

The Tyrants' Foe

The Newsletter Of The Texas Rifles

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Commander's Dispatch

For those of you who could not make Sharpsburg, truly I can say we missed your company, and you missed a once in a lifetime experience. As Shakespeare said in his best Southern drawl :

*We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his sweat with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in Texas now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon the Corn Field.*

It was an honor and a privilege to lead the Texas Rifles at this premier national event. The company performed up to its usual standard of excellence in every activity asked of it by its officers and NCOs, as indicated to me personally by brother officers of our battalion and other, unaffiliated units.

I want to express my thanks to Jack King, Pat Dowd, Bobby Crisp, and all the members of their staff for their hard work, dedication and perseverance in planning and pulling off this epic endeavor.

It was interesting to have in our ranks so many past-officers, including Scott Swenson, Gill Eastland, Jeff Hunt, Phil Ulbrich and Chris Strezlecki. I have to say, I was a little worried that every command out of my mouth would be followed by pages being flipped through pocket-Hardees and murmurs of “That’s not what we used to do ...” and “I would have done ...”.

Our recruitment of new members, under the able stewardship of Chris Strezlecki, has paid off handsomely this year. You can read Chris’ report later in this newsletter. I believe that the ‘G’ stars handed out to our newest Rifle members Rodney Bode, Doug Davis and Don Tucker are the first ever awarded on sacred soil, IN the Bloody Lane!

Our ‘company sutlers’ John Keahey and Frank Marek have been working their fingers to the bone providing our members with equipment and uniforms that far surpass anything on the market. Their hard work has enabled us to approach our company goals set by the Authenticity Committee.

Let's finish up this fantastic year at Texian Market Days, Liendo Plantation, The Strand and Winedale.

To the Tyrants Never Yield!

Bob Huey

Captain, Texas Rifles

From The Lieutenant's Inkwell

Well, most of you were there, so what more can be said about Sharpsburg. As with all big events, everything was not perfect, but we will be telling the stories for years.

Marching through the actual Cornfield is something I will never forget. As we marched to and then through the battlefield park, I was waiting to see that Cornfield. Most of you probably did not know that I had never been to the Antietam battlefield before that day. When we did by company into line and then forward into line forming the battalion in amongst the cornrows I was thinking "Are they crazy! We are all going to get arrested!". Then I realized, this was the surprise Major Dowd had been alluding to. And then, of course, the gravity of it hit me. Where we were, who we were, what they did there. I have never had an experience like that before. So proud and yet so melancholy at the same time. I hope that each one of you will personally thank Pat Dowd and Jack King next time you see them. They put a lot of time and effort into organizing that whole experience.

The second thing I want to comment on is how well we performed at this event. Our drill was outstanding, and being the first to walk past the parade ground and all those spectators on Saturday was another great experience. I have never been in the field with men who were better drilled. If you were not able, from your vantage point in the line, to see just how well drilled we were all weekend, just ask Sgt. Major Keahey about it when you see him at TMD.

Also, we have been busy on the recruiting front. We have a lot of new members and new recruits, quality individuals all. We have three great events coming in the next 2 months at TMD, Liendo and Dickens;

TAKE NOTICE, LIENDO DATE WAS WRONG!

Texian Market Days: October 19 & 20, George Ranch Historical Park in Richmond Texas

Well, this is our event and it should be a great one. As you know, we are Federals for this event. Please show up Friday night if at all possible. If you can't get there Friday night, you need to be there at reville on Saturday (6:30ish).

Directions:

Get to Houston if you don't live there. Then, take 59 South out of town. The exit you are looking for is past the tollway and past Highway 6. A few miles past Highway 6 you will cross the Brazos river. The first exit off of 59 after the river is "Crab River Road". Take that exit and turn left on this road. A couple of miles down you will come to a large intersection that looks like a "T" but it is not. Kep going straight over the elevated railroad tracks. Go a couple of more miles and the entrance to the park is on the right.

Liendo Plantation: November 23 & 24, Liendo Plantation in Hempstead Texas

This year should be bigger and better than ever. Great location and all around excellent event. The date we got at the beginning of the year was wrong, so change those calendars!

