



The Tyrants' Foe

Volume XLV

Newsletter of the Texas Rifles
Celebrating 32 Years of Excellence

December 2019



January 18, 2020 will be our 33rd annual muster. This is quite a milestone, as few living history groups last the third of a century we will soon celebrate. This is a tribute to our members over the years and the standards we have set for ourselves. I have as a consequence, been thinking about the history of the Texas Rifles and how we were formed. Part of the legacy of the Rifles stems from the break up of one of the larger living history groups portraying the events of 1861 to 1865, the Confederate Guard. The Texas members of the Guard were some of the founders of the Texas Rifles and became two of the first three captains (Winders, Eastland). The Guard was also my first living history home, so upon my return from Europe, this is where I obviously belonged. I am on the search for older copies of our newsletter (pre 2003) in order to better document our own history.

I mention this also in part because of what we expect at this muster to be is another addition to the legacy of the Texas Rifles, as circumstances have led to one of our fellow groups aligning themselves formally with us. This will add a Federal component to our Confederate past, and make us a truly well rounded representation of the period. As most of this unit has served with us during the year, we will be able to vote the members of the 13th US into full membership at muster, and they will then be part of the Texas Rifles formally.

This also brings up an agenda item of changing our US impression to the 13th Regiment of United States Infantry. To do this impression properly, we will need to tweak our Federal impression. Primarily, this means the 1861 Springfield should be the standard, along with wearing the issue shirt. There is ample evidence of the slouch hat in use by

Regulars, so the forage cap will not be a field requirement. The Corps badges we have been wearing will also be removed.

The George Ranch as a muster site will have a challenge associated with it – meals. On site dining is sparse to non-existent, but the urban growth in the area presents other possibilities – the problem being transit time. We may look at some delivery option – something to discuss before muster.

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



More Thoughts on the First Issue Army Overcoat

The Winter 2019 issue of Military Collector & Historian features an article on the first issue US Army Great Coat by Fellow Steve Osman. Obviously this article was of interest to me after writing my suppositions here previously. In summary, after the War of 1812, the Army decided that watch soldier should have a great coat when stationed on the northern climate, and this later became an issue item. The task then fell to Calendar Irvine to procure the materials and have the great coats made. This correspondence gives us the following information:

The intention was to have the great coats made of gray kersey, but such material was unable to be procured. This led Irvine to the expedient of having great coats made from dark blue uniform cloth and starting to issue them. The US Light Artillery appeared in them to the approval of the President, who saw them on parade.

However Army officers wanted great coats made of kersey, and this proved to be a problem and a dilemma. The gray being procured for pantaloons and jackets was a twill gray, as kersey was hard to come by. Changing the color would produce a non-uniform effect, as some soldiers had blue great coats, and would not get another greatcoat until the next enlistment.

The article ends before giving us a conclusion as to what happened in the 1820s, but finding Army general orders from 1824 to 1826 where the cost of the great coat has dropped to 7 dollars or less leads me to conclude that gray great coats are being issued in the mid 1820s. While the initial issues of 1817 had dark blue great coats, at some point thereafter, gray became the standard, although the official price of \$8.35 was beat by as much as \$1.50 by using gray cloth.



Book Review – Ten Years in the Ranks by Augustus Meyers

This book covers life in the US Army from 1854 to 1865 from the perspective from an enlisted soldier. Meyers lied about his age, falsely claiming to be 14 (actually 12) to enlist as a musician in 1854. As a Swiss immigrant he used his time in the Army to perfect his English and to educate himself, which distinguished him from his contemporaries. This was noted by his officers. Points of interest to us portraying regulars –

Men joining the Army were sent to Governor's Island, New York. This post was their introduction into the Army and a short introduction to the Articles of War and School of the soldier. They got their first uniform issue here, and in the case of Myers, not even Size 1 would fit, so he had to use his first Army pay to have his uniforms fitted. Soldiers were not allowed to have any civilian clothing (this would be a possible aid in desertion). Once some two dozen men assigned to the same Regiment were collected, an NCO from that regiment, would then conduct the troops to the Regimental HQ by train and/or steamboat. This was the only time soldiers marched carrying a full pack. On campaign, packs were carried in the wagons.

