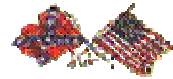




The Tyrants' Foe



Newsletter of the Texas Rifles

Volume XXII, Number 2 ***** April 2006



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*****Next Maximum Effort Event*****

**Red River Battalion Muster in preparation for
Perryville**

September 9-10th, 2006 TBA

Captain's Dispatch



It is all a question of random chance. Random chance and statistics informs us that the weather at some events will have rain and some will be dry; it's all a matter of chance. What I fail to understand is how we can have the driest winter on record in Texas with above average temperatures for months, BUT Winedale had rain on Sunday, Jesse Jones Park was cold and cloudy, and the Beaumont Ranch Event is a wash-out, literally. The week before Beaumont enjoyed great weather as does the week after, yet on that particular weekend in that part of the

state we got doses of cold and heavy rain. Random chance seems to be a fraud. I have the miracle cure for drought; hold a Civil War reenactment in your drought stricken area and I can almost guarantee rain!

I would like to commend all our members who attended Beaumont Ranch. In spite of trying conditions, no one complained and everyone did everything that was demanded of them. I know that we all were cold, wet and disappointed at times, but the Texas Rifles pulled through in their usual grand style. On the bright side the companionship was good, Mike Lucas won the Firing Competition, long postponed from Winedale (due to rain there as well), and the ammo box was rescued in good shape from the sinking officer's tent by John Lechmann and lugged up the hill to safety. The civilians managed to stay graceful, attractive, warm, dry and amused at an event with precious little grace, attraction, warmth, dryness or amusement. The officer's meeting on Friday night was full of compliments for the Texas Rifles on our deportment, drill and how we form our company for battalion evolutions. We are being held-up to the rest of the battalion as the example of how to do things. Don did a good job as First Sergeant, Tommy was Second Sergeant and Bo and Jim stood as corporals. That is one of the strengths of our organization; we are blessed with tremendous depth of leadership.

As will be discussed in an accompanying article, the Pleasant Hill March is closed to most of our membership due to some restrictions placed upon participants by the host. It is a dismal tale and you should read the article for a full account. That makes our next event in May at Bellemeade. Bellemeade is just north of Waco on I-35. It is a typical battle-and-barbeque type event with little scope for authenticity. We will serve there with our good friends in the Red River Battalion. That stills leaves April without an event. We still need to build-up our cartridge supply and perhaps we can combine a drill with it to keep things going.

It has been a rainy year thus far for reenacting, but the next several events will enjoy great weather; random chance and statistics guarantees it!

John M. Keahey

Captain

Lieutenant's Inkwell



Although it is still a few months away, I would like to pass on a little bit of my excitement about the Outpost event this coming June. The Outpost started as an excuse for a small mess of us to get together and practice our first person impressions without the distractions that come with most re-enactments. The Mudrollers, mostly defunct now due to attrition and promotions, set up camp near Lake Travis and for the weekend, became a mess of soldiers within the Texas Brigade. First person “talk” was kept up throughout the weekend and we learned a thing or two about cabin building and winter quarters. The next year, we decided to move the Outpost to the Caldwell area since the site was easier to get to for both Houston and Austin men to get to. Phil Sozansky provided the site on property that is owned by his family and once we did a walkthrough, we were sold! The property is far enough away from everything to provide a site with very few modern intrusions and it is quite simply a beautiful spot of Texas. We added a few soldier responsibilities to event by actually standing guard. A mail call and period rations topped off the event and we learned even more about the contrariness of winter cabins.

Last year saw a shift in our motivations at Outpost. Due to a tight schedule early in the year, we decided to move the event to the first week of June. No longer a “winter” outpost, we now had the Texas heat to deal with. We also opened up the invitation list. We had to do this to meet the interest of other Texas Rifle members who were caught up by our enthusiasm of past events and a desire to coordinate our event with the national Franklin event that would be later in the year. With the help of the Texas Groundhorns, we added numbers, divided sides and set up an outpost to represent Granbury’s Texans and Hazen’s Brigade at the end of the battle of Picketts Mill. Earthworks were dug, men slept in trenches and a constant guard was manned for over twenty four hours. We were all quite spent afterwards, but we knew that we had accomplished something that most re-enactors only dream of.

