
The UNION STANDARD

July-August 2002

Vol. 10, no 7

The Newsletter of the 1st United States Infantry, The Regulars

Dispatch from the Board

I was pleased to see so many of you turn out at the Six Flags living History/Recruiting. We had 25 on Saturday and 21 on Sunday. Impressive for a hot July weekend. Fortunately we set up camp in a nice grassy (mostly) shaded spot. Unfortunately no amount of shade could make up for the lack of a breeze and every little puff that came our way brought smiles of relief to the troops. With the exception of one demonstration we confined most of our activities to attacking the train - much to the delight of the passengers and park higher-ups. Of course there was the time on Sunday where we took over the train and searched out traitors and escapees. Most of the men took advantage of the air-conditioned canteen to eat but there were a few hardy souls who stayed in camp to feast off Alan's latest creations. Red flannel hash and roasted duck, cooked over the fire on two ramrods a la 1863. There were a few who gave new meaning to "hard core" by staying the night and Bob was there with his wagon. We went for quality over quantity in the recruiting department this year. We only took names of folks who appeared to have a serious interest in re-enacting. All of them have been contacted and several look promising. A well done to everyone who participated and especially to Clark who pulled it all together.

This month we have the annual live fire under the able direction of Kip and Ted on the 24th. We're going to a new range this year in Johnson County. Its actually closer than it sounds as its only 10 minutes from the

35w/67 intersection between Alvarado and Keen. I was down there the other day with Kip and I think this will be great! This is out in the woods. There are no baffles to block your view down range and 200 yards is a long way off. We'll be firing at this range in company, individual, and skirmish line profiles. There will also be a pistol competition. Unlike at Arlington there is lots of shade. We'll also have hot dogs and hamburgers so you won't have to worry about when lunch is. Even if you're not a regular shooter this is a fun event and will give you a new appreciation of how good (or bad) the CW rifled musket was.

With the advent of fall the campaign season picks up again. In September we'll have our final drill prior to heading out for Perryville the first weekend in October. Perryville is the big national event this year. The weather should be perfect and the site is on the actual battlefield. November will find us in the Veterans Day parade and December is Prairie Grove, Arkansas. Camping on the actual battlefield this is a chance to break out all the heavy gear and winter clothing. Maybe it will even be cold this year - as opposed to the 70s last time. See you in the field.

God Bless The Regulars

Don Gross

(The editor wishes to note the Capt. has completely forgotten the Sweet Potato Pudding....maybe not without cause?)

LIVE FIRE - Directions **The Johnson County Shooting Sports Club**

WHEN: 24 August 2002 starting at 0900, gates open at 0730.

WHO: Anyone in the 1st US or others who are associated with the 1st. Also some Span-Am reenactors are welcome.

DIRECTIONS: *From Dallas--* take Highway 67 toward Cleburne. At the intersection of 67 and I-35W, go another 3.9 miles west (toward Keene) and turn left (south) on County Road 318. Go south on CR 318 one mile (it's only 1 mile long) and turn right. The range entrance is 100 yards on the right. Look for the orange 1st US signs.

From FT WORTH: Go south on I-35W to Highway 67 (towards Cleburne and Keene). Go west on 67 3.9miles and then south on 318 until it ends, then turn right 100 yards, range on the right.

1st U.S. Calendar

2002

AUGUST

24 Johnson County Shooting Sports Club

SEPTEMBER

14 Drill or outpost Tactical

OCTOBER

4-6 Perryville, KY

NOVEMBER

11 Veterans Day Parade, Ft. Worth

DECEMBER

6-8 Prairie Grove Reenactment, Arkansas

Email update:

DON GATES - <mailto:sugates@attbi.com>

Civil War Account of Pvt. William Clark Hosack, 1843-1927

courtesy of Conway Barton

Part 2, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Wilderness

Battle of Fredericksburg

The Army of the Potomac was now commanded by Gen. Burnside, and was faced toward Fredericksburg, Dec. 10, 1862. At midnight, we moved to Rappahanock River and forced a crossing on Pontoon bridge in front of Fredericksburg. December 13th we marched across the plain and engaged the enemy in battle. We drove them back and took the Heights, but having no support and our loss so heavy, were unable to hold the position. We had 394 men engaged in the battle and 112 were killed, wounded or missing. Company E was the color company. Capt. Coder reported that 31 men in his company engaged and one came out safely. We then re-crossed the river, and went into Camp at Belle Plain Landing.

