



# The Tyrants' Foe



Volume XXXVI

Newsletter of the Texas Rifles  
Celebrating 30 Years of Excellence

November 2017



## The Last Liendo?

Like many of you I have been attending the event at Liendo Plantation for years. Some of the events have been outstanding, some boring. The weather has been fickle for years from floods of biblical tales to down right hot. We have shared many meals together and renewed old friendships.

As the years have passed so has the numbers of people attending the event. Gone are the days of the Red River Battalion forming Companies E, F, G, H, I and K with a band. Gone are days of multiple battalions on the field. Gone are a lot of the big name sutlers attending. We all have to admit our hobby is shrinking.

There are many factors to this demise. One of course is many of us are aging. The ground seems harder and colder for some. Health concerns have forced many from joining the ranks. Others have found new outlets for their pursuits of historical living history. There appears to be not a lot of people to step forward and fill our brogans and carry the torch forward. Recent political developments across the country have turned many folks away from our hobby for a variety of reasons. Modern technology had made it easier for many people to stay at home and recreate battles on their home video systems or phones. It has been a very hard and bitter pill for me to swallow to say the least.

Liendo Plantation is a wonderful place regardless. It is close to many of us to attend. The date has always been easy to remember. With the exception of a few years we have

always worn the blue suit. We have always won on Saturday and lost on Sunday. That being said it is time for one last full measure from us as members of the Texas Rifles.

I propose the following scenario to you. What if during the invasion of south Texas, a small squad of Federals ventured north to recruit and gather loyal Germans to their ranks? This is my proposal. For those as Federals we will have standard western attire. The Germans? What they may have had in 1863. Squirrel guns, shotguns, day to day attire. Either clothing is fine. I just need to know which you will attend as German or Federal. We will be having a hardcore camp, period food, no coolers, and no modern stuff. If you cannot do this, feel free to camp in the Federal Mainstream Camps and join us when you can.

Frank has volunteered to cook a German period meal Saturday night. If you care to partake, donations to Frank are expected to cover costs. All other arrangements for meals are up to individuals right now.

As per history, we would like to recreate the Nueces Massacre during the weekend. The 1<sup>st</sup> Texas has volunteered their services to do the deed to us. It is not often we get a chance to recreate a Texas historical event. Anyone who cares not to participate is fine with me.

Like I said this maybe our last Liendo. I would like to make it one I remember with many of my dear friends. I hope as many of you can attend and join us.

I Remain Your Humble and Obedient Servant  
Captain Dusty Lind



**The First Sergeant Says So**

The weather this fall has not been kind to us. We have Liendo and the opportunity to participate in an event local to Houston as our year-end events. We will then turn our attention to the annual muster and a new campaign season.

The last issue of our newsletter and subsequent discussion focused on our need to maintain our standards of authenticity. We have long considered this characteristic to define ourselves as an organization. I'd like to explore this topic a bit further. I think of authenticity in three areas; (A) material objects, (B) scenario portrayals, and (C) mental state. Attention to all three areas can make the living history experience remarkable.

The physical impression we present and the items we use initially attract attention. This is because what people wore and the objects they used are very unlike the material items of today. For the uneducated, "looks old" is good enough, while the living historian is aware of changes in materials, methods of construction, and patterns used as the design of any article of clothing or object in use. This knowledge is the easier part of the challenge we face in portraying the material objects of our period of interest. The more difficult challenge is to replicate those objects with what we have available to us today in terms of materials and workmanship. To a large extent, the challenge to obtain suitable cloth has a viable solution. The exact weave or weight of cloth may not be available, but something close to what is desired usually is. The big challenge, it manufactured items created via an industrial process (even if just a large lathe is required). This requires an investment of capital, that none but the hobbyist will make. Individual industry (sewing, woodworking, metalworking, etc.) often has skilled practitioners who can create excellent replicas.

The scenarios we portray also demand our attention. To recreate a battle is more than to know which set of participants won or lost. Do we have reports or reminiscences that tell us what sequence of events in the battle itself transpired? Do we have knowledge of logistical situation of the participants? Was weather a factor? In other scenarios are we portraying the typical or unusual and why did we make that choice? Who is the intended audience for the event – spectators or ourselves?

When thinking about the mental impression, the first thought is usually of the first person impression – using period speech pattern and "being" a person of the period. This requires particular knowledge and skill that is done well by those with a particular flair for it in all candor. I suggest we approach this as an exercise in placing ourselves into the time period as appropriate. In the role you are portraying, what would be your present, past, and futures concerns? What would be topics of conversation? Again, the question of who is the audience applies, are we teaching spectators via the role play, or is there another purpose – to better understand period life?

If we address these points as part of our event planning, we can help to achieve our goal of creating more authentic portrayals of the people participating in the events we portray. For example at Liendo this year, the change in camp layout make it more likely we will have visitors in camp. This provides an opportunity to show and tell what a typical Federal Solder

had and did in camp. Keep the coolers and non period items in the vehicles during the day, and bring them to camp at night. We can make sure we have the nuances of Casey's down in terms of stacking arms and school of the soldier so we can more accurately be a Federal unit. Just a thought.

