

# The Tyrants' Foe

## The Newsletter Of The Texas Rifles

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April 2000

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### COMMANDERS DISPATCH

We have lots to look forward to in this reenacting season. Bellmead is coming upon us soon. This is a brigade event. Major Susat will be in command. Please contact me with your registration as soon as possible. Look for the article in the newsletter for more specifics.

Wilson's Creek is not far behind. I have been to the website and it seems to be well planned and organized. As you may already know we are going as FEDERAL troops for this event. Please consult the articles in this newsletter to broaden your knowledge of what we are trying to accomplish in our impression this summer.

John Keahey , Mike Covington , and I have formed a committee to plan the Texian Market Days Event for this fall. We have some ideas and are meeting and discussing the options we have for this event. If you would like to give input about TMD , please call one or all of us and you can be on the committee too.

The last item for my dispatch concerns recruiting. We must all make a real effort to help the company grow. Our sister companies in the 1st Texas now regularly outnumber us in the field by three or four times. We need to always be on the lookout for new people who might have an interest in reenacting. Don't let someone else carry the load; we must all do our own part to keep the Rifles strong and a force in reenacting.

**Chris Strzelecki**  
**Captain , Texas Rifles**

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### DRILL BITS

This article will be short and lame for several reasons. The first is, we have a new baby boy! The second is, I quit my job! The third is, I took a new job! And the final reason is, I moved to Austin and bought a new house! I now live less than a musket shot away from Lt. Buns. Anyway, I did not have time to write an article but I will share this with you.

I have a weird habit. When I am driving home from reenactments, or just driving in the country, I look at the fields and hills and think, "That would be a great placer for a battle" or, "That gap there would be a great place to move a regiment through!" I have spoken with other guys who claim they do the same thing.

When we do what we do, we are constantly bombarded by commands and instruction. Yes, it can get old and tedious but it serves an important purpose. After a while we begin to think in commands and correlate our physical movements with commands. For instance, one time I came home from a long event where I was 1st Sgt. and giving a lot of commands and my daughter asked me where her dolly was and instead of saying "walk around the couch and its over there" I said "Go forward and do a by files left past the couch". She looked at me like I was insane. I probably am, but lets not go there. Anyway, it is easy to get mired in the details and miss the big picture.

Furthermore, by design, soldiers are taught to simply follow orders, one at a time, and not anticipate commands.

That does not mean you can't anticipate when you are by yourself. Next time you go to the grocery store, "manuever" yourself through your shopping with commands, or walking from the parking lot to your office or whatever. Try to use as many as you can think of. Try it for a while. It is good practice and after a while becomes quite a rush! Please, don't issue commands to yourself out loud as you shop. You will most likely be asked to get off the property. Sorry so short.<P

**Your Obedient Servant,**

**Rob Williamson**

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## **Ft. Towson**

The Texas Rifles made up for low numbers with grit and determination. Out of about 100 Confederate infantry in two battalions that started the march on Friday, only 10 infantry finished the march: Col. Mount, Major Susat, Lt. Ron Strybos and two of his men, and five of us from company G. They were John Keahey, Frank Marek, Dennis Taylor, Steve Wolford & this author. Conditions were lousy and yet the men rallied to the cause. We led the cavalry and artillery into Ft. Towson on Sunday. Since the Yanks had already left, we didn't bother to surrender at the last surrender! Wolfie's quote from Chickamauga sums it up best, that is what the Texas Rifles do. Well said Wolfman.

The event was cold and wet, but provided the best campaign fighting I have ever witnessed. The 1st Texas had two companies of infantry on Friday, and we fought the whole day. Our main opponent was the Federal cavalry, although we did scrap with the Yank infantry on several occasions. From about 8 AM until about 6 PM, we pursued the Yankees and gave them a sound thrashing.

The rations provided by the brigade gave us good food throughout the event. I have to say that Saturday night's stew was the best. Frank Marek brought along some peppers and they really gave supper a much needed kick by Saturday night.

Dennis Taylor restocked the medical bag before the event. He carried it through the whole event and surprisingly nobody needed it. James Burnett hung in very well all through Friday's march and battles, but he was forced to retire Friday night. His pack was ill fitting and just wouldn't allow him to keep up. I think experience is a great teacher and James is now an experienced campaigner.

