



The Tyrants' Foe



Volume XLIV

Newsletter of the Texas Rifles
Celebrating 32 Years of Excellence

October 2019



We are once again on campaign for the fall season. At Ft. McKavett we had one of our contacts make an appearance and join in with our clan for a bit of fun and the chance to interact with park visitors with a dose of living history on display for those visitors. While few in number, we had an enjoyable experience and the improvements made in the park would lead to the opportunity for doing quality events in the future.

Preparations are underway for our journey to Virginia for this year's large national event. We will portray the Texas Brigade in that part of the country where the brigade won its fame. It is uncertain when such an opportunity will present itself again. The Rifles will combine with the 9th TX to form a company, the RRB forming two companies for the event.

Later in October, we have Texian Market Days at the George Ranch Historical Park; Friday being the school day, and Saturday primarily for park visitors. As we are still trying to work out use of park facilities for the 2020 Muster, helping out at this event will help us in that relationship with the park staff. As soon as we return from Virginia, I will start to focus on this event.

The last event on our schedule is Liendo, this year being the 20th Anniversary of the event. As always, this is one of our more relaxed events, as we have a limited ability to do living history scenarios, it serves mainly as a spectacle for spectators. The RRB should be conducting the evening entertainment, and I personally would like for us to be able to put on a short minstrel show – that is a living history moment that will seldom be seen in the future.

In my spare time, I have been cataloging some history of the Texas Rifles. I am collecting issues of the newsletter to present on our webpage as an archive, and the tenures of the past captains of the Texas Rifles. As we enter our 33rd year, we will be one of the oldest living history organizations in the country, and we do not want to lose our legacy, or forget those who created it.

The Texas Rifles – keeping history alive.
Capt. T. Attaway



Colonel of the Regiment

As a group, we have concentrated on the portrayal of a company of volunteers – the 60 to 100 men who initially volunteered for service. Over the course of the years, the number of men left unscathed by the war dwindled, frequently numbering fewer than 24 at the war's end. These men initially chose their own officers and NCOs, but their regimental officers were chosen by the state, usually the governor, sometimes the legislature or other officers. These were usually men of some political influence and possibly military training at a military school. As we portray the Texas Brigade, let's have a look at those who led the Texas regiments of the brigade.

First Texas Regiment

Colonel

The first commander of the 1st Texas was Louis T. Wigfall, who was an ardent pro slavery senator from Texas who was frequently in conflict with Sam Houston. Wigfall

remained in the US Senate after Texas seceded in order to make conducting the war more difficult for the Union, until he was expelled from the Senate in July of 1861, took command of the 1st Texas, never commanded in the field as he became the first brigade commander of the Texas Brigade, and resigned when he was elected to the Confederate Congress, where he almost immediately came in conflict with Jefferson Davis and later Gen. Lee.

Thus, Lt. Col. Hugh McLeod was promoted to command the regiment. He graduated last in his class at West Point in 1835, and was on his way to Ft. Jesup, when he met some volunteers from Georgia headed to Texas to fight in the Revolution. McLeod resigned from the US Army, joined the Texas Army, and eventually became a Brigadier General in the Texas Army during the Republic. He commanded the Santa Fe expedition and was captured by Mexico. In 1861, he was appointed Lt. Col. of state troops, and died of pneumonia in January 1862.

Alexis Rainey then became regimental commander until he was wounded at Gaines Mill. He had been in the Texas Senate in 1861, then organized and commanded Company H.

Command then passed to Philip Work. He had served as a sergeant in a mounted volunteer company, which was mustered into the US Army when the two Cavalry regiments were formed in 1855. He was a delegate to the secession convention, and then organized what became company F in the regiment, which he commanded until promotion to Major. He became ill in September of 1863, and his resignation was accepted a few months later.

In July 1864 Frederick Bass became the last commander of the 1st Texas. He graduated from VMI in 1851 and was the original commander of Company E. At Appomattox, he surrendered a regiment of 16 officers and 133 men.

Fourth Texas Infantry

Colonel

The Superintendent of the Bastrop Military Academy, Robert Allen was appointed the regiment's colonel when the regiment was organized in 1861. He was forced to resign when the regiment rebelled against his style of discipline, and John Hood became colonel. Hood was West Point class of 1853, Hood resigned his position as 1st Lt. in the US Army, was appointed a Captain in the Confederate Army, and then promoted to Colonel to assume command of the 4th Texas.