Tommy Attaway,  
1st SGT



**From the Mind of Tommy Attaway**

### **A Tale of Two RDII's**

The Summer 2017 issue of Military Collector and Historian features an article on two Richmond Depot II jackets issued in 1864. As these jackets were not mentioned in the 1989 Les Jenson series, they are of interest in adding to our knowledge of operations at the Richmond clothing Bureau. Both jackets are the same size, the Standard Size 1, which happens to be my size, and as the author was able to take seam measurements, the study of these jackets is helpful to me to make better reproductions. Finally, I will compare the cloth color of the originals to my reproduction efforts, and the effect of fading over time.

The first jacket is in the 5<sup>th</sup> Maine museum and is quite remarkable. It is only labeled as captured at the Wilderness. The Confederate units engaged by the 5<sup>th</sup> Maine had clothing issued to them only two weeks before the engagement in which this jacket is reported as captured, and thus may have been issued in May of 1864 and work for less than two weeks before its capture. This would explain its remarkable state of preservation. One interesting feature is that the epaulettes are sewn down and are not functional. Here is the photo of the jacket from MC&H:



FIG 1. "Rebel Jacket taken from a prisoner at Spottsylvania." Courtesy of the Fifth Maine Regiment Museum, Peaks Island, ME.



FIG 2. Rear view of Fifth Maine Museum jacket. Courtesy of the Fifth Maine Regiment Museum, Peaks Island, ME. Author's photograph.

The other jacket is attributed to Joseph Brunson. He served in a South Carolina artillery battery in the ANV. He enlisted in 1861, and was First Sergeant at the end of the war in 1865. Records for his batter have been lost, but other batteries in the battalion received clothing issue on May 1, 1864, and this is consistent with his recollections. He jacket is the expected 9 button jacket with belt loops and epaulettes. Except for one button, the original buttons are missing and are the "Gibson" type wooden button. The jacket is the kersey English or cadet gray shade wool. There are two remarkable features to this jacket. It is entirely machine sewn, except for the buttonholes. The other remarkable feature to this jacket is that it probably did not fit, as gussets of faded uniform material of the same type have been added to the jacket, leaving the lining cut and raw edged where the gussets have been added.

Obviously one of the reasons we have an interest in such items is to better be able to give the proper impression of the people we portray as to time in place. As more RDII's become known, a better picture emerges. By May of 1863, Richmond's Clothing operation is getting substantial quantities of cloth from the UK and jacket issues reflect this in period accounts of almost blue very well made jackets being issued. Thus we can conclude that the non English cloth manufactured RDII jackets date from early in production from the Spring of 1862, to some time in early 1863. By mid 1863, to the end of the War, English cloth, or cadet gray is the dominant uniform color of ANV issued uniforms. As these RDII date to May 1864 issue in all probability, the RDII saw service to the end of the war, with the earliest known RD III issues taking place in September of 1864.

Here is the reproduction of the RDII, and the measurements give me feedback on how well I did.



Measurements matched the originals (within a half inch) with the following exceptions. My cuffs were too large by one inch. This led to the rear of my sleeve seams being too short with not enough curve. I have too much width in the shoulders, resulting in the epaulette being one inch too long. My belt loops are too long and too low.

One of the difficult things for photos to convey is the proper shade of the material. My Reproduction RDII is also very new, only being work for a couple of days out in the sun, but I am happy with the color compared to the jacket in the 5<sup>th</sup> Maine museum. Here is a comparison of my Reproduction RDII with another reproduction RDIII / Houston Depot jacket made from the same bolt of cloth, but has many days of reenacting wear dating back to at least 1985. You can see the color difference wear makes on modern dyes, and of course chemical dyes were a new science in the 1860s.



Tommy Attaway,





## VOCABULARY AND OTHER MINOR PEEVES

In my school years I was forced to live with vocabulary lessons; words, spelling and meaning. Spelling them correctly was, is, and will continue to be a bane in my existence. A friend of mine hosted my wife, myself and others at a nice dinner at her house and then thought that she would entertain her guests by playing a dominos-like game that involved letters and spelling. It was a tortuous time for me. In school the torture went on for years, but by manfully shouldering aside any pretense to learning I made it through.

Our language continues to evolve from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. 'Accoutrements' has become accouterments, 'friend' can mean anything on the spectrum from "he sent me an email" to "we cohabitated for five years", 'comfort' has evolved from assistance to personal physical ease, 'survivor' has been so overused that it changed from an unusual escape from a deadly situation to anyone with a shared experience.

Two horrific events will impact reenacting in Texas; one was natural and one was man-made. Powerful hurricanes in the Gulf and southern Atlantic struck Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands in addition to other non-US areas. Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are US territories and their residents are US citizens. Puerto Rico's population was declining as much as 8% per year before being destroyed by Hurricane Maria. Puerto Rico was in debt already, its primary export is its young people and economically is a third world country. Now it is an island of roofless buildings, no power, no food and no clean water. It will take years and billions of US dollars to restore with no perceivable payback. Ditto the Virgin Islands, but they have a stronger economy. Texas and Florida will get lots of US dollars because they are on the US mainland, vote, and have representation on Capitol Hill. The US national debt will soar to new heights (or is it depths?). Government expenses will rise and siphon-off monies which might have gone to things like parks or health care. People's personal wealth will go to replacing their homes, furnishings and cars, not living history stuff. Taxes, in various disguises, will rise.



