



# The Tyrants' Foe



## Newsletter of the Texas Rifles

Volume XXIII, Number 1 \*\*\*\*\* February, 2007



### \*\*\*Next Event\*\*\*

#### Twigg's Surrender

February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007 Humble, TX

### \*\*\*Next Max Effort\*\*\*

#### Bank's Grant Retreat

March 14<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>

### Current 2007 Schedule of Events

Date	Event	Location	Type	TR Rating	Impression
January 19th - 21st	Texas Rifles Annual Meeting	Round Top, TX	Texas Rifles Event	MAX EFFORT	Confederate
February 10th	Twigg's Surrender and Lace & Sabers Magnolia Ball	San Antonio, TX	Statewide Event	Optional	As desired
February 17th	Jesse Jones Park	Humble, TX	Local Event	Optional	Confederate
March 14th - 18th	Bank's Grand Retreat	LA	National Event	MAX EFFORT	Federal
March 24th	Camp Ford	Tyler, TX	Local Event	Optional	?
April 14th - 15th	Camp Mabry Muster Day	Austin, TX	Local Event	MAX EFFORT	Confederate
May 5th - 6th	Battle of Port Jefferson	Jefferson, TX	Statewide Event	Optional	?
June 8th - 10th	Vicksburg Encampment	Vicksburg, MS	Local Event	Optional	Confederate
September 15th - 16th	Battle of Sharpsburg	Sharpsburg, MD	National Event	Optional	Confederate
September 21st - 23rd	Henkel Square Immersion	Round Top, TX	Texas Rifles Event	Optional	Civilian
October 27th	Texian Market Days	George Ranch, Houston	Local Event	Optional	Confederate
November 10th	Dallas Heritage CW Day	Dallas, TX	Local Event	Optional	Confederate
November 17th - 18th	Liendo Plantation	Hempstead, TX	Statewide Event	MAX EFFORT	Federal



# Captain's Dispatch



It is with distinct pleasure that I take this time to write my first Captain's Dispatch. I have been granted only a few honors in my life, being made a Freemason, becoming HolliBeth's husband to name a couple, and now to be chosen by the Rifles to be Captain for the year 2007. Believe me when I say that I will do my best to honor you all for placing this trust in me and I promise to do my best to help our company prosper into our third decade.

We held our annual muster at Henkel Square in Round Top. The weather was a bit nasty and I think this kept a lot of our members at home but we did have a very good time! We all stayed pretty cozy in the old houses and to hear the comments from those there, I believe that we have found a new home for our annual muster that more than meets our needs. Thanks to everyone who braved the weather and joined us for the weekend. You all made it the success that it was.

As most of you might have heard, our schedule for 2007 is a bit muddled. We didn't have a Battalion schedule to go by so most of our events are on a company level. Rather than a hindrance, I want to think of this as opportunity. We still have time to add to our schedule some interesting events both on a national level and self generated. I think the goal of the executive board this year is to simply get the Rifles to the best events possible. I know that we all enjoy seeing large events like Perryville and Franklin and there is a strong and growing attraction for those events that we create ourselves like Outpost, Ft. McKavett and Henkel Square. Of course, there are always the "party" events like Liendo. We will be doing a little of all these events and hopefully adding some good recruiting opportunities too. Hopefully there will be a little something for everyone and we will get to see a lot more men in the ranks.

Drill and "authenticity" will also be things that you hear a lot of this year. These are two of the things that put us at the top of our game and so I believe we should keep them both high on our priority list. As we keep an eye on our schedule this year, we will try to fit in a few company musters. I hope to include some "classes" at these musters, much like we have had at Winedale in years past that will touch on not only drill, but also uniforms and equipment and also Texas History and Lifestyles of the 1850s and 60s. Hopefully we will find a lot of interest in doing this and that we will gain more as Living Historians.

