



The Tyrants' Foe



Volume 51

Newsletter of the Texas Rifles
Celebrating 34 Years of Excellence

July 2021



Greetings Ladies and Gentlemen,

Much of the following has been emailed previously to the group, but I felt it important to reiterate here. Please take the time to read all.

It is with great sadness and a very heavy heart that I must inform all of you that our friend and fellow Texas Rifles/13th US member Lee Chesney, passed away on 27 June 2021. Lee's Memorial Service will be held Saturday, 24 July 2021 at Cook-Walden Funeral Home (6100 N. Lamar, Austin, TX 78752). The unit has arranged flowers for the memorial. Please keep Lee and his family in your thoughts and prayers. A small group of us will be attending the memorial and you are welcome to attend. We will get together after the ceremony for lunch to remember Lee and to drink a toast in his honor.

My memories of Lee begin with my very first events in the Texas Rifles way back in 2002. Lee was always helpful, knowledgeable and friendly- hallmarks of the Texas Rifles- which he helped mold from the very beginnings of the unit. I'll always remember with a smile his pancake fiasco at the 140th Sharpsburg, where he spilled all of his batter onto his lap while mixing. He was kidded about the stain for years. I also remember his years of winning the loading and firing contests at many annual musters/meetings. One year, he almost won with flintlock. If you've ever fired a flintlock, you'll realize how impressive a feat that was. I'll miss you, Lee, as will all of us who were lucky enough to know you. Onwards we must go, to remember Lee and the others we have lost from around the campfire.

As we continue to suffer through the heat and humidity of the dog days of summer (& the almost daily rain), I can't help but miss reenacting with my many friends and compatriots in the unit. However, we finally have some events to look forward to which are summarized here:

- 1) We are fast approaching our unit-hosted Fort McKavett Re-Garrisoning event on September 24th-26th. This is a Max-Effort voted event. I have received confirmation from Cody Mobley that we can use the fort on the scheduled dates. As previously discussed, this is a post-Civil War event where late war Federal impressions or civilian impressions are requested and welcome. The event proper will kick off ~7am Saturday morning and end by no later than noon Sunday to give people time to get home at a reasonable hour. Those that want to may arrive Friday afternoon to set up and begin interpreting the site. I'll be there no later than 1pm Friday.

As mentioned, all members are welcome. Let us know if you can make it. The more people that attend, the more the fort will come alive. Quarters will be in the buildings available at the fort (barracks, officers' quarters, command building, etc.). The Texas Rifles have hosted this event in the past and it's always been fun and educational. The site itself is incredible and very beautiful. This is also a great event for our civilians and for those that would like to be on light duty for the weekend. We have also invited our friends in the Red River Battalion and the 1st Texas. Let me know if you have someone else you would like to invite.

Now is the time to start thinking about the role you would like to interpret. As of now, I expect John Tyler to be provost or in the adjutant's office and Rion Braddock will be the paymaster. Let us know immediately if there is something specific you'd be interested in portraying. I've asked our newsletter editor (The Crow) to include the scenario list created by Lt. Attaway, as an amendment to this publication. We will have a standard, small command staff and there will be various scenarios throughout the event (flag raising/lowering, mess calls, pay calls, fatigue details, etc.). So far, I've heard from the following that they plan to attend, but we need more to fill out the company and really interpret the site:

Capt. Don Tucker
Lt. Tommy Attaway
1st Sergeant Doug Davis
Curtis Lewis
Bo Ramirez,
Steve Corey
John Tyler
Jim Richardson
Kerry Manning

Rio Braddock
Frank Marek
Chris Strzelecki
Steven Silva
Johnathon Silva

Remember, this is our event! We also really need someone to step up and fill the role of company cook. The cook will prepare 5 meals (& coffee) over the weekend (Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast, lunch & dinner and Sunday breakfast). The cook will be excused from all other details and most formations. He will also have 1-2 soldiers on fatigue detail (soldiers to be rotated through event meals unless otherwise requested by a soldier) to serve as assistant cooks and to perform cleanup after meals. I would greatly appreciate volunteers as it would be of great help to the unit and the event. Please let us know if you would be interested in cooking.