Directions:

The Liendo Plantation, near Hempstead, is 55 miles west of Houston, just north of Highway 290 Loop, exit 1488 on Wyatt Chapel Road.

Dicken's on The Strand: December 7 & 8, The Strand in Galveston Texas

More information on this event and directions will be in the next newsletter.

There is a lot to say, but I will end this post now, as I have another article in this newsletter about taking our recruiting efforts to the next level. I look forward to seeing all of you in the field in large numbers to close out the year.

Your Obedient Servant,

Rob Williamson

Lieutenant, Texas Rifles

Drill Bits

Drill, Drill, Drill! It was a way of life for a soldier during the War Between the States, and it is something that we must do to accurately represent these men. They drilled practically every day, we drill only a few times a year. Since we don't drill enough to

make these movements second nature, we have to concentrate on what we are doing. There are many things to think about when it comes to drill but I want to point out the most basic thing that affects just about all that you will do in formation.

In each rank, COUNT TWO

This simple order tells you your job more than any other. Each count of, ONE-TWO forms a file. In a way, it breaks the company into many four man comrades of arms. These comrades work together to do many simple things. When going from a Line to a Column, the men that you counted to two with are always in the same file. "Twos step up and to the right on a Right FACE and on a Left FACE, the ones step up and to the left. Facing either direction puts you into a file with the same four men. When you notice this, it will make it easier for you to march by the flanks. The only difference between a facing and a flank is that you are moving during a flank. If you are marching in a Line of Battle and you get the order, "By the Right Flank, MARCH" Twos still double up with the same four men. The same goes for marching from a line to the Left Flank. If we are marching in a column and the order is "By the Left Flank, MARCH" you simply go back to your comrades of arms, facing and moving to the Front. Just remember: Facings are stationary, Flanks are moving.

When you stack arms, you should notice that the same men who you counted to two with work together. The front rank, number two man is the anchor and the rest of the men work around him. These same four men that you face left and right with, work together in skirmish formations. Front rank, number two once again anchors the four men. (see articles page for Rob Williamson's article on Skirmish.)

This is all fairly simple. The challenge comes when we are in battle and start taking casualties. Listen to your Sergeants, who should be re-numbering you as they dress the line. Do your best to remember your new number. It is every man's job to know his spot, and knowing where you belong in formation is what keeps the company looking smart.

I seem to have a little space left, so I will leave you with a compliment and a reminder. The Texas Rifles have a reputation of being among the best. On Sunday at Sharpsburg, when what was left of our company had to fall in with another group, even our newest members noticed the difference in how well we drilled. It is through YOUR determination to be the best, YOUR motivation, intelligence and attention to orders that we continue to be among the best re-enactors in the state of TEXAS. I compliment you all on your performance this past year, and challenge you to do even better in the upcoming events. Privates, learn your manual of arms and School of the Soldier. NCOs, hit the books. You are ALL just a few shots away from leading the company in a fight. Texas Rifles, one and all, continue to HOLD THE LINE!

FJMarek

Quartermaster Report

THE TEXAS RIFLES COMPANY QUARTERMASTER (QM)

Being basically of unsound mind, I pushed at Winedale for the creation of a TR QM. Please do not confuse the TR QM with the Brigade QM. The Brigade QM is a nice man with a complacent expression on his face, who looks pretty in his untarnished officer's uniform and essentially works for Mercury Supply, selling unauthentic junk to unsuspecting reenactors. For the remainder of this article, when I use the term "QM", I am referring to the TR QM. The TR QM works for the TR membership only! This luckless person would be responsible for the various items entrusted to the company for loan to new members. He, she, or it (the QM) is the person who would track the various loaner items, maintain them and obtain replacements as needed. Private Strzelecki has turned-over to me the loaner gear in his possession. It is a very poor lot. Some of these items, to be polite, have exceeded their useful life.