No account of the event would be complete without mentioning how special the parcels were prepared by Laura Fitzpatrick, Kimberly Scott, Ann Stockton, and Marjorie Burnett. Each parcel contained cookies; fudge, letters, lemon drops, a newspaper, and mine even had a pair of dry socks! Those socks came in very handy on Saturday night. I know I speak on behalf of all the boys when I say thanks to the ladies.

For those of you who weren't able to make the event we missed you. At times it was pretty miserable, and the men grew worried, they did as our flag commands, Trust and Go Forward Next time they hold this event I will be there, no questions asked.

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## **Battle For Lake Bellmead: The Quest for Water Friday, May 19th through Sunday, May 21st**

This event is battalion maximum effort. Major Susat will be in command. This event features a mini-campaign on Friday, May 19th. If you choose to attend this campaign there will be a ration issued Thursday evening. There will be no rations issued Friday evening.

<P.REGISTRATION p site.

There are showers available on site, and the camping area has lots of shade.

The event issues rations on Saturday and Sunday morning. Last year they provided an evening meal on Saturday. Although this event is a static event we will attend it as if we were on campaign. So only bring what you can carry. No camp furniture or A frame tents for this event. Save them for Wilson's Creek.

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## **Wilson's Creek - Friday, June 16th through Sunday, June 18th**

Company G will portray the 2nd Kansas regiment for this reenactment. As it stands now, we will be a 6-company battalion. Companies C and L from the Houston area will serve along with Co. M from New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming. In addition we will join the ranks along with two companies of Kansas boys. Some of the Kansas folks served in our battalion at RR2 and made arrangements with Col. Mount to serve with us. This should make for a good size battalion.

John Keahey's article sums up our impression very well. Please read his article carefully. It is time to get a pair of civilian pants and put those blue kersies away for cooler weather. I would recommend cotton or linen pants. If you wait until the last minute you may find the sutlers with a shortage of items in your size. Gen. King has federal sack coats available for \$65 dollars. Contact the quartermaster, Jack Ziegler in League City if you are interested. Jack can also get you a musket for \$365.

The regional coordinators will be arranging car pools in their area. If you need a ride, don't hesitate to contact Chuck Prack or Steve Wolford. Do this early so you won't be left standing on the side of the road.

It is worth your time to check out the website for the event. We will register through the company, so don't register on line. Here is the address:

<http://dabear.tzo.com/wilsonscreek/registration/generalrules.html>

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## **WILSON'S CREEK UNIFORM & EQUIPAGE**

Before you know it, the Wilson's Creek Event will be upon us. Ideally this event calls for a major change in our impression. The Texas Rifles typically does a mid-war Confederate impression; this event asks us to do an 1861 Federal impression. At Wilson's Creek we will be portraying the 2nd Kansas Volunteer Infantry, a western theater poor-boy regiment.

### **Uniform**

According to Col. Mount, the only item of uniform received by the 2nd Kansas prior to the battle was a regulation Federal sackcoat. If you don't own a sackcoat, buy or arrange to borrow one. Every other item of clothing should be civilian. A few civilian coats mixed in with the sackcoats would be fine. In regard to hats, slouch, straw, mechanics, wheel, top and other period hat styles should be worn. No Confederate forage caps should be used and very few Federal forage caps. Pants should be everything except sky blue kersey trousers. Gray trousers are acceptable as gray was a common civilian clothing color. Since this will be a warm weather event, this would be a good time to purchase a pair of cotton trousers.

### **Equipment**

The 2nd Kansas probably had little in the way of military issue equipment. For ammunition a hunting bag and powder horn would be good if you have it (you would still use cartridges and not the powder horn.) White buff leather belts, bayonet shoulder carriages and cartridge box straps would add a lot to our early war appearance. Open frame belt buckles are best, with regulation US issue gear ok. Try not to carry anything with a CS on it or a Georgia Frame buckle. Haversacks should be our usual Texas Rifles mix, with unpainted cotton and carpetbags as the most authentic options. We are lucky in that our Texas Rifles knapsack pattern is a pre-war model. Mexican War and other frame knapsacks would be appropriate and the US issue double bag would be acceptable. Wood drum, Mexican War tin, gourd, or even leather covered bottle canteens would be preferred over the M1858 Federal canteen.

