



The Tyrants' Foe

Newsletter of the Texas Rifles



Volume XXX

April 1, 2013



★ Company G ★

The Captain's Dispatch



Once again, I wish to express my gratitude for being selected as Captain of the Texas Rifles for this year. We have 3 national 150th Anniversary events on our schedule, which should be memorable. Port Hudson is the immediate concern, and I look forward to seeing everyone at the event. The Louisiana State Park System really works to preserve the sites and make events on their sites enjoyable for us as well as the spectators.

Again, Jefferson has been confirmed as the first weekend in May, and we will return to Pioneer Farms the 6th of April – both events offering the venue for us to have an enjoyable time and after hours jollification. Obviously, the big push this year will be Gettysburg. It will be very likely the microcosm of the Sesquicentennial experience; the anniversary one of the key milestones in the history of our country being totally ignored by the National Park Service, and the living history community doing the best it can with its own resources to commemorate the actions of our ancestors.

We also face the challenge of attracting more members to the Texas Rifles, and making the hobby enjoyable to all. The key measure of success will be to field 20 men under arms. This is the first step to rebuilding our company, and enhancing our reputation. This means that what we do must appeal to our less senior members. We must teach those will follow in our footsteps, and be the future of the Texas Rifles. To do so, means being properly trained, and familiar with the roles and duties of the various company positions.

With our experience, we should be the most proficient company in the battalion. At each event we will work on this, so that as a company, we can perform whatever task may be required of us. I will try to make the drill sessions more interesting and educational, so that in a few years from now, our newer members are ready to take their place as the company leadership.

With this issue, our quarterly newsletter should be back on schedule, and serve as a vehicle for passing along to the membership interesting period trivia – especially the more domestic and social aspects of Victorian period life. The war was a key event, but not the only event in the lives of the people we portray. I ask you to pass along the knowledge that you have acquired to the rest of our membership.

I am currently working on the gallery portion of the website – so pass along your photos of past events

Lastly, the captain's role implies that I should be replaced on the Authenticity Committee, and I ask John Keahey to chair this important committee, and keep our impressions current with the most up to date research.

Your Servant,
Tommy Attaway
Captain, Texas Rifles

Lieutenant's Inkwell



I have been debating what exactly to write to you folks. I knew I wanted something to cover our upcoming national events. I started to dig out some old books I have and began to sort through some pictures about the events. As many of you know I have a serious uniform fetish. It seems I have this thing about collecting them. Anyways, as I was looking at the pictures a common theme came up about both of our national events. An army on the move, and how they dressed and looked.

Both the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of Tennessee had been engaged in major battles before their current engagements. The armies of course had a bit of time to resupply with a few basics before both heading northward. But what was even more striking was the condition of the clothing and the equipment the armies carried on the march. The men after prior to engaging in the conflict were dirty, ragged and quite shabby to say the least.

Lets take the Army of Northern Virginia for example prior to arriving at Gettysburg. They had fought a couple of major battles within the last few months, Chancellorsville and Brandy Station in May and June. As we know in our hobby a few days in the field and we begin to smell a bit ripe, equipment begins to wear out. Although there might have been an opportunity to gather a few pieces of clothing and equipment after the battles, im sure the quartermasters got the majority of it and spread it out as needed.

Lets talk about the quartermaster system for a second, the units would ask for clothing and equipment as needed. What they got was another story. If you look at the clothing returns the men per say never received complete uniforms as replacements. They would receive various uniform pieces to replace a worn out piece. Consequently this meant the mens uniforms were alot of mix and match. They also due to the lack of replacements, alot of field repairs were done. Im sure we have all lost a button or two in the field or had to repair a seam or two. But these uniforms through use in a combat battle would be torn by everything by shot and shell to tree branches. The uniforms would also not dirty and dusty.