It is a new year and the Call to Arms has been sounded! Outpost 2006 will be held on the first weekend of June this year on the same great spot of land with an expanded scenario and more men to man the works. Please watch for Jim Bozworth’s article in this newsletter with a full description of this years plans. I will simply sum it up by saying that this is shaping up to be another awesome weekend. Like last year, it will be tough with plenty of work and little rest but therein lies the challenge. We can never fully put ourselves into the shoes of the men who fought in 61-65, but we should get a good dose of what army life was like back then. If ever there was time to “soldier up” for an event, the time is now, the place is Caldwell and the name is Outpost 2006. Answer the call. You won’t be disappointed!

FJMarek
LT of Texas Rifles

From the Home Front

As this is my first report as Civilian Coordinator, I wish to thank the membership for electing me to the position and to Nancy for setting such a great example during her tenure. It has been a busy first few months attending events and working toward the goals we have set.

Several of the Civilians attended Beaumont Ranch in March. We stayed warm and dry in a room at the ranch while our brave soldiers unfortunately endured the terrible weather. The Civilians enjoyed games of cards and chuck-a-luck, hot tea and chocolate, cookies, a wonderful lunch and celebrated Elizabeth Lechman's birthday with cake. We were very thankful to be able to provide a bit of comfort and shelter to the military members when the weather finally became unbearable.

Six camp stools for the Civilians are on order from James Country Mercantile. These will provide much needed seating for our members in the civilian camp. Once received, the canvas seating will be covered with

more appropriate period fabric. The Civilians now have their own informational brochure. It provides information about the Civilian activities and membership in the Texas Rifles. A few have already been distributed at different events. Planning for the Henkel Square event planned for the first weekend in November is progressing and information will be made available to all Texas Rifle members in the next month or so.

Other goals for the Civilians include producing a new member guide, developing appropriate scenarios for events and purchasing a fly to provide the civilians with shade and a common place for us to gather.

I attended a school event in March at the Round Rock High School attended by the 173rd New York and Terry's

Texas Rangers among others. This event provided information about living through the Civil War to the Jr ROTC units of the school. After hearing presentations on medicine, soldier life, and the homefront, the students participated in a mock battle with reenactors as commanders and various military service recruiters judging the battle to determine the winner. I also participated in a festival at Old Settler's Park in Round Rock celebrating the 200th birthday of Williamson County's founder. The event consisted of several "pioneer" demonstrations. We may have also gained a civilian recruit from the event.

Steven and I plan to attend the May Bellmead event for a day. It is fairly close to us and usually has some interesting civilian activities. If anyone is interested in attending and wants more information let me know.

I invite anyone interested in the civilian side of the era or a civilian impression to contact me. We would have all been civilians at one time or another in the time we interpret and it is appropriate that some civilian attributes be apparent in all our impressions.

With fond regards

Annette Bethke

Civilian Coordinator

Corporals Corner



For all those intrepid individuals that have attended an event this year, welcome to the Texas Rifles, Volunteer Marine Regiment. The Lechmanns & Joe Raffels have decided they are causing the rain. If this were so, be assured we would have taken steps, like obtaining landing craft. Unfortunately, that's just how Mother Nature responds to Reenactments.

On a brighter note, Nancy & I had a great time at Beaumont Ranch (not counting the weather, the event coordinator, the site, & the offsite distance to lodging). The camaraderie around the damp campfire, at Annette's room & in the barn is what makes reenacting fun & is a big part of why I love the hobby & being a member of the Texas Rifles.

On a more military note, I would like to see all of us concentrate more on our company drill. As Texas Rifles, we are all proud of the reputation earned by the group, encompassing both current & previous members. If we want to maintain this reputation & continue to impress people both within & outside the reenacting community, we need to work harder than we have been. There is no one to blame, except possibly for the aforementioned Mother Nature. I know our company drills of late have been short, but our performance during the drills has been lax. We need to put more effort into company drill in a number of areas including; maintaining our dress while marching (line bowing in & out), the rear rank needs to maintain distance with the front rank (rear rank falling back), maintaining 2 steps behind the our commanding officer, keeping track of our dress side (usually left unless otherwise specified) & most importantly, don't anticipate commands & turns. We are consistently wheeling prior to the order in a column of companies & stopping the wheel early. Sergeants, Corporals & experienced privates need to step up and help those with less experience. This doesn't mean repeat orders or singling someone out who's making a mistake, but help out with positioning & quietly give advice in the ranks when the opportunity presents itself.

