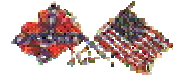




The Tyrants' Foe



Newsletter of the Texas Rifles

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Civilian & Military Fort McKavett Garrison Weekend Scheduled!!

June 3rd - 5th Fort McKavett, TX

See Fort McKavett Immersion below.

Captain's Dispatch



Pleasant Hill

The 2005 version of the Battle of Pleasant Hill has gone into the books, but what kind of books I could not say. Certainly it was not a history book. Although not a Texas Rifles maximum effort event, Pleasant Hill was attended by thirteen members; eleven as Trans-Mississippi Confederates and two as Federals with the 1st Texas. Beyond the first and successful use of the Texas Rifles Ration System set-up by Lt. Marek and the comradeship around the campfire, the chief lesson learned at this event was that there are very few organizations of Texas

reenactors with which the Texas Rifles can operate. Or to put it more bluntly, there are very few organizations that rise to our standards. We received many positive comments about our Trans-Mississippi uniforms and equipment from fellow Confederates and even sutlers. One unit was so impressed that they asked us to make the uniforms for them. Our drill and comportment were good. But the event just didn't click for me. We could not serve with the 15th Texas because they are essentially dangerous to themselves and those unfortunate enough to be around them. We did serve with the 12th Texas, but found them to be so ignorant of how to run a company and a battalion that we, who did things correctly, could not function with a bunch of guys whose major ambition at a reenactment is to not be bothered by such things as drill, maneuver and proper sequence of commands.

We went to the event looking to march and skirmish against our friends in the 1st Texas, but the landowner forbade us using the miles of trails through his extensive property. It seems we would have disturbed the Boy Scouts in their encampment. So we were left to find a campsite away from the Confederate tent city and existed on the fringe of the event both figuratively and literally; something to keep in mind next year at Winedale as we discuss the 2006 event schedule.

Port Jefferson

Our next event and a Texas Rifles Maximum Effort Event is Port Jefferson over the weekend of April 30 and May 1. Jefferson, Texas is a fascinating cotton shipping town left high and dry by the destruction of the waterway needed to ship its cotton and the lack of a railroad. The formerly wealthy town withered on the vine after the Civil War, leaving many period homes and businesses intact, which would have otherwise been destroyed in the name of "progress". We will participate at this event with our friends in the Red River Battalion. There will be plenty of action for the military members and lots of things to do for the civilians as well. The civilians will have a role to play as the armies pass through town. The organizers will supply one meal for the reenactors on Saturday night, but we will need to organize the food for other meals. The battalion will not be issuing rations.

We have not attended the Port Jefferson Event for many years, so all of this is rather new and challenging. I look forward to meeting the challenge with you.

Captain John Keahey

Lieutenant's Inkwell



The Jefferson event is right around the corner and is our first Max Effort event of any size for the year. At last count, we had nineteen Military members answering the Call to Arms. We always wish that there could be more but when you look at other units you see that the 18-22 range is very good for a turn-out. Many units show up with half that. We will have a good showing in both our numbers and our performance. It was plain after the Pleasant Hill Farbvent, that the Red River Battalion is definitely the unit that we want to serve with. Making an effort to improve is what makes you stand out even if you have not reached the top, and actually, once you start to strive to improve your impression both as an individual and as a unit you see that there are always improvements to be made.

In that effort, let's try to do our best with our unit impression at Jefferson. The preferred impression is Trans-Miss so that we can look the part of early war troops fighting in the Mississippi area. This will help us prepare for our trip to Corinth this summer. Most of us have this impression. It is easily done by wearing your "white" overshirts instead of a jacket. If you don't have one of these, check with the QM, or use a Civilian sack. I think that the Columbus jacket will be "accepted" at this event, but we might want to try to keep these to a minimum as well in order to keep our unit impression tight. I think if all of us who have the overshirt wear it, we will make quite an impression on the RRB this far ahead of Corinth. We will probably have a mixture of weapons and accoutrements, but try to stay away from the Federal issue trousers.