### **Weapons**

The biggest problem with an 1861 impression is that Enfield pattern weapons were not imported into the South or North in large numbers until 1862. The 2nd Kansas carried a mixed armament into the field. Obviously, no one expects the members to purchase a new musket just for this event, but this is a good excuse to buy that M1816, M1842, M1855, or M1861 musket of which you have been dreaming. The 4th Texas that we usually identify with started the war with eight out ten companies armed with smoothbore muskets such as the M1816 percussion conversion and the M1842, so the smoothbore musket purchased for Wilson's Creek would also be perfect for our more traditional impression. Civilian pattern shotguns, plains rifles and squirrel rifles are appropriate. Flintlock muskets and rifles would be great. This is also the event where we can be just as over armed as the most diehard member of irregular Confederate cavalry! Go ahead and wear a big side knife, Bowie knife, D guard knife, period cane knife, M1832 Foot Artillery Sword and/or a large bore pistol.

### **Tentage**

Shelter halves did not become an item of issue in the Federal Army until 1862 and the larger style of shelter half that we use were not issued until 1864. A frame tents and tarps would be the most authentic. Hopefully we won't actually need tents except for shade. I don't know if this will be a campaign style event for us, or whether we will shift campsites and carry our tentage.

Jmk, 4/15/2000

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## **Brigade Insurance Benefits:**

General King has contracted with a company for insurance benefits. I have all the incorporation papers and they are available for your inspection if you would like to read them. Through this insurance we are covered for any brigade activity: like cartridge rolling, drill ,or events. The insurance covers you from the time you leave your home until you return. The only check is that I must register us through the brigade. So for all brigade events send your registration fee to me and I will send it to brigade. Otherwise you are only covered by the insurance while at the

event. The General has also arranged for each of us to receive an insurance card to carry with us. Completing the enlistment form in a timely manner is very important to make sure the insurance coverage is up to date. I have recently mailed forms to everyone who had not already completed one. Please send it back as soon as possible.

Dues Are Passed Due:

The Texas Rifles dues this year have been lowered to \$12. If you haven't paid, please do so. The company needs the funds to conduct its business. Brigade dues are \$25. If you plan to join the brigade you may include that amount in with the company dues.

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## Regional Reports

### Houston

News from the Houston front and the Battle of Jesse Jones Park. With assistance from nine Texas Rifles and another Confederate Company (Chris help here), and of course due to the able command of Captain Strzelecki and Sergeant Williams, we pushed the Yankee blue bellies through the woods on a right flanking maneuver, while (Chris other Confederate Company), pushed them on the left; towards the retreating right flank. In other words, they got caught in the Big Squeeze. No casualties from the Rifles. Time between engagements was spent perfecting the skirmish drill under the firm, yet caressing leadership of Sergeant Williams. The last engagement of the day again demonstrated the superior leadership of the Confederate army over the Federals as we swept over the right flank and chased the Blue Bellies back to Washington. Regrettably, the Captain went down with several wounds and died a glorious death under the water pump in the mud (only place in the entire park where mud could be found). What? more rust on the sword! Ask John!

Thanks to Rene, Mike and Chris for attending the gun show and parading our colors over the past weekend.

Numerous people picked up information, unfortunately, due to the brisk weather at Jesse Jones, none showed up to see us in action. Hoping to hear from them in coming weeks. We will be calling them to follow up. All to report for now.

Your obedient servant with the caressing hands per Roberta, Wolfie.

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## Ask John!

### CARE OF TINWARE

All of us use tinware in this hobby. It may be a tin cup, tin plate, knife, spoon, fork, cooking gear, canteen, or perhaps just the tins within the cartridge box. This article is concerned with the proper care and use of tinware. In years past you could buy cheap tin cups for 50 cents, but those days are long gone. Mess sets can now cost over \$100.00. Needless to say, most reenactors want to insure that such expensive items enjoy a long and useful career. Well made, heavy gauge, authentic tinware is an investment deserving of proper care. Here are some suggestions for the care and feeding of your tinware.

There are two problems with tinware. The first problem is that it is prone to rust. Tinware will not rust as easily as plain iron, but it will rust. Tinning was developed as a rust preventative. It was even used on the iron parts of muskets issued to sailors and Marines. The tinning reduced the problem of maintaining unfinished metal corrosion-free in a saltwater environment. For the same reason it was applied to canteens, cooking and eating utensils. Rust on tinware usually starts at the junction of two tin sheets. Due to the nature of the material, these junctions tend to be angular and are difficult to clean. The standard dish washing rag does not reach into those junctions very readily. So, Step 1 in preventing the premature demise of your tinware is thorough cleaning; paying particular attention to those angles where the different tin sheet parts are joined. Now I know some of you veterans out there take a great deal of pride in the fact that your muskets and tin pots are coated with black scorch and soot on their exteriors. This is authentic and good, but for health reasons you do need to thoroughly clean the interior.

