



The Tyrants' Foe



Volume XXXIV

Newsletter of the Texas Rifles
Celebrating 30 Years of Excellence

April 2017



First of all this is not a political statement. It is not to throw stones on anyone's values or beliefs. It is just a simple observation from the simple mind of a wandering tourist.

We were returning from an event recently with a day of sight seeing on the menu. It was a beautiful Sunday morning in a small town in south Texas. Many of the residents were in church; the main square was deserted except for a lady washing windows. Not a car was in sight. It was a typical small Texas town with a huge gothic courthouse standing tall and proud, a symbol of local pride and prestige for generations. The buildings around the town square were filled with antique stores and boutiques with smattering of law offices close to courthouse. The business of the past had all been all replaced by big box stores on the edge of town.

I was about to leave when something strange caught my eye on the corner of the courthouse lawn. It was made of simple granite and somewhat looked like a gravestone marker about ten feet tall? I walked around a gothic iron fence and began to read the inscription.

It was in fact a marker of remembrance. But not to the memory of someone dearly departed. It was a marker to honor the men who had led a Civil War Battle. It was a marker for the leaders of the Battle of Galveston. How strange I thought as Galveston was at least three hours drive by car from here yet here was a marker to laud their accomplishments. I looked for any other markers who would erect this, but alas there was not. Of course my interest picked up.

Who were these simple men from south central Texas who would take the time and monies to do this? What was their connection to a battle so far away? Their were other battles fought in the south and in Texas, what made this small one day battle so significant to a bunch of ranchers and farmers? These for the most part were not men of wealth. These were no the big plantation owners with the white columned homes. What would drive men to do this task and then put in on the courthouse lawn for all to see? It was a source of pride for a by gone generation, but why?

In this new world of ever changing values and beliefs, I wonder how much longer this simple piece of stone will be perceived for what it is? How much longer till it is thought to be an affront to society and a black mark from the past?

After leaving the square we stopped in the local diner and had some lunch. My eyes wandered over the other diners. There were people of all colors, classes and walks of life, who mingled and talked as friends and neighbors. These were the locals by their dress and demeanor. I overheard conversations about the price of hay and local sports. I thought did these local people ever think what would happen if they were posed the question to remove what their ancestors had done?

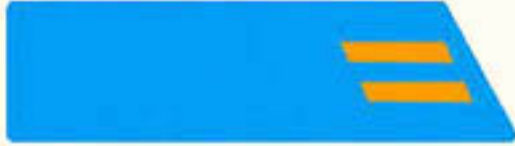
I left the town more confused than satisfied. I kept wondering on my return trip would the simple granite marker still be on the square? Would it be removed as a bad memory of the past or maybe moved to another location which society today might find more appropriate.

As many of you like I have been in this hobby for a few years. Great changes have come over the value system and what our forefathers believed in. We are now in a generation where we are asked not to even fly flags in camp. We are now asked not to do several other things what would not have been questioned 20 years ago. Is it right or wrong? This is not for our hobby* to question, challenge or change. Our mission be it right or wrong is to continue to portray what our ancestors did the best way we can. I just wonder sometimes what the next generation will bring and how much longer little monuments in small town America will survive?

I Remain Your Humble and Obedient Servant.....Captain Dusty Lind



Lieutenant's Inkwell



Due to Frank's deployment behind enemy lines he is unable to provide an article for this newsletter. However, I was able to obtain a tintype of him in action. - The Editor.





First Sergeant Says So

The Red River Battalion had intended to conduct a school of instruction so that we could harmonize our drill among the companies. Circumstances have precluded that activity from taking place, but this provides an opportunity to cover in greater detail some of the items we covered at our annual muster. This article will be about dry books of tactics.

The first manual used by Continental troops was Von Steuben's Regulations, which remained the standard manual until 1812. In that year, Smyth's manual was in use from 1812, until Scott's tactics was adopted for use in the 1830s, with a one year exception in 1813, when Duane's was in use. Scott's was abstracted for militia use, and remained in use until 1855, when Hardee's manual was adopted. Both Scott and Hardee essentially translated post Napoleonic Wars French manuals into English, they were not original works.

