

The Tyrants' Foe

The Newsletter Of The Texas Rifles

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Captain's Dispatch

Well, I hope the hot summer months are finding all of you well. Despite our lack of activity in the field since Port Gibson, we have several new recruits who will be receiving this newsletter so I would like to welcome all of them to their first issue of The Tyrants Foe! We can't wait to meet you guys out on the field and welcome you properly.

I guess the first matter of discussion should be the postponement of the Gettysburg event to August 8th, 9th and 10th. I know this was a real downer for most of you who were planning on attending. I guess these things happen. As you all know, I was not going to be able to make that event as we await the arrival of a new baby any day now. I would like to thank John for doing a great job organizing the event and I wish it had gone off as planned. As it stands now, we did not have a lot of folks going to this event (around 16) and with the date change, we have even fewer. All of you who are on the fence need to think real hard about it, then be ready to give a definitive answer as to whether you wish to attend to your regional coordinators by July 1st. Regional coordinators, please enact your phone webs, or make personal phone calls to all members by this date and let John or I know what the numbers are.

Also, please make note of the date change for Texian Market Days. It is now October 24th, 25th and 26th. This should be a really exciting TMD! It will be our first year at the new Civil War era plantation house, which is far removed from the highway, unlike the Davis house. We need to all plan on this event. We are the hosts and we always have a great time out there. We also have to discuss some important business there and then hold a vote on whether or not we want to re-affiliate with the Texas Brigade for 2004. I hope all of the members have had a chance to look at the pre-meeting material. If not, please contact your regional coordinator or myself and I will make sure you get a couple in the mail. We will most likely not have a real strong Brigade turnout, as Chickamauga is the following weekend, but the 13th U.S. is coming and have invited one of their sister companies from the Dallas/Fort Worth area, so plan on being there and don't let the yankees outnumber us!

So, that brings us to Chickamauga. I hate that the schedule is so tight, but it is what it is. I sent out an e-mail to the group asking for everyone to let me know if they planned on doing TMD and Chickamauga. I only received 3 responses, so I have no information on attendance plans for that. If you are unsure, let me urge you to not miss TMD for the sake of Chickamauga. If you can only do one, lets hit TMD full strength. It is in our backyard,

and does not hold the burden of travel and time off. We have lots of new recruits who will be much more able to get to TMD and we need to get out and show them the ropes. I would love to see us put a 25 man company in the field in Georgia, but not to the detriment of TMD. So, please look over your schedules and do some planning.

If we are not going to field a company strength unit for Chick, maybe we should just consider hitting Liendo full later in the month. I don't think the Brigade is planning on attending, but I can find us a good home for that event as either Federal, or Confederate and we could get a great turnout there as well. It will be a great chance for us to get our new recruits some trigger time and it also may be our last chance to fall in on the field together as a Company until next year. As for next year, despite the fact that it is 1864 for reenactments, I am really excited about the events we can do next year. We obviously have to make a decision on the Brigade issue, but we have lots of opportunities either way. So lets rest up, spend time with the families and get ready for a great fall campaign!

To Tyrants Never Yield!

Rob Williamson
Captain, Texas Rifles

Lieutenant's Inkwell

How You Wear Your Mud

During World War II there was an excellent cartoonist who drew for the U.S. Army's official newspaper, "The Stars and Stripes." His name was Bill Mauldin. Mauldin drew cartoons about the experiences of the average foot soldier of WWII. He got his inspirations for cartoons by spending time on the front lines with the men fighting the war. He was actually wounded in combat drawing newspaper cartoons! As a result of his dedication, he became the unofficial voice of the soldier in Europe. After the war his best cartoons and commentary were published in a book titled, "Up Front". Mauldin wrote in his book that you could tell a real combat soldier by how he wore his mud. The U.S. Army in Europe went through several fashion trends during the war. At first, soldiers went for glamour. Celebrities in uniform and the Air Corps were the trend setters. Clean uniforms, creased trousers, smartly knotted neckties and sun glasses became the "in" look. This lasted until the publications of the era started to print more stories about the average fighting man in the foxhole. This led to a change in army fashion. The "in" look now became to look rough and scuffed. Rear area troops who never fired a shot would tear and dirty their uniforms so that they looked like combat soldiers. Through all of these fashion trends the real combat soldier never changed. You could tell, in Mauldin's words, the real fighting man by how he wore his mud.