- 2) Texian Market Days, 23 October 2021. Texian Market Days is a single day event (Saturday) that we also voted as a Max Effort event. At this time, it's not clear if we will be doing Federal, Confederate, or providing men for both sides, but I suspect we will need to have men in both uniforms for the event. Period camping is possible on both Friday and Saturday night. I would really like to see TMD well attended. There's little reason not to attend as this is the closest reenactment we have this year. We also voted to support this event as a Max Effort to show our support of the George Ranch and support Megan Cromeens (site lead at the Ranch, who arranged for and allowed us to use their conference room for our annual meeting/muster in January 2019). I am hopeful we can use the site again for our 2022 meeting, but we need to show our support. Please do your best to attend, even if it's just for the day.
- 3) Port Hudson, LA, 6-7 November, 2021. Last I heard in June, from one of the event organizers, is that this re-scheduled event is still a 'go'. He also indicated that registration information will be sent in July. I'll forward the information as soon as I receive it. Our impression for the weekend will be Federal. As of now, only 7 members have indicated they would like to attend. We need 8-10 more at a minimum to allow us to be an independent company. If we don't get more, we will be folded into another company. This can be trying as we may have no idea of the quality or ability of the company we will be joining unless they are from the Red River Battalion (RRB) or the 1st TX. I don't know of any other companies from the RRB that are going to be attending the event, but I'm hopeful the 9th TX (Co. F.) might be going. At least falling in with them would give us a known unit of high quality.
- 4) The Veteran's Day Ceremony in Downtown Houston, Thursday, 11 November, 2021. The 13th US attends each year to fire a volley during the ceremony and

participate in the parade as a period color guard. I've been able to join them a couple of times and it's a worthwhile event and has always been a lot of fun. We had a great group at the Memorial Day ceremony and I hope we can have even more for Veteran's Day. I will let Howard Rose or Tom Whitesides address uniform and headgear requirements. I'll be posting before the event with the arrangements.

- 5) Texas Rifles/13th US United Company Annual Muster/Meeting, 15-16 January, 2022. As mentioned above, hopefully this will take place at the George Ranch. This is a Max Effort Event and, for this muster, either Federal or Confederate uniforms are acceptable. If we get good enough numbers, bringing back a Saturday afternoon skirmish would be fun. I would also like to see some of the competitions re-established. More information will be disseminated in December and January.

Finally, this brings me to the unpleasant, but still relevant topics of Covid & politics. I'm hoping that the Covid resurgence is temporary and we will be able to participate in the above events without Covid being an issue. I would also like to see us have a get-together in August. I haven't seen any movies being screened that might be worth seeing but, depending on interest, a live shoot at Carter's Country up in Humble would be fun (if done early before it's too hot). I'm also up for a rolling party (which would be mostly making arsenal packs) combined with a grilled meal and a movie or two. Let me know if one of these sounds like something you would like to do.

I'm not going to delve into the politics we are all too aware of other than to say again that we may have to continue making our own events (i.e., McKavett or an Outpost) or attending more local events to keep the hobby alive. If we don't, who will?

Your Servant,
Capt. Don L. Tucker
The Texas Rifles/13th U.S. Combined Company





Finally, we can look forward to resuming our schedule and seeing each other at events.

At the end of our typical summer pause, Ft. McKavett will be our next event. This year promises to be a good return to the living history hobby, as we will have the use of buildings to enhance the interpretive experience for park visitors. We will portray 1868 just after the return of troops to the fort. We will try to enhance scenarios that we have performed previously. This will give us the opportunity to see if we can still meet our standards and work on our reputation for authenticity. This will be one of those events that if it isn't correct, don't bother bringing it.

The Rear Rank Productions staff have been also anticipating the return to the field and are planning a spring and fall event next year in Virginia. We should consider placing at least one of these events on our schedule next year.

Port Hudson will be a fall event this year friends in the RRB portray the 165TH NY at an event that was of great importance in the history of that regiment.. We have a very supportive park staff and the opportunity to be on the actual ground as our

We also have Texian Market Days as a one day fun event.

Keeping History Alive
Lt. Tommy Attaway



FALL IN! ATTENTION COMPANY! QUIET IN THE RANKS!

UNUSUAL CIVIL WAR WEAPONRY

1. HAND GRENADES

Civil War soldiers were known to make jury-rigged explosives using assortments of fuses and gunpowder, but the conflict also saw advances in the design and manufacture of hand grenades. The most popular model was the Union issued Ketchum grenade, a projectile explosive that was thrown like a dart. The grenades came in one, three and five-pound models equipped with stabilizer fins and a nose-mounted plunger. Upon impact, the plunger would detonate a percussion cap and ignite a deadly supply of gunpowder.

While a novel idea, the explosives did not always work as intended; in fact, when they were bombarded with Ketchum grenades during the 1863 siege at Port Hudson, Louisiana, Confederate soldiers reportedly used blankets to catch the explosives before throwing them back at their attackers.