In creating his work, Hardee had one advantage over Scott. Hardee was the tactics instructor at the Military Academy, and so had a four company battalion to test his manual for him. This might be useful to keep in mind in studying Hardee's manual of the 1855 version. First, the cadets would already be familiar with Scott's and thus, were not learning the drill from no previous military experience. Second, they were using the shorter cadet muskets, and not 1842 or 1855 Springfields.

As the unpleasantness of the early 1860s required larger military formations, led by people with little practical military experience at the levels of command they had attained, Hardee's 1855 manual was revised. In 1861 Hardee himself created a revision we now refer to as Goetzel's edition, which introduced two major changes with which we are very familiar. The stacking method was changed to account for the full size muskets and properties of the Enfield bayonet. Also, when loading, the butt of the musket was moved from between the feet, to outside of the left foot, to make it easier for shorter men to load.

In the Federal service, the 1855 revision of Hardee's was done by Silas Casey. His manual leaves the same loading method as the 1855 Hardee's. He also leaves the more traditional stacking method of having the first two muskets placed on the ground and using the third to come in underneath the intersection of the bayonets of the first two muskets and turn the third to "lock" the stack. Fortunately for us in performing the school of the soldier, much of the rest is the same in both manuals.

Thus, our impressions require us to be proficient in three drill manuals, Scott, 1861 Hardee's, and Casey's. While working with different units, we may need to mix Hardee's and Casey. This means before we drill and take the field with other units serving together with us, we need to take a few moments to make sure we are all doing the same thing for the same command.

Actually this is not a new challenge, there was a publication in the 19th Century, The Army and Navy Journal, where officers wrote about their experience and sought the advice and experience of their colleagues. One of the articles was how to fire at the left oblique, as the manuals were not clear on how to do it.....

Tommy Attaway,
1st SGT



Our Civilians, a wonderful group of people with great works and a fine impression!

- The Editor



Commander's Corner



I was recently at a flea market. I looked under a glass case and there was a small revolver, a pocket pistol. I asked the seller what it was and he said it was a child's toy. He asked \$20.00 dollars for it and I paid it. I got it home and saw the word s "Dead Shot" across the top of the frame. A little bit of research found a forgotten Civil War era gold mine of information. I thought it might be nice to learn more about more than just Colt's and Remington Revolvers.

http://americansocietyofarmscollectors.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/B048_Wagner.pdf

- Captain Dusty Lind





From the Library of Tommy Attaway

Notes on the Texas Brigade Seven Days Battles

As we prepare for our trip to Virginia in June, a review of the Texas Brigade as it may have appeared at the Seven Days is in order. As a review, the brigade consisted of companies organized and accepted into service shortly after Texas left the United States in February of 1861. The regiments are organized by the State of Texas and are accepted into Confederate Service on June 30, 1861. By mid August of 1861, the regiments are on their way to Richmond, traveling by rail from New Orleans to Richmond.

Diary accounts from this time give us an insight into the appearance of the troops. In the 4th Texas, only one company had arms, and the leatherworkers were tasked with making the accoutrements for that company. Uniforms were militia company or commutation, and thus local manufacture. Not until arrival in Virginia were all of the troops of the brigade armed. One account says that their arms were captures from First Bull Run.

As we are now at the point where the man have just over one year of service, we have some interesting challenges in determining what the troops had, and the source of supply. Clearly, the first set of clothing accompanies the regiments from Texas, but we are now reaching the period where this clothing was being replaced. As early as December 31, 1861, the regiments are drawing a considerable amount of clothing. On this date alone, the 4th Texas receives 754 blankets, 202 coats, 202 pants, 503 overcoats, and 148 sets of accoutrements, in addition to the expected items such as shoes socks and drawers. Thus, in the first three months of 1862, almost the entire 4th Texas has been clothed with issues while in Virginia. This indicates in addition to the numerous reports of sickness in winter camp, that the 4th Texas arrived without being prepared for hard service.