The same thing could be said about the world of reenacting. You can buy the most authentic clothing and equipment on the market (and there are people out there who wear

\$500 Federal sack coats) you can smear dirt all over it; never clean your weapon, scratch-up your accoutrements, and study drill manuals until you have them memorized. You can do all of these things and still be spotted instantly by a veteran as a person who has not done much. The clues are there in the person's clothing and equipment. Is the fabric of his clothing faded by the sun? Does his cap or hat droop due to repeated rain? Is his haversack white as snow, or stained with bacon grease? Do the toes of his brogans curl up? Is his tin ware blackened and slightly rusty? Is his kit reduced to the marching minimum? Does his musket look used, but well maintained? Are his accoutrements scarred? Does his kit scream, "Look at me," or blend with his unit?

All these things are clues to the person's experience level. They are also things which you can't buy from a sutler. They tell everyone what you have done in reenacting and the only way to obtain these things is to be there and do it. So, if you haven't been there and done it much lately, there are still plenty of opportunities available. Get you gear together and join your friends in the field. Learn, through experience, how to wear your mud. John M. Keahey, 5/10/03

John Keahey
Lieutenant, Texas Rifles

BECAUSE THE SERGEANT SAYS SO!

Renaissance Redux

One and a half years ago, Phil Sozansky wrote his manifesto that would become the cornerstone of the Texas Rifles' Renaissance. In short, this was a call to clean up our own house and worry less about Battalion problems. Eighteen months later and man, does this house stand tall.

We started at Winedale with the initiation of classes for our members. Often entertaining, and always informative, these classes have become a big part of our annual business meeting, and a great help to recruits and veterans alike.

Chris Strzelecki became our company recruiter after his term as Captain. His professionalism on the field made a smooth transition to his abilities as a recruiter. We now have over 30 men on our list of prospective members. Not only that, but our numbers in the field has doubled thanks to the men who have joined us since a year and a half ago. These are quality folks who have a passion to be the best in the hobby and they have all very quickly become a part of our family.

One of the best things to come to the Rifles in the past year and a half is our attendance in the field. The year before the renaissance there were times when we could only get eight men out to the field. Now, we are consistently falling in with at least twenty men. I would much rather have twice that number, but the good news is that for the past eighteen

months, we have been falling in as our OWN company. The only exception was the last day of Sharpsburg. All the Rifles who stayed till the end noticed the difference between us and the other companies on the field. That is why attendance is important. We stand the strongest when we stand together.

Authenticity within our company has taken strong steps forward. Our uniform and equipment guidelines are among the best ever written for a re-enactment group. New recruits accept them without fail and our veterans have made every attempt to make the change from our old impression to our new one. This was very noticeable at Sharpsburg, Jesse Jones Park and Beaumont Ranch. Not only has our Confederate impression improved, but our Federal impression has improved as well. Any of the Rifles who attended the Port Gibson Preservation March can tell you that we did NOT just galvanize for the event, we went as a top notch US infantry company. Our impression there was every bit as good as the more well known living history groups there.

Authenticity, Recruitment and Attendance. In the past year we have come a long way. We have definitely cleaned up our own house. But this is not a dirt floor log cabin that we are in. We are living in the Big House. It takes constant upkeep to keep this house presentable, but I think that we are up to the job. Every one of us has had a hand in the improvements to our company but we must keep pressing forward. Keep recruiting. Talk up the hobby to everyone who seems interested. We should strive for that fifty man company in the field. This will also take the good attendance of all of our members. It should be made clear to each and every one of our members, we need you in the field. Our physical impressions should always be a work in progress too. Don't be afraid to add to, or improve your kits. Keep guiding our new recruits toward our Uniform and Equipment Guidelines. There are going to be some interesting events to go to in the next few years and we all have a responsibility to the Texas Rifles to stay on top of our game. It takes work to be the best, but we are up to the challenge. I'll leave you a few words from the late Bruce Catton:

“We are people to whom the past is forever speaking. We listen to it because we can not 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 that they sang and, finally, the deaths they died- make up a part of our own experience. We cannot cut ourselves from it. It is as real to us as something that happened last week. It is a basic part of our heritage as Americans.”

FJMarek
1st Sgt, Texas Rifles

Regional Reports

Houston Regional Report

Houston Report – May 6, 2003

The event began as most military events; arising at dawn on Friday morning and then hanging around waiting for things to get started. We knew this was going to be an interesting event, when just before marching off that morning, the commander told us that our supply wagons had broken down and we would now have to carry our rations, consisting of full sides of bacon and boxes of hard tack. Following some improvising, we marched off with sections of bacon on every other man's bayonet and boxes of hard tack carried between two rifles.