Having never been to this event, I am not sure of the quality, but having served at this past Pleasant Hill, I can assure you that the Texas Rifles BRING the quality that they desire. I look forward to serving with you all again very soon.

....Oh yes, Anticipate a weapons inspection very early in the event. NCO's, you are responsible for having the men show up to formation with clean serviceable weapons. The men are a reflection of YOU after all!

FJMarek

Lieutenant Texas Rifles

Because the Sergeant Says So!



The experience of having to fall in and serve with a less-than-well-drilled battalion at Pleasant Hill seems to me an excellent prompt to discuss the tremendous importance of practicing the manual of arms and close order drill whenever possible. Clearly, the best opportunities to do this include camps of instruction and living history events. That said, practice of this kind does not have to be executed on merely the company or battalion level. Indeed, squad and individual practice can be rather useful, particularly when you consider that such components are essential building blocks that enable larger organizations to operate smoothly on the drill field. Cartridge rolling parties are excellent occasions to engage in impromptu drill sessions—with or without accoutrements—as are local festivals. For the lone soldier, going through the distinct motions of each arms position in front of a mirror is one way to sharpen your skills while still surrounded by the comforts of home. Close order drill is a bit more difficult for the individual, but not impossible. Careful study of drill manuals such as *Hardee's*, *Casey's*, *Gilham's*, and the like can simultaneously improve one's overall knowledge of period drill and increase understanding of why field evolutions are performed in the fashion they are. If each private in the ranks regularly participated in such activities, company and battalion level drill would be noticeably more fluid and veteran in its progress and appearance. Now, I must state for the record that the Texas Rifles generally do a remarkable job of “knocking the rust off” in time for big events. To be sure, we consistently exhibit great discipline and professionalism on the drill field, even when other organizations around us are visibly lacking in military polish. Even so, additional attention to detail will enable us to stand out even further, thereby serving to enhance our reputation as an elite reenactment and living history unit. In short, the brighter we shine on the drill field, the better respected we will become in the hobby. After all, authenticity is not just a matter of material culture—it also encompasses how an organization functions in its role as a Civil War-era infantry company on active campaign.

To the Tyrants Never Yield,

1Sgt. Phillip M. Sozansky

From the Home Front

This Spring we have some great opportunities as civilians. Next weekend, we transform ourselves into the townspeople of the occupied city of Jefferson. We even get to “live” in a house. OK, so it’s not from the 1860’s but it is near the historic part of town. It will be so nice to attend an event where the civilians are removed from the battle and camps, but not from the action. Expect some interaction with both armies.

Next up is the Ladies Conference in Fredericksburg (May 21-22) at Ft. Martin Scott. Annette, Molly and I will learn how to fire period weapons, clean poultry and garden. We’ll be sure to share our findings with the rest of the group.

To finish the Spring season, we have our own immersion event at Fort McKavett June 4-5. The immersion portion of the event will be Saturday and Sunday. All participants are encouraged to arrive on Friday evening for fun and socialization. Due to the social structure of the time, many of us will not interact with each other throughout the weekend, making Friday night more important. Information about this event is presented below. I hope you will all make it to this event, which should be incredible. Besides, it’s the last thing we have until Fall.

See you at Jefferson,

Nancy Tucker

Civilian Coordinator



Quartermaster Report



QM has been looking at ways to raise money to purchase new equipment. I will be working out details with the command of the rifles. Once we hammer every thing out I will post the plans on the next newsletter and the next meeting. The QM has about \$100.00 in its funds and I will be opening a new account this week.

Loaner gear- If you us loaner gear you need to be sure it is properly cleaned when you are returning this item. The QM should not have to walk behind everyone who uses this equipment to show how to clean this gear after every event! The new recruits are excluded from this portion of the letter this is intended for the people who have been in the Rifles for a year and up! We need to gather all of equipment that has been loaned out so that the QM can inventory what the Texas Rifles has in its inventory! The QM is looking at a new policy on the loaner gear which I pass through the command as well!