Hood was promoted to command the brigade after Wigfall's resignation, and the regiment was then commanded by John Marshall, who was killed at Gaines Mill.

Marshall was a newspaper editor and power broker in the Democratic Party in Texas, and was appointed the original Lt. Col. of the regiment.

Command of the regiment then went to B. F. Carter, who was mortally wounded at Gettysburg. This caused John Bane, the organizer and original commander of Company D, to assume command of the regiment. 15 officers and 143 men surrendered at Appomattox

Fifth Texas Infantry

Colonel

The regiment was initially commanded by James Archer, who was a volunteer in the Mexican War, remained in the Army, and was a Captain in the 9th Infantry when he resigned in 1861 to join the Confederate Army and was appointed Colonel of the 5th Texas. He was promoted to Brigadier General in 1862.

Jerome Robertson. A veteran of the Texas Army, then took command of the regiment, and he was then promoted to Brigadier General and assumed command of the Texas Brigade after Hood was promoted to Major General. Thus, command of the 5th Texas passed to Robert Powell, a wealthy landowner and original commander of Company D.

12 officers and 149 men of the regiment were present for duty when the regiment surrendered at Appomattox.



For those that recall, this article is an almost identical article published in 2011. I am revisiting the article to you because it's still current and relevant to me and my interest in the content. - Lt. Tucker

“We few, we happy few, we band of brothers” is one of the well-known lines from the St. Crispin's Day Speech of Shakespeare's *Henry V*. (1598).

SPOKEN BY KING HENRY V:

This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remember'd;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

Over time, the term ‘band of brothers’ has come to describe any group of intrepid and brave warriors. As I have always had an interest in ships and naval battles, my 1st exposure to the “We Few” statement came from the quote of Admiral Horatio Nelson in his description of the Captains that served under his command at the spectacular British victory at the Battle of the Nile.

I never had the opportunity to serve my country, so I can only imagine what Lord Nelson meant, or what it means to real soldiers to have their “Band of Brothers”. With that said, I would like to point out that in our own small way, we too are a “Band of Brothers”. “We Few” each hold dear a love of history and a strong interest in the events that we call, among its many names, The War Between the States. We come together as a “Band of Brothers” to most certainly have fun and fellowship, but also to learn and to teach from our research and experience.

It's hard to describe to someone that hasn't reenacted for at least a short period of time, what it's like to have reenactor friends. People that you know and trust. We are certainly not the real military, but how do you explain to someone who has never stood in the line of battle, or been on a march, what it's like. After multiple events and especially after long marches, you come to know and respect your comrades in the ranks. You know they are present out of a strong desire. We must face the fact that this is an expensive and time-consuming hobby, which takes a commitment that most people can't or won't make. Whether you know it or not, “We Few” are participating, and through that participation – making better, a hobby that is not for the masses. Because of this, I salute each one of you and am proud to call you “Brother”.

With the current downtrend in Civil War reenacting, those of us that remain still have the opportunity, to experience battles on both small and grand scales. Brothers, I ask that

you dedicate yourself to these opportunities. Read again the words of King Henry V and consider how many of his statements could apply to our participation in the Texas Rifles and Civil War reenacting. Future events will give us many more experiences that we will always treasure, so make them your Saint Crispin's Days. So I say to you, **"We Few, We Happy Few, We Band of Brothers"**!

Your Servant,
Lt. Don L. Tucker
Texas Rifles



As Napoleon once said, "An army marches on its stomach." If an army is not provided with sufficient food and water, it will eventually disintegrate into a group of starving people without the energy or will to fight. Food for the Union and Confederate armies was supplied by their respective Commissary Departments. The Confederate soldier's rations were not as plentiful as his Union counterpart and, as the war dragged on, he didn't receive much at all. The Union soldier was generally well supplied, but the rations for both sides were not high quality nor did they taste particularly good. The union soldier's marching rations in the Army of the Potomac consisted of one pound of hardtack, or as it was sometimes called, hard bread, three-quarter pound of salt pork, or one and a quarter pound of fresh meat; sugar coffee and salt. When in a static camp, Union soldiers rations consisted of twelve ounces of pork or bacon, or one pound four ounces of salt or fresh beef; one pound six ounces of soft bread or flour, or one pound of hard bread, or one pound four ounces of corn meal. With every hundred of such rations there should have been distributed one peck of beans or peas; ten pounds of rice or hominy; ten pounds of green coffee, (which would have been roasted in a pan and

then crushed into grounds) or eight pounds of of roasted or ground, or one pound eight ounces of tea; fifteen pounds of sugar, one pound four ounces of candles; four pounds of soap; two quarts of salt; four quarts of vinegar; four ounces of pepper; a half bushel of potatoes when practicable, and one quart of molasses. Desiccated potatoes or desiccated compressed vegetables might be substituted for the beans, peas, rice, hominy or fresh potatoes Vegetables, the dried fruits, pickles and pickled cabbage were occasionally issued to prevent scurvy, but in small quantities. The dessicated vegetables were apparently universally disliked and so became termed “desecrated vegetables.”