Please take these observations as constructive criticism and not as a complaint. We are one the best reenacting companies, but I know we can do better & want us all to be proud when we march, whether it's during battle or drill.

Proudly your servant,

Corporal Don L. Tucker

Company G, The Texas Rifles

PLEASANT HILL MARCH

I regret to inform you that this event is now closed to most members of the Texas Rifles. I have been in email correspondence with our friend Mike Bringhurst of Company C in the 1st Texas. In spite of the entire Red River battalion being invited to participate in this day and a half march, any members of the Texas Rifles who were former members of the NCLHA (Nineteenth Century Living History Association) A.K.A. the 1st Texas are not eligible to participate in this march unless they 1) pay \$40 dues, 2) re-join the NCLHA as individuals and 3) be assigned to another company within the organization. Texas Rifles members who have retained their membership in the NCLHA are of course eligible to participate in the march. Members of the Texas Rifles who joined the Texas Rifles after the split with the NCLHA three years ago are also eligible to participate in the march.

The stated reason for this position on behalf of the NCLHA is their insurance policy. Their insurance policy, apparently, specifies that individuals can participate with the NCLHA troops twice without paying dues and becoming members. These individuals are termed, “volunteers”. Unlike the Texas Rifles, payment of the dues automatically makes you a full member of the NCLHA instantaneously. Under this clause the Red River battalion can participate in the march as they, presumably, never served with the NCLHA before and therefore fall under the “volunteer” designation.

It would be pleasant to accept the position that this impasse is a product of complex insurance language in which the leadership of the NCLHA finds itself trapped in spite of their good intentions. I have known the key players in this little charade for many years and served with them on many fields. The insurance angle, while probably true, is a convenient excuse. We left the NCLHA due to repetitive, mean spirited subterfuges just like this one. So be it. It would have been great to participate in this march, renew old friendships and see places made memorable by the Red River I and II Campaigns. This is not now an option for the majority of

our members due to the grudge carried by a few individuals and the sycophants who unquestioningly support them.

John Keahey,

Texas Rifles Civil War Immersion Weekend **2006**

Outpost II

When: Friday evening, June 2 until Sunday noon June 4

Where: Private property a few miles outside of Caldwell, Texas

We in the Texas Rifles would like to extend an invitation to participate in an experience that is unique in this region and rare in the hobby itself. Please understand that if you are reading this, we consider you to be a progressive part of our hobby and feel you will find this invitation of special interest. For a period of 36 hours you will have the chance to step into a Civil War scenario that was very common to most soldiers but is almost never addressed by our hobby. The event will take place on beautiful rolling wooded and open country that has almost no modern intrusions.

Scenario: An earlier attempt was been made to fortify a hilltop that commands a seldom used but potentially strategic road. These fortifications were poorly built and the position was overrun and abandoned. The tides of war have changed once again and this hilltop is once more a valuable piece of real estate. You are a member of a Federal company that has been assigned the task of refortifying this hilltop. An officer of engineers has been put in overall command of your force and will guide you in your task. A Confederate force is already in place to act as a threat (having campaigned in the bottoms with the heat and mosquitoes at the previous Outpost event, we would advise you to be glad to be Federal for this one).

Expectations: You should expect to live for 36 hours in a Federal military camp that is in harms way. First person personas are encouraged but are not required. Guards will be constantly posted, details will be organized to gather wood, water, dig sinks, and roll call and formations will be necessary. Your army-issued rations will be cooked for you by a company cook. Fatigue details will construct ramparts, ditches, obstacles and revited gun emplacements as per the instruction of the officer of engineers. All of these tasks will occur under the threat of hostile fire. To suppress these threats, pickets may need to be thrown out at any hour.