In the Houston area homes were built inside flood reservoirs, downstream from dam spillways and in the natural flood plains of streams. These areas are named "flood plains" for a reason. Harvey dumped the greatest amount of rain in the recorded history of Texas. That's right, recorded history. It happened many times before literate European settlers arrived to write down their experiences. How are flood plains formed? By repetitive large scale flood events like Harvey over the past ten thousand years. Places flooded from Hurricane Harvey that don't normally flood, and did damage in areas that should have been safe, EXCEPT that the drainage of streams have been so altered by construction upstream that it is not safe to live downstream of all that new concrete. The way things are done in Houston will have to change. We have Harvey sufferers in our ranks and I tip my forage cap to them and regret the burdens they carry.

Horrific event #2 was created by a human being. A guy with no arrest record and a dark corner in his soul smuggled an arsenal of weapons into a Las Vegas high rise hotel and opened fire on the crowd at a music festival. We can ask, "Why?", but that is pointless because the answer died with him. We, as the public, gun owners, and citizens will be left to deal with the guilt, survivors and consequences. Even the N.R.A. has gone silent on this one. I am willing to go silent as well on the overuse of the word, "survivor" in this case.

As you know, I and some other members of the Texas Rifles speak in schools and other public venues on history topics. This means that we go to schools and other places with swords, knives, muskets, spears and bayonets. I am wondering how much longer we will be allowed to do this, or how much longer we as reenactors will be allowed to simulate a past act of violence. The Civil War is rapidly becoming so politically untouchable that reenacting is affected and events have been cancelled. Sooner, or later someone will figure-out that the participants in the Texas Revolution, American Revolution, War of 1812, classical Greeks and ancient Romans were not perfect people either and those topics may also become untouchable. Our heroes, statues and history are indeed being taken away. And the type of person who ran down demonstrators in Charlottesville and who committed mass murder in Las Vegas played right into the hands of the history thieves.

I can't prevent hurricanes, and I can't prevent murder in Las Vegas. I can resent the corruption of my vocabulary, my personal heroes and my country's history. No law ever seriously considered in this country would have prevented Newtown or Las Vegas. One politically correct recourse to prevent similar events in the future is confiscation of firearms in the hands of the general public (criminals never seem to have their weapons confiscated); that means goodbye to what we do. Certainly less dramatic solutions which do help the situation could be tried.

While I grieve over the destruction and death, which I cannot prevent, I try to keep the cost of various freedoms in mind: formerly up to 40,000 Americans per year died in automobile accidents. The awful number has been decreased lately by seat belts, air bags and improved car design. Nobody has ever suggested that cars be banned due to the deaths on the roads; cars were too important to do that. They are the "great American freedom

machine” as one commercial put it. Yes; drunks, scofflaws, terrorists and distracted drivers abuse that freedom.

Many children are injured every year in bicycle accidents. Frankly, I should have been seriously hurt/killed doing some of the stupid stuff I tried on a bicycle. Helmets and elbow guards help. No one has called for a ban on bicycles. For children, bikes can be a freedom machine as well.

Lots of people talk about the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to our Constitution, but very few of them mention why it is there in the first place. It is not there so that any mentally warped American can own an M-16 with a bump stock; it is there because a government of an armed population will think twice before oppressing that population. It is there because if any enemy, foreign or domestic, wants to start a disturbance on US soil, one of the factors they will have to think about is that the US public is armed and may object. Japan had delusions of invading the US west coast during World War II. One factor they considered before dropping the idea was that the US citizenry was armed and dangerous. Horrible as it sounds, an armed public that occasionally commits murder, like deaths in cars or kids hurt on bikes, is the cost of those freedoms. Yes, violent people abuse that freedom too.

Jmk, 10/5/2017



## Reflections





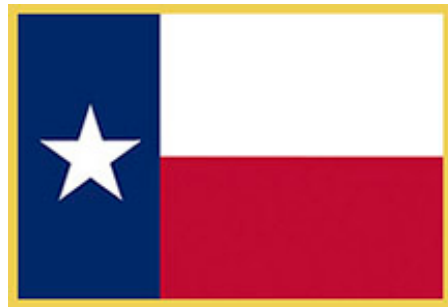
**Where's That Wascally Wabbit?**





### The Traditional Response From the Editor

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the making of this edition of the Tyrants' Foe Newsletter. Without you it would be nothing. Deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is tentatively scheduled for January 7, 2018.



To Tyrants Never Yield

### UPCOMING EVENTS

November 17/19	Plantation Liendo	Hempstead, TX	MAX	US
January 20, 2018	Annual Muster	Austin, TX	MAX	CS