Purchase new uniforms and equipment- Once the QM has inventoried all gear the QM will look to see what needs to purchased to be able to better fit people in the field!

Rowdy

FORT McKAVETT IMMERSION EVENT

Date

The event will take place over the weekend of June 4 and 5, 2005. Participants are urged to arrive at the site on Friday evening. The day and event will begin with reveille on Saturday morning, just as in any period army post.

Site

The Fort McKavett Immersion Event will take place at Fort McKavett State Park in Menard County, Texas. Fort McKavett is located northwest of San Antonio and is about a five hour drive from Houston. This is an original pre and post Civil War era fort. Many of the buildings have been restored and we will have use of some of them over the weekend. This area remains isolated and rural. This will allow all participants to truly enter into the spirit of the event and feel the isolation of the garrison's occupants.

Concept of the Event

The concept of this event is to provide the participants with an excellent living history experience in an outstanding setting. While visitors will be allowed and encouraged, the primary goal of this event is to immerse the participants for 33 hours in the life of a western frontier garrison of the immediate post Civil War era. Visitation will probably be sparse in this remote area. This will allow participants to enter into their characters more fully. The event will officially start at reveille Saturday morning and end at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday. In between these times participants are expected to stay in character as much as possible.

Military Impressions

Fort McKavett was a U.S. Army post garrisoned by regular army soldiers. For our purposes we will interpret the garrison as the post commandant and small staff, attached specialists such as artillery and ordnance, and one or two infantry companies. As we will be interpreting the immediate post Civil War era, standard Federal Civil War uniforms, equipment and weapons are the ideal. As regular army troops, the uniform will be the forage cap, shirt, sack coat, kersey trousers and black brogan shoes. Standard Federal accoutrements, knapsack, haversack and canteen are preferred. A Springfield pattern M1855, M1861, M1863, or M1864 is preferred. Enfield pattern muskets are acceptable. If any member has a M1866 breech-loading Springfield, please bring it for illustrative purposes. Many enlisted men in the post Civil War regular army were ex Confederate soldiers and officers earning a living the only way left to them. Slouch hats and other non-regulation items of uniform and equipment are allowed on post as fatigue wear while on campaign, but not as the uniform of the day. Officers will also wear standard Federal officer's attire. All participants seeking to serve as officers will need to have their roles approved in advance by the organizers. Many frontier regular army officers continued to insist that they be addressed by their brevet Civil War Volunteer rank. For example, Lt. Colonel George A. Custer continued to be addressed during his post Civil War career by his brevet wartime rank of General. No Confederate, militia or irregular troops are wanted for this event.

Civilian Impressions

There are many civilian impressions that would be appropriate for this event. At the top of the fort's civilian social structure would be the officer's wives and children. These hopefully will be able to stay in the period officer's buildings. Obviously, an officer's wife will need to associate with an officer, but these portrayals can be for the event purposes only. An officer's wife would never stoop to menial labor, nor associate socially with the enlisted men's wives.

Next down the social ladder would be the wives and families of the enlisted men. The U.S. Army of the period did not encourage their enlisted men to marry. Accommodations for enlisted families were ad hoc and generally discouraging. Wives of enlisted men frequently supplemented low army pay by serving as servants to the officer's wives and as camp laundresses. This can be a great activity for the women doing this portrayal. There exists a beautiful period school building on the grounds and recreating a period school could be another activity. As the event will include part of Sunday, perhaps a non-required period religious service could be held.

Beneath the families of the enlisted men were the occupants of Scab Town across the creek from the fort. This collection of huts, tents and temporary buildings provided the enlisted men with alcohol, gambling, entertainment and other more personal services. This would be a great impression for civilians to do and with which to have fun. Perhaps Scab Town could run wide open on Saturday night?