Step 2 in the care of tinware comes after it has been cleaned. Once the tinware is cleaned (at least on the inside) tinware sutlers recommend that it be oiled. Just as in the case of your musket, the oil prevents rust. Do not use petroleum oil for this! Petroleum based oils, such as you use on your musket, are toxic. I use cooking oil, such as Wesson Oil, because it is edible. One tinware sutler recommends mineral oil. He says that mineral oil will not affect the body and will pass through the digestive system. And he believes that mineral oil is a better rust preventative than vegetable-based oil. In either case, oil the tinware after cleaning it. Prior to the next use of the tinware, wipe off the excess oil.

The second problem with tinware is that it is quite easy to destroy by melting the soldered seams. Tinware sutlers recommend that soldered tinware pots NEVER be used to fry food. Soldered tinware is only intended to heat liquids, such as coffee or stew. Liquids help to disperse heat. The melting point of tinware solders is well within the temperature range of the average campfire. Without liquid to disperse heat, the solder connecting the tinware seams will melt and the seams will quickly come apart. Whatever you are cooking (coffee, stew, or rice) a tinware cooking utensil needs to be at least half full of liquid. Additionally, try to cook on the coals only. Coals provide even heat at the base of your tinware. Flame from an open campfire can lick up the sides of your cookware and heat the seams above the liquid level in the pot.

So that is it: keep your tinware clean, oil it with vegetable or mineral oil to prevent rust, keep it at least half full when cooking, and cook on coals. Follow these rules and your tinware investment should last a long time.

Jmk, 4/15/00

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## Ask John Some More!

### ARMS AND AMMUNITION

The Civil War is known to historians as the first of the “modern” wars. It was considered modern in that for the first time metal covered warships fought one-another, railroads were used extensively, and weapons such as machine guns, submarines, repeating rifles, and land mines were employed. It was also the first American war in which the rifle was the predominate infantry weapon. All our wars before this were fought primarily with smoothbore muskets. In those conflicts rifles were considered a specialty weapon used by only a small number of soldiers.

Everyone understood the advantages of using a rifle. Most rifles of the late 1700’s and early 1800’s had about the same capability... range of approximately 500 yards and able to hit a man-size target at that distance. Smoothbore muskets were generally loaded with a bullet 4 or 5 calibers undersized. For example, the bullets for a .69 caliber musket would actually be .65 caliber. This practice certainly prevented powder fouling from jamming a musket during loading, but it did not help accuracy or range. A smoothbore musket had a maximum range of only 200 yards and was only expected to hit a target the size of a man on a horse (14’ x 14’) at that distance.

The problem with rifles was time and money. Rifles were more expensive to manufacture, due to the process of cutting rifling grooves in the barrel and the greater demand for precision. Rifling grooves imparted spin to the bullet when the gun was fired. Because the bullet was spinning as it flew through the air it was aerodynamically stabilized and went straighter. But, rifles cost about 1/3 more than a smoothbore musket to make.

The time factor had to do with loading. In order to take advantage of the rifling grooves in the barrel the bullet had to tightly fit the barrel. Fit tightly enough that ramming the bullet down the barrel was impossible. The German solution to the tight bullet problem was to load with a thick iron ramrod and a mallet. The bullet was hammered into a tight fit. Obviously a time consuming process and it deformed the bullet. The American solution was to load a slightly loose bullet wrapped in a cloth patch. The cloth crushed enough to allow the bullet to be rammed down the barrel, but was still a tight enough fit to spin the bullet on the way out. However, to measure and load powder into the barrel, place cloth on the muzzle, press a bullet into the cloth, cut away excess cloth, put the cloth away, put the patchknife away, ram the charge down, replace the ramrod and prime, meant that the rifle loading process took time; typically a minute to a minute and a half. A smoothbore musket took 20 seconds.

In addition, the rifle barrel had to be relatively clean. Powder fouling could stop the rifle loading process after as few as ten shots. Then the rifle barrel would have to be cleaned.