After six or seven miles of marching over dirt roads, we arrived at the Windsor Plantation ruins consisting of majestic Corinthian columns; all that remained of a four story home containing 23 rooms. We spent the next hour cooking all our bacon representing our rations for Friday and Saturday. What a way to loose weight; marching and eating pieces of fat; I mean bacon.

After several more hours of walking in the heat and humidity, many soldiers began to fall by the wayside; so many that marching plans were changed to shuttle the group for 4 miles over asphalted roads in order to allow the remaining force to complete the last portion of our march (3 miles) on the historic road to Fort Gibson. This is where things really got interesting. The road was sunken, with the walls extending upwards of forty feet in some areas. The road could accommodate six men abreast, but according to our commander, historically this road was only as wide as four men. We continued to march down the road as the sun fell, finding ourselves ultimately marching in utter blackness at 9:00 at night. Then at the double quick as our artillery pressed on our rear and indications of enemy rebels sounded to our front, Company G engaged the enemy, after replacing the advanced federal guard and then moving forward, clearing barricades erected by the rebels.

Unfortunately, I was sent ahead to reconnoiter for additional barricades in the pitch dark, and was killed as I approached a barricade set up as an ambush point. However, not before I was able to shout out a warning. Then, in the best tradition of the Texas Rifles, our two platoons moved forward and poured fire down on the enemy, sending them fleeing.

As we marched away and back down the road to our camp (the Shaver House – former plantation home and former federal hospital during the Port Gibson campaign), we all began to come back to reality and began remembering our blistered feet, tired bodies and awesome experience we had just participated in, beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 10:00 pm. What a day; we were all beat.

Once reaching camp, most of us crashed with no desire for any food, but instead for rest and mole skin replacement. The night sky was clear and we enjoyed the shooting stars until 4 am when the twinkling stars turned into lightening flashes. We all dashed for the

Shaver House that we were camped next to and by 5:00, it was pouring rain. What a sight to see, 100 men crammed into every corner of the house and porch area, bodies and gear everywhere, straddling the roof leaks. We awoke the next morning to find the cowardly rebels had abandoned their positions in the night due to a little rain! At that point, the impending skirmish planned for later in the morning was cancelled. We were all very disappointed and were so looking forward to another day of marching! That morning we spent time taking pictures of the company and Lt. Keahey passed out Mississippi infantry buttons to the Company G participants. Now we have more than just sore bones, empty stomachs and blistered feet to remember the event by! We concluded the day with a tour of Vicksburg.

For those of you who missed this event.....sorry. These are the type of events that bring out the best of the Rifles and bring us closer to the real life of the civil war soldier. For those of you that participated; congratulations on continuing the great tradition of the Rifles.....to the Tyrants (and weather, long marches, crappy food and blisters) Never Yield!

See you at Gettysburg or better yet, the next cartridge roll party, coming to a home near you in a few weeks.

THE WOLF; aka Corporeal Gates.

ASK JOHN

SIZE MATTERS

One of the most challenging aspects confronting all bureaucracies is their comical attempts to reduce human beings to as few types, levels, categories, sizes, colors, shapes etc., etc., etc. as possible. Armies are one of the finest examples of this tendency. Of course, armies have the major excuse of their desire for uniformity. All soldiers are encouraged to look exactly the same. It would be most convenient if only identical people were recruited, but since this stifles recruitment, the army is forced to fit people, in all their variety, into its programs. No where is this problem better revealed than in the attempts of the 19th century armies to uniform its members.

The pre-Civil War United States Army was cheap. The U.S. Army spent less on its soldiers, there were only 12,000 of them, than the State of New York spent on its militia. Clothing for all enlisted regular soldiers was entirely hand sewn in one place, the Schuylkill Arsenal in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The newly invented sewing machine went largely unused by the Army. Officers, as in the past and up to today, provided their own clothing. People were smaller back then. The average height of people in the United States has been increasing over time, primarily due to better nutrition. We have been gaining in average height about one-half inch every fifty years. This means that the Civil War era soldier was about one and one-half inches shorter than men today. It goes

without saying that he was also thinner. Pre-war U.S. Army uniforms were made in four sizes numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4. Since many soldiers were illiterate, sizes were often marked onto uniforms by dots, the number of dots corresponding to the uniform size. On coats, these marks are generally found on the upper lining of the left sleeve. For Frock Coats and Fatigue Blouses (sack coats) size 1 was a 36 inch chest, size 2 was 38 inches, size 3 was 40 inches and big ol' size 4 was 42 inches. If you were bigger, or smaller, than these sizes that was your fault, not the Army's. YOU paid to have the uniform altered, or YOU purchased a uniform from a private source.