Because most rations had to be transported long distances, the commissary departments relied on food that was non-perishable or slow to perish items. This led to food that was monotonous and not very appetizing. Soldiers in the Union army might enhance their diet with food and drink furnished by sutlers whereas the Southern soldier might rely on the generosity of local farmers to give them an occasional treat such as fruit. Many soldiers supplemented their diet with what could be obtained in the wild such as onions, garlic, strawberries and such. When in enemy territory, soldiers frequently relied on foraging, helping themselves to chickens, livestock, fruits and vegetables from local farms and households which the soldiers considered to be the spoils of wars. When on campaign, armies had herds of cattle, pigs and sheep which followed them and allowed for fresh meat to be distributed on occasion.

In the Union army, hardtack was sometimes prepared so that it was not so hard to chew. Hardtack was crumbled into coffee, or sometimes crumbed into soups as a thickening agent. A dish known as “skillygalee” was prepared by soaking hardtack in cold water, then frying them brown in pork fat and salting to taste. Sometimes the men would take a bit of their sugar ration and spread it not the hardtack for a tasty(?) treat. The dried-apple ration supplied was usually stewed and then was a suitable sauce for hardtack. When rice was cooked, sometimes molasses was used as a way to make it a bit more tasty.

The Confederate alternative to the Union hardtack was “cush.” When fried, it could be carried in a haversack and eaten at a later date like hardtack. Or it could be more of a hash or even a soup depending on how much water was added to the recipe. Basic cush consisted of salt pork, cornmeal, water and salt pork grease. The salt pork was cut into chunks and cooked over a fire in a canteen half or frying pan. The excess grease is then poured off but with enough remaining to cook the prepared cornbread batter or “Johnnie cakes.” Add that to the fried salt pork and, depending on the desired consistency, it would become a hash or a soup.

A Union soldier described a favorite dish of beans which was prepared in an unusual way: A hole was dug large enough to set a mess kettle in and to have ample space around it. These mess kettles were cylindrical and made of heavy

sheet iron. In the bottom of the hole was placed a flat stone, then a fire was built in the hole and kept burning for several hours while the beans were prepared for baking. When all was ready, the coals were shoveled out, the kettle of beans and pork set in with a board over the top, while the coals were shoveled back around the kettle; some poles or boards were placed across the hole and a piece of sacking or cloth was placed over the poles to exclude dirt and a mound of earth was placed above all. Then the beans were left to bake overnight and, voila, a meal fit for a king! The soldier describes it as "...the most enjoyable dish that fell to the lot of the common soldier."

Well, gotta go. I'm getting hungry!



WHERE DID THAT COME FROM?

Federal Issue Shirt P1851

We, thankfully, live in an age when service in the armed forces of our country is considered honorable. That has not always been the case. Prejudice against soldiers has been very severe in the past. Sometimes the recent past. In the 1960's returning Viet Nam veterans who had done what their country asked of them were offered little appreciation and were frequently called, "Baby killers" to their faces.

In the past the prejudice against soldiers was both cultural and social. Whatever the university-based eggheads might tell you, we are culturally descended from Europeans, particularly Britain. Britain had no real standing army until the English Civil War of 1642 to 1649. As in the American South, the distaste of the government's soldiers by the civilian population came not from the actual war, but the repression afterwards. In the British case, the acts of the victorious Parliamentary Army. Soldiers were used as police, enforcers of the strict Covenant Church lifestyle and as the strong arm behind an increasing unrepresentative government. Soldiers continued to be used as police in Britain well into the 1800's. Politically this meant that the Army was unpopular and was purposely kept small to inhibit repression and another potential Cromwell. The colonies inherited this attitude and while soldiers might be regarded as heroes during a war, in peacetime they were treated with contempt. No one became a soldier in 19th century America in the public's view unless they were lazy, foreign-born, inept, alcoholic, or all of the above. Socially, persons seeking any opportunity to survive, like Irish immigrants, enlisted for food, shelter and protection from a society which rejected their culture, their religion and their place of origin. Sound familiar? All of which brings us to the topic of shirts.