Myers was assigned to Company D, 2nd Infantry, which was assigned to the Northwest Territories, and deployed from Minnesota to Iowa. He describes the trip by train and steamboat to his assignment and then the state of the outposts and encounters with the Indians which are generally non hostile His service as a musician leads to his one blemish on an exemplary service record. He refuses to administer the lash to a convicted soldier, and is AWOL for three days. His company commander (later a colonel in the Confederate Army) vouches for his character, and his punishment is slight. Toward the end of his first enlistment, he remarks on the issue of the new style of uniforms, and is discharged in late 1859, Major Longstreet serving as paymaster, pays out the almost \$300 due at the end of the enlistment and is also on the steamboat returning from the post.

Not finding employment in his home of New York City, Meyers enlists again in the Spring of 1860, requesting to return to his company as infantryman. Once again, he goes to Governor's Island, and the process repeats itself. As war breaks out, the 2nd Infantry is recalled to Washington, but arrives too late to participate at Bull Run. Myers describes the guard duties performed in Washington and the build up of the Army. The 2nd Infantry is assigned as part of Sykes' Regulars and takes to the field. The men now have to march with packs for the first time, and lose their scorn of the volunteers who tossed items away to lighten their loads as now the Regulars started to do the same.

He describes the march and counter march troops are subjected to in getting to a camp area, and the lack of good water to be had in such circumstances. After his first action, Meyers is promoted to corporal and assigned to the color guard. Subsequently, he is promoted to sergeant and detached from his company to act as commissary and later ordnance sergeant for the brigade, where he ends his enlistment in March of 1865, officially as second sergeant of Company C (D Company being consolidated), one of the two companies remaining of the 2nd Infantry. He is offered a commission in the 5th New York, and after initial acceptance, decides instead to take a clerk position in the War Department. Thus ends his military career at age 23





Greetings and salutations to my Texas Rifles family. Please bear with me as I wander through a few thoughts.

As we stand on the cusp of a new decade, I think back on my almost two decades with the Texas Rifles. I joined the Texas Rifles in the spring of 2002. I'll never forget my first contact with the group. I met Straz and Wolfy at the Houston Gun Collectors Association gun show and that had to have been the easiest recruitment that Straz has ever had. I'll also never forgotten excitedly telling my ex that I was joining the Texas Rifles and her asking me what kind of militia unit I was getting myself into 😊.

Through the years, I've learned so much about reenacting and friendship from the Rifles. I've had experiences on and off the field that I'll never forget. After having been in the hobby for so many years, there are many events that blur and only certain things stand out, as I'm sure is the same for many of you. There are other events that are incorporated into my memory and psyche. Events like the 140th Sharpsburg (I'll never forget receiving my TR star on the actual Sunken Road or charging through the Cornfield), the 140th Franklin (returning to camp Saturday evening minus the days casualties still gives me chills), New Market Heights (the impressive works and the outstanding USCT) and my 1st event as captain (at the 150th Wilson's Creek). I'll never forget losing almost my entire company to an unfortunate artillery blast of canister (someday I'll get all of you for that 😊).

I've had my ups and downs on and off the field, but throughout it all, my Texas Rifles brothers have had my back. I'll never be able to express how much that and all of you mean to me. You have been and are my family and I look forward to taking the field with you in the coming decade.

Okay, enough melancholy. As we move into the new decade, we need to remember our roots and also consider our future. How do we want to improve and what does taking the field in the 20's look like for us as a unit. Many of us are getting long in the tooth and are leaning more towards mainstream camps for annual events (Liendo, TMD, Jefferson, Port Hudson, etc.). I don't have any trouble with this for the mainstream events (i.e. I like my cot & A-frame), but personally, I would still like us to consider doing

a hardcore event once or twice a year. I would suggest that these hardcore events not be Max-Effort events unless most of the unit really wants to attend, but these more hardcore events help some of us that have been reenacting for a long time keep interested in the hobby (by learning & experiencing new things). These events are in no way exclusive and everyone is welcome at these events. With that said though, we do need to continue to support local events as best we can to help guarantee the events continue for us and for the public. For many of us, including myself, educating is as important (or more so) than burning powder at the local events. If we don't teach the public about the Civil War and what it meant to both sides, they will never be exposed to a critical portion of our countries history, other than in bad movies or from people whose preferred narrative is more important than the actual history.

