



The Tyrants' Foe

Newsletter of the Texas Rifles



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★ Company G ★

The Captain's Dispatch



We are well into this year's campaign. Some of our members attended Jesse Jones park and put on a show that got the attention of the visitors. We played host to the Red River Battalion muster at Pioneer Farms. And we participated in Living History Days at Ft. Martin Scott. We have 2 national 150th Anniversary events on our schedule, which should be memorable. Mansfield 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.

The other 150th Anniversary event will take us to Virginia where we will portray part of the Texas Brigade as they repelled multiple attacks. This event also promises an interesting scenario as we will be attacked by a unit of US Colored Troops.. Some members will be at Pleasant Hill, where we will form a Federal company with some friends from the RRB, and a few others. Then we will return to Ft. Martin Scott portraying the Confederate occupation of the fort, and the site staff are working with us to do something unusual – we are working on having as one of the interpretive points being making period repairs and some construction work about a couple of the buildings on the site. Bring period tools.

In the fall, after our return from Virginia, we will have TMD and another civilian event at Pioneer Farms. Unless we can work up a suitable scenario at TMD, we will be primarily civilian there as well. The last

scheduled event for the year is Liendo, and the 1st US is attending, which should boost the numbers of Federals, and might make this year's event more interesting.

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 who 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 should 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. This is vital to our organization. We need to appeal to our less experienced members to learn the duties of the company NCOs, and be able to assume the role of a company grade officer.

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 still working on the gallery portion of the website – so pass along your photos of past events especially of the years from 2000 to 2010. One additional project that I wish to complete this year, is to create an archive of our past newsletters and make them available via the website.

Lastly, the captain's role is been honor that I appreciate in having been given your trust, hope that you find the Rifles can continue on for the next 27 years as we have the past.

Your Servant,
Tommy Attaway
Captain, Texas Rifles



Lieutenant's Inkwell



As the 150th Mansfield approaches I would like to take a few moments and talk about the 13th Maine and their involvement at the battle. The 13th and 15th Maine had recently returned after being loaned to the 13th Corps for the Rio Grande occupation. The 13th Maine was involved in a lot of the "battles" along the gulf coast and out lying islands. The battle of Fort Esperanza won them laurels and mention from General Franklin.

Upon their return these two fighting regiments were assigned to the 1st Division of the 19th Corps. Through the mud they marched northward with General Banks up the Red River. As the battle began the First Division was in fact stopped and was issuing supplies including uniforms when the call came for them to move forward.

The single road forward was clogged with wagons and limbers so the men pressed forward leaving their own horse drawn vehicles in place. The 1st Division would go into battle with nothing more than their muskets and a willingness to prove themselves.

As they moved forward through the stalled wagon they began to have another obstacle slow them down...the migration of the shattered 13th Corps fleeing to the rear. The men of the 13th Corps told them "all was lost and flee while you can". At this time a messenger came down the line ordering forward "at the double quick". The 1st Division pressed forward through the tangle coming the other way. They finally came to the largest opening in the forest they had seen in quite some time. The break in the forest was about half a mile long and deep.

A New York regiment was thrown forward as skirmishers across the entire half-mile while the rest of the Division formed on line across the road. Im sure the command must have been "by the left flank deploy by regiment " or such" as they did they could clearly see the Rebel Army pressing forward driving the Federals of the 13th Corps before them.

It was a combination of the Rebels stopping to loot the wagons and the shock of the New York regiment which gave the First Division just enough time to come online and face the attack.

History books have said the fight lasted an hour. But the soldier's accounts said it was only about 20 minutes. Regardless remember the Division had no support from any other arms. It was one of the few battles of the Civil War where cannons were not present. They fired volley after volley into the advancing Rebels. The Rebels brought up reinforcements and tried to turn the right flank. The 1st Division refused the line and held their ground. Regardless of the time frame the Rebels finally withdrew. The 1st Division actually began at this point to advance forward but was quickly recalled by General Banks. The first Division then again sent out skirmishers. They held this position until told to withdraw that night. Unfortunately some of the skirmishers were not recalled and were captured the next morning.