Prior to 1850 almost all bullets were round balls. The word “ball” was synonymous with the word bullet. That is why our ammo boxes are stenciled with labels such as “Ball cartridge.” There were various attempts to improve the military value of the rifle by speeding up the loading process. The system that worked best for muzzle-loaded weapons was the Minie Ball, invented by French Captain Claude Minie (pronounced min-nay) in 1850. The minie ball was pointed and had a hollow base. It was made several thousandths of an inch smaller than the barrel caliber so that it could be loaded as fast as a smoothbore musket. Upon firing, the explosion of the powder jammed the hollow base of the minie ball into the rifling grooves. In effect, it made the bullet a tight fit. The rifling spun the bullet and rifle accuracy was achieved with the same loading time as a smoothbore. The rifle was finally a practical military weapon. The U.S. M1842 Rifled Conversion Musket, M1855 Rifle, and the M1855, M1861, M1863 and M1864 pattern Rifled-muskets used the new minie ball ammunition.

The cleaning of the rifling problem was addressed by an American improvement to the minie ball, the Williams Cleaner Round. A Williams minie ball had a thin nailhead shaped extension out of the hollow base. Firing jammed the thin lead into the rifling and theoretically scraped the barrel clean of powder fouling. You may have noticed the

divisions in the tops of cartridge box tins. Typically each tin top is divided into two sections holding six and four cartridges. The larger section is for six normal rounds. Four Williams Cleaner Rounds fit into the smaller section. So, Civil War ammunition intended for muzzle loaded weapons can be divided into two types; minie ball ammunition for rifles and round ball ammunition for smoothbore muskets. Soldiers definitely preferred the rifle-muskets. This weapon gave them man-stopping accuracy out to 500 yards. Yet, the smoothbore muskets could be more deadly than rifles at short range. Smoothbore musket ammunition was issued in two varieties; ball, and buck-and-ball cartridges. Ball cartridge contained one .65 caliber round ball. Buck-and-ball contained the .65 ball topped by three .28 caliber buckshot. At ranges less than 100 yards this load gave you four chances to hit someone per shot. The 1st Texas Infantry started the war with 8 out of ten of its soldiers using smoothbore muskets. They were known for their aggressive behavior on the battlefield. When they charged into short range and opened fire with those buck-and-ball loaded muskets, the military situation for the Yankees opposed to them must have become decidedly unpleasant. This could go both ways, of course. Some of the Pennsylvania Reserves Brigade troops that received Pickett's Charge were equipped with smoothbore muskets. They are on record as having broken their buck-and-ball cartridges open before the charge and combined the buckshot into pure buckshot charges. When Pickett's men got really close to that stone wall, they were charging into a virtual cloud of buckshot. Smoothbores were more common in the Civil War than you might think. Early in the war production and importation of rifles had yet to catch-up with demand. The majority of early war troops on both sides carried smoothbores. These obsolete weapons were gradually replaced as the war went on, but were never entirely supplanted. I have seen smoothbore round balls recovered from the 1864 Pleasant Hill Battlefield.

jmk, 4/15/2000

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## **You just keep on asking John, Don't you!**

### **BLUED VERSUS ARMORY BRIGHT; OR ENFIELD VERSUS U.S. PATTERN ARMS**

From the beginnings of the United States arsenal system for the manufacturing of military firearms, the metal finish used for most issue weapons was "Armory Bright." What this meant was that the iron and steel components of the weapons were highly polished bare metal. The soldiers, marines and sailors who used these weapons were expected to maintain them in this shiny condition. While rust and corrosion were easily started by sweat, weather and firing of these weapons; strict discipline helped insure proper maintenance. Also, with a bright metal exterior it was easy for an officer to spot if soldier was not properly maintaining his weapon.

The tactics of the period supposed a highly visible line-of-battle. In this style of combat a shiny weapon that could reflect light and reveal the soldier's position to the enemy was thought to be unimportant. Civil War period officers, brought-up in the tradition of bright metal weapons, often insisted that soldiers issued weapons with blued (for example the Enfield) or browned (such as the M1841 Rifle) parts remove the colored finish so that the weapons were "nice and shiny." You may have notice that some of our members carry Enfields with the bluing removed from the barrel. This is totally authentic.