Our next three scheduled events are Twiggs Surrender, Jesse Jones Park and Banks Grand Retreat. Twiggs Surrender is on February 10th in San Antonio. Jesse Jones Park is in Humble on February 17th. Both should be excellent recruiting opportunities so if you are planning on attending either of these please bring some fliers and hand them out if you get the chance. Jesse Jones will also be the event where we have our company competitions. The weather was a little to nasty at Muster and the overwhelming opinion was to postpone the competitions. I hope that this is satisfactory to everyone. I know that Lee Chesney is driving down from Austin for this and I hope a few other Austin men will be there too.

Finally, I want to say "Thank you" again for electing me Captain. My door is always open if you want to drop by the swamps of Dayton and I'm always ready to take your call if you have any questions or concerns. I'm looking forward to serving with you this year and hope to see you soon!

To Tyrants Never Yield!

Frank Marek, Captain of the Texas Rifles

---

## Lieutenant's Inkwell



I would like to begin my inaugural missive as an elected officer of the Texas Rifles by first expressing my gratitude to the membership for their continued faith in my capacity for leadership. I find it difficult to put to words the deep sense of honor and tradition that I feel as the newly selected lieutenant of the company. In short, I stand humbled before twenty years of comradeship, custom, and living history excellence. I will forever cherish my time as First Sergeant, but I will also endeavor to be the best junior officer I can be during my term of office.

Now, rather than address issues likely to be commented on by Captain Marek in this newsletter—recruiting, close-order drill, event selection, and the like—I have instead decided to launch a new initiative for 2007. I would like to propose "The Texas Rifles Renaissance, Phase II." Whereas 2002's "Renaissance" was primarily concerned with improving physical authenticity among military members, this second phase would be geared toward helping ALL members immerse themselves in the proper period "mindset," either as civilians temporarily in uniform or as civilians remaining on the home front. After all, Union and

Confederate volunteers perceived their military service as a transitory condition. Mentally, they were, first and foremost, civilians. Thus the general approach of "Phase II" would involve the men in the ranks actively seeking to develop their understanding of mid-nineteenth-century civilian society, culture, and material circumstances in an effort to enhance their experience as reenactors portraying Civil War citizen-soldiers. It would also involve the civilian men and women actively creating impressions, scenarios, vignettes, activities, and the like with an eye toward establishing an appropriately interactive communal presence at military events. In undertaking this endeavor, a more integrated relationship will be established between the military and civilian spheres of this organization reflective of that which actually existed during the war, thereby laying the groundwork for a more authentic living history experience for all members of the Texas Rifles.

It should be noted, however, that this initiative would be accomplished over the long term, not in one year. Moreover, I fully expect to have an ongoing dialogue with the membership regarding how to accomplish the above stated objectives, perhaps beginning at Jesse Jones. It is my fervent hope that the spirit of the original "Renaissance" will continue to propel the Texas Rifles toward greater heights in the hobby during the course of this second phase. With your dedication, creativity, and open-mindedness, I have no doubt that it will. Trust and Go Forward!

Your obedient servant,

Phillip Sozansky, Lieutenant of the Texas Rifles

---



The quality of the Texas Rifles civilian membership is dropping!

## Because the Sergeant Says So!



Another year has passed for the Texas Rifles and with it; the organization surpassed the 20 year milestone. This is something that should make all members, both current and past, very proud. Few living history organizations are able to last half that long. There are a number of reasons that the Rifles have survived when so many other groups have disappeared. Great members, a progressive attitude, continued self education and pride in our appearance and impressions are but a few of the reasons that the Texas Rifles continue to thrive. To insure that the Rifles last for another 20 years, we all need to continue to evolve as reenactors, but more important, we need to recruit. I have to admit that in normal life, I'm as lax as anyone when it comes to trying to recruit friends and acquaintances, but we all need to work harder. While the civilians have continued to grow, the military has shrunk. Get out there and find people as crazy or foolish as we are to stand in the line.

As already mentioned by Captain Marek, we also need to sharpen our drill. Through no fault of our leadership, the quality of our drill has dropped. As you newly elected 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant, a decision I'm sure you will all come to regret, my primary focus will be our military appearance in the field and in camp. I am going to promote greater drill time at events including manual of arms, squad and company drill. As the Captain also mentioned, it would be greatly beneficial for members to get together for company or regional drills. I'm sure that food, beverages and comradeship would accompany these gatherings.