The Battle of Mansfield was over. Although the Rebels had defeated a large portion of the Federal Army...The First Division, which included the 13th Maine, stopped the Rebel Army cold.

So when we take the field next month at Mansfield.... hold your head high you are the undefeated.

I Remain YOS
Lt. Dusty Lind



From the Cup of John Keahey

FRANCE, THE UNITED STATES AND TWO OF THEIR “OH SH _ _” MOMENTS

There are times in the life of an individual when circumstances go beyond his/her control and they are forced to helplessly confront the consequences of their actions. Some examples of this might be seeing the flashing light on the top of a police car behind you as you travel down the road at a velocity above the legal rate. Or the letter from the IRS informing you that you were a trifle too creative on last year's Income Tax Return and that a lot of money, plus additional penalties, is now rightfully owed your government. Or to not study for a test due to social commitments, only to re-discover the strong correlation between actually studying for an exam and passing it. The usual reaction is to exclaim, “Oh Sh _ _,” and then try (and

generally fail) to mitigate the circumstances in which we now find ourselves. We have all had these moments in our lives, and they occur in the lives of nations as well as individuals. For the purposes of civility, I will now refer to these times of painful insight as an OS moment. There have been two major OS moments which connect the United States and France over the past couple of centuries. One of them has to do with certain events which took place in the 1814 and the other has to do with the American Civil War.

Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear named in the United States the War of 1812 and named the Napoleonic Wars by the rest of the universe. For those of you condemned to a modern education and who consequently have been historically deprived, I will stoop to explain the historical context of this rather regrettable slaughter.

After winning its independence from Great Britain as a result of the American Revolution, the United States revised its government in 1787 with a new Constitution and proceeded to enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as a new, but weak country. The same was not true in the Kingdom of France. France, as you may recall, supported the thirteen colonies in their struggle against Great Britain, supplying the American revolutionaries with money, muskets, cannons and uniforms. The French did not do this because their hearts glowed at the righteousness of the American cause; France was using the US as its proxy to fight against its habitual enemy; Great Britain. Eventually France and Britain formally declared war against each other during the Revolution. A French fleet made the victory at Yorktown possible; that same fleet was later defeated by the British Navy. After the peace was signed in 1783, the bills for this expensive commitment came due in France. Inspired by the American example of democracy, the French overthrew their absolute monarch in 1789. This led to the Terror when the French murdered each other wholesale with the guillotine, which led to a war against most of Europe (no European king wanted a king-killing republic as his next door neighbor; his peasants might start thinking too much), which led to a leader named Napoleon Bonaparte, which led to Napoleon Emperor of the French, which led to France kicking Europe's collective butt (except Britain and Russia), which brings us to the year 1814. What began in 1792 as a war of European monarchies against revolutionary France continued as the Napoleonic Wars in 1803 as Europe fought against Napoleon (and generally lost). These were the world wars of their day, huge in scope, and the US tried to stay out of them. Tired of being picked on by the super powers France and Britain, particularly by the British habit of abducting sailors from US ships, the US eventually declared war against Britain in 1812. We came within a few votes of declaring war against France as well, but cooler heads (?) prevailed and the weak United States decided to pick a fight with only one international super power at a time. We began this war with a navy of thirteen ships and an army of 4,000 men. Britain at the time had a navy of 600 ships and an army of 100,000. Being focused on the greater threat in Europe, Britain committed few resources to the American war. We got booted out of Canada twice, the frontier Indian tribes went on a scalping spree with a British credit card, and the United States and Royal Navies exchanged a few warships; yet in general the War of 1812 fizzled for two years.