A few years ago I had the "honor" to help assemble wagons prior to an event, between oiled leathers and axle grease after a few wagons I was filthy. I then spent four days in the field. Needless to say this was just a fraction of the time the men headed to Gettysburg would have been going through. Gunpowder, sweat, wood smoke and various other odors would have announced the arrival of troops before they were seen I'm sure.

My point being is in this hobby we sometimes look too clean and pristine. I'm not saying drag your shell jacket out behind your car, but I am suggesting a few things we might do to improve our impressions for these events. First, wear some of these items you are going to wear to the event outside around the house to help with a weathered look. You might consider sewing on a couple of patches on the knees, elbows and seat of the pants, or change out a few buttons to mismatch them? Don't polish the shoes to give them a scuffed look after a few weeks on the march. You also have to remember some dust and dirt somewhere, it was July there and hot for the most part.

Take a look at a few books to see how you compare for example Echoes of Glory or Maybe Don Troiani's "Civil War", which has a nice picture of Bennings Brigade on the picture. There are a lot of other good pictures online as well.

Now, after talking about how ragged, filthy and worn out the uniforms were there is one thing the men always kept bright and shiny, their weapons. There have been several accounts stating how the soldiers at Gettysburg kept their weapons in a shiny and bright condition. I would encourage you to do the same.

Lastly other equipment carried by the men, a lot of the period pictures show men with packs, but there are a lot more bedrolls in the pictures. These men were marching long distances and kept their equipment to the very bare essentials. A lot of battles will be just on the move. I would suggest we all lighten our own loads. One more place lot of period soldier carried their equipment by accounts was their pockets. Rags, combs, pocket knives, purses were all carried there.

This event is shaping up to be a really good event. I encourage you all to take a look at the clothing and equipment of the men who fought at Gettysburg and ask yourself "How do I compare?"

I Remain YOS
Lt Dusty Lin



I'd like to touch on a subject that I have written about in a previous newsletter, that subject being "authenticity." To illustrate my point, I'd like to once again use the movie, "Somewhere in Time." In this movie, the main character finds a way to travel to the past mainly by dressing in period clothes, surrounding himself with items of the period and somewhat putting himself in a trance. He goes back to the early 1900's and falls in love with a woman. He loves her so much that he really doesn't want to come back to present time. One day, she is teasing him about the clothes he is wearing which are a little out of date, especially his vest which has many pockets. He tries to tell her that he likes the pockets because they hold a variety of items and to illustrate, he reaches into one of them and pulls out a penny. To his shock the penny has a mint date of 1976! He tries to focus on his woman but alas, the moment is ruined and he finds himself in present time again.

Today, the hobby we enjoy has a lot of "pennies." We like to overlook some of these things in the name of comfort and also because stressing authenticity sometimes feels like a weight that keeps new members from joining or keeping older members current. We allow ice chests in camp, beer cans are all over camp in the morning, food is wrapped in plastic and we learn to accept this. The worst thing of all, in my opinion, the death of our hobby is all the damned cell phones in camp. One can not simply wonder about the weather without someone dragging their phone out and checking their App. Football season is no longer for re-enactments because whether we want them or not, we are constantly updated on the scores. But we have to be quiet if we gripe, we'll just disenfranchise someone who means well but is not really out to relive history anyway.

We used to have a decorum in camp that I would like to see reestablished. It mostly involves hiding these "pennies" and taking care not to haul them out and ruin someone else's experience.

1. Take care of your personal impression and strive to have the best in uniforms and equipment you can get. Ask if you don't know before you buy your gear and research originals.
2. Hide the plastic!!! I have gone through numerous events without any rations that needed to be wrapped in plastic. I know this is a tough one sometimes, but think it out and work with your messmates. You will be surprised what you can come up with and will appreciate your experience more.
3. Hide the plastic!!! I know that we need bug spray or sun block sometimes, but keep it in a poke sack. Keep the container hidden.
4. I like beer as much as the next guy and more than the previous guy. Depending on the event, sometimes ice chests are simply not an option. At others, they still need to be kept covered with a blanket, pour your beer into a tin cup and throw the can away in a burlap bag.
5. Keep your phone in your pocket! A few short years ago anyone caught with a cell phone in ranks was derided. Now it seems that no one cares..., except for maybe the man who was looking to get away from it all and leave modern times behind. It is actually quite easy to step out of camp for a while to check your phone and shows respect to your fellow re-enactor