Since enlisted men in the US Army deserved very little, very little is what they got. In Europe the army had a direct connection to the head of state, usually a monarch. He or she wanted a well-dressed, visually impressive army as a reflection of their majesty. Americans saw such an army as undemocratic and purposely kept their army small, plain, undistinguished, and largely out of sight. Soldiers got what society thought they needed to do their job and little more. The army did need to provide shirts for soldiers as they were visible at the cuffs and collar. From 1700 until about 1850 shirts remained fairly constant in style, made of square and rectangular parts designed to minimize the amount of hand sewing needed for construction. One piece sleeves with added cuffs, one piece body cut long and a tall collar to accommodate the wearing of a neck cloth. Things began to change with the invention of the sewing machine. Store-bought shirts made by machine became more common. Shirts became more fitted with curved parts which followed the body shape more comfortably. Collars became lower. All this innovation was totally ignored by the US Army; its shirts lagged civilian fashion by fifteen years in design and a century in concept.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries shirts for the military were made of linen, usually two white shirts and one of checked linen per year. The checked linen was the work shirt, as it did not show dirt as readily. With the invention of the cotton gin in 1796, cotton became a more common fabric, but cotton was not considered to be as healthy. Lice and fleas seemed to proliferate in it. Military shirts went from being made of linen to wool or wool/cotton flannel.

The new issue shirt for the enlisted men of the US Army patterned in 1851 was made from a wool/cotton flannel weave called Domet Flannel. Needing some shirt fabric, I googled "wool/cotton domet flannel" once looking for sources. I got 300+ hits; five were for sources of the flannel or unit authenticity guidelines, the rest were for rotary attachment polishing pads made from domet flannel. It is an industrial abrasive used to polish steel! Suddenly, all the period complaints from Federal soldiers about scratchy

shirts made sense. In addition to being scratchy on the skin, the P1851 shirt was made in one size only, modern size 41 in the chest. It had three buttons. Sleeve length and collar size meant nothing. Cuffs were trapezoidal pieces of fabric sewn on the end of the sleeve. Shirts were relatively simple to sew, so the shirt was the first garment sewn by government contract-by-the-piece sewers. Sometimes shirts had as few as four (4) stitches per inch and rapidly fell apart. Domet flannel shrinks horribly if exposed to heat. To small soldiers this meant little as they could shrink the shirt to a better fit. For men above size 41, which was approximately the largest issue size coat during the war, you had your new shirt altered to a bigger size, or purchased one from the Sutler. That was your problem and your expense, not the Army's (and shame on you for being so disloyal as be bigger in size than the Army expected you to be). In the classic first person account of the soldier's life in the Civil War, "Hardtack and Coffee", there is an illustration of a soldier boiling his shirt in a cooking kettle to kill the lice eggs. I hope that soldier was small in stature, because his shirt would have shrunk several sizes.

The Army needed millions of shirts for the war effort and could not make enough of them at the government clothing factory at Schuylkill Arsenal outside Philadelphia, Pa. To meet demand, shirts were purchased on the open market. These included knit wool shirts and commercial wool shirts with a placket on the neck opening.

So that was the P1851 US Army Shirt. You got two per year. They were ill-fitting, scratchy and primitive, but they were made in their millions. There are three (3) documented P1851 shirts known to exist. After the battles was over, there were re-internment of bodies at such places as Gettysburg. The problem then became identification of bodies, or more basically on which side the dead soldier fought. One of the criteria used was the shirt. If it was a P1851, the body was Federal. They were that common and definitive.

Sky Blue Kersey Trousers

Surprise! The United States Army Uniform Regulations published in March of 1861 specified dark blue trousers for its soldiers. The regular army troops and a large percentage of the Federal regulation conscious volunteer militia regiments were supposed to have worn them at Manassas, Ball's Buff, and other early war battles. The branch of service and rank trim color on trousers for the infantry was not dark blue at that time, it was sky blue. How much the dark blue trousers were actually worn is questionable. Sky blue kersey trousers were reinstated for most officers and enlisted men in December, 1861 as was dark blue trim colors for infantry trousers. Where did that come from?