In addition to stepping up our drill at events or get-togethers, all of us need to take the opportunity to look over the drill manuals between events. While I'll admit it's not the most exciting reading, you can learn a lot from reading and thinking about the movements or formations. Of special importance to me is improved proficiency with our skirmish drill. We are often called upon to serve as skirmishers, either at small events or at the battalion level and we need to look sharp. There are a couple of publications with good descriptions of



skirmish drill and I take it upon myself to provide a skirmish summary that I'll post to the TR website.

During the annual meeting I had the opportunity to speak to a number of individuals interested in serving as non-com's for the coming year. If you missed the meeting but you're interested in serving as an NCO, please contact me by telephone, email or at the next event. Leadership is one of the Texas Rifles great strengths and we need interested individuals to step up and take more responsibility.

Finally, I would like to express how humbled I am at being elected as the Texas Rifles 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant for 2007. I consider it one of the great honors of my life and promise to do my best to serve all members of the Texas Rifles, as a 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant and as a friend. I expect I'll be more than a little annoying on the drill field, but always remember that you can approach me at any time with any concern regarding the conduct of the company, officers, or myself. While in the Rifles, I've learned from experience and from the guidance of the other members. I plan on that continuing.

Very humbly, your servant,

Don L. Tucker, 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant, Texas Rifles.

---

## From the Home Front

This past year was quite busy for the civilian impression of the Texas Rifles; we obtained a tent fly, several stools and a table, and at muster John Keahey presented us with a wonderful pitcher. Henkel Square was, I think, our greatest accomplishment this past year. I thank you for reelecting me to another year as Civilian Coordinator; it is shaping up to be a very busy year too.

At muster several members joined in a discussion regarding the direction the civilian impression should go. It was agreed that rather than separating the membership into civilian members and military members, we should think of ourselves as all members of the Texas Rifles with different impressions.

Some of our members have strictly civilian impressions. These individuals have either chosen this impression because the military aspect does not appeal to them, they are unable to physically participate in the military activities or their sex prohibits them from participation in the military of the 1860s. While these members concentrate on the material culture and civilian activities of the 1860s, it is important that they are aware of certain aspects of the war, such as the dates of major battles, who won these battles, general casualty numbers, and maybe even troop movement.

Other Texas Rifles members choose a strictly military impression. These members have a great knowledge of

the weapons and tactical information from the war. While these members do not need to know as much of the material culture as someone with a strictly civilian impression, there are certain topics they should be familiar with such as literature and music of the day, period politics and the occupation they may have held before the war.

The important point to remember is that we are all portraying people of the 1860s. Whether you choose to develop a full blown impression or you prefer the briefest sketch of who you are at a reenactment, some element of the other impression should be included. For the military it can be something as simple as a civilian piece of clothing or a blanket or plate or whistling a popular tune from 1860. A civilian impression can include discussions of the war and which army is where or simply understanding that women should not be in a military camp unescorted.

As we broaden our impressions to include aspects of each, we provide a better view of the Civil War and the mid-19th century to the public.

Annette Bethke, Civilian Coordinator

---

## Authenticity Committee

The goals set for the AC are to refine the supplier list and matrix and give the new members the ability to have a list of needed items, in priority of purchase, with a suggested source for each item. This should help those new to this hobby become well equipped, without having to replace items of substandard manufacture.

---

## Frontier Region

The muster provided the opportunity to meet with members no longer active and improve our communications with those members. There are some items that these members have which will be helpful to the region and the Rifles.

---



# Texas Rifles 2007 Annual Meeting & Reunion



You can dress em pretty, but their still only Captains!



Captain Keahey's last act as the Texas Rifle's serving captain; threatening to shoot the members!

Seriously, fun was had by all at the meeting/reunion and it was great to see the legacy of the Texas Rifles in its outstanding previous captains. If you were unable to attend, you missed a unique experience.

