

The Tyrants' Foe

The Newsletter Of The Texas Rifles

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[Click Here To View a Previous Issue](#)

In This Issue

- [Captain's Dispatch](#)
 - [From The Lieutenant's Inkwell](#)
 - [Because The Sergeant Says So!](#)
 - [Quartermaster Report](#)
 - [Book Reviews](#)
 - [An Overview of "Guard Mounts"](#)
 - [Newsletter Deadline](#)
 - [Sutler Row](#)
-

Captain's Dispatch

Another year is here! We started things off at Winedale last month with an awesome and exciting weekend. We had a great time, a good turnout and the best weather we have had there in years. We held our annual elections, and I am excited and honored by the opportunity to serve as Captain for a second year. Lt. Keahey and 1st. Sgt. Marek were elected into their positions for a second year as well.

One of the highlights was welcoming two new members to the group. Robert Garner and Stephen Johns are two great guys and two great reenactors and we are lucky to have them. We also had the pleasure of handing out EIGHT membership stars, which may be a record. Congratulations again to all of these folks:

Grant Welty
Nancy tucker
Roy Eanes
Rick Hall
Mark McNair
Tommy Attaway
Stephen Johns
Robert Garner

We had a couple of other announcements as well. Doug Davis will take over as treasurer this year. Again, many thanks to Bill Bates for several years of great service in this office. Also, Nancy Tucker was elected as the new Civilian Coordinator and there is a lot of activity on the civilian front with new recruits becoming interested in our unit.

As for the competitions, Chris Strzelecki is once again the "Best Drilled Soldier" and retains the John Keahey Cup and Mike Lucas was the winner of the firing competition, which keeps the "Tom Heard" cup in Austin, where its namesake hung his hat.

Also of note, we have formed two committees for this year. One will be responsible for going through the bylaws and making recommendations as to changes that are needed, as well as insuring that all changes that have been made in the past are represented in the version that we post online. The second committee will focus on the topic of insurance, researching our options and feeding this back to the membership.

Moving forward, as you know, we have Jessie Jones just 5 days from the posting of this newsletter (the event is February 20th - 22nd). We will arrive Friday night for camping and socializing and head home on Sunday around 10:00 AM. This event will be a good chance for you to wear your Mansfield impressions if you are attending that event. Any Confederate impression will be acceptable for Jessie Jones.

Beaumont Ranch is just a month away now. We will be going Federal to this event as it needs some good ones and we need a strong turnout. This will probably be the largest event we have in Texas this year, so don't miss it. If you lack any item for a Federal

impression, don't worry, we can get it for you. Let myself, Frank or John know about it and it will be taken care of.

After Beaumont is the 140th Mansfield / Pleasant Hill event. If you wanted to go to this event and you have not registered and/or paid, please send me an email. Even if you can't march, we need you. It is not too late, we need your support and I will make sure it is taken care of.

The big event of the spring is, of course, the 140 Wilderness / Spotsylvania event. Make sure the date is on your calander (May 7th - 9th) as this will not be one to miss.

We need to keep our momentum going this year. We need to continue to grow and improve. We are forging ahead and have many exciting things on the horizon. Remember, though, that strength is in numbers and the more folks at an event, the more fun it is. Think of someone new to bring to an event this year.

For many years I worked at trying to help the Texas Rifles and progress our unit. This was coupled by the excitement that I may have a chance to lead the organization someday, as so many others have done and done very well before me. My goal was and is to leave my leadership role with the Texas Rifles with the unit in a better place than it was when I began. This is not an easy task, as the group has always been the "Cream of the Crop" as far as I am concerned. This is the beginning of my second and final year as Captain of this great organization. In the grand scheme of things, reenacting will always be classified by others as a "hobby" and for many folks looking at it from a distance, a strange one at that. To me, though, the experience of being the 1st Sgt., Lieutenant and now Captain of this organization is one I will never forget and one in which I will always take great pride in. There will be plenty of time to look back, but right now, while there is still some time left in front of me, I want to do everything I can to make it rewarding and fun for all of our members. So, your feedback and comments are needed and welcomed.

To Tyrants Never Yield!

Rob Williamson
Captain, Texas Rifles

Lieutenant's Inkwell

For those of us who were fortunate enough to be able to attend the Liendo Event last November, we all got a taste of the future for the Texas Rifles. By that, I do not mean that our future as an organization is going to be a succession of sleepless nights, mosquito bites and poison ivy (my poison ivy rash did quite nicely, thank-you, blooming in places that I was not aware that I exposed to plant-life). What I mean is that we saw in small glimpses what our relationships in the hobby will be like in the non-NCLHA future.