Not only did the Army expect its men to come in four sizes, it also expected them to come in certain proportion of these sizes per hundred men. Uniform trousers, sack coats, frock coats etc. were issued in BALES of one hundred items. Forget that scene in the movie "Glory" when each man received a sack coat individually wrapped in brown paper. The bale contained a set number of each of the four garment sizes, based upon the Army's experience in the relative sizes of men. If your company happened to contain more taller or shorter men than the Army's proportion of sizes, tough luck. If you are beginning to suspect that many Civil War soldiers wore garments that did not fit, you are on the road to enlightenment.

Each bale of garments was compressed to eliminate air and reduce the bale to its smallest possible size for shipping purposes. I once got a call from Gay Frazer because one of her customers complained that the sack coats I made had wrinkles. I told her about the bales and ignored the complaint.

Of course the smaller size garments took less fabric to make and were therefore cheaper, a fact not lost on the government contractors who were paid a set price per one hundred garments. Uniforms have been found marked "REMAS ", meaning that inspectors found them to be small for their labeled size. The inspectors then had to "RE-MeASure" and re-label each item. So, a size 4 sack coat might carry an additional marking in the sleeve such as "REMAS 3", meaning that the size 4 coat was actually a size 3. Isn't human nature wonderful? This, of course, also meant that the proportions of sizes in that bale were also skewed towards the smaller sizes.

I have read nothing on Confederate clothing sizes, but since their clothing "depots" were modeled on the Schuylkill Arsenal system, I suspect that they used the same sizes. So, in the matter of uniform coats/jackets, if you are bigger than a 42, or smaller than a 36, (as many of our members are) then during the Civil War you had to incur additional expense simply to keep yourself clothed. Size matters!

John M. Keahey, 1/31/03

Recruiting Report June, 2003

Well fellas we have a few new folks that need to be introduced. Many of our members have been busy seeking out new recruits over the past few months. For about a year , Al and Travis Cogbill have been interested in re-enacting the Civil War. Well they jumped in with both feet during our May Port Gibson event. They found us in the dark, and were bedded down for the night with a few brief instructions. During the next day's march the Cogbill's did just fine. Our night fight was their first action as reenactors, and one I think they won't forget!

In addition another fella named Roy Denes has fallen in with the Rifles during a pre-Port Gibson march in Dayton. Frank, Rodney, Daniel, Don Tucker, and I got to enjoy his company for the entire six mile march. Glad to have you Roy.

All this year one of my students has shown an interest in the Civil War. Well after school got out we managed to get together and I am pleased to announce that Grant and Preston Welty will be joining us in the ranks. With no events to do, Grant and Preston have had to make due with cartridge parties. They have been to both of the recent Houston gatherings.

Finally I have met a recruit named Kip Othold. Kip lives in Spring, Texas and is looking for a group to fall in with for reenacting. He had planned to visit Gettysburg this summer, but now that the event has been called off, he had to make a new plan. I think you will be seeing him in the field soon.

So if you can make it to our summer outpost in Dayton, you just might meet a few new fellas that are itching to become a Texas Rifle!

Chris Strzelecki

Recruiting Coordinator

APPROVED AMMENDMENTS

TEXAS RIFLES UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT REGULATIONS; EASTERN THEATER CONFEDERATE INFANTRY

APPROVED AMMENDMENTS

1) Section II, Tents

Changed to;

Preference #1 Gaede Type IIa pattern Shelter Tent Half
Preference #2 Gaede Type IIIb pattern Shelter Tent Half
Preference #3 Tent Fly

2) Section III, Uniform

Change to;

Required - Richmond Depot Type II (RDII) Jacket made of wool/cotton jeans with nine button front, two epaulets and two belt loops. Jacket fabric to be Texas Rifles approved fabric, wool side out. Buttons to be US sack coat size eagle buttons, or Confederate brass 'T' buttons, small buttons on epaulets, functional epaulets are optional

Updated 2/21/03

John Keahey
Lieutenant, Texas Rifles

Book Reviews

R.E. Lee on Leadership

If you are not interested in: (1) reading light civil war era history and (2) specific lessons learned as applied to leadership, then dump this note and don't waste any more of your time. If you are interested, I would strongly recommend the book: "Robert E. Lee on Leadership" by H.W. Crocker III in 1999. It is about 220 pages, very easy and enjoyable reading and at the end of each chapter it spells out "Lee's Lessons" that you may find very useful in our daily challenges. It is available at Bookstop for approx \$14-16 and I am sure from Amazon.com for less. If you are interested in the leadership aspect but, don't want to read the book now, etc. I have sent the Captain a file with all the Lessons per chapter. Enjoy! NOTE: Apologies to some in that the book and the lessons are masculine in tone, gender and pronoun.