---

## TECHNOLOGY AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

We all know the long list of advantages that the Northern states enjoyed in the American Civil War: greater population, greater wealth, greater industrial capacity, greater naval and merchant fleet, greater railroad mileage, etc. From a rational perspective it was foolish for the South to attempt to win independence through armed struggle. Of course from a "rational" perspective it was equally impossible for the thirteen colonies to win independence from mighty Great Britain during the American Revolution; due to a similar list of advantages enjoyed by the British in that war. And it was thoroughly impossible for a few Texians to win independence from Mexico in the Texas Revolution.

The American Revolution was not a particularly innovative war and was fought with existing technology. Britain ignored its one chance to subdue the American colonies through technological advantage; the Ferguson breech-loading flintlock rifle. If Britain had placed this accurate, rapid fire (comparably speaking) rifle into production and issued it to its regiments in American, we all would be singing, "God Save the Queen" before sporting events. Mt. Vernon would not be sanctified as George Washington's home; it would be the residence of a rich Sir Somebody OBE who would regale his guests after dinner, visiting from the nearby city of



What real soldiers look like.



Wow! They can stand at attention!

Georgetown, with a tale about how the original owner was hung for treason sometime way back when. And the era of military breech-loaded military weapons would have started fifty years before it actually did. However fervid your patriotism and however brilliant your military leadership, you can't win battles or hold ground while your few uninjured soldiers are seeking cover from accurate, frequent volleys from the enemy. Volleys they can not match for rapidity or range. But happily for us, Britain remained conservative and chose not to innovate.

The brief Texas Revolution was fought between third world combatants utilizing second hand weaponry.

The Civil War happened during the transition from the old hand made world of the previous millennia to the new world of mass industrial production. Among the other Northern advantages listed in the opening paragraph, this transition doomed the Southern independence movement. The Northern States could not only make more of everything it needed for its war effort, it could make it so technologically improved that the South could not even compete against it. The U.S.S. Monitor was one example. Two other such innovations; the Spencer and the Henry repeating rifles, were even more decisive. Coincidentally, each of these weapons was patented in 1860. Both made use of new technology; the brass self-contained rimfire cartridge combining primer, powder and bullet in one neat convenient metallic package.

The Spencer mechanism was patented by Christian Spencer. It looked like the typical breech-loaded weapon of its day such as the Sharps Rifle; the Sharps itself being advanced for its time. But the Spencer did not operate like the single shot Sharps loaded with a linen cartridge and fired by a percussion cap. The Spencer was loaded through a tube through the butt stock and held seven brass rimfire cartridges. Another cartridge could be loaded into the breech for a total of eight shots before reloading was necessary. Loading and firing was easy; push down the trigger guard/loading lever all the way down to open the breech and eject the spent cartridge, pull it all way back to load the next cartridge and close the breech, cock the hammer and shoot. A skilled shooter could fire eight shots in ten (10) seconds. Even Mike Lucas at his best can't match that!

The Henry mechanism was patented by B. Tyler Henry. It did not resemble any other weapon of its day in appearance or operation. If you have ever watched a western movie with cowboys armed with Winchester rifles, then you know how a Henry rifle works. The famous Winchester was an improvement on the Henry design and operated in a similar manner. The Henry was loaded with 15 brass rimfire cartridges in a tubular magazine under the barrel. Throw down the loading

lever to open the breech and eject the spent cartridge casing, pull the lever back up, aim and fire. Repeat as necessary fourteen more times, or until the enemy survivors have run back out of range in abject terror.

While the Henry was the superior weapon in all technical respects, Spencer was way ahead in the marketing. P.R., as any modern American can tell you, is everything. The U.S. Army purchased only 1,700 Henry Rifles during the Civil War. A total of 10,000 additional Henrys were purchased by northern states for their soldiers, or by individuals Yankees who wanted the best. The Army purchased 12,000 Spencer Rifles and 94,000 Spencer carbines during the war. This means that the Federal army deployed approximately 120,000 repeating weapons during the latter half of the war. This total does not even take into consideration the 90,000 single shot breech-loading weapons such as the Sharps, or the 7,000 Colt Revolving Rifles issued. Statistically, one in every ten Northern soldiers had a repeating rifle or carbine by the end of the war. Another one in ten had a breech-loader. Due to production problems, the repeating rifles and carbines were not issued until 1863. The student of the Civil War is often informed that the Federal troops in the western theater of the war got the second rate uniforms and equipment. This was not true about the repeating rifles; the westerners got most of them! The western army under Rosecrans, Thomas and Sherman boasted two infantry regiments fully equipped with Henry rifles and eight infantry regiments partially armed with them. The same army deployed thirty (30) infantry regiments armed all, or in part, with the Spencer. This total of forty arm-of-decision infantry regiments does not include the many cavalry regiments armed with repeaters.