I propose that the TR QM be capable of putting four (4) new recruits into the field completely equipped. This would allow us to grow as we all want this organization to grow. This will, of course, require a major increase in the uniforms and equipment available from the QM. This would be an overwhelming expense totaling thousands of dollars, if all the required QM uniforms and equipment were purchased on the retail market. I propose that we use alternative methods of equipping the QM. To that end I propose the following QM sponsored D.R.A.B.B. program:

- Donation- Consider donating unwanted items of uniform and equipment to the QM.
- Replacement- As stated in an earlier email, many of our members own unauthentic canvas goods; particularly the heavy sutler row type shelter halves. Turn these in the QM for credit and I will use the canvas to make knapsacks, haversacks, poke bags and gun cases. These items could then be re-sold with the proceeds going to the TR.
- Available- Some big ticket items the QM may never own, such as muskets or RDII jackets. However, we will still need access to such things. Enroll your surplus uniforms, equipment and weapon(s) on the "Available List". This will give the QM an idea, for example, of who has weapons for loan to recruits at events, where they are located, type, and condition.
- Buy-Back- The QM gear does not have to be cutting edge authentic, or new. I proposed that the members "sell" useable items of uniform and equipment to the QM for credit or money. The members can then use his proceeds to upgrade his own kit. The QM can use the acquisition for the new members. Each of these exchanges would have to be negotiated on an individual basis for items the QM needs.

We can all participate in this program and help-out the unit. We have two opportunities here, to help ourselves by using this opportunity to upgrade our kits, and to help the new

guys get into the field. I will report to the TR membership on an semi-occasional basis of the progress and needs of the QM.

John M. Keahey

Recruiting Report October, 2002

Well boys you have made my job much easier because of all the recruiting you have done. The following men have been recruited into the Texas Rifles this year. Some have already been voted into membership. Check it out!

Paul Lemmer – attended 2 drill sessions

Ed Venteroso- met Matt Rechten at the airport after Sharpsburg and is coming to TMD

Bo Rameriz – met us through the web site and came to Sharpsburg , bought a new hat!

Rodney Bode- part of the Dayton Battalion, now a super member.

Von Capps- Von came to us from the Rebel Wolf. He has been voted into membership after coming to several events including Sharpsburg (where I stomped on his ankle , sorry!)

Mark McNair – Mark joined us at Winedale and then the battalion camp of instruction.

Don Tucker- Don met us at a gun show and has now been voted into membership after super attendance!

Doug Davis – Doug met us at the Jesse Jones Park event. He has now joined the ranks as an official member. He made the walk through the corn with us at Sharpsburg.

Dennis Scott- Dennis comes to us through Mike Covington, and has now joined the Katy Battalion. Dennis has been to his two max effort events and is ready for a membership vote.

I sure hope I didn't forget anyone. But if I did, give me ^&\$& and I will fix the problem in the next issue!

As you can see, the men of the company have taken recruiting very seriously this year. We have 9 new recruits. Plus I just got another email from a fellow in Dayton who is interested! We can become the strongest company in the battalion if we continue our efforts. I want to thank all of you for spreading the word. Keep it up. Let's take a 50 man company to Gettysburg next summer.

Chris Strzelecki

Texas Rifles Recruiting Guy

Growing the Texas Rifles

What follows is a little longer than my normal posts to this publication, but it addresses what I think is the biggest problem we face. I hope that you find the subject matter as important to our future as I do.

Playing the Numbers game

It has been an exciting year that began with a great Winedale. I hope everyone left there with the same enthusiasm and excitement that I did. After talking to you guys and going to the sessions, I still have so many things I want to do to improve my impression that I had to create a list and prioritize them! After meeting with John, Mike, Phil and Frank, I want to get a new shelter-half and decorate it as a captured Federal half and I have been thinking about my Federal impression and how I have neglected it (we have TMD coming up as Federals). I am also thinking about all the little things I can do to my existing gear and how many good resources there are out there to help me along. So I have set the events we have this year and next as the benchmarks for completing the things I have on my list. Each event has one or two things I want to have completed before I get there. I am pumped!

So, we have folks that take the time to research and get us great ideas on how we can improve our impressions, we now need to talk about how to grow the Texas Rifles into not only the best Company in the 1st. Texas Infantry, but the largest as well. We have added some great new members and recruits as of late, and several folks have expressed serious interest at some of the events and Gun Shows we have attended. My hope is that we can maintain this over the long run and the focus of this article is to get everyone thinking about how this can be accomplished.