Atmosphere

Forget the John Wayne movies! We all enjoyed watching them, but they are generally poor history. Regular army life can only be described as boring. Garrison troops were required to observe peacetime "spit and polish." Guard duty, kitchen duty, fatigue parties, water details, inspections and drill were the constants of life. Courts Martial were very common and it was exceptional for a soldier to get through his enlistment without being subjected to at least one court martial for breaking one of the many rules. Combat was rare and desertions frequent. Contrary to Hollywood, the Native Americans rarely attacked an army post. Guerilla warfare, cattle theft, ambushes and isolated killings was more to their taste than the risk of taking high casualties attacking an alert garrison. The average size of an Indian Wars fight was seven (7) combatants per side: hardly the stuff of epic movies. There will be no battle associated with this event, but ammunition may be needed for drills, etc.

Enlisted men will sleep in a fully restored stone barracks building with reproduction iron frame bunks, straw-filled mattresses and wood slat "box springs." Food will be prepared on a group basis by company cooks at or near the stone Cook House. Issue food had not changed since the Civil War, and in fact for decades after the 1860's the fugal U.S. Army was still issuing hard bread, salt pork, rice, beans and coffee purchased during the Civil War. Officers and families would ideally supply their own food, but we may have to make allowances for that. Officers and families are encouraged to bring as many period furnishings as possible to give their living quarters the appearance of real homes.

Most of the military units in Texas had only recently been doing "reconstruction work" in Texas. In short, they were the occupying army in a defeated nation. As such they were based in the

settled areas projecting the power of the Federal government and protecting the newly liberated slaves. Troops only re-occupied the fort system on the frontier after many Indian attacks and high profile killings in the unprotected frontier areas. During this period the U.S. Army had 25 infantry regiments and 10 cavalry regiments. Most frontier soldiers were infantry. In time of danger, the army's technique for fighting the Native Americans was to post infantry troops at key water holes, river crossings and mountain passes. Many Indian attacks resulted in a detachment of the local infantry troops being loaded-up with ammunition and food and being sent to "walk down" the horse mounted Indians by sheer stamina. The grass fed Indian ponies would give-out without the opportunity to graze while being pursued. Without having time to hunt, the Indians would also run out of food. Unless the trail was lost, or crossed a boundary such as the Rio Grande River; the infantry could often bring the Indians to battle after a long strenuous pursuit.

Much could be said about the enemy, the Native Americans. Their long retreat from the east coast of the continent in the face of the continual expansion of European style civilization continued in post Civil War Texas. The invention of repeating pistols and rifles, railroads and telegraphs doomed their resistance to a fight without hope of victory. Active in the Fort McKavett area were the Kiowa, Apache, Kickapoo and Comanche tribes. Suffice to say, the Native Americans of the frontier period did not receive the same sympathy then as their plight does today. Regarded as savages, their skill as fighting men, kidnapping of women and children, and use of torture inspired fear in their foes and the determination to kill them all, or reduce them to small bands of survivors living on reservations.

Organization & Contacts

This event is being hosted by the Texas Rifles. We would be delighted to share this experience with our many reenacting friends, but we must know in advance of your coming to Fort McKavett.

For additional information contact John Keahey at jjpkeahey@pdq.net, or by phone at 281-261-0665. Civilians can contact Nancy Tucker at ntucker00@yahoo.com or 281-922-1915.

John Keahey, 4/19/2005

Pleasant Hill Pilfering

I would like bring to the Texas Rifles attention a disturbing incident that occurred at Pleasant Hill. While leading us in battle, our gallant Captain Keahey was wounded and two members of the Texas Rifles rushed to his side. Unfortunately, they didn't render aid. In his weakened condition, the Captain couldn't defend himself and was robbed of his most prized possessions, including his liquor. Be warned, the culprits remain unidentified and at large!