As has no doubt been mentioned in other newsletter articles, the annual Texas Rifles Muster is coming up on January 18th. Captain Attaway has arranged for us to have muster at The George Ranch this coming year in Richmond, TX. This is a big improvement over last year at Winedale. Our part of the meeting was great, but Winedale as an event site has turned into solely a money making venture which prices itself out of our budget and is disheartening after the great memories we had of the site from our old meetings.

As I mentioned above, think about the direction/s you would like the Texas Rifles to go moving forward. Also bring information about any events you are aware of in the coming year (names, locations, dates, type of event [i.e. hardcore, mainstream, etc.]). We will of course have opportunities with the Red River Battalion in 2020, both with the full battalion or as possibly a composite company (or companies), depending on the numbers going, the type of event &/or the location. We will also discuss hosting another Texas Rifles event at Fort McKavett. If we could come up with the land, another Texas Rifles Outpost would also be fantastic. I personally really miss our Outpost events.

As a final note, I want to remind everyone that you have a voice in the unit, regardless of whether you are a new member or have been in the unit longer than you care to remember. We on the executive board work for you and if you see something that needs to be addressed, you as a member have the responsibility to bring it before the group or the board. Please always feel free to contact me any time. No organization will ever be able to make everyone 100% satisfied with everything, but if we don't know the sticking points, we can't at least try to address them.

Well, I've meandered long enough. I hope everyone had a very Merry Christmas and have a Happy New Year. As with any year, it is going to be what we make it. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the Muster and having another great event and year.

Your Servant,
Lt. Don L. Tucker



Given my recent medical history and numerous trips to the hospital for a knee replacement and cancer treatment, medical care has been uppermost in my mind. So now here's a trip back in time involving Civil War medicine.

Medicine during the War Between the States cannot be thought of as advanced or hygienic, yet many of the practices of modern medicine are a legacy of Civil War medicine. As all of us in the Texas Rifles know, many more deaths during the war was the result of disease rather than combat. Measles, typhoid, dysentery, pneumonia, mumps, measles and tuberculosis spread among the poorly sanitized camps and felled men who were already weakened by marches, fighting and poor diets. Doctors in the field were limited by their ignorance of germs, clean medical practices such as antiseptics, and organized hospitalization. Medical training was just beginning to emerge from the time of bloodletting, purging and blistering to rebalance the "humors" of the body. Some diseases such as syphilis were treated with mercury, an extremely toxic substance.

The wounded and sick suffered from a haphazard hospitalization system that existed at the start of the war. As battles ended, the wounded were rushed down railroad lines to nearby towns and cities where doctors and nurses were overwhelmed by the onslaught of wounded. Walt Whitman, the poet and nurse, described a camp hospital, a converted brick mansion, utilized by the Army of the Potomac in Falmouth, Virginia in 1862 as "quite crowded, upstairs and down, everything impromptu, no system, all bad enough, but I have no doubt the best that can be done; all the wounds pretty bad, some frightful, the men in their old clothes, unclean and bloody." However, the heavy demands of the sick and wounded sped up the technological progression of medicine. Field hospitals replaced makeshift ones and the more efficient hospitalization encouraged medical records and reports which in turn increased accessible knowledge and helped spread the use of more beneficial treatments. Several key figures helped with the progression of medicine at this time. Jonathan Letterman, the Medical Director of the Army of the Potomac, established a regulated ambulance system and evacuation plans for the wounded.

The surgeon general of the Union army, William Hammond, standardized, organized and designed new hospital layouts and inspection systems and literally wrote the book on hygiene for the army. Clara Barton, the founder of the American Red Cross, brought professional efficiency to soldiers in the field, most notably at the Battle of Sharpsburg when she delivered much needed medical supplies and provided care for the wounded.