19th century weapons maintenance was not the nightmare you might imagine. Oil in the pre-Civil War days was almost exclusively whale oil. One of the reasons whales continue to be slaughtered today in large numbers is that whale oil penetrates metal better than petroleum (rock) oil. Penetrating oil that can enter the microscopic pores of the metal prevents rust and corrosion much more effectively than oil that simply sits on the surface of the metal and is subject to being wiped-off. Cleaning agents used in the 19th century for the metal parts of the musket were abrasive, such as powder of emery. What that means is that once the highly polished, smooth exterior of the metal began to deeply rust, then the soldier had to resort to abrasion to clean his weapon. Abrasives scratch the metal and roughen the surface of the metal from the original highly polished finish. In essence, it is cleaning your weapon with fine sandpaper. This makes it easier for rust to start the next time because the surface of the metal is now much coarser and retains dirt and moisture in the microscopically uneven surface.

For some time now I have been carrying at events a reproduction M1842 Musket finished, as were the originals, in armory bright. One of the reasons I chose to carry this weapon is to see how long I could maintain the armory bright polish before having to resort to abrasive cleaners. Some of you are laughing at this point and thinking that the weapon of a Sergeant Major and/or General Guide isn't used much. However, this weapon has seen over a year's service in the field (including Red River, Dickens's Evening on the Strand, Liendo Plantation, Winedale, several Rebel Arms drills, and numerous other events) at which it was fired, used in the rain and handled by sweaty hands. Consider this article as a progress report on the bright finish.

So far I have been able to maintain the bright finish on most parts. The only part which has developed deep rust is the butt plate. If you want to evaluate how much action a weapon has seen, don't look in the barrel. Look at the butt

plate. The nicks and scares there will tell you how much service the gun has seen. I do seriously clean my M1842 after events. More importantly, I keep it well oiled with "Brake Free." Brake Free is a modern synthetic oil developed for the U.S. Army during the Viet Nam War. It penetrates the metal and really helps to prevent rust... just like whale oil use to do.

To clean my musket I first disassemble it. Disassembly for the US pattern muskets is relatively quick. During the Red River II Campaign we had an afternoon of rain. After putting-up a tent, Dennis Taylor and I sat down to clean our muskets. I removed three screws and had all the parts dismantled before Dennis even had the barrel bands off his Enfield. It is not that I was any quicker than Dennis was; my gun's design made it easy to disassemble. I clean the barrel of my musket with hot soapy water. I then rinse the barrel with fresh water and leave it to drain muzzle down. My stock is kept oiled with linseed oil. All the metal surfaces and the interior of the dry barrel are wiped in Brake Free. Hard-to-reach areas are scrubbed with an old toothbrush. Rusted surfaces are rubbed with a Brake Free soaked cloth. Stubborn rust is rubbed with a soft piece of wood. None of these techniques are new. I found them in a reprint of the "Rules for the Management and Cleaning of the Rifled-Musket, Model 1863." This manual was originally printed by the Union Army. Most of the information in this manual is applicable to an Enfield, or any other period percussion musket. Copies of this reprint are available from Gay Frazer. After cleaning the musket is reassembled. I always use a tompon. Prior to an event I swab the bore to remove excess oil. In hot weather I try to avoid handling the metal surfaces as much as possible.

So, what is the point of all this? First of all, I have learned that it is possible to maintain a shiny, if not a polished, musket even under campaign conditions. This not a feat only a weekend reenactor can do. One of my favorite Civil War photographs is of a column of Confederate soldiers marching through Frederick, Maryland in 1862 or 1864. Now the soldiers in the picture are not dead guys with shiny photographer's prop guns placed near their bodies. Nor are they disarmed prisoners. Nor are they formally posed for an indoor gallery photograph. Nor are they fresh troops. This photograph is of live veteran Confederate infantrymen; armed, dangerous and on campaign. They wear dark drab clothing, blanket rolls and a variety of hats. But most importantly, you can see their clean, shiny, well-maintained muskets reflecting the sunlight. If they can do it, we can do it.

Second, reenactors should not be overly concerned about maintenance of blued versus armory bright weapons. With modern penetrating oils such as Brake Free, there is not much of a maintenance difference.

Third, the original 1st Texas Infantry started the war with eight companies armed with .69 caliber smoothbore muskets, such as the M1842, and two "Flank" companies armed with Enfields Rifles. While this weapons mix probably shifted to more to rifles as the war progressed, the 1st Texas was still listed as having a "mixed armament" at Gettysburg.