January 1863, we participated in the hardship of the Burnside Stick-in-the-Mud Campaign. February 8, 1863, our Division, the Pennsylvania Reserves, was sent to the defense of Washington and to re-organize. Col. Gallagher having resigned by reason of wound. Lieut. Col. Jackson was then commissioned Colonel. Capt. Dan S. Porter of Company B was

commissioned Lieut. Colonel. Gen. S.W. Crawford was assigned to the command of the Division. Battle of Gettysburg, July 2-4, 1863 June 25th the division broke camp and marched to Fredericksburg, and joined the main body of the army on its way to Gettysburg, Pa. We arrived there on July 2, and halted behind Cemetery Hill. The 2nd Division, 5th Corps, was engaged in battle in front of Little Round Top, and was hard pressed. Our division was hastily moved to their support. Our regiment's position was in front of Little Top. We lay down until the troops in front would pass through our line. Then we rose to our feet and poured a volley of buck shot and ball into the enemy, then charged bayonet double quick, yelling, which demoralized the enemy, killing some and wounding others, took many prisoners and drove the rest back over the wheat fields, and saved the mountain, and perhaps the battle of Gettysburg. I was then detailed for picket duty, and remained on picket until after part of night. The following day, July 3rd, we, in the afternoon were ordered to make another forward movement, after Pickett's charge, which we did, and drove the enemy out of their trenches and across the Emmitsburg road. This proved to be the end of the battle. This night I was again detailed for picket. Two of Co. I, John Hammerly and I, now placed on a post. Sometime in the night, we both went to sleep. Next morning at break of day, being 4th of July, I got up cold, saw a blanket over the stone fence that I put around me as I was walking my beat. When as all the rebel army had retreated in the night and the picket line was last to leave, and gave me a parting shot. I heard the ball pass my head. This is a note worthy of mention.

July 4th our army began the pursuit back into Virginia, and on the way, done a little skirmishing. This fall we had a few slight engagements in this part of Virginia: Bristoe Station, Rappanhancock Station, and the Mine Run Campaign. Casualties were slight. The greatest suffering was from colds and loss of sleep. I was nearly "all in".

Battle of Wilderness and Spotsylvania Courthouse May 4th, 1864 or May 3rd, the army started to find the enemy in the wilderness and gave them battle. I received a shot in the heel of my shoe. We moved to the left flank, and engaged the rebels again. We again moved to the left flank and fought the battle of Spotsylvania Court House, and further to the left we fought the battle of North Ann River, where one of my mess mates had his leg smashed by a shell.

On our way back to the hospital, he wanted to reward me by a set of Sergeants strips he had in his pocket. Next Issue, Capture and Imprisonment at Andersonville

Thanks

Dear Guys,

Before I forget, THANK YOU for attending the 1st U.S. Six Flags event. As you found out when you got there, Six Flags had no one to man the table at the employee parking lot. That is why you had to pass through the employee security gate without your Six Flags ID badge, the family passes, or other items. A little late, huh? But, I did not hear of anyone having a problem getting in. Even though pets are not allowed at Six Flags, the Fogerty family even got their pet dog in! I did hear that the employee discount was not available at any of the restaurants that the Hargis family tried on Saturday. I am sorry about that if you experienced the same, I do not know what went wrong. And, Six Flags only had packets for those who signed up before the deadline.

And, most of these did not have the valuable "meal ticket" in their packet. I made a quick call and I do believe that I finally got one for everyone, each day. Oh, by the way, there seems to be a misconception that the "guest passes" that were in your packet (only those who signed up at least five days before the event had a "packet"), are the ones to be used later. No, they were the ones your family members were to use to get in the Employee Gate the day you attended last weekend, but you never got them until after you got you loved ones in. Your two free passes for every day you "worked" will be mailed to me for distribution in a couple of weeks. Thank you for all the kind words...and efforts.

I could not have done it without your support. It makes our unit look so much more attractive to outsiders when we have twenty-five members attend, rather than five.

Again, thank you, thank you, thank you. I especially wish to thank those who set up stuff: Kip Bassett (Sibley tent), John Bowen (recruiting fly, ammunition stack, etc.), Rick Brockman (flags, Sibley tent), Bob Fuhrman (wagon & hospital tent), Don Gross (A-tent), Glen Hargis (who stayed up all Friday night making "rope beds" etc.), and last but not least, Alan Prendergast (cooking gear, food, tent, etc.).