Objective: You will be successful if your company is able to build so many pre-determined feet of works within the set time. The Confederate force will win if they are able to slow down your work with attacks and interrupt completion. The rules of engagement will virtually preclude casualties. Rates of fire and proximity will determine whether a force is having effect on the opposing force. The officer of engineers will make this determination. The officer of engineers will in effect be the referee, and as in the real army of the time, may not necessarily make rulings that you agree with.

Outcomes: Based on Outpost I, this will be a very intense 36 hours. Food will be plentiful but plain. Sleep will be limited. Frustrations will arise. There will be some amount of physical work. That's the way it was for the boys of '61-'65 too. It is not our intent for anyone to be put in an unsafe situation, nor are we out to hurt anyone. This is a hobby and not the real military. Having said that, it is the goal of this event for men to come away with an understanding of what it was like for a Civil War soldier to be given a difficult task and see what strengths and weaknesses arise from this exercise.

What you will need to provide: Above all you will need a positive attitude. You will need a complete Western Federal kit with shelter half. Be prepared to carry your kit about half a mile into the site. Bring three gallons of drinking water in "milk jugs" that will be carried in and pre-dropped for you. Modern medications and mosquito repellants may be carried but not in plain site. Plain cotton work gloves may be used if you are prone to blisters. Period shovels and axes are needed, (the soil is sandy and digs pretty easily). There will be a small charge for rations that should be less than five dollars for the entire weekend. Plan on arriving on-site no later than midnight Friday night. Directions and final information will be forth-coming. At the end of the event we will probably retire to town after the event to eat in air-conditioning.

For updated information check <http://www.texasrifles.org/>

If you have any questions, contact:

Jim Bozworth at

<http://us.f354.mail.yahoo.com/ym/Compose?&To=jimbosworth@hotmail.com> or Frank

Marek at <http://us.f354.mail.yahoo.com/ym/Compose?&To=fjmarek@aol.com>

TR QM REPORT



The TR QM is in recovery, needing to dry-out, reclaim and restore the articles provided to members and recruits for the Beaumont Ranch and previous events. The current balance in the TR QM account is \$350.00, but that will soon change.

The goals of the TR QM are to; 1) follow through on the Bode Plan to sell-off unneeded items in the inventory via EBAY, 2) upgrade the loaner items in the area most needed such as accoutrements, trousers and jackets and 3) support the civilians in their needs. The first upgrade will be to replace all four bayonet scabbards with one that will actually swallow an entire bayonet of any design. How does that sound to you, Andrew?

The second upgrade will be to replace the Pakistani cap boxes, cartridge boxes and belts. These cheaply made items are deteriorating rapidly. The cap boxes will be replaced first as the cheap ones don't stay closed and dump the caps out on the slightest pretext. The Pakistani cap boxes will be disassembled, rebuilt as CS painted cloth cap boxes and sold.

The third upgrade will be to add to our Federal Trouser inventory in the 44" waist size range. We have needed this size for some time. I would also like to reduce our loaner CS jacket inventory to the current Texas Rifle required style and increase our supply of cotton overshirts, but these are down-the-road goals.

I want to do a complete inventory of the contents of the TR QM. To that end I need to know who has what items of clothing and equipment. My information on what is out of the inventory is as follows;

Eddie Voskamp has Federal trouser P11

Victor Yancey has a boy's brown jacket, and grey trouser

Andrew Davis has some accoutrement items, but I do not know what specifically

John Lechmann has a Federal sack coat, trouser, shoes, two pair socks, forage cap, shirt

Ben Lechmann has a Federal sack coat, forage cap

Kim Levine has a blue/white shirt, braces

Ben Levine has jacket B1, trouser B9, checked shirt, hat, shoes

Rob Williamson has a cap box.

Please verify with me that you have these items and take steps to return them to me if no longer needed. The above list is not meant to embarrass anyone and probably is incomplete, but I need to know.

John Keahey 3/20/2006

501(c)(3)

I've researched our options regarding non-profit. In order to claim donation deductions such as mileage, equipment etc. from federal income tax the Rifles will need to be a 501(c)(3). That will mean refocusing our purpose as educational, which in turn will mean a change in our by-laws and articles of incorporation. It would also require a considerable outlay of money (about \$500). If we wish to incorporate to protect personal property from any legal action a state incorporation through the Secretary of State would accomplish this without the federal designation; however,

there would be no tax benefit for members. This will now need to be referred to the general membership for a decision on what direction the group wishes to take.