The first time the Confederates slammed into the technology brick wall was at the 1863 Battle of Hoover's Gap, Tennessee. Wilder's Brigade of Federal Mounted Infantry, completely equipped with breech-loading and repeating rifles, shredded attacking Confederates, even though the Confederates enjoyed superior numbers for once. Later that year at the Battle of Chickamauga, Longstreet's Corps of eastern theater Confederates swarmed through a hole in the Union lines when a Federal Brigade mistakenly withdrew and presented Longstreet with a large hole through which to swarm. This left Rosecrans's Federal Army was in a tough spot; routed from the field, broken into several parts and thrown back against a mountain with only two roads through passes by which to escape. One road out was captured by Confederates. The other road out was held open by General Thomas on Snodgrass Hill, Thomas's defense was ably assisted by Wilder's Brigade and the 21st Ohio; all armed with repeaters. Longstreet's Corp was stopped cold and the Federal Army escaped and lived to fight another day; exacting



revenge for its defeat later that year under Grant. The South had nothing with which to counter units such as Wilder's Mounted Infantry Brigade equipped with repeating rifles. Towards the end of the war this unit roamed the South at will.

At the Battle of Franklin, Cleburne's Confederate Infantry did the impossible and broke through the entrenched Federal line in a frontal attack; only to be counter attacked, thrown back and gunned down; in part by the men of the 73rd Illinois regiment, armed with Colt revolving rifles. The ditch in front of the Federal works was so full of Confederate bodies that the newly killed had no space in which to fall over, they died standing-up.

The Confederate Army of Tennessee was critically wounded at the Battle of Franklin, but it died at the Battle of Nashville. There this depleted, cold, starved, out numbered army was overwhelmed on its left flank by dismounted Union cavalymen armed with Spencer carbines.

The South did not have the technological ability to manufacture metallic rimfire cartridges. Captured Federal repeating weapons could be used only so long as

the ammunition captured with them lasted. Most of the Southern regiments began the Civil armed with smoothbore muskets; some still with flintlock ignition. By the close of the war the South had made great strides towards arming its armies with percussion rifled muskets. The South even managed to make a copy of the Sharps breeching loading single shot carbine, but that was as high tech as the South got.

The Northern volunteers also began the war armed in part with smoothbore muskets, but they ended the war with breech-loading or repeating rifles. The United States Congress passed a law specifying that troops armed after January 1, 1865 be issued with a breech-loading rifle. The South could not compete with that. Northern victory in the American Civil War was a matter of the Northern will to win. The North's many advantages could have been set at naught if the Northerners gave-up; as did the British and Mexicans before them. But the citizens of the North accepted their loses in men, and ultimately fielded the best equipped and most modern army on the planet at that time. Union numbers, will and technology proved to be unbeatable.

jmk, 12/1/2006

---

## Newsletter Deadline

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

---

## Survey



Company Recruiting  
Hotline:  
281-922-1915

## Texas Rifles

2007 Membership ID

Name

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

Emergency Contact:  
Name  
Phone # (XXX) XXX-XXXX

Medical Information:  
Allergies: none  
Other: none

If lost, please mail to :  
Texas Rifles  
2111 Rome Drive  
Pearland, TX 77581

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

Back

**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 remaining TR ID cards made! Thanks, Don.**

Name:

Emergency Contacts:

Contact Numbers:

Medical Info:

Allergies: (especially to medications)

Other: (i.e. heart, asthma, etc.)