Also to those who set up shelter half tents, etc. My mind is too frazzled to remember all of you, I am still so tired, but I appreciate all that you did. Gosh it was hot. But, you know, at least it was humid and we were wearing wool! For those who missed Sunday, it felt cooler even though it was still hot and humid 'cause we had a breeze Sunday!

Thanks to Conway Barton for manning, so ably, the recruiting booth on Sunday so the rest of us could "go play". Thanks to Kip Bassett who brought his

awesome Henry rifle, Saturday, to demonstrate to the crowds. Thanks to Robert Cowgill for watching my army beans, cooking on Saturday morning, while I checked on everything else. Thanks to Glen Hargis for all his time spent at the hospital tent and tireless efforts keeping the farby drinks area policed up and screened from view. Thanks to Bill Hathcoat who wore his dress uniform on Saturday and showed what a Regular should look like while the rest of us (ME!) were lounging around in our shirtsleeves trying to keep from sweating to death. Thanks to Ed Prejean who brought his awesome Spencer rifle, Saturday, to demonstrate. Thanks to Alan Prendergast for cooking Captain Gross' goose, er "duck", each day. The ducks were delicious! Did I start a fowl cooking trend at Cross Timbers? Thanks to 1st Sgt. Sanders for his great sense of humor all weekend....it keeps me in a better mood. Thanks to William Ray & William Wells for doing SUCH A GOOD JOB AS DRUNKS on Saturday when they were "arrested" at the saloon!

The following should get a special medal for spending all day Saturday, all Saturday night (guarding all our stuff), and all day Sunday at Six Flags: Glen Hargis, Terry Quigley, Steve Sanders, and new member, Kevin Terry. You guys are truly "born again hard"!

-Clark

What did YOU do before the war? What will you do afterwards?

Your Uncle Sam wants you to be a contributing member of society once your time in ranks is over and you're mustered out. So if you haven't decided how you're going to make your way in life after this cruel war is over, look for some possibly useful info in our next issue. Remember, McFuddy has the market cornered on corruption, so *you'll* have to find other, useful, *honest* work! Ed.

PERRYVILLE REENACTMENT

The Perryville organizers state there will be no walk-on registrations at Perryville – ***"All reenactors, civilian and military, must pre-register by Aug. 31 deadline!"*** Your \$10, per person, registration fee must be mailed to George Hansen no later than August 24th, or see him at the Live Fire. **Note the Perryville announcement on page 5.** Those who do not register before August 31st will have to personally contact the organizers as the 1st will not be able to assist late registrants.

An invitation
to
Gen'l Dolive
Commanding 1st Federal Division

Sir,

The officers and men of companies A and D 1st US infantry request the general's presence at our marksmanship training on August 24th next.

As part of our drill we will be firing at 6' x 22" targets at 100 and 200 yards. Each man one shot. It would be our honor for you to evaluate this exercise.

Refreshments will be served and all manner of activity undertaken to ensure your comfort during your visit.

Your respectful servant

D. Gross

Capt Co A, Commanding

1 August 2002

Perryville 2002

submitted by John Bowen

After Shiloh, the war in the West split into two loosely interdependent campaigns. One was Grant's push to secure the Mississippi and the other was a contest for control of middle and eastern Tennessee. That campaign began with the Confederate invasion of Kentucky. To divert General Don Carlos Buell's Army of the Ohio from its push towards Chattanooga, General Edmund Kirby Smith decided to strike north into Kentucky from Knoxville with about 12,000 men. Braxton Bragg joined this action by moving from Tupelo then Chattanooga on a parallel track to capture the Union supply center at Louisville with 30,000 men, effectively ending Buell's move on Chattanooga. Bragg's capture of Louisville would have placed him to the rear of the Army of the Ohio, cutting it off and giving the Confederacy control of the state. Bragg believed thousands of Pro-Southern Tennesseans and Kentuckians would join his move and force Buell's army out of Tennessee and maybe bring Kentucky into the Confederacy. Buell reached Louisville in September and then doubled back to meet Bragg. Meanwhile, Bragg, believing that most of the Federal Army was far to the north marching from Louisville to Frankford, sent 16,000 men under Leonidas Polk

into the path of Buell's entire force. They collided in the predawn hours of Oct 8th at Doctor's Creek, two miles outside of Perryville. Finally, at 2PM, Bragg ordered Cheatham's division across the Chaplin River to attack the Federal left. Cheatham's thrust broke Jackson's division and follow-up attacks by Buckner and part of Anderson's divisions drove back the rest of McCook's corps. Sheridan held the center against Anderson's other two brigades and by nightfall the Confederates halted the attack with the advantage of holding the ridge. Buell had only committed about one third of his 60,000 troops and Bragg, realizing he was vastly outnumbered, retreated, saved by possible annihilation by the failure of General Crittenden to advance his II Corps and envelop the Confederate left. He had won the battle but left the field and lost the war for control of the state. The invasion was the last major effort to keep Kentucky in the Confederacy. November found the Army of the Ohio, now under Rosecrans, at Nashville, and Bragg at Murfreesboro, setting the scene for Stone's River. (Information came directly from Time/Life Books "The Battle Atlas of the Civil War", and "The History and Battlefields of the Civil War", by John Bowen---no relation!)