In 1814 the European allies finally managed to defeat Napoleon and exile him to the Mediterranean island of Elba. Now we come to the America's OS moment. With Napoleon in exile (he didn't stay there long) and Europe at peace, Britain now turned its full power upon its one remaining enemy, the United States. While technically not an ally of France, the US was certainly at war with Britain. The British people were angry that we stabbed them in the back while they were fighting for their national existence against Napoleon, and there must have been a lingering desire to punish us for the American Revolution. Britain had the world's strongest navy and possibly the world's best army; both organizations were composed of veteran professionals accustomed to victory against the best that Europe had to offer. Britannia's long sword was now pointed solely at the United States. President James Madison must have uttered a very loud "Oh Sh _ _!" when the news that Napoleon was defeated arrived. What happened next was that our coast was strictly blockaded by the Royal Navy; nothing that floated moved without their permission. The few American warships not captured were confined to port, Washington D.C. was captured and burned (what a concept!) and the Chesapeake Bay became a British lake surrounded by devastated towns and farms. Several New England states openly talked of leaving the Union. The only bright spots were the fending-off of a British

fleet from Baltimore by a stoutly held fort (we got a good song out of that), we won control of Lakes Erie and Champlain, and Americans began to re-re-invade Canada with some success. Peace was signed in 1814 between a lucky United States and a war weary Britain, a peace which mostly returned things to the way they were when the war began. We shot-up a British Army attacking New Orleans after the peace was signed, which raised the body count for this whole pointless endeavor.

Fast forward to 1823. Our next OS moment between the United States and France removes the OS shoe from a US foot and puts it squarely on a Gallic (French) one. Concerned about European governments attempting to re-establish colonies in the western hemisphere, US President James Monroe proclaimed the Monroe Doctrine. This piece of bravado announced that no European nation will be allowed to create or re-create colonies in North or South America or said aggressor would have to answer to the United States. Of course, the only European nations the 1823 version of the United States was capable of keeping out of the hemisphere was Andorra and possibly, on a good day, Monaco. What Monroe was counting upon was a partnership with the Great Britain's navy to help prevent foreign interventions. What Monroe had not counted on was that the British Navy might assist in an intervention and that the US attention might be focused internally.

In 1848 the French staged revolution #2 against their less-than-revolutionary king and created revolutionary republic #2. For president they elected another Napoleon, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, nephew of Napoleon #1. Bad choice! In 1851 the second Napoleon staged a coupe d'état (just like Napoleon #1) and in 1852 declared himself Emperor Napoleon #3 (they skipped #2) of French Empire #2 (without the numbers French rulers, revolts, republics and empires really do become confusing). He then began a series of foreign interventions with his overdressed army in a bid for wealth, prestige and power just like his uncle used to do. In 1862 France, Britain and Spain jointly captured the Mexican seaport city of Vera Cruz. The idea was to forcibly take port revenues as payback for un-repaid loans made to Mexico. These loans had been defaulted upon by the Mexican government (there may be a lesson in this story for Greece), but France had a hidden agenda. They wanted the whole country. Spain and Britain did not sign up for that and left. The French went on to capture Mexico City in 1863, overthrew the republican government and install a puppet empire under an Austrian prince named Emperor Maximilian #1 (there won't be a #2) of Mexico.

As anyone reading this article probably recognizes, the United States fought its Civil War between 1861 and 1865. In 1862 the United States Government was somewhat distracted by the firm of Davis, Lee, Jackson, Bragg and Co.; too distracted to do more than diplomatically protest against France's blatant invasion. The US had its hands very full fighting the Confederates. All that changed in April, 1865. The Southern Armies had surrendered and the South was prostrate. In 1865 the US Army had 980,000 soldiers under arms! Most were combat veterans. As of January 1, 1865 Congress required all newly mustered regiments to be equipped with breech loading rifles, so this large army was progressing technologically as well. The US Navy had 60,000 sailors and almost 700 ships; more than 60 were ironclads, more ironclads than the rest of the world's navies combined (as an aside, for those of the Southern persuasion, it took a technologically advanced navy and million men to beat the South!). This military might was poised, battle hardened and ready, but there was no one left to fight. I read an interesting 1865 newspaper editorial once. In it the editor speculated on just what the US government was going to do with a million man army ready to march. Invade Mexico? Invade Canada? Curiously, the editor was comfortable leaving such a momentous decision to Federal politicians (sounds rather naïve, doesn't it?).