As we know that Texas troops are being issued clothing in early 1862, we next need to solve the mystery of what did those items look like, and where did they originate. That they

are listed in the regiment's quartermaster book indicates these are issued from a depot, and not commutation items. As Texas did not have a substantial quartermaster operation functioning until later in 1862, this leaves Richmond as the most likely source. As the issue dates are before what we can date the type RD II jacket, it can now be considered very possible, that some 25% or more of the Texas Brigade went into action at the Seven Days wearing RD I jackets and other clothing items supplied from Richmond.

Some of the other numbers on the issues are also telling. Almost everyone draws a blanket, and over 50% draw overcoats. Either the brigade was in dire circumstances, or the Richmond depot was able to obtain large quantities of material to supply the Army of Northern Virginia. From what we have of the records, it seems more of the former than the latter. In its stride and even into 1865, the Richmond depot was able to supply the ANV with some 15,000 jackets per month and corresponding numbers of other clothing items.



WHAT MUZZLELOADING CIVIL WAR SHOULDER ARMS COULD ACTUALLY DO

Since my youth (yeah THAT long ago) it has been conventional historic wisdom that the introduction of the expanding hollow-base bullet invented by French Captain Claude Minie in 1847 (minie ball to us) resulted in huge increase of battlefield casualties because now the average soldier could now deliberately shoot an individual enemy soldier at 500+ yards; hence, more slaughter due to increased range and accuracy in rifled shoulder arms and artillery. Lately some authors have begun to question this theory. They use first person accounts to reveal that most Civil War combat took place at short, smoothbore musket, ranges. Therefore rifled weapons didn't increase the amount of long range firing, just increased the ability to hit the target at the traditional shorter ranges of combat. What few, if any of these authors have done, is live fired Civil War weapons more than a few times at

a target. I have. I have shot rifle-muskets for sport and in competition since 1964. Below is my summary of how Civil War era muzzle-loading weapons actually performed.

Smoothbore Muskets

Whether using matchlock, wheel lock, snaphanze, doglock, flintlock or percussion ignition, the performance of a smoothbore military musket remained the same. The military smoothbore caliber in the US was .69. Some imported arms ranged up to .80. But all these muskets were loaded with unpatched round balls about .06 caliber smaller than the bore. You can literally drop a bullet into a clean smoothbore musket from muzzle to breach without having to use a ramrod. However, what goes in may come back out; soldiers were trained in most armies to ram the cartridge paper down on top of the bullet to keep them from rolling back out if the weapon was pointed down. Loading time was 20 seconds, or less. Due to this intentionally loose fitting ammunition, loading was not inhibited because of powder fouling build-up in the barrel. For smoothbore muskets in the US military three types of ammunition was supplied; ball, buck and ball, and buckshot cartridges. Smoothbore muskets were the most common early war weapon, 850,000 were available for issue. Northern troops mostly has their smoothbore weapons replaced with rifled-muskets over the course of the war. Southern soldiers carried them throughout the war: you still find .62 round ball bullets on late war battlefields.

What could these weapons do? Buckshot is almost non-lethal and suitable for a range of 50 yards or less. It was not commonly issued. Buck and Ball cartridges have three .32 caliber buckshot on top of a .62 ball. It was deadly out to 100 yards and the preferred smoothbore ammunition. Ball, and Buck and Ball cartridges, had difficulty hitting an individual man at 100 yards and their maximum effective range was 150 yards. The bullet would go further, but with an unpredictable point of impact and decreasing velocity; leather straps, belt buckles or even heavy clothes could stop a "spent round".

Patched Ball Rifles

Academic historians have written a lot of books trying to define what made Americans different; different enough to fight an eight year war to separate us from Great Britain. One influence on American character development was the frontier. Europeans had not had a frontier area since the Middle Ages. The theory goes that the American Character was determined more by the people living in primitive conditions on the frontier than the more civilized people on the coastline striving to clone another England. Ben Franklin called the frontier people "white savages". Out on the frontier you did not live long unless you could hunt and protect yourself. The weapon of choice since before the American Revolution was the American long rifle, capable of killing a man or deer at 400 yards. These weapons used a powder charge measured from a powder container with a tightly cloth patched round bullet sized to that gun and took up to 90 seconds to load. They used wooden ramrods to prevent damage to the rifling. After eight shots they needed to be cleaned or the already tight patched bullet could not be rammed down. These long range hunting guns were owned by individuals who by trial and error developed the most accurate cloth patch material, powder charge and bullet size. Some back-country Southerners carried these weapons with them when they joined-up at the beginning of the Civil War.