Our "pennies" have the effect of dragging us back to modern times never to find that Magic moment that most of us Oldtimers used to look forward to. Mike Lucas once told me that the hobby is about escapism. We use the time to escape our jobs, worries and for a while, live in a simpler time. That, or we can just put on funny clothes and go camping...

So, in summary, RESEARCH RESEARCH RESEARCH---HIDE YOUR PLASTIC---STEP OUT OF CAMP TO CHECK YOUR PHONE!

That is all for now,
F.J. Marek
1st sgt. Of Texas Rifles



BOOK REVIEW

"The Last Shot"
by Lynn Schooler
Harper Perennial
2005



John Keahey
Captain Emeritus

Where was the last shot fired in the American Civil War? Virginia? North Carolina? Texas? These standard answers from history are all incorrect! Where the last shot of the Civil War was fired will probably surprise you as it surprised me. It was fired from one of the broadside deck guns on board the C. S. S. Shenandoah at a group of Northern owned whaling ships in, of all places, the Bering Sea north of the Aleutian Island chain offshore of Alaska. The shot was fired on June 22, 1865: a full two and one half months AFTER Lee surrendered his army at Appomattox, two months AFTER Johnston surrendered his army to Sherman in North Carolina and one month AFTER the last "battle" of the war at Palmetto Ranch, Texas.

The Confederate Navy was never able to seriously challenge the United States Navy for control of Southern rivers, coastline or the high seas. The South did strike at their stronger foe using the time-honored method favored by inferior naval powers since the 1500's: commerce raiding. With the few Southern shipyards cut-off from salt water by Northern blockading ships, the best place to obtain ships was Britain.

In spite of British Neutrality Laws written to keep Britain and its citizens neutral in other people's wars, three ships were built or purchased in Britain, armed with British cannons on the open seas, manned with largely British sailors and sent merrily on their way to destroy Northern ships with everyone smiling except the United States authorities. The three ships were the C.S.S. Florida, C.S.S. Alabama, and the C.S.S. Shenandoah. All three ships were wooden hulled sailing ships with auxiliary steam engines. The last of the British built commerce raiders to operate was the C.S.S. Shenandoah; it fired the last shot of the Civil War and is the subject of the book being reviewed.

The C.S.S. Shenandoah began life as a merchant ship named the Sea King. It was never intended to be a warship, but it was purchased by CS authorities because it was fast and had steam power. It sailed from Liverpool, England and was armed and equipped with cannon near the Madeira Islands in April 1864 by another British ship, the Laurel. The career of the Sea King/Shenandoah started out like comedy rather than warfare. Unlike previous ships like the Florida and Alabama, few of Sea King's or Laurel's British crew agreed to sign-on as crew for the newly re-named Shenandoah. The British government was becoming leery of continuing to assist the South by ignoring its own Neutrality Laws. British sailors did not want to risk their lives in a lost cause. The result was that when the Shenandoah left the Madeira Islands it was critically undermanned, with Confederate Naval officers filling in as seamen. No proper gun tackle was provided so the Shenandoah could not fire any of its guns until suitable rope and blocks were captured. It scared most of the ships it captured into surrendering by firing a small ceremonial saluting cannon loaded with blanks. The engine of the Shenandoah was mounted above the water line, which meant that it was vulnerable to enemy cannon fire. Throughout the ship's career as a raider the officers and crew lived in dread of encountering any Federal warship because they knew they could never defeat a real warship with an exposed engine and not enough crew to man their guns.