Annette.

THE CARE OF LEATHER

All of us are into leather, at least as far as living history is concerned. Yet, how many of us take care of our shoes, leather belts, scabbards, cartridge and cap boxes? A quick glance around the ranks shows that, while most of us know how to maintain a musket, very few members know how or are willing to put time in on their leather equipment. We all should. First, because your shoes and accoutrements are an expensive investment. If you do not maintain them, they will deteriorate and will have to be replaced. Second, good soldiers are distinguished by well-maintained equipment. Third, the campaign style of living history is harder on you and your leather gear. Finally, why ruin something neat!

Most leather is dead cow skin, which has been chemically treated so that it will not rot. This treatment process is called tanning. Leather has two sides, the rough side and the smooth side. The rough side used to be attached to the deceased animal. The rough side was used on the exterior of working class boots and shoes because it is more porous, oils and polishes can penetrate it easily. The smooth side was the outside of the cow, now minus the hair, which is usually removed during the tanning process. The smooth side was used for the exterior of cartridge boxes, belts, etc. because it is less porous and will shed water better. Unlike living skin, leather cannot moisturize, or heal itself; if it is not moisturized it will become brittle. Eventually it will break at flex points. All leather equipment arrives from its maker dry. The dryness only becomes worse as the leather is exposed to sun, heat, sweat, and rain. The stuff imported from India and Pakistan is made of particularly poor leather and their leather dye tends to be water soluble.

There are a number of leather care products on the market. They can be purchased at hardware and food stores. Each has its uses. For shoes you can't beat paste shoe polish rubbed in thoroughly with a brush and buffed. Once or twice a year should do it. And remember, the worse thing you can do to your shoes is to place them near a campfire to dry or warm them.

For accoutrements I recommend a combination of saddle soap and neatsfoot oil (real neatsfoot oil, not the imitation product). They compliment each other nicely; saddle soap cleans and moisturizes the smooth surfaces while neatsfoot oil thoroughly penetrates the rough side. Using a one inch wide paintbrush, brush the neatsfoot oil onto all the rough leather surfaces. Don't soak the leather in it, but make sure the neatsfoot oil penetrates the leather thoroughly. Extremely dry or thick leather will need more oil. Saddle soap is best applied with a piece of sponge. Don't use the kitchen sponge because saddle soap is toxic. Rub the saddle soap with a sponge dampened with water, creating a lather. Rub the lather into the smooth side of the leather. After all the smooth surfaces have been done, wipe off the excess saddle soap with a damp cloth. You will already see how much more soft and flexible the leather is. It is stronger now as well.

Do this once or twice a year and your leather gear will last longer than you. Someone asked me at an event if I had purchased a new cartridge box. The box he thought was new is actually 17 years old! Although it has seen long service, that cartridge box is in better than new condition. Will our gear last 130 years like original Civil War equipment? No. Unlike 19th century organic tanning, the chemicals used in the modern process eventually break down and destroy leather.

John Keahey, 7/22/96

Newsletter Deadline

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

Survey



Texas Rifles

2005 Membership
ID

Name

Medical Information:

Allergies: none

Other: none

Emergency Contact:

Name

Phone # (XXX) XXX-XXXX

If lost, please mail to :

Texas Rifles

2810 W. Pebble Beach Dr.

Missouri City, TX 77459

Company Recruiting Hotline:
281-261-0665

Company Website:
<http://www.texasrifles.org/>

This ID is to be presented at the first company formation at each Texas Rifles event, and should be carried on you throughout the event. Please keep a copy of your medical insurance information with this card. ID card replacement fee is \$5.00.

Front

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IMPORTANT: All members (military and civilian) who haven't passed along the ID info., please send me the following information so we can get the TR ID cards made! Thanks, Don.

Name:

Emergency Contacts:

Contact Numbers:

Medical Info:

Allergies: (especially to medications)
Other: (i.e. heart, asthma, etc.)

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