2. ROCKETS

Rocket launchers made a few appearances on Civil War battlefields. Confederate forces reportedly experimented with Congreve rockets, a British-designed weapon that had previously seen action in the War of 1812. These weapons resembled large bottle rockets and were so inaccurate they never saw widespread use.

Meanwhile, Union forces employed the Hale patent rocket launcher, a metal tube that

fired seven and ten-inch long spin stabilized rockets up to 2,000 yards. While a vast improvement on the Congreve, these projectiles were quite unwieldy, and were only generally used by the U.S. Navy.

3. MACHINE GUNS

The Civil War gave rise to some of the earliest machine guns. Of these, perhaps the most well-known is the Gatling gun, a six-barreled piece that was capable of firing up to 350 rounds per minute. The U.S. government never ordered the Gatling in bulk, but Union General Benjamin Butler privately purchased several of them in 1863 and later used them during the Petersburg campaign.

Other rapid fire guns included the Williams gun, a Confederate breechloader first unveiled at the Battle of Seven Pines in 1862---and the Billingham-Requa battery gun, which consisted of 25 rifle barrels arranged side-by-side. Viewed as too inefficient and unwieldy for infantry combat, these weapons were generally used for guarding bridges and other strategic locations.

4. LANDMINES

Mines-or "torpedoes" as they were then known, were largely a Confederate weapon. Originally developed by General Gabriel J. Rains, these antipersonnel explosives were typically iron containers rigged with gunpowder, a fuse and a brass detonation cap. Rains first used the subterranean booby traps in 1862 during the Peninsula campaign, and later buried thousands more around Richmond and in various parts of the Deep South. In fact, some of the still active landmines were recovered in Alabama as recently as the 1960s.

While they proved an intimidating weapon, landmines were often viewed as an unethical form of combat. Union General McClellan denounced them as "barbarous," and Confederate General Longstreet briefly banned their use. Perhaps the most vociferous critic was General Sherman, who lost several troops to the underground landmines during the March to the Sea. Decrying the use of mines as "not warfare, but murder," Sherman reportedly forced Confederate prisoners to march at the head of his column so they might trigger any hidden "land torpedoes."

5. UNDERWATER MINES

Along with landmines, both sides mined harbors and rivers with torpedoes, but the Confederacy enjoyed greater success. Starting in 1862 with the sinking of the ironclad Cairo, Confederate torpedoes destroyed dozens of Union ships and damaged several others. Union torpedoes, meanwhile, sank only six Confederate vessels.

The Confederates owed their skill at underwater warfare in part to Matthew Fontaine Maury, an oceanographer who first demonstrated the use of mines in 1861. Maury's "infernal machines" made the James River virtually impassable, and mines later terrorized the Union Navy during the battles of Mobile Bay and Charleston Harbor. The

Confederacy still succeeded in using submarines to turn mines into offensive weapons. In 1864, the H.L. Hunley, destroyed the Union sloop-of-war Housatonic after ramming it with a pole-mounted torpedo, becoming the first combat submarine to successfully sink an enemy ship.

6. CALCIUM FLOODLIGHTS

During an 1863 operation to retake Charleston Harbor, General Quincy Adams Gillmore laid siege to the Confederate stronghold at Fort Wagner. Gillmore's guns bombarded the fort day and night with the help of a strange, new invention: the calcium light. Better known as "limelights," these chemical lamps used superheated balls of lime, or calcium oxide, to create an incandescent glow. The lights had been used in lighthouses and theaters since the 1830s, but Gillmore's engineers were the first to adapt them for combat. By shining calcium lights on Fort Wagner, Union forces were able to illuminate their target while simultaneously blinding Confederate gunners and riflemen.

Also called "Drummond lights," these calcium floodlights were later used as searchlights to spot Confederate warships and blockade runners. In early 1865, a Union light even helped detect a Confederate ironclad fleet as it tried to move along the James River under cover of darkness. A Southern officer later noted that a planned sneak attack was made impossible because of the Union's "powerful calcium light."

7. WINANS STEAM GUN

The Civil War produced a number of experimental cannons, machine guns and rifles, but perhaps none was more unusual than the Winans steam gun. Built by Ohio inventors William Joslin and Charles Dickinson, this massive automatic weapon sat on an armored train carriage and used steam to fire projectiles, supposedly at a rate of 200 per minute.

Newspapers hailed the mysterious gun as a super weapon, but it was never actually used in combat. When Dickinson headed to Harper's Ferry in May 1861, most likely to sell the gun to the Confederacy, Union forces intercepted him and confiscated his invention. The steam gun was transferred to Fortress Monroe in Virginia before being sent to Massachusetts where it was eventually scrapped. The Union Army never attempted to deploy the contraption in the field, which suggests the steam gun probably failed to live up to its deadly reputation.