So Texas Rifles members new and old, if you are considering the purchase of a musket consider buying a .69 caliber US pattern firearm. There are three reproductions on the market, the M1842 percussion smoothbore, the M1842 percussion rifled-musket, and the M1816 percussion conversion musket. These are well-balanced impressive weapons and very appropriate for the impressions we do.

jmk, 4/15/2000

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## **Starting to annoy John now!**

### **UNITED STATES ARSENALS**

In the year 1792 President George Washington recognized the need for new military weapons to replace the deteriorating stocks left over from the American Revolution. Congress passed legislation authorizing the construction of two government owned arms factories that year. They would be needed! In 1793 an inventory of all weapons belonging to the government found that the U.S. owned 31,015 mixed weapons, of which only 26,000 could be used. President Washington wanted an additional 7,000 arms, but there existed no large gun making factories in the United States to make them. This perceived need threw the arsenal selection and construction process into high gear. While the selection must have involved a lot of politics, there were certain criteria that had to be met. First, the new facilities needed to be near a river. The river would provide a consistent source of waterpower to run the arms making machinery. Second, the river might be used for transportation of raw materials, but the arsenal site needed to be far enough inland to prevent possible water borne raids by foreign enemies (for which read Britain's Royal Navy.) Thirdly, as a possible hint of sectional problems to come, it was decided to build two arsenals; one arsenal in the north and one in the south.

The northern site chosen was in Springfield, Massachusetts. There already was a small weapons repair facility in place. The first muskets made for the U.S. Army in the U.S. government's own factories, or arsenals, were fabricated in 1795 in the Springfield Arsenal in Massachusetts. Rather than copy the British style .75 caliber

smoothbore musket with the barrel attached by pins, the decision was made to copy the French Model 1763 smoothbore muskets of .69 caliber. The Americans had purchased French muskets during the latter part of the Revolution and found them to be superior to the British musket. The French muskets were made of iron and steel with the barrel retained by barrel bands. Different weapon designs adopted for the U.S. military were identified by the year the design was approved. For example, the first musket design is known as the Model 1795. United States muskets continued to be based upon French designs throughout the smoothbore musket period.

The first year's production run at Springfield was only 45 muskets; lacking any machinery as yet the iron and steel parts were hand filed from blocks of metal. Think about the labor involved in doing that the next time you see a flintlock musket! Facilities were rapidly expanded until the Springfield Arsenal in 1829 could produce up to 16,500 muskets per year. A total of 471,346 .69 smoothbore flintlock muskets were made at Springfield from 1795 to 1844. After that smoothbore percussion arms were made there until the switch to .58 caliber percussion rifles and rifled-muskets was made in 1857. With the beginning of the Civil War a simplified Model 1861 (M1861) .58 caliber percussion rifled-musket design was adopted by the US government. Springfield Arsenal alone produced 265,129 M1861 muskets, 273,265 M1863 muskets and 255,040 M1864 muskets. That is 793,434 muskets from one Union arsenal in less than four years! Additional Springfield pattern muskets were contracted for from private arms makers. Something like 1,200,000 Springfield pattern muskets were used in the Union Army. Total Union Army enlistments are estimated to be 2,200,000. This figure includes all service branches such as engineers, artillery, cavalry and other troops not normally issued with infantry weapons. Deduct these kinds of troops from the 2.2 million total and you can see that most Federal infantry carried a Springfield pattern musket.

In 1863 40% of the weapons issued to the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia were captured northern weapons. The majority of these captured muskets must have also been Springfield pattern rifled-muskets

The site chosen for the southern arsenal was at Harper's Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia.) Production was delayed at Harper's Ferry because facilities needed to be built from scratch. Construction of the arsenal began in 1796. Production began in 1801. The first year's production was 293 M1795 .69 caliber smoothbore muskets. Harper's Ferry weapons production peaked in 1832 with completion of 16,360 muskets and rifles. This southern arsenal made 332,171 flintlock smoothbore muskets from 1801 to 1842. Harper's Ferry made the M1842 percussion smoothbore musket and the M1841 "Mississippi" Rifle from 1842 to 1855. After 1855 Harper's Ferry made M1855 percussion rifles and rifled-muskets until its destruction in 1861.

The two United States Arsenals pioneered the concept of interchangeable gun parts. Although the two arsenals made guns from the same design, often the parts of a gun would be interchangeable with any gun of the same design made in its home arsenal, but not necessarily with a gun from the other arsenal. The first weapon made so that its parts could interchange with any U.S. arsenal made gun of the same pattern was the M1842. Other nations were slow to catch on to this innovation. Foreign military officers were amazed at international exhibitions when several U.S. made weapons were completely disassembled, their parts thrown into a pile, and fully functional weapons reassembled from the mixed parts. Even by the time of the Civil War, the imported Enfield muskets still did not have truly interchangeable parts.