The US Army issued patched-ball rifles, but they were made in limited numbers for specialty troops. The one that survived into the Civil War era was the M1841 (Mississippi)

Rifle. It was a nominal .54 caliber loaded with a cloth patched ball and had a range of 400 yards. The rear sight had no range adjustment. Two regiments used them in the Mexican American War of 1845-48. A total of 102,000 were made. With the invention of the Minie Ball these weapons become much quicker to load and more accurate. Although supposedly .54 caliber, one Southern ordnance officer happily reported that they were so erratically bored, that they could be loaded with .58 caliber ammunition! Hold that thought for a while.

Rifle-Muskets

The invention of the minie ball meant that a rifled weapon could now be loaded with smoothbore speed, but have the longer range and accuracy of the patched ball rifle. The US M1841, M1855, M1861, M1863, M1864 rifles and rifle-muskets, P1853 Enfield and numerous contract weapons were designed to use, or could use, this new bullet. Older .69 caliber smoothbore muskets were rifled to accept it. They all still became progressively difficult to load as powder fouling built-up.

For six years I competed in the North-South Skirmish Association firing rifle-muskets and breech-loading carbines. The events were designed for eight man teams to race to break targets at 50 and 100 yard ranges; quickest total team time won. Most members worked hard to develop the optimum powder load and bullet type, lubricant and size to bring their reproduction rifle-muskets to peak performance. Some used original weapons. This what we learned: first, the most accurate bullet shape had a flat top; not the pointed 1800's design. Second, the most accurate powder charge was between 35 and 41 grains of FFG powder out to 100 yards. This charge varied from gun to gun. Government ammunition held 60 grains. Admittedly, period ammunition was designed to propel a bullet to the limit of accuracy of the weapon, not just to a target at 100 yards. A 60 grain powder charge created greater velocity and range, but decreased accuracy. Third, moisture content of the powder, granulation, maker, and the bullet lubricant affected the accuracy. Fourth, barrel diameters vary; even with modern guns made on (presumably) low tolerance assembly lines. For example, a M1861 Springfield should measure .580 of an inch in diameter. Many do not! My reproduction M1861 Springfield swallows a sized .580 bullet whole with no problem, so it measures .581 or .582. Lastly, and most important, **to hit a four inch target at 100 yards or less the bullet needed to be sized 1/1000th of an inch smaller than the diameter of the barrel.** Remember the Mississippi Rifle? A supposedly .54 caliber rifle that would accept .575 bullets! When all these factors had been resolved, a good shooter with a good musket could fire 4" diameter group at 100 yards. Significantly, even a mediocre condition original Springfield or Enfield shoots more accurately than modern reproductions. Their rifling and ignition systems are simply better and they were built to fire bullets, not blanks. An off-the-rack wartime Springfield was designed to shoot a 4" group at one hundred yards using issue ammunition. Enfields were rejected if they could not shoot a 24" group at 1,000 yards. Modern made guns simply cannot match these performances. Typically they will group around 24" at 100 yards without tuning.

As most of you know, ammunition in the Civil War era generally was 5/1000th of an inch smaller than the bore; so a .580 caliber musket was loaded with a .575 caliber bullet. In 1864 Confederate Ordnance officers made the decision to reduce the bullet diameter further to 6/1000th in order to accommodate the variety of weapons in their army. In short,

the average Civil War era soldier could fire at a target 500 yards away and the bullet would arrive there and still be capable of doing harm, but he was not trained to do this. Target practice in the Civil War armies was rare. The trajectory of rifle-musket bullets was not flat, it arched. It took a lot of training to accurately judge distance to put a bullet on target beyond 100 yards. The real “killing zone” in the Civil War was in the 0 to 200 yards range, smoothbore range. Federal General Meade issued a general order to the Army of the Potomac in 1864 that every soldier was required to load and fire his weapon in the presence of an inspecting officer because Meade knew that many of his men **did not know how to load and fire their weapons!** If a soldier could not load and fire his weapon, his combat effectiveness was low.