The Shenandoah was specifically tasked by Confederate authorities to attack the Northern whaling fleet. Whale oil was hugely important to the North. It provided the light, lubrication, gun oil and taxable wealth for the North. Petroleum or rock oil as it was known then, was a relatively new industry and only grew as a substitute for whale oil as the whales were gradually exterminated. Northern ships dominated the whaling and shipping trade. The voyages of the Florida and the Alabama had seriously damaged Northern shipping in the Atlantic Ocean. The oceans where Northern ships remained untouched by war were beyond the Atlantic; that is where the C.S.S. Shenandoah was sent. The Shenandoah literally circled the globe sinking Northern ships; it was the only Confederate ship to circumnavigate the world. It was the only Confederate ship to enter the Arctic Ocean. Its most destructive day was June 22, 1865 when it burned ten Northern whaling ships in one day in the cold Bering Sea. It fired one shot to compel their surrender; the last shot of the war.

The captain of the Shenandoah, James I. Waddell, knew that two Confederate Armies had surrendered and Richmond had fallen from California newspapers found in captured ships. The Northern crews informed him that the war was over, but it was not until he read a foreign newspaper that he accepted the fact that the nation he fought for had ceased to exist. He stopped destroying Northern ships. He and his men now found themselves in a desperate situation; the US Navy was in hot pursuit and knew approximately where he was off San Francisco. Federals considered the Shenandoah's crew to be pirates and they were explicitly exempted from amnesty by President Johnson; if caught they could be hung. His decision was to strike his guns into the hold and sail 17,000 miles back to Liverpool, England. Not a single life was lost from the 38 ships captured by the Shenandoah; the only deaths during the cruise were two Shenandoah crewmen who died from previous injury or disease. The views of the ex-Confederate crew about Lincoln's assassination make poignant reading.

This book is an easy read and is interesting not only about the Civil war, but about the whaling industry and its impact on whales and the native peoples such as the Eskimos who depended upon whales for food. As

my wife put it, “whales were like the buffalo: slaughter them and the Native Americans dependent upon them starve”.

Finally, for our civilian members I offer two additional reasons for reading this book; several of the Northern merchant ships had on board the wives of the captains. Voyages in slow sailing ships could last for years and several women were captured at sea by the Shenandoah. In addition to oil, whales were harvested for baleen (whale bone). Why? To make the hoop skirts demanded by ladies’ fashion. Think about those two facts when constructing your civilian persona.



Though it has not been a very active season for the civilians, it has given us time for research on our impressions. I would like to thank Roxanne for representing us at Port Hudson, hopefully she had good time and will come out with us again.

There are also some men who are coming out more as civilian, any ideas or research that can be shared to assist any of the gentlemen develop a civilian impression is appreciated. We need to remember to share our knowledge of the hobby with each other there is simply too much information out there for any one person to know it all.

The next event is at Pioneer Farms, and we hope to have many more at the site. Any help with scenario ideas for future events will be appreciated. Gathering around the kitchen will eventually get old if that is all we ever do. We (myself included) could put a bit more thought into food for the given season and time period. The more research I do for an event the more I seem to enjoy it.

In May we have Port Jefferson and TMD Civil War Vets. In June is Gettysburg. At Port Jefferson there is only a small scenario for the civilians, but if there are enough us that go we can practice our outdoor/camping skills, such as campfire cooking. And there is a ball in the evening.

That is about it for now. Sorry it is so short. I look forward to seeing you all at Pioneer Farms.

Meanwhile.....



...back in camp...