First and most importantly, we will control the quality of our own future. Battalion commander Rob Williamson and his co-workers took Liendo, the classic farb-fest event extraordinaire, and converted it into a challenging authentic outpost defense. By the way for you guys who were not there, our lines were never broken by the opposition! We were able to form a different and better experience from the circus surrounding us. This does not mean that the Texas Rifles leadership intends to convert every event we attend into a demanding test of strength. What it does mean is that we have the freedom to do what WE want at any event.

Second, the Texas Rifles continued to serve with our friends such as Mike Bringhurst and Mike Miller, to name a few, within the NCLHA organization. That the NCLHA has problems is old news. That we can continue to work with individuals within that organization is a healthy development.

Third, the Texas Rifles is developing strong working relationships with other organizations such as the 9th Texas Infantry. The leadership of the 9th repeated their standing offer to participate with them at any event on an individual or company level. It is certainly refreshing to be WANTED and APPRECIATED by a regimental strength organization! While we may never join the 9th Texas organization, working with them offers a whole new range of opportunities.

Fourth, the character of our members continues to produce good times and laughter around our campfires. We all can look forward to serving together and continuing the ties of friendship and mutual interest.

Lastly, but not least, we continue to grow with veteran and raw recruits joining us in the line. Men like Kim Leavene and family, returnee Mark McNair, Chris Neel, and Stephen Johns. The path of the Texas Rifles stretches long and bright into the future. Don't miss traveling this path together with your friends!

John Keahey
Lieutenant, Texas Rifles

BECAUSE THE SERGEANT SAYS SO!

Less is Better

I once heard a line on my favorite TV program that said, "It's funny because it's true." I think of this line whenever I see the old caricature of the "New Recruit" and the "Seasoned Veteran." These were originally in the book, *Si Kleg and His Partner*, but have been reproduced in many other books and publications. The "new recruit" is seen marching down the road with a knapsack that looks like it will burst from the amount of junk packed into it. He also has boots, spare blankets and frying pans strapped to him and the poor fellow looks like he is going to cry or pass out from the sheer exhaustion of

carrying so much weight. The “seasoned veteran” has learned a thing or two and has gotten rid of all of his extra weight. All he carries is his weapon and accoutrements, canteen, haversack and a small blanket roll. In contrast to the pained expression on the “new recruit’s” face, the “seasoned veteran” has a big smile on his face and seems happy to be taking a little stroll.

It is funny because it is true. The more you carry, the worse off you may be on a march. Over packing your gear can hurt you in more than one way. It doesn’t take long for straps to start cutting into your shoulders and for your back to start to hurt when you have too much gear. If you try this on a long march, you might find yourself in a chase vehicle and missing a march that you payed good money and traveled a long way to attend. The less painful way over packing can hurt you is to detract from your primary impression of a soldier on campaign.

When you pack for an event, ask yourself if a soldier, or you would want to carry so much for 6, 12, or 15 miles. If the answer is “no,” start looking for things to leave at home. Decide if you really need that extra blanket, or if someone else that you are messing with is planning on bringing a frying pan. Make plans with your chums to split up your mess gear so you each won’t be carrying so much.

Packing light is a good idea not just on a marching event, but also on every event we go to. There are a few exceptions, but for the most part, the impression that the Texas Rifles seeks is that of a “Seasoned Veteran” infantry company. Try to remember that the next time you pack for an event. The less you have to carry in, the less you have to carry out!

Less is better. Why?

Because the Sgt. Says SO!

FJMarek
1st Sgt, Texas Rifles

Quartermaster Report

The Texas Rifles Quartermaster currently has a balance of \$-7.32. None of the funds raised from Winedale have yet to be distributed.

The biggest QM news is that Rodney Bode has stepped forward and volunteered to be the next TR QM. My thanks to Rodney and it is reassuring to me to see the TR QM go into such capable hands as Rodney’s. I will be stepping down as TR QM at the end of this year. This will complete my third year as QM. It has been a challenge, but much has been accomplished. It is a lot of work to be the TR QM, but it is an important service to our organization. It is also a great opportunity to meet the new people entering the

organization. I am always proud to tell prospective members that we can assist them with their kit. It is another selling point for the TR.

With the allocation of some of the funds raised at Winedale the QM can continue to fill in gaps in our needs. Additional Federal items such as knapsacks and haversacks are needed. We need to replace items not returned. Of course donations of goods are welcomed and we could use large socks, shoes, muskets, gum or painted blanket, mucket and a setting of tin ware.