What does this all mean tactically?

Rifling in a muzzle-loading Civil War era military weapon increased the range and accuracy, tripling the effective range of a smoothbore musket. However, the lack of training on how to use this advantage negated the effectiveness of long range fire for the average infantryman. The ammunition issued to both sides was concerned not with maximizing accuracy, but with speed of loading, long range and prevention of guns becoming unloadable due to powder residue build-up in the barrel. Civil War combat typically occurred at less than 300 yards, typically 200 yards or less. Civil War officers were generally not stupid; they did not waste ammunition firing volleys at targets beyond 300 yards. They waited until the enemy was closer when their soldiers had a better chance of hitting something. To me the classic smoothbore battle was Antietam on September 17, 1862. Antietam was America’s “bloodiest day” because a higher proportion of soldiers were still armed with smoothbores and fought at ranges suitable for both smoothbores and more accurate rifle-muskets.

During Pickett’s Charge on July 3, 1863, a corps level attack was launched towards the Federal lines. The Federal lines were breached by Confederates lead by Brigadier General Armistead near and angle in a stone wall. The Union defenders carried rifle-muskets, but only opened fire when the Confederates closed to 300 yards near the Emmitsburg Road. A little further to the north on the stone wall were troops armed with “obsolete” smoothbore muskets; when they opened fire with Buck and Ball ammunition, the Confederates were stopped cold and never reached the wall.

A true revolution was taking place during the American Civil War, but it was not due to the minie ball ammunition; that was an incremental step-up from the patched ball. The revolution was the transition to breeching loading weapons with brass self-contained cartridges holding ignition, powder and bullet. While not used in the same magnitude of numbers as muzzle-loaders, tens of thousands versus hundreds of thousands, they represented the future.

Jmk, 3/12/2017





THE CROW'S CORNER

I ran across this interesting rifle up for bid recently. It's an original Whitworth .451 percussion rifle that went to some collector on 3/26/2017 for \$9,125.99! It is considered among the most accurate percussion rifles in the world. The website has photographs of it if you are curious to see the details - The Crow



“Scarce Whitworth rifle with signature hexagon bore and chained nipple protector. Military Whitworths were often used by the very best sharpshooters during the Civil War. We are unable to track the history of this rifle, but we are certain that this rifle is in the military configuration. Whitworths are still considered among the most accurate percussion rifles in the world. This rifle is 100% original and the photos below will provide more detail.” <http://www.gunbroker.com/item/621230546>



2017 ANNUAL MUSTER





JESSE JONES





GOLIAD

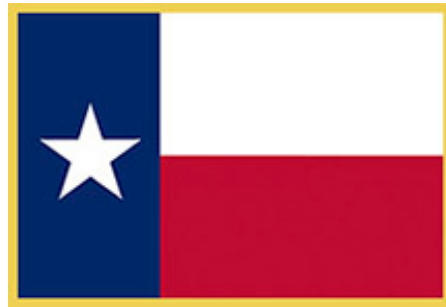


New Wheels? Frenchy Davis' gift to the Texas Rifles?



From the Editor

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the making of this edition of the Tyrants' Foe Newsletter. Deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is tentatively scheduled for July 2, 2017.



To Tyrants Never Yield

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 21/23	San Jacinto	Houston, TX	Individual	Tex Rev
May 20	Pioneer Farms	Austin, TX	Civ Max	Civ
June 2/4	On to Richmond	Richmond, VA	MAX	CS
September 22/24	Pioneer Farms	Austin, TX	Civ Max	Civ
October 6/8	Gonzales	Gonzales, TX	Individual	Tex Rev
October 20/21	Texian Market Days	Richmond, TX	Company	US
November 17/29	Plantation Liendo	Hempstead, TX	MAX	US