I would like to dedicate this article to Lee Chesney, a founding member of the Texas Rifles, University of Texas art professor and U.S. Marine, who routinely won our firing competitions. Lee was a true gentleman and our good pard. You are missed, Lee. Semper Fidelis. Rest in Peace.

Best regards,
First Sergeant Frenchy



Submitted by Joseph Akers

From [Abraham Lincoln](#) to [George G. Meade](#) [Draft],

July 14, 1863

Executive Mansion,
Washington, July 14, 1863.

Major General Meade

I have just seen your despatch to [Gen. Halleck](#), asking to be relieved of your command, because of a supposed censure of mine-- I am very -- very -- grateful to you for the magnificent success you gave the cause of the country at Gettysburg; and I am sorry now to be the author of the slightest pain to you-- But I was in such deep distress myself that I could not restrain some expression of it-- I had been oppressed nearly ever since the battles at Gettysburg, by what appeared to be evidences that your self, and Gen. Couch, and Gen. Smith, were not seeking a collision with the enemy, but were trying to get him across the river without another battle. What these evidences were, if you please, I hope to tell you at some time, when we shall both feel better. The case, summarily stated is this. You fought and beat the enemy at Gettysburg; and, of course, to say the least, his loss was as great as yours-- He retreated; and you did not; as it seemed to me, pressingly pursue him; but a flood in the river detained him, till, by slow degrees, you were again upon him. You had at least twenty thousand veteran troops directly with you, and as many more raw ones within supporting distance, all in addition to those who fought with you at Gettysburg; while it was not possible that he had received a single recruit; and yet you stood and let the flood run down, bridges be built, and the enemy move away at his leisure, without attacking him. And Couch and Smith! The latter left Carlisle in time, upon all ordinary calculation, to have aided you in the last

battle at Gettysburg; but he did not arrive-- More At the end of more than ten days, I believe twelve, under constant urging, he reached Hagerstown from Carlisle, which is not an inch over fifty-five miles, if so much. And Couch's movement was very little different--

Again, my dear general, I do not believe you appreciate the magnitude of the misfortune involved in Lee's escape-- He was within your easy grasp, and to have closed upon him would, in connection with the our other late successes, have ended the war-- As it is, the war will be prolonged indefinitely. If you could not safely attack Lee last Monday, how can you possibly do so South of the river, when you can take with you very few more than two thirds of the force you then had in hand? It would be unreasonable to expect, and I do not expect you can now effect much. Your golden opportunity is gone, and I am distressed immeasurably because of it—

I beg you will not consider this a prosecution, or persecution of yourself-- As you had learned that I was dissatisfied, I have thought it best to kindly tell you why.

[Endorsed on Envelope by Lincoln:] To Gen. Meade, never sent, or signed.

As we all know, the first couple weeks of July 1863 saw a crushing blow to the Confederacy at three decisive locations...Grant vs. Pemberton at Vicksburg, Lee vs. Meade at Gettysburg and lesser known (or at least talked about in less historical circles) Gillmore vs. Hagood at Fort Wagner in Charleston, South Carolina. These three battles are said to have dramatically turned the tides against the Confederacy. Why? I'm glad you asked...

Under the Anaconda Plan of legendary but aged General Winfield Scott, Vicksburg cut the Confederacy nearly in half by Grant seizing the use of the Mississippi River from Confederate President Jefferson Davis. At precisely the same time as Vicksburg, General Lee had crossed into Pennsylvania in an attempt to take away the will to fight of the Union. Which then leaves Fort Wagner. In Charleston, South Carolina, a young colonel by the name of Robert Shaw was in command of the becoming the talk of the newspapers known simply as the 54th Massachusetts Infantry which just happened to be one of the first all colored units to join the ranks of the Union army's combat fighting units. Although the 54th was not victorious in the taking of Fort Wagner, the fact that the Confederacy could no longer deny one of their fears of facing former enslaved men in uniform against them...

Despite the tactical loss at Fort Wagoner, Lincoln did have two resounding victories to boast about in his efforts to end this bitter and costly feud between the States with Vicksburg and Gettysburg. And although Gettysburg was the most costly single battle to date in terms of cost of American lives, because it was a defeat against the "Grey Fox" known as General Robert E. Lee and on northern soil, it was all the leverage Lincoln needed for a victory in morale against the Confederacy. Lincoln only had one slight problem with the victory at Gettysburg... Meade's lack of enthusiasm to pursue Lee back into Virginia and thus letting him go to fight another day!