Your servant,
Cpl. Tucker



Fortunately, at least one of the bandits can't hold his liquor.



RED RIVER BATTALION OFFER

At the Spring Muster of the Red River Battalion, the members of the 9th Texas, which comprise most of the battalion members, were issued plastic laminated cards. The cards were approximately three by five inches in size, the same as a medium size index card. On each cards was printed the owners name, address, phone numbers, emergency contact information, and any important medical information which could affect treatment in case of injury. Each member fills-out a standard form which is then reduced in size and laminated. Members were encouraged to keep these cards in a standard place so that they could be quickly found in case of need by anyone in the 9th Texas. The 9th members keep theirs in their cartridge boxes.

Colonel Fred Yokubaitis, the commander of the Red River Battalion has generously offered to let the Texas Rifles get similar cards for our members at very reasonable price using the 9th Texas laminating machine. The price would be on the order of a few dollars for each card. We have discussed formally and informally within the Texas Rifles for years of developing some sort of medical form, so that we would know about serious medical conditions in advance which members might have, or which might affect emergency medical treatment. This would have led to a pile of papers which someone would have to be responsible for and to carry at events. The 9th Texas's solution is much better.

I propose that we accept the generous offer of our comrades in the 9th Texas and pursue getting these cards for each of our members. The cost could be paid from our treasury, assisted perhaps with donations from members. Something to think about for our next business meeting.

Regards, John Keahey

NOTE: New Red River Battalion Website: <http://www.9thtexas.org/>

Rowdy's Corner



TAKING A HIT

Watching a reenactment always seems to be the same! People take a hit and die. What we need to start working on is when we take hits take a hit were you can walk off the field. Once you are out of sight of the public you can reform and go back in as support troops. In every battle you have almost all dead! It just not seems to give a false scene to the battle it self! So I would like to see walking wounded you can also make it look real by screaming and do a little running towards the rear for help. At Liendo Plantation we ran off then we reformed and went back in as support it was to no avail as were we routed shortly after but it looked good from what a lot of the bystanders had said! So let's work on this at our next event! We should have only about 1-3 killed the rest should be wounded.

Cpl Rowdy



Look! Cpl. Tucker followed Rowdy's advise at Pleasant Hill. But then, he's always been very impressionable.

A Short History of the US Militia

This is a short essay on the militia system of the United States, as it served as the basis for organizing the army of the Confederate States. After the Constitution was adopted, the first law relating to the militia was the Militia Law of 1792. That law, as amended in 1795, 1803, and 1808, specified that all able-bodied males between the ages of 18 and 45 were to be enrolled in their respective state's (or territory's) militia. Each state was to appoint an Adjutant General who would be responsible for providing annual reports to the appropriate state and national authorities, and for supervising the organization of that state's militia. All states were enjoined to structure their militia along lines parallel to the Regular Army organization. There should be regular muster days, and all militiamen should be drilled, trained, and disciplined according to "normal standards", whatever those were. Officers needed uniforms of Regular army design; militiamen needed none. Some arms and equipment would be provided by the federal government; the rest was the responsibility of the state or the individual militiamen.

All militia were liable for active national service for six to twelve months, depending on which of the many amendments to the law was currently applicable. They were to be paid by the national government while in national service. Volunteer militia units were recognized as legitimate state militia if sanctioned by the state and, in practice, received most of the arms and equipment distributed by both the state and national governments. The individual states appointed militia officers and controlled unit training. When on active service with the nation, state militia came under national control and direction.

In the 18th and 19th Centuries, most organization of the militia was haphazard at best. Each state appointed an Adjutant General with the rank of Major General of Militia. Any regular Army officer outranked all militia officers, regardless of rank, which had a couple of interesting effects, when during the War of 1812, Andrew Jackson actually took the field as the Major General of the Tennessee Militia, and at New Orleans, refused to accede to the command of the senior regular Army officer present. Fortunately, this professional recognized the gravity of the situation, and did not challenge Jackson to command the forces in Louisiana. For the most part, the AGs were political appointees, this being a patronage job.