The US Army, like much of the western world, militarily admired and copied the French Army; primarily for its achievements under Napoleon I. The first United States military musket, the M1795, was a direct copy of a French Model 1763. The M1816 Musket copied the French M1777. The drill system known to us as Scott's Tactics was a modification of a French manual (Hardee's Tactics was a straight translation of a French

light infantry manual, if you look at the soldier in the prints in the Manual of Arms section, he is dressed in French uniform and carries a French rifle). Even the victors over Napoleon, Britain and Prussia, copied the French. In the mid-19th century the French Army wobbled between wearing sky blue kersey trousers and red/orange trousers with their infantry uniforms. The military world watched and copied them. Mexico and the USA, among others, both switched their winter trouser color to sky blue. When the French switched from the tailcoat to the frock coat, we jumped into that fashion trend in 1851. We also copied their shako (but in a cheaper version). We did not follow the trend of wearing red trousers, but US Army made-up for that military fashion contretemps by slavishly establishing white gaiters as regulation for its infantry in 1862, while in the midst of the Civil War, simply because the French did; 250,000 pairs were contracted for and issued to the Northern soldiers. They proved to be unpopular with the troops and officers. As with several other items of issue which were unpopular with the troops, they tended to somehow disappear and were rarely seen after 1862.

The same sky blue kersey wool was also used for greatcoats, so US Army greatcoats went from grey to sky blue in 1832. Greatcoats stayed sky blue even when the Uniform Regulations of 1861 put the soldiers into the dark blue trousers with trim in sky blue. The US Army was authorized by Congress to a strength of 16,000 officers and enlisted men in the post Mexican War period. However, the actual strength of the army was around 12,000. Most of these men were scattered all over the western frontier areas. Changing trouser color for 8,000 enlisted men was not a huge issue even though dark blue trousers were more expensive. It became a huge issue after the Civil War started and the first battles of the Civil War were fought. It became obvious to military authorities that this war was not going to be over in three months, it might last years, and would involve huge citizen-soldier armies; the US Army was going to have to make and issue hundreds of thousands of trousers per year. Many senior officers had served in an army clothed in sky blue trousers during the 1830's and 1840's. They identified with that color as the proper color of an army in the field. So, in December of 1861, less than a year after they were adopted, US Army Regulations reverted to sky blue kersey trousers. It was estimated at that time that this simple color change would save the government \$750,000 per year in uniform costs.

The Federal government did purchase 10,000 Chasseurs a Pied uniforms from a French uniform contractor in August, 1861 and issued them out as rewards to two well drilled volunteer regiments. These were complete outfits and included forage caps, shakos (leather instead of the cheap US P1854 of cloth covered pasteboard), cloaks, cowhide knapsacks and mess gear. They had dark blue jackets and medium blue very full trousers with gaiters. A Pennsylvania and a New York regiment wore this state-of-the-art uniform. What the purchasers and buyers forgot was the size difference between better nourished American men and French men. After issuing-out these uniforms to two American regiments, the remaining clothing was only in the smallest sizes. Years later the Federal Government was still trying to sell-off this surplus and advertised these garments as suitable for "military schools and boy's bands." In 1862 a Quartermaster Board of senior officers seriously considered rejecting the forage cap, sack coat, sky

blue trouser uniform and adopting the chasseur uniform as the new US Army style, but in the end did not.

The Army stayed with sky blue through several uniform changes into the 1890's, although the cut of trousers changed with fashion. Those paragons of military fashion, the French, had their well-dressed butts kicked by the Prussians in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. That war led to a unification of the German speaking small states into one country, Germany. The US Army began to wake-up from its French military fashion hypnotic trance and began to copy the Prussian uniforms. Germany never gained the reputation of the French as the greatest soldiers in the world until after 1939. French infantry marched into WWI battles wearing "horizon bleu" (sky blue?) coats over red trousers. They proved to be highly visible targets for German machine guns manned by soldiers uniformed in less visible field grey. But the French were better dressed, which was the important thing.

JMK



UPCOMING EVENTS

Events for 2019

Date	Event	Location	Rating	Impression
October 5/6	Shenendoah	Richmond, VA	MAX	CS
October 26	Texian Market Days	Richmond, TX	Tentative	US
November 23/24	Plantation Liendo	Hempstead, TX	MAX	US

Events for 2020

Date	Event	Location	Rating	Impression
January 18	Annual Muster	TBD	MAX	CS





To Tyrants Never Yield!



Thanks to everyone who contributed to the making of this edition of the Tyrants' Foe Newsletter. Without you it could not exist. Deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is scheduled for midnight January 5, 2020. – The Editor