The Perryville Battlefield State Park consist of 100 acres on the northern end of the battle lines, which at one point during the fighting stretched for three

miles. There is a Visitor's Center and Museum with relics, a slide presentation and a painting of the battle. A look-out tower on the crest of the ridge provides a view of the most important terrain of the battle, as well as the rolling countryside nearby that muffled the sounds of combat so well that Buell did not realize for several hours a major battle was in progress.

When you send your Perryville reenactment registration check to George, we will compile the list and take care of getting everyone registered as a group with the event hosts. You will not have to send in a separate registration or register over their website. *Beware: the Perryville organizers have declared Aug.31 as the deadline registration date and there is no walk-on registration.*

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It's that time to start planning our excursion to the Kentucky hills in October.

Directions and information for the **140th Perryville anniversary** can be found at: www.perryville2002.com. The **\$10** registration fee is due to George no later than **August 24th**. You may pay at the Live Fire. Make checks payable to "NTRS". Send your check to:

George Hansen
3407 Palmtree Dr
McKinney, TX 75070-7443

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FURTHER INFORMATION ON LIVE FIRE

While this is a smaller range than the Arlington Sportsman's Club, it is more of an open range and has berms out to 225 yards. There is lots of shade and picnic tables but only 1 (count 'em) 1 port-a-potty.

BRING: Muskets, leathers, range gear if you have some, cup (for ice water), money for live rounds and lunch, any gear you want to mark, eye and ear protection (I have some but not enough).

COMPETITION: We will be a little more laid back this year, but we will have lots to shoot at. Some of the highlights: a revolver competition, the infamous 4 minute drill, 1 and 200 yard volley fire, and a live, moving skirmish exercise. We really think you will like the course of fire this year.

QUESTIONS: give Kip a call at 817-453-0063. or E-Mail kip@imagin.net

FOOD: This year we will have hotdogs and burgers, soft drinks, water etc. on site. Lots of shade and just a real good time.

Black Soldiers in the Civil War

By Tom Harris

Approximately 180,000 African-Americans comprising 163 units served in the Union Army during the Civil War, and many more African-Americans served in the Union Navy. Both free Africans-Americans and runaway slaves joined the fight. On July 17, 1862, Congress passed two acts allowing the enlistment of African-Americans, but official enrollment occurred only after the September, 1862 issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. In general, white soldiers and officers believed that black men lacked the courage to fight and fight well. In October 1862, African-American soldiers of the 1st Kansas Colored Volunteers silenced their critics by repulsing attacking Confederates at the battle of Island Mound, Missouri. By August 1863, 14 Negro Regiments were in the field and ready for service. At the battle of Port Hudson, Louisiana, May 27, 1863, the African-American soldiers bravely advanced over open ground in the face of deadly artillery fire. Although the attack failed, the black soldiers proved their capability to withstand the heat of battle.

On July 17, 1863, at Honey Springs, Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, the 1st Kansas Colored fought with courage again. Union troops under General James Blunt ran into a strong Confederate force under General Douglas Cooper. After a two-hour bloody engagement, Cooper's soldiers retreated. The 1st Kansas, which had held the center of the Union line, advanced to within fifty paces of the Confederate line and exchanged fire for some twenty minutes until the Confederates broke and ran. General Blunt wrote after the battle, "I never saw such fighting as was done by the Negro regiment. The question that Negroes will fight is settled; besides they make better soldiers in every respect than any troops I have ever had under my command."

The most widely known battle fought by African-Americans was the assault on Fort Wagner, South Carolina, by the 54th Massachusetts on July 18, 1863. The 54th volunteered to lead the assault on the strongly fortified Confederate positions. The soldiers of the 54th scaled the fort's parapet, and were only driven back after brutal hand-to-hand combat.