As our civilians continue to expand, the TR QM can assist them as well with boys clothing, men's civilian trouser and shirts, and eating/cooking gear.

I know of no other organization that assists its new members like we do. It is another reason to be proud of your TR membership!

John Keahey
Quartermaster, Texas Rifles

Book Reviews

"Battle On The Bay" by Edward T. Gorham

I found this book to be a very thoughtful read. Mr. Gorham not only gives the history of the battle of Galveston, he also informs you of all the events leading up to the Siege of Galveston. In addition, he manages to thoroughly develop the backgrounds and motivations of the Commanding Officers for both the Union and the Confederacy who participated in the battle, which occurred New Years day, 1863.

"Battle On The Bay" then goes further, providing accounts from the Confederate victory on through to the end of the war.

This book was humorous and exciting. To put it frankly, I could not put this book down. Every page held my attention and I wondered what the next page would reveal. This book did a good job of informing me about the history of the area where I live.

Rodney Bode

"Gates of Fire" by Steven Pressfield, bantam Books, 1999

This historical novel is not about the American Civil War. It is about classical Greece during one of the critical moments in western civilization; the invasion of Greece by the huge army of the Persian King Xerxes. The invasion resulted in a series of engagements

whose names we were all taught in World History classes; the naval Battle of Salamis, Plataea, and the most famous of all... Thermopylae. One commentator has stated that the Battle of Thermopylae has been, "seared into the psyche" of western civilization because of the sacrificial nature of the stand of the Spartans and their allies against the overwhelming numbers of the Persian army. The ultimate Greek victory over the Persians after Thermopylae allowed two important historical trends to be continued; the growth of democratic government at Athens and the continuation of European development without the domination of autocratic eastern god-kings.

"Gates of Fire" pulls together several sub-plots and love stories, but centers around the fictional character of Xeones, a Greek whose home and family are destroyed during his youth by a rival Greek city-state. He and his cousin survive on the run until they split-up outside Athens; she goes into the city and he moves on to Sparta. They live separate, but hard, lives until Xeones marches with the three hundred Spartans chosen to defend the strategic mountain pass at Thermopylae. The last third of the book is a recreation of that battle and its consequences.

Although utilizing coarse language more than appears to be necessary, Pressfield has done an admirable job of recreating the culture of Greece around 480 B.C. Incorporated into the book are several historical figures from the times including the Persian King Xerxes, Persian general Mardones, and Greeks such as King Leonidas of Sparta and the Greek hero Dienekes. His recreation of the Spartan lifestyle is brutal, but honest, and his battle descriptions are accurate. Particularly riveting are the descriptions of a fictional, but typical, engagement between armies of Greek hoplites (bronze armored infantry) and the climatic stand in the pass. The author's description of the Battle of Thermopylae is something you will probably want to read over and over. It is marked in my copy for easy reference. Thermopylae is a narrow strip of land in Greece between the Aegean Sea and the mountains. Three hundred Spartans with about 3,700 Greek allies held the pass against a Persian army of 100,000 men for five days. In the end the few remaining Greek defenders were surrounded and wiped out. Historically only one Spartan survived and he was ridiculed for leaving the area in spite of being blind. After Thermopylae the Persian fleet was defeated in the naval Battle of Salamis and the Persian army was destroyed the next year at the Battle of Plataea. Greece, and Europe, remained free to develop its own culture and systems of government.

This book is about the nature of courage. The author's conclusions about courage, and who displays it most frequently, will probably surprise you in a male oriented book. "Gates of Fire" is available in paperback and well worth the time to read it.

John Keahey, 11/29/03

An Overview of "Guard Mounts"

- **Guard** - A unit composed of an officer/sergeant of the guard, one or more corporals of the guard, and soldiers grouped into relief's. The group is maintained together at the post of the guard, completely clothed & accoutered with weapons stacked.
- **Relief** - Individual relief's were normally composed of men taken from a single company or regiment and consisted of enough men to completely replace all sentinels (including guard house sentinels) in a camp or region of a camp. Sentinel = an individual soldier assigned to a specific post.
- **Countersign** - Word that allows passage past sentinels. Only given to such persons that are entitled to pass during the night, & to officers, non-commissioned officers, & sentinels of the guard.
- **Parole** - Given to officers that have the right to visit the guards & make Grand Rounds.

