We are people to whom the past is forever speaking. We listen to it because we cannot help ourselves, for the past speaks to us with many voices. Far out of that dark nowhere which is the time before we were born, men who were flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone went through fire and storm to break a path to the future. We are part of the future they died for; they are part of the past that brought the future. What they did--the lives they lived, the sacrifices they made, the stories they told and the songs they sang and, finally, the deaths they died--make up a part of our own experience. We cannot cut ourselves off from it. It is as real to us as something that happened last week. It is a basic part of our heritage as Americans.

**-anonymous**

---

## **TIPS FOR BETTER DRILL**

Take pride in what you are doing. You are representing a soldier. Do it. Listen to your officer. He is responsible for the well being of his men. He will take care of you. If he doesn't, elect another one next year. Or find a new unit.

1. Never, NEVER, EVER, move your head. From a distance, it is impossible to see fingers moving, it is difficult to see feet move slightly, but you might as well send up a flare when you move your head. Everyone's hat reflects the light, and as soon as you move your head, the light reflection is different. You might just as well hold up a big sign that says "I'm moving!".
2. Read rule 1 again.
3. Look with your eyes, not your head. God gave you the ability to turn your eyes to see to the side. Use this ability. If you want to check your alignment, turn your eyes, not your head. The worst offenders are those who lean out and look to check their alignment. What are these people thinking about?
4. You are responsible for maintaining a certain distance between yourself and the man in front of you. Never change that distance. When 20 men are marching in column, if each man is three inches farther from the man in front than he is supposed to be, then the last man is FIVE FEET out of position.
5. When your officer says, "March", go. If you step on the heel of the man in front of you, it is HIS fault for not moving.
6. When your officer says, "Halt", stop. If you have followed rule 4, you will be in the right place. If you have to close up, it's YOUR fault because you didn't maintain your distance.
7. When marching in line, stay even with the man next to you. That's all. Not the colors, not the sergeant, not anybody but the man next to you. Never mind what the officer says. If everybody does this, then everybody's in line. Besides, your peripheral vision doesn't allow you to see more than one or two men down the line anyway. And, rule one is NEVER move your head. If your judgment or alignment is off, the sergeant or corporal will tell you to move up or back. He won't just yell "Dress!", because he has read rule 2 in his section.
8. Work on every motion in the manual of arms. Not command, motion. Make them separate motions. A slight pause between each. You really do have the time to do this.
9. When placing the rifle on or off your shoulder, NEVER MOVE YOUR HEAD (Rule 1 again). What's the matter, don't you trust yourself?
10. When you are performing the manual of arms and have finished the last motion of a command, FREEZE. If the rifle is in the wrong place, or if your hand is not quite in the right place, or your foot is slightly out of line, DON'T MOVE. The next command will be coming along shortly. If you don't move, people have to look very carefully at

all of the men to find your error. If you move after everyone else has stopped, you just pointed out your mistake to anyone who is watching. Again, you might just as well hold up that big sign that says "I'm moving!".

---

**Well, here it is, the end of the final issue for 1997. Notice that no proposals for any new bylaw changes were submitted. So, that makes things look bright for Winedale. I promise to do my best to keep the first half of the business meeting short and sweet; can't speak for the second half, though. That'll be up to your new Captain!**

**Happy Holidays, Everyone!**

**See You at Winedale, Jan. 24, 1998!**