Although black soldiers proved themselves as reputable soldiers, discrimination in pay and other areas remained widespread. According to the Militia Act of 1862, soldiers of African descent were to receive \$10.00 a month, plus a clothing allowance of

\$3.50. Many regiments struggled for equal pay, some refusing any money until June 15, 1864, when Congress granted equal pay for all black soldiers.

African-American soldiers participated in every major campaign of 1864-1865 except Sherman's invasion of Georgia. The year 1864 was especially eventful for African-American troops. On April 12, 1864, at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest led his 2,500 men against the Union-held fortification, occupied by 292 black and 285 white soldiers. After driving in the Union pickets and giving the garrison an opportunity to surrender, Forrest's men swarmed into the fort with little difficulty and drove the Federals down the river's bluff into a deadly crossfire. Casualties were high and only sixty-two of the U.S. Colored Troops survived the fight. Many accused the Confederates of perpetuating a massacre of black troops, and the controversy continues today. The battle cry for the Negro soldier east of the Mississippi River became "Remember Fort Pillow!"

The Battle of New Market Heights, Virginia (Chaffin's Farm) became one of the most heroic engagements involving African-Americans. On September 29, 1864, the African-American division of the Eighteenth Corps, after being pinned down by Confederate artillery fire for about 30 minutes, charged the earthworks and rushed up the slopes of the heights. During the hour-long engagement the division suffered tremendous casualties. Of the sixteen African-Americans who were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Civil War, fourteen received the honor as a result of their actions at New Market Heights.

In January, 1864, General Patrick Cleburne and several other Confederate officers in the Army of the Tennessee proposed using slaves as soldiers since the Union was using black troops. Cleburne recommended offering slaves their freedom if they fought and survived. Confederate President Jefferson Davis refused to consider Cleburne's proposal and forbade further discussion of the idea. The concept, however, did not die. By the fall of 1864, the South was losing more and more ground, and some believed that only by arming the slaves could defeat be averted. On March 13, the Confederate Congress passed General Order 14, and President Davis signed the order into law. The order was issued March 23, 1865, but only a few African-American companies were raised, and the war ended before they could be used in battle.

In actual numbers, African-American soldiers comprised 10% of the entire Union Army. Losses among African-Americans were high, and from all reported casualties, approximately one-third of all African-Americans enrolled in the military lost their lives during the Civil War.

Tom Harris is a member of the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry. As well as CW re-enacting he does living history presentations of the 1st Kansas and Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Gibson. His website is: www.geocities.com/buffalo_soldier_1sgt

How Accurate Is Your Rifle?

G. Hansen

The latest issue of "America's Civil War" magazine features an article entitled "Shock Troops of the South," which discusses the elite Corps of Sharpshooters commanded by Maj. Gen. Stephen D. Ramseur's division. These troops were deployed as skirmishers and sharpshooter skills were, obviously, a must. As a side note the author stated a modern test was conducted between the Enfield P53 rifle and the US Model 1861 Springfield rifle-musket. At 400 yards firing at a 72-inch square wooden target, a Springfield managed only seven hits, while an Enfield scored 13! This might be a moot point considering most battles were fought at 100 yards or less. Still, in the hands of a sharpshooter, the Enfield was the weapon of choice. Don't forget that Keith Brazile won the 1st US' live fire contest last year with his '61 Springfield.

Back to the rifle test - the Whitworth rifle, however, got 15 hits out of 15 shots. Made in England it fired a unique .451-caliber, hexagonal-sided bullet, or "bolt." Featuring an optional telescopic sight and a high muzzle velocity, the Whitworth could strike at 1,000 yards and beyond. It weighed only 9 lbs., 10 oz., but its lightweight gave it a heavy recoil. The article inferred this weapon brought down Maj. Gen. John Sedgwick at Spotsylvania, where his last words were "they couldn't hit an elephant at this distance."

(ED: Speaking of Rifles...did you know that rifle barrels were once made in two pieces and welded together? Or that the metal was "wrapped around the hole" to create the bore? Do you know why those old rifles have octagonal barrels? Ever wonder about your old pappy's powder horn?, grandad's horn spoon?, horn rim glasses? Wonder how that stuff was made? Find out about exciting career opportunities in our next issue. Remember, this war can't last forever!)

Cross Timbers After Action Report Operations South of the Red River from Indian Territory, June 1864

Sirs,

Elements of the 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade embarked on a movement south to cross the Red River and take positions in the town of Gainesville Texas, the first village south of the Red along the Texas Rd from the Indian Territory. Eventide Fri May 31st found us about