William Bates

When in the Course of Human Events

Guys,

I recently read a book titled "When in the Course of Human Events," subtitled "Arguing the Case for Southern Secession" by Charles Adams. It amplifies the article in the Baltimore Sun that Phil was talking about. Although at times the author goes a little overboard, I think it gives some balance to the view that the war was strictly about slavery. In fact, he goes so far as to say that Lincoln, Sherman and Grant should have been tried for war crimes given the rules of war of the day. Pretty fun stuff for a boy from the deep South! At any rate, Adams cites various acts that Lincoln took, such as having the elected Maryland legislature arrested before the anticipated vote for secession could take

place, arrests of newspaper editors who opposed the Northern position, and the suspension of habeas corpus as being tyrannical acts which forced the South's hand. Even if you don't agree, it'll make for a lively conversation around the campfire and I highly recommend it.

Doug Davis

The Lost Regiment Series. Book #1 in the series is, "Rally Cry," by William R. Forstchen, Penguin, 1990.

This series of books were written by a reenactor with a PHD in military history, but they are interesting far beyond that circumstance. Some of you have heard me recommend them before. They make excellent light reading and are very entertaining.

The basic plot is that a Federal Civil War regiment, the 35th Maine Infantry, is loaded on a steam transport vessel in 1864 for a short campaign in North Carolina. The 35th Maine is consciously modeled upon the historical 20th Maine of Gettysburg fame, right down to its Joshua Chamberlain like commander, a tall former college professor. With them is a battery of New York artillery and a beautiful nurse (unmarried, of course). The ship enters a "portal" in a storm and finds itself beached in unfamiliar territory. Very unfamiliar! They are on another planet. And other groups of earth dwellers have entered the portals at various times before the Yankees. The entire planet is populated by such groups. The ship lands in the territory of the medieval Russians. Nearby are the ancient Romans and sailing around the ocean are Elizabethan English buccaneers. There is some initial conflict with the Russian Boyars. This results in the amusing scene of Civil war era infantry dispersing a medieval armed mob with a volley, and using artillery to smash catapults from long range. An accommodation is reached, but the anti-slavery Yankees are appalled by the treatment of the peasants by their leaders. Ultimately a peasant revolt leads to the formation of a republic. But all this action is minor!

This planet has been dominated for centuries by a Mongol-like nomadic group of creatures named the Horde. The Horde are nine foot tall nightmares with bow and arrow technology who travel horseback around the planet on an endless journey. They number in the hundreds of thousands. When they arrive in an area they take tribute, eat 20% of the people, and move on. And they are about due in the Russian territories! Needless to say, the Horde is not tolerant of changes in their dining arrangements. The phrase, "Victory or death" becomes reality for the Yankees. The remainder of the book describes how the Yankees and their new republic of medieval peasants build a New England style mill town from scratch in order to equip an army to fight the approaching Horde. Their example of an agricultural people arming to fight a foreign invasion is, you guessed it, their former enemies the Confederate States. You will find familiar weapons, uniforms, command structures and tactics used in the exciting battle scenes. Plus several evolving romances between the Colonel Keane and the nurse, his men and the local women.

Later books, there are eight, deal with fighting larger Hordes with (too) rapidly evolving technology. These books have Civil War soldiers with mortars, breech-loading weapons, steam-powered tanks and winged airships. All these books are available in paperback and make a fine diversion from the serious history many of us are prone to read. Enjoy!

John Keahey, 2/4/03

Newsletter Deadlines

The September 2003 newsletter deadline is Wednesday, September 3rd.

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

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

www.frazerbrothers.com

Jean Cloth & Period Fabrics

Thistle Hill Weavers

Rd #2, Box 75,

Cherry Valley, NY13320

518-284-2729

Charles Childs

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Paris, Ohio 44669

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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

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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.

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Neosho, Mo.

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General Merchandise

Fall Creek Sutlery

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Freedom , CA

408-728-1888

Musket Tools & Parts

S & S Firearms

74-11 Myrtle Ave.

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718-497-1100

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