So now history begs the question of why didn't Meade pursue Lee and seal the fate of the Army of Northern Virginia? Historians on both sides of the battle debate Meade's sluggishness in a variety of arguments, but two more than any of the others stand out. The first is the sheer carnage of the Battle of Gettysburg. All in all over 51,000 Union and Confederate soldiers became casualties from the three day battle. Fact is that Lee lost 38% of his men to casualties as compared to Meade's losing only 27% of his Union soldiers. Up until this point in the war the bloodiest carnage had only been seen along Antietam Creek in Sharpsburg, Maryland less than a year earlier.

The other argument debated with Meade after Gettysburg is of his soon learning of the Confederate defeat at Vicksburg, but more importantly to Meade was his not knowing the fate of the Confederate commander; Lt. General John C. Pemberton. It is true that Maj. General George Meade, also known for his temper which his men referred to him as "Ole Snapping Turtle", had always been a "Union Man". But despite this Meade also had a soft spot in his heart in respect to his fellow classmates and alumni of West Point. To understand Meade, you have to understand his respect for esprit de corps when it comes to West Point alumni. Once this is understood then it is easily to see the benevolence shown by Meade towards Lee and respectively towards Pemberton having lost to Grant at Vicksburg. Fact is that Pemberton was not only a classmate of Meade's at the Point but they were also roommates...Small world huh? This coupled that Lee, also a West Point alumni, was more or less a legend among officers on both sides for his arrest of John Brown, being the only West Pointer to never earn a single demerit and not to mention his being the son of Harry "Lighthorse" Lee of the American Revolution nor his own related at least through marriage to George Washington himself. Needless to say the name Robert E. Lee was not just well known but also stood out to fellow classmate, Major General George Gordon Meade.

So why didn't Meade give chase to Lee after Gettysburg? I argue that Meade was empathetic to Lee's defeat on the field of battle but more so was his grief in the potential loss of his friend, Pemberton, to Major General Ulysses S. "Unconditional Surrender" Grant at Vicksburg. Some may argue that this was battle fatigue. Perhaps this had something to do with his reasons of why. But soon after the Battle of Gettysburg, Meade had requested to resign his commission as commanding officer of the Army of the Potomac which in January 1864 promoted Maj. General U.S. Grant to command the Army of the Potomac and subsequently finish off Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at the Siege of Petersburg and to finally surrender the Confederacy at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia later in 1865.

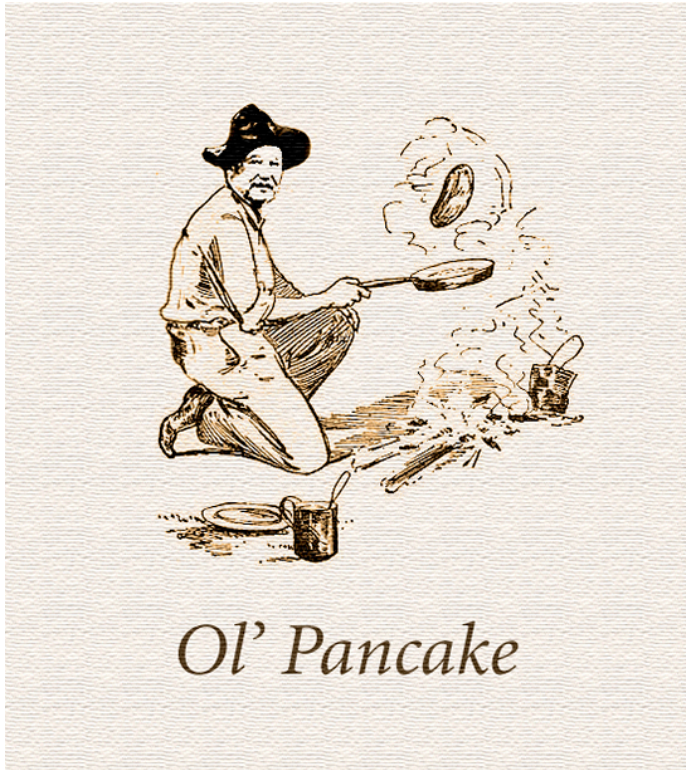
Pvt. Joseph Akers

The Passing of Lee Chesney

A friend and always a joy to be around, Lee loved the hobby of civil war reenacting in which he excelled. Everyone enjoyed his company at those events. His being there added to great memories and fellowship. You will be missed my friend.







Ol' Pancake



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 October 24, 2021 – The Editor