The sheer numbers of those who suffered wounds and disease forced the army and medical practitioners to develop new therapies, technology and practices to combat death. Thanks to Hammond's design of clean well ventilated and large pavilion-style hospitals, suffering soldiers received care that was efficient and more sanitary. In the later years of the war, these hospitals had an 8% mortality rate for their patients. Though the mortality rate was higher for soldiers on the battlefield, field dressing stations and field hospitals administered care in increasingly advanced ways. Once a soldier was wounded, medical personnel on the battlefield bandaged the soldier as fast as they could, gave him whiskey (to ease the shock) and morphine, if necessary, for pain. If his wounds were more serious, he was evacuated via Letterman's ambulance and stretcher system to a nearby field hospital. Under Letterman and Hammond's encouragement of the triage organization that is still used today, field hospitals separated wounded soldiers into three categories: mortally wounded, slightly wounded and surgical cases. Amputations, though horrible, were not as crude as many people believe today. Anesthetics were readily available and chloroform or ether were administered before the procedure.

In field hospitals and pavilion-style hospitals, thousands of doctors received experience and training. As doctors and nurses became widely familiar with the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, anesthetics, and best surgical practices, medicine was catapulted into the modern era of quality care. Organized relief agencies like the 1861 United States Sanitary Commission dovetailed doctors' efforts to save wounded and ill soldiers and set the pattern for future organizations like the American Red Cross in 1881. While the Union certainly had the advantage of better medical supplies and manpower, both Confederates and Federals attempted to combat illness and improve medical care. Many of America's modern medical accomplishments have their roots in the legacy of America's defining war.

On a personal note, my cancer treatment was completed about three weeks ago and things are looking pretty good. See you at muster!

Best regards and Happy New Year!
First Sergeant Frenchy



PORTRAYING CIVIL WAR REGULAR UNITS

I applaud the decision to include our comrades in the 13th US Infantry in our ranks and to more actively work with them in the future. Yet this change will **ideally** involve a change in how we do our Federal Infantry impression. To date we have usually portrayed generic Federal infantry, not a specific regiment. As part of the Red River Battalion, the member units portray two very different units; the 144th New York Volunteer Zouave Regiment and a more typical 18th Vermont Volunteer Infantry. Please note that both of these original units were recruited from a particular state and both were volunteer regiments; that is significant. The vast majority of soldiers serving in the American Civil War were enlisted in Volunteer regiments. This meant that out of the large pool of militiamen responsible to their state governments, the Volunteer Regiments had placed themselves into the service and under the control of the Federal government. They may have been raised by their states, had their field officers appointed by the governor, been fed, initially clothed by their organizers (sometimes in exotic uniforms such as the Zouave units), but at some point they passed from the responsibility of their respective states to that of the United States Government.

Regiments of the United States Army, the Regulars, were recruited, armed, fed and clothed directly by the Federal Government. They were recruited from the population at large and had no state or local identity. The 13th US Infantry had existed after the American Revolution and during the War of 1812 and was re-re-created in May 1861 as a three battalion regiment. Many of Regular Army regiments existed before the Civil War started, and in some form continued after the war had ended. They were often the last refuge of immigrants not welcomed by society and thus had large numbers of Irish, Germanic and other cultures on their roles. Pay was low in the Army and conditions harsh. Before the Civil War began, the US Army had an authorized strength set by Congress at 16,000 men. However, the actual strength was only 12,000. Few men

wanted to enlist when opportunities were better in the civilian economy. This situation still exists today in our modern volunteer army recruiting programs.

Regular Army soldiers were looked down upon by civilians and generally considered to be the dregs of society, good for nothing else other than to be offered up as cannon fodder, or in the pre-Civil War case, arrow fodder. They got little and deserved less in the public's mind. This attitude was carried into the Civil War by the Volunteers, who considered themselves to be superior men and patriots, not the slavish minions without élan like the regulars. Before the war rain protection for soldiers did not exist and tentage were huge Sibley or wall tents, hauled by wagons and only seen in base camps. During the war Shelter Halves and Ponchos became issue because the volunteer patriots deserved protection from the elements. The regulars did expect to have their knapsacks carried in wagons during long marches in the pre-war army; that went away after the first year of war.