Turnouts for the Texas Rifles and the hobby in general, tend to rise and fall. Peaking for big events, then falling off, then rising again a year or two later, etc. This is my eighth year with the Texas Rifles. I remember serving with over 35 men consistently my first year or two, peaking at my first major event, Pea Ridge, where we had 43 men in the field. I remember this because on the last day of the event Bruce Winders, our Captain, made it a point to tell us that as far as he knew, that was a record. Attendance dropped off a bit after that and between 96' and 97' we were putting between 18 and 25 men in the field. We focused on recruiting and by Gettysburg in 98' we had 32 men back in the ranks. After Gettysburg and Red River, attendance started dropping off again and you have to expect that. I even found myself thinking after Red River, what else is there to do? Between 99' and 01' our attendance had dropped off and at our lowest point, we had a couple of events in a row where we had less than 10 guys at max effort events despite

the fact that we had over 40 active members. During this time period, we all knew it was a problem and we focused on recruiting again. For the last year or so we have seen a lot of new guys coming into the ranks and I have enjoyed meeting and getting to know each one of you.

So, over time we see a cycle. Our numbers grow, then go flat, then wane, then grow again, etc. What I am thinking is, maybe it does not have to be this way. If we decide a 25 or 30 man company is what we are happy with, then we will see this trend in the future. We will recruit until we get about 25 - 30 guys serving consistently, then we will relax. Some of our members will become inactive and our numbers will drop over time and we have to drive hard at recruiting again to build our numbers back up. What I propose is this:

First, I think we need to set our expectations much higher. We all know that when battalions were formed, they were made up, ideally, of 10 one-hundred man infantry Companies. If you go to the article index on the main page of the website, you will see an article titled "Numbers and Organizations" by John Keahey. This article describes how Companies were formed, if they re-filled their ranks and about what their average "operating" size was. Since our main impression is a mid-war Confederate one, and the Confederacy did have a replacement system, I think we should strive for a company of 60 - 70 men, not 25 - 30. Though it sounds like a lofty goal, believe me, it is attainable. If we are going for authenticity, I think the number of men in our company should be as important to us as our hand sewn RDII's.

So, how can we get that large? I will talk about recruiting in a second, but working within our own membership is something that we can do right now, today. I feel that I neglected one of my duties when I was 1st. Sergeant and that is keeping in touch with all of you. I have never once been to an event where I was not glad I went after it was over. I really enjoy the time we get to spend together. Sitting around the campfire at night over the years, I have laughed, reminisced and had some of the best conversations of my life. Despite these good times, it is easy for guys to "fall out" so to speak. You miss a couple of events and then it is easier to miss the next one and then there are new guys in the unit that you don't know as well and you end up not being active. Getting to the events takes a toll on our personal lives and nobody should ever be made to feel ashamed or neglected if they have to prioritize themselves out for a while. The problem I am talking about, though, is getting those guys back in when it becomes possible for them to do so. I have several people I consider good friends that have not been out much lately. They all have good reasons. What we all need to do, though, is keep in touch with these guys and make sure they know how much we want them back in the field.

Enough said on working within our current members, on to recruiting. We recruit in two ways. Amongst the general population through recruiting events and the website and also from amongst our own personal contacts (friends, co-workers, people we meet one-on-one, etc.) Over the years, I was able to bring several "personal" recruits to events. Only 3 of them panned out, and two were only active for about a year. I wish these two had stayed in the hobby longer, but that is the way it goes. The third, though, turned out to be

a member who has not only stayed in the unit, but has done a lot for the Texas Rifles as an organization. I met Phil Sozanski in September, 1996. We were both friends with Joe Glatthar, a history professor at the University of Houston and we got to talking. He was not happy with the lack of authenticity he saw in his current unit (imagine that) and was looking for a new unit. I invited him to come out to Texian Market days and meet the guys and see what we were all about. He found me at the event, was impressed with the Texas Rifles and the rest is history.