The entire guard is organized into 2 ranks (similar to line of battle) with the various reliefs in groups of files with bayonets fixed at Shoulder Arms. The first relief is designated (or the initial guard mount) & ordered forward 2 paces. The corporal of the guard takes charge of the relief & is accompanied by the previous corporal of the guard (who locates the guard posts for the new corporal & takes command of the old sentinels when all are relieved).

The relief, with arms at support, in two ranks, march by the right flank (without doubling), led by the corporal on the side of the leading front man (on the 1st files left). Men are numbered alternately in the front & rear rank - the man on the right end of the front rank being #1. If an officer approaches, the corporal will command "Carry Arms (Shoulder Arms?)" & resume support arms after he passes. When the old guard has marched off or at the establishment of the guard, the officer of the guard orders the remaining guard (subsequent relief's) to stack arms.

Sentinels at the guard house/tent are the 1st relieved. When a sentinel sees the relief approaching, he will halt and face it at shoulder arms. At 6 paces the corporal commands "Relief - Halt" (relief halts & goes to shoulder arms). Corporal then commands number of post (coinciding with the relief number) & Arms Port (ex. "Number 1 - Arms Port"). The 2 sentinels (previous & relief) go to arms port & approach each other. Under direction of the corporal, the old sentinel whispers the posts instructions to the relief. When done, both sentinels go to Shoulder Arms, the old sentinel passes, in quick time, to his place in the rear of the relief column while the new relief takes his post or begins his rounds. The corporal will then command "Support Arms - Forward - March" and the relief column proceeds in the same manner until all posts are relieved.

Each new relief is inspected by the officer/sergeant of the guard before mounting and is also reported to, by the corporal of the guard, on the return the relief column. Before being dismissed, the old guards weapons are discharged & examined by a non-com.

Sentinels are relieved at 2hr intervals unless weather or other factors create a need for shorter or longer guards.

Any general officer or post commander may visit the guards of his command.

Whenever there is a fire or an alarm is raised, all guards are to be immediately put under arms.

General Instructions for Sentinels:

- Sentinels take orders from the officer/sergeant/corporal of their guard detail, the Officer of the Day, or the Commanding Officer only! All instructions given to a sentinel by entitled persons should be promptly communicated to the commander of the guard.
- Sentinels will report every breach of orders or regulations that they are instructed to enforce.
- Sentinels will remain alert, observing everything within site & hearing of their post.
- Sentinels will always carry their weapon (at Support, Shoulder, or Right Shoulder Shift; Secure Arms may be used during inclement weather).
- No sentinel shall leave his post or speak to anyone unless necessary for discharge of his duty.
- All persons, regardless of rank, must observe respect towards the sentry.
- In case of disorder, the sentinel must call out "The Guard!" (or for fire call out "Fire!") & the number of his post (if the danger is great, he should discharge his weapon).
- It is the sentinel's duty to repeat all calls made from more distant posts than his own (no sentinel will be posted outside earshot of The Guard (either directly or through another sentinel).
- Sentinels Present Arms to General & Field Officers, Officer of the Day, & the Post Commander, to all other officers, he will stand at attention at Shoulder Arms & salute (left hand to rifle at right shoulder).
- The sentinel will call "Turn Out the Guard" whenever a body of troops or an officer entitled to complement approaches (does not occur after sunset).
- Sentinels will pay appropriate compliments to officers until darkness requires challenging.
- After retreat (or a time set by the commanding officer) until daylight, the sentinel challenges **ALL** persons who approach them taking the position Arms Port.
- No person is allowed within reach of his bayonet until the countersign has been given!
- Example challenge between sentinel & approacher (challenge given at a distance):
Sentinel: "Who Comes There?"
Approacher: "Friend (or Friends) with Countersign"
(If sentinel has been instructed to pass persons with countersign, then)
Sentinel: "Advance friend with countersign" or if answered "Friends" then "Halt friends! Advance one with the countersign."
If answered "Relief", "Patrol", or "Grand Rounds" then he replies "Halt! Advance Sergeant (or Corporal), With the Countersign."
a) Sentinel will allow approacher to bayonet distance and determine if the party is

- who they claim to be.
- b) If sentinel doesn't have the authority to pass persons or the wrong countersign is given, he will order them to stand fast & call "Corporal of the Guard!"
- If someone approaches the post of the guard, the sentinel before the post will challenge "Halt, Who Comes There?" and hold him there until examined by a non-com of the guard. If an officer entitled to inspect the guard approaches, a non-com will call "Turn Out the Guard" then the guard will be paraded at Shoulder Arms.

Don Tucker

Newsletter Deadlines

The April 2004 newsletter deadline is Wednesday, April 14th.

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.

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