The regular regiments were small, but very dependable. They were generally held in reserve by generals until the volunteer regiments learned their job. At both 1st and 2nd Manassas when the volunteer regiments stampeded to rear, it was the crisp volleys of the Regular Infantry held in reserve which stopped the pursuing Confederates cold and allowed many Federals to escape capture. As the volunteer soldiers learned their new trade, or as General Sherman put it, "the war entered its professional phase", the Regulars were used in normal capacity. In the Federal Army of the Potomac the Chief of Artillery, General Hunt, combined volunteer and Regular batteries together in the same administrative organizations so that the volunteer gunners could learn from the professionals; Federal artillery as a result tended to dominate Confederate artillery not only quantity, but also in quality. In the eastern Army of the Potomac the Regular infantry was combined into the 2nd Division of Sykes' V Corps. Because discipline was stricter in Regular regiments, men preferred to enlist in their hometown volunteer units, so Regular regiments started under strength and steadily shrank. Many Regular Army officers were promoted up to staff or high command. Most Regular regiments ended up being commanded by a captain and consisted of only one or two hundred men. The 12th US Infantry lost so many men at Gaines Mill in 1862 that it was used as wagon guards until its numbers slowly recovered.

Because they directly represented the power and majesty of the United States Government, Regular Army troops were more highly disciplined and uniformity was enforced. They were always armed with US arsenal produced Springfield Rifle-Muskets; the model did not matter as the major parts interchanged and the ammunition was standardized to .58 caliber. So a Regular infantry regiment might carry a mix of M1855, M1861, M1863 or M1864 muskets. No contract or foreign purchased weapons were issued to them (like an Enfield). They used standard US Ordnance accoutrements, badges, belt plates, haversacks, canteens, insignia and knapsacks. Their uniforms would be "as issued". Neck stocks would have been worn on formal military occasions such as parades and reviews; possibly in combat. Forage caps (not hats), sack coats,

cotton/wool blend issue shirts and kersey trousers. The 13th US Infantry (First at Vicksburg!) would have worn the western theater corps badge “Forty Rounds”. Regulations required a Company Letter on the front of the forage cap; nothing else. If the volunteers looked down on the Regulars as unimaginative morons, the Regulars looked upon the volunteers as wasteful dilettantes playing at soldiers in a dangerous world. Ultimately, both earned the respect of the other. If you have ever walked the trenches at Vicksburg as I have and seen the hill the 13th US Infantry assaulted, you too would respect the Regulars.

Bottom line for Texas Rifles members: we should encourage our new members to obtain Springfield Rifle-Muskets, issue shirts, forage caps, double bag knapsacks and neck stocks. Current members should strive to add or replace civilian items as time, funds and inclination allow.

Jmk, 12/3/2019



Words to Remember From the Past

“We band of brothers resolve never to advance to the rear as we endure the heavy seas of historical ignorance and political correctness on the fields of reenacting. We forge through the valleys pressing on to the green pastures of the mountain tops as we cross the desert in search of the refreshing waters of historical truth.”

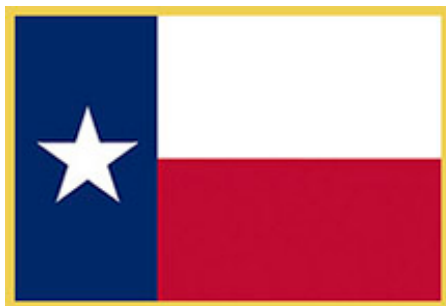
Ezekiel Crow Talbot (1803 - 1858) shining true from the swampy back woods of ideas. A philosopher, riverboat gambler, and civil war reenactor, he was a man ahead of his time.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Events for 2020

Date	Event	Location	Rating	Impression
January 18	Annual Muster	George Ranch	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 March 29, 2020. – The Editor

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!