Since I moved to Austin almost three years ago, I felt like I just didn't know anybody that I could talk to about the hobby. I finally sat down about 3 months ago to brainstorm. Before I knew it, I had 6 names on a piece of paper. Two friends, a brother-in-law, a co-worker and two golfing buddies that are married to women I work with. I invited all 6 to the last few events, but none of them could make it. Though I was frustrated, 3 of them said they would like to do it and to keep them informed. So, we will see. My problem was, I couldn't think of anyone 2 years ago so I stopped thinking about it and in the mean time, I was meeting people and had friends move back to the area, etc.

As far as recruiting from the general population, I think we need to schedule recruiting events in advance and commit to staffing them and think of new ways we can recruit and people we can approach. If we are to grow and maintain our unit strength, we need a focused, constant and organized plan for recruiting, which brings me to my second point:

To address this issue, your executive board decided after Winedale to create a new, annually appointed position of "Recruiting Coordinator". This person will serve several needs. He will work with the quartermaster in insuring new recruits are outfitted with the necessary gear. He will make sure each new recruit has a qualified sponsor and help that sponsor organize transportation to and from events. He will help the sponsors introduce our new recruits and keep track of their attendance towards membership. He will manage and maintain our recruiting flyers, keeping them up to date, printing more when necessary and get them distributed to the regional coordinators. Lastly, and most importantly, he researches and develops new ideas for recruiting and works with the regional coordinators on implementing these ideas.

As you know, Chris Strzelecki has agreed to be our first Recruiting Coordinator and everyone knows he is the perfect candidate for this position and he has done a great job this year. While on the subject, I need to mention John Keahey as well. Over the last year, John Keahey has stepped up as the first quartermaster we have had for almost 5 years, and his contributions have been enormous. I hope all of you will do everything you can to continue to help them with their duties.

I think we need to change our mindset when it comes to recruiting. We do not receive recruits from the Brigade, so we must control our own destiny. I think it would be extremely rewarding for all of us to know that when we form the 1st Texas and march ourselves onto the color line, that we have not only the best drilled and most authentic company, but the largest as well.

I hope that all of you can find the time to give this some thought and I apologize again for the length of this article. I promise the next one will be shorter.

Your Obedient Servant,

Rob Williamson

Twenty-six Hours to Houston!

Well fellas that van ride back home was long and tiring. We talked about a million things, and this one item is worth sharing with the company. How do we keep our separate identity as a top notch reenacting organization without being digested with the 1st Texas? Our schedule is almost totally a battalion schedule. We are in essence just another one of King's companies (with an attitude). One avenue to this goal might be to work in the area of history preservation. The conversation started about attending the Port Gibson preservation march in May, when the suggestion was made that maybe we could do some of our own preservation right here in Texas!

Being starved for conversation the topic took off like a rocket! We brainstormed for about a hundred miles and came up with a list of ways we could work toward preservation. We also decided the best way to approach all of this was to put out the list and see what the fellas would like to work towards. I will try to basically fill in the "how to items" as I type this out. I think this would make excellent material for the Yahoo discussion thread. I just wish I could figure it out. (Polish factor you know)

1. Contact some people who are currently in the "history business" and ask them for some suggestions. The short list included : Miss Vicki (UT Tyler), Danny Sessums (Museum of Southern History), Bruce Winders (Director of the Alamo), Local County Historical Associations and Societies, The George Ranch Historical Park, Jesse Jones Park – Rosehill Homestead. Then throughout the year we could try to raise funds to help out a project or organization.
2. Publish historical sources on our website our the internet.
3. Create Living History Displays that can travel to local libraries around our cities.
4. Create a living history event centered around the Camp Groce Prison in Hempstead, Tx.
5. Speak to the local Civil War Roundtables, ask for donations to preserve our pet project.
6. Work with the Houston Freedman's Museum to bring attention to that period.
7. Set up displays on the Strand in Galveston as the TEXAS RIFLES ! Grin