Musters, if held, tended to be annual events in most locations. Typically, each county (the US being basically a rural country) would have a "company" and at the muster, elect the Captain, Lieutenants, and NCOs. Some weapons might actually be present, and the more ambitious might actually attempt to read a drill manual before continuing the muster at a nearby tavern. Cities may have more than one company, and in major cities, the militia company took on a social aspect. Certain units, such as the Boston Company of Cadets and the Philadelphia City Troop were "gentleman" organizations, and others such as the New York Grays and Louisiana Blues equipped themselves well and actually were known to conduct drill.

When the militia was “called forth” due to conflict, the weakness of this haphazard organization became apparent. Companies varied greatly in size, anywhere from 30 men to 100 men could be a company. The unit was generally undrilled and had to start instruction as soon as the unit was accepted for service. None of the officers and NCOs had any experience managing a unit in the field, much less as functioning as part of an Army. When the company organized during a time of crisis, the captain would report the company to the state Adjutant General as ready for service. The AG would then accept companies for service until the state quota was reached. After being accepted, the company would be sent to an encampment, and the state AG would then organize companies into Regiments, a Regiment to be composed of 10 Companies (In 1861, the 1st Texas was an exception to this rule, being organized with 12 Companies). The state Governor would then appoint the 3 Field Grade officers of the Regiment (Colonel, Lt. Col., and Major), the Col. then appointed the Adjutant (usually the senior 1st Lt., but typically the most competent officer that he could find in the 10 Companies), and Regimental NCOs (Sgt. Maj., QM Sgt., Ord. Sgt., Color Sgt., etc.).

Obviously, the senior officers had political connections in the state, but many of the 1861 appointments went to men who had served as officers in the Mexican War 15 years previously. Another exception to this rule, was Robert E. Lee, who after resigning his commission as a Colonel of the U.S. Army, was not given command of any of the Virginia regiments than being formed, and was assigned to the AG’s office, until Jefferson Davis had control of the national army and needed a commander for the ANV.

As the Army was formed for service, a number of Regiments would be brought together to form a Brigade. A Brigade could consist of a minimum of 2 and as many as 6 Regiments, but typically, a Brigade consisted of 4 Regiments. Confederate practice was to brigade Regiments of the same state together whenever possible, while U.S. Army practice was to brigade regiments with no regard as to origin (although Regular Army regiments seldom served in the same brigade as state regiments). A Brigade would be commanded by a Brigadier General or a Col. senior to all of the regimental commanders. The appointment of Generals is the sole province of the central government, so at this point, state influence started to diminish.

If the size of the army is even larger in scope, 2 to 4 Brigades would be formed into a Division, which should be commanded by a Major General. As our Civil War formed armies on a scale never seen before on our continent, larger organizations were needed to command and control the units. An Army Corps was formed by anywhere from 2 to 4 Divisions, and could be commanded by a Lieutenant General, the first time this rank had been used since held by George Washington, and an Army would consist of 2 or more Army Corps, and could be commanded by a General. At the Division and Corps level, additional units such as Engineers, Paymasters, and such, make an appearance.

At the end of hostilities, the militia would be released from service, back to the states, and the Regular Army officers serving as Generals would return to their permanent ranks. For example, Custer died as Lt. Col. of the 7th CAV, although he served as a Major General in our Civil War. Had the Regular Army not expanded from 6 Regiments of Cavalry to 10 in the post war organization, he most likely would have been a Captain.

This system was still used in the Spanish American War, and then was changed to the system we know today as the National Guard (organized state militia) and Army Reserve as part of the reforms in Army organization that took place from 1905 to 1916.

Tommy Attaway

Newsletter Deadlines

The next newsletter deadline will be announced on the Yahoo group. Thanks, Don

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