The radical abolitionist John Brown chose to attack Harper's Ferry in 1859. He did so due to the presence of the US arsenal in the town. The arsenal was supposed to supply weapons for the slave rebellion he hoped to incite within the southern states. His short-lived rebellion ended on the arsenal grounds when United States Marines led by United States Army Colonel Robert E. Lee attacked Brown's men, who had retreated into the arsenal's firehouse. Brown was wounded and captured. He was subsequently hung by Virginia authorities.

Rather than yield a complete arms-making facility to the Commonwealth of Virginia after Virginia seceded from the Union in 1861, Federal troops burned down the Harper's Ferry Arsenal buildings. However, this hurried job of destruction left much of the heavy gun making machinery still useable. It was removed and sent to the state arsenal in Richmond, Virginia. This machinery then produced a modified copy of the M1861 Springfield rifled-musket for Confederate troops until the fall of Richmond near the end of the Civil War.

The Harper's Ferry Arsenal was never reopened by the government after the Civil War. The former grounds and remaining buildings of the historic Harper's Ferry Arsenal have been incorporated into The Harper's Ferry National Park.

The Springfield Arsenal continues to make weapons for the U.S. military to this day. It has been the primary source for military small arms for more than 205 years.

jmk, 4/15/2000

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## CLASSIFIED SECTION

Brady Williams has contacted me about selling his gear. At Winedale a number of his items were sold. However some things do remain: Enfield Musket: \$300 (missing front sight). Cartridge Box, cap box, bayonet and scabbard, tin cup, pants and shirt pattern: Contact Chris for prices on these items. Also, check out the new CLASSIFIED section of the website and post anything you want to sell to Rob Williamson at [rhwillia@sprynet.com](mailto:rhwillia@sprynet.com).

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## SUTLER ROW

The following contacts produce or sell goods of the finest quality. They are the recommended source of supply for members of the Texas Rifles.

John Keahey:

2810 West Pebble Beach

Missouri City, TX 77459

281-261-0665

Shell jackets, uniforms, leather gear

Gaye Frazer

5641 Yale Blvd, Ste 125

Dallas, Texas 75206

214-696-1865

fax 214-361-9720

[frazer@frazerbrothers.com](mailto:frazer@frazerbrothers.com)

[www.frazerbrothers.com](http://www.frazerbrothers.com)

### **Jean Cloth & Period Fabrics**

Thistle Hill Weavers

Rd #2, Box 75,

Cherry Valley, NY 13320

518-284-2729

Charles Childs

13979 – C Georgetown St. NE

Paris, Ohio 44669

216-862-3307

### **Ready Made Shell Jackets**

Terri Parker

738 Currey Rd.

Nashville, TN 37217

615-361-8765

Ask for Alabama Depot Style in gray brown jean

### **Hats**

Clear Water Hat Company

Bob & Kaye Brewer

Box 202,

Newnata, AR 72680

5017464324

### **Leather and Paper Goods**

Dixie Leather Works

P.O. Box 8221

Paducah, KY 42002-8221

800-888-5183

### **Custom Made Brogans**

Robert Serio

Missouri Boot and Shoe Co.

Rt. 7, Box 207

Neosho, Mo.

417-451-6100

### **General Merchandise**

Fall Creek Sutlery  
P.O. Box 539  
Freedom , CA  
408-728-1888  
**Musket Tools & Parts**  
S & S Firearms  
74-11 Myrtle Ave.  
Glendale, NY 11385-7433  
718-497-1100

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## **APPROVED SCHEDULE FROM WINEDALE**

*(This schedule can also be viewed from the "Schedule" link on the main page.)*

- \*May 6, Cartridge Party (Houston) - Phil Sozansky's Home
  - \*May 19- 21, Bellmead Battle
  - \*June 3-4 Gun Show - Houston ,Astro Hall
  - \*June 16 - 18, Wilson' Creek
  - \*July Drill Date TBA
  - \*August 19-20, Gun Show Houston , Astro Hall
  - \*September Drill TBA
  - \*October 21- 22, Texian Market Days
  - \*November 4- 5, Cartridge Party (Houston) - John Keahey's Home
  - \*November 17 – 19, Battle at Liendo - Liendo Plantation Hempstead, TX
  - \*December 2-3, Brigade Muster - Dickens on the Strand
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