8. Help the Sam Houston Research Center
9. Work to help preserve historic buildings through donations of time or labor.
10. Help restore the new plantation home at the George Ranch.
11. Work with the Houston Heritage Society
12. Work with the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the Daughters of Confederate Veterans.
13. Set up booths at local festivals. These would serve two purposes: 1. Recruit 2. Sell a replica minie ball for \$1 to the families and use the money toward preservation!
14. Collect the items necessary for a “ soldier’s trunk”. Then donate these to a local school district. We would raise the money by appealing to the public at our local events. For example , at the George Ranch set up a tent fly with a banner that describes what we are doing. If it were a local district many of the tourists might just be from that district and they might donate some change. We could insure the stuff we put in was good, because we have several of the finest craftsmen right here in our own company. The school would have to provide a box or trunk for these items.

Whatever we choose to do (if we choose) could be great photo opportunities. The local papers might like to run stories about our preservation efforts. We would begin to earn another set of laurels for the Texas Rifles. Besides, we would be helping to preserve history in our community, and what’s wrong with that?

Signed ,

The Houston Region Van Pool

Ask John

FEDERAL SHELTER TENTS; THE NEW INFORMATION

Mr. Frederick Gaede, The Company of Military Historians Fellow, has recently published a book on Federal shelter halves. He has personally examined every existing original Civil War era shelter half; a total of 33. His conclusions destroy just about everything we thought we knew about this item of issue.

What we thought we knew:

- There were two patterns of shelter tent; the P1862 and the P1864.
- The early war issue was smaller than the late war issue.

- The early war issue used only bone buttons, while the late war issue only used tin-backed-with-cardboard buttons.
- The early war issue shelter tents were made of “Blue Line” cotton duck exclusively.
- The QM Department had strict tent contract terms that insured standardization of shelter tents throughout the US Army.
- Each shelter half was commonly issued with two-part tent poles and tent pegs.
- Triangular tent end pieces were issued.

Gaede’s findings indicate that there existed three basic constructions of shelter tents:

- **TYPE I-** direct purchases from the French government and straight copies of the French. Less than 20,000 issued between 9/61 and 3/62. Made of linen.
- **Day’s Poncho/Tent-** Day had a contract for 15,000 combination poncho/shelter tents. Most were painted, some were rubber. About 2,000 were issued early in 1862.
- **TYPE IIa-** 3 piece vertical panels, made of light cotton duck or drilling, bone buttons, dimensions at inspection 66.5”x63”. Issued from 3/62 to 5/64 from eastern depots.
- **TYPE IIb-** 3 piece horizontal panels, made of light cotton duck or drilling, bone buttons, dimensions at inspection 66.5”x63”. Issued from late 1863 to early 1864 from Cincinnati Depot.
- **TYPE IIIa-** 2 piece vertical panels, made of heavier cotton duck; bone, zinc and tinned metal buttons. Dimensions at inspection 66”x63”. Issued from 10/63 to 9/64.
- **TYPE IIIb-** 2 piece vertical panels with three rope loops, made of heavier cotton duck; bone, horn, zinc and tinned metal buttons. Dimensions at inspection 66”x65”. Issued 7/64 to 7/65.

Conclusions: We should be using TYPE IIa shelter tents for our eastern theater impression. They are not smaller than late war issue as we previously thought. Triangular end pieces were never issued. Poles for the tents were issued, but were not common. Tent pegs were never issued. Tents were closed on one end with a third half. Tents were made of un-shrunk fabric, so they shrank like crazy! Blue Line Duck was commonly used to make late war tents. QM standards were not published until 3/64. Tents were commonly marked with names, units, fanciful businesses and artwork. As we are using “captured” tents, this gives us a lot of scope for “under new management” type additions to existing federal markings. Tent guy ropes and loops could be manila or hemp.

John M. Keahey

Newsletter Deadlines

The next newsletter will be going out on Friday, November 29th. That means the deadline for article submissions is: **TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26TH**. This newsletter will cover the Dickens event in December and Winedale, our annual company muster, in January.

Please send me any articles or information you would like to see posted here. Regional Coordinators and the Recruiting and Quartermaster Coordinators should provide a submission as well.

Thanks,

Rob

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

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Shell jackets, uniforms, leather gear

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