What the United States did with a small part of its big military was to use it for our neighbor's welfare. Citing the Monroe Doctrine the United States Navy blockaded the Mexican coast so that no additional French troops could land, and President Johnson sent General William T. Sherman with a 50,000 man army to the Texas/Mexican border. The French language is renowned as a subtle tongue and excels at conveying nuance; Americans, however speak blunt force trauma English. Their message to France was indelicate; get out of Mexico and stay out, or we will throw you out. And Billy Sherman is just the guy to do it; ask anybody from Georgia.

Now it was France's turn to scream, "Oh Sh _ _", or "Ah merde" or whatever the equivalent expression is in nuanced French. Napoleon #3 (they skipped #2) Emperor of French Empire #2 had not planned on facing United States #1's strong military in its own neighborhood when he shot his way into a weak, financially strapped republic. He had planned on just a quick mugging while the United States was preoccupied by its Civil War. Napoleon #3 (they skipped #2) backed down. He could not win against both the US military and the Mexican resistance movement. The French stopped killing Mexicans and left. Emperor Maximilian #1 (there won't be a #2) of Mexico's government collapsed and Maximilian #1 was executed by a restored Mexican republican government (that's why there won't be a #2).

The US very democratically took its million-man military, the greatest armed force in the hemisphere and probably on earth at the time, **and disbanded it**. Sent it home. That's right, the brutal, ruthless, Great Satan, imperialistic, arrogant, warmongering, evil (insert in this space _____ the slur of your choice) United States of America armed with a mighty sword of conquest, dropped it in the dirt, turned on its heel and walked away. There have been other times in the history of the United States when it rejected conquest or revenge. Perhaps it is of those times we should be the most proud as a nation. The intervention of the United States on behalf of the Republic of Mexico seems to have been largely forgotten by our friendly neighbor south of the border. We could have taken Mexico or a piece of Mexico (again) for ourselves or simply ignored the whole situation, but we did not. The next time you hear somebody denigrating the US for being so nasty towards Mexico, ask them how many Mexican nationals do they know who speak French?

So, OS moments happen to individuals and to nations such as the United States and France. Of course, the best way to prevent an OS moment is to not put yourself into a situation in which circumstances can so decisively turn against you. For example, don't declare war on a super power (alone), don't assume that a country torn by a civil war cannot emerge stronger from it, and don't assume that a war weary country would be unwilling to stand-up to an international bully for brutalizing a republican neighbor. And study for tests!

John M. Keahey, 11/6/2011





From the Mind of Tommy Attaway

The History of the History

We are now upon the 50th anniversary of “re enacting” or living history which we can trace to the centennial of the WBTS. Interestingly, most graduate level history courses are concerned with the history of what was thought about the events of history as much as it is concerned with the events themselves. The past does not change, only our interpretation of it does. Let us take a brief look at the history of the study of the war itself and a perspective of the living history hobby.

The post war generation has their view of the war subject to the specter of the “bloody shirt”. This was predominantly a Republican party tactic of holding the Democratic party responsible for the Civil War, and to show any sympathy for anything Confederate was to betray the blood of good men who died to save the Union, with the more extreme orators taking a blood covered shirt the supposedly belonged to a slain Federal soldier for dramatic effect. This attitude formed the basis for the attitudes displayed during Reconstruction, and the resurgence of the Democratic party in the South leads to the disputed presidential election of 1876, which resulted in a Republican President and the end of Reconstruction. (note that the current Texas Constitution dates from 1876) for the next 20 years, the war becomes the subject of some national reconciliation, primarily led by the veteran’s organizations, which leads to some sympathy for the individual soldiers of the South.