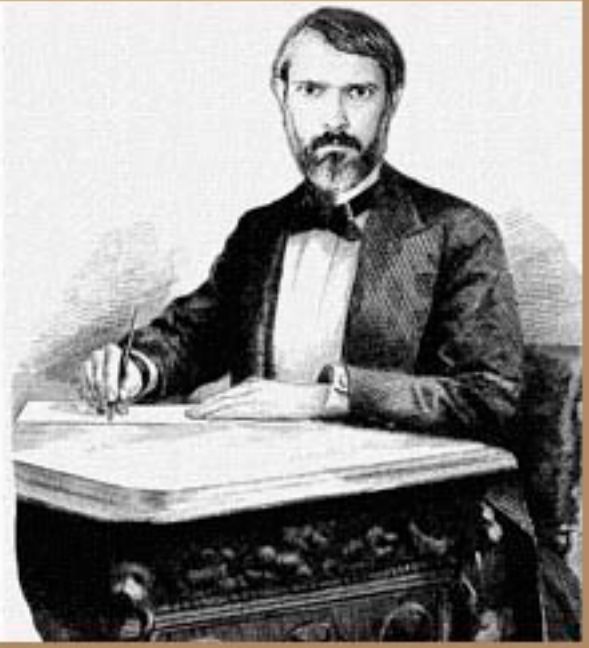
THE REBEL YELL

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/multimedia/videos/What-Did-the-Rebel-Yell-Sound-Like.html>



Can any of us do half a good as those who were actually there?

From the Editor's Desk



We have the following information on the planned battle scenarios for the 150th Gettysburg
- Courtesy Capt. Attaway

Wednesday (afternoon) - ceremony on the original battlefield and march to Devil's Den

Thursday (late afternoon) - possible non-spectator skirmish with our brigade and a select Federal force (not yet solidified)

Friday (early morning) - The Railroad Cut & McPherson's Ridge
(early evening) - East Cemetery Ridge

Saturday (afternoon) - Devils Den & The Round Tops
(dusk to dark) - Culp's Hill (non-spectator and hand-picked units; assault on the two lines of breastworks; we will sleep on arms after assault in the 1st line of breastworks)

Sunday - Pickett's Charge (we will portray Kemper's Brigade and will be heavily engaged while resisting the flanking attempt by the Feds)

With this in mind, I don't think it unrealistic to expect that 300 rounds per man for the weekend will be required. So, start getting rounds rolled and get as many arsenal boxes as you can together, or constructed if needed!



Registration Page for the Gettysburg Event

<http://www.redriverbattalion.org/gettysburg-event--bus-trip-registration.html>

- Courtesy Fred Yokubaitis

We will be conducting the registration process a little different from how we have registered for recent 150th events. Instead of everyone calling or emailing directly to Jack King to register, EVERYONE attending Gettysburg with the RRB is to fill out the [Gettysburg Event & Bus Trip Registration](http://www.redriverbattalion.org/gettysburg-event--bus-trip-registration.html) form on the RRB's website. This includes those who may have already registered on the Blue-Grey Alliance Gettysburg website, as those people still need to pay the wagon use fee. This information will be forwarded to Jack King and he will bill your credit card. This registration process will also assure that battalion staff has the most complete real-time list of everyone who has registered. **AGAIN, EVERYONE ATTENDING GETTYSBURG WITH THE RRB IS TO REGISTER VIA THE RRB'S GETTYSBURG REGISTRATION PAGE.**

Civilians may also register using this page, but **DO NOT** need to pay the wagon use fee.

Anyone interested in riding the bus, but has not registered or paid the bus fee, can do so while filling out the registration form. In addition, those with a remaining bus fee balance can pay it at the same time. **Please note, there are only 9 open seats remaining on the bus!**

Company commanders, if you have men that do not have access to the internet, you may fill out the form for them. If you plan to register your entire company and pay in bulk, you will still need to fill out the form for each person and indicated "COMPANY BULK PAYMENT", along with who to contact for payment, in the **Special Instructions** box on the registration form.

Now, let the fun begin!



Advice From the Doctor



“Small ills are the fountains of most of our groans. Men trip not on mountains, they stumble on stones.”
Ancient Chinese Saying



Buy Hiram's Snake Oil for Quick Relief!



P O R T H U D S O N

2013



Thanks for sharing
the pictures Dusty!
-The Editor

The Death and Looting of Our Captain
Remember when and where this wretched act took place?



July Newsletter

Due date of June 15, for publication on 1 July, 2013