The next turn in interpretation of the WTBS occurs as a result of the war with Spain 1896 to 1898. The poor condition of the state militias (in the South due to various disarmament laws aimed at the Klan and in the North due to using militia units for strike breaking and to suppress labor violence led to a decline in membership) led to the use of Civil War vets to lead the volunteer units raised for the war. News coverage from Cuba was particularly sympathetic to ex Confederates – “Fighting Joe Wheeler” moves inland was big news and “regulars and Rough Riders, representing the young manhood of the North and South, fought shoulder to shoulder, unmindful of race or color, unmindful of whether commanded by an ex-Confederate or not, and mindful only of their common duty as Americans.” John J. Pershing quoted in the Washington Post.

This sympathy for the South, led to the “Lost Cause” view of the war, in which the war is seen as the South trying to preserve its culture and heritage from encroaching modernity. This played to the romantic notions of the antebellum South, plantation culture and rural yeoman farmers, combined with a streak of stubborn

independence. Due to underlying racial tensions in the country as a whole, this view was a particular justification to the attitudes that led to Southern secession and views on race. Two cultural events form the bookends of this view of the war – the film “Birth of a Nation” marks the beginning of this view of the war, and concludes with the publication and filming of “Gone With the Wind”.

Running alongside, and slightly behind this view, was the start of academic historical research, with an emphasis of history being the influence of economic factors on events – or the school of “economic history”. This view of the war is a result of economic trends – the inability of the South to develop economically, especially compared to the North as it industrialized. Labor productivity could not increase in the South because of the inability to end slavery because of racial theory, while the North became increasingly prosperous by manufactures. The South breaks away from the Union before it became nothing more than a poor backwater with no economic power and little political influence – the North having faster population growth meant the House of Representatives should become greatly imbalanced in favor of the Northern states in the future.

The Southern sympathizers also took an economic view with the study that the economic factors, if left on their own must have resulted in emancipation because the cost of slavery would have become excessive. Once the profit went out of slavery, it would end on its own. Had the abolitionist not interfered in the politics of the South, slavery would have ended on its own. The most recent look at economic history has looked at the effects of the tariff policy of the federal government, the proportion of the tariffs paid by the Southern states relative to the Northern states. The idea being that the South was the primary tax payer for the federal government, and the war is a result of the Southern states incapable of keeping federal tariffs low, while the North could not let the South secede because of the loss of revenue to the federal government.

Post World War II study has concentrated on various social and cultural factors that led to the war, and this leads us to the consideration of living history. This form of historical activity combines the study of social history (people and societal norms), hobby, and restoration projects starting with Colonial Williamsburg. The start of living history is the placing of buildings and artifacts in context by demonstrating their everyday use. The proliferation of information available in terms of diaries, memoirs, and printed material made it possible for almost anyone to study history in various forms.

As a hobby, we date to the Centennial celebrations of the WTBS, in which people who were interested in the war sought some form of personal experience – or the ability to reconnect with the past via personal experience. While popular to hold those efforts of the 1960s in disdain by the living history community today, were it not for those events, we would not be where we are today. There were the occasional participants of extremely high authenticity – it was all original gear, but the most was the some way to participate with what they could get – being there more important than the physical artifacts.

The lack of historical accuracy in the portrayals of the Centennial was a mistake the leaders who turned their attention to the American Revolution Bicentennial were determined to avoid. The re-created units focused on leaning the clothing and artifacts in use during the 1770s and members of the hobby set about to provide the needed material. It was in this period, that the idea of re-enacting took hold as a hobby with even entire families participating, and the Reagan review of the re-enactors at Yorktown is one of the high points of the hobby.

The 1980s were a period of increased commitment to historical accuracy and research, so that the physical impressions would be credible and the first strivings toward “museum quality” impressions. The hobby also started to branch off into the entire panoply of American history – name the date, and there is someone somewhere trying to portray the period. We are now at another milestone in the hobby – WTBS Sesquicentennial, Bicentennial of the War of 1812, 175th of the Texas Revolution, and the Centennial of the first World War. We will find out if as a society, we have changed from personal experience and learning by doing, or have transitioned to “virtual reality” in which we live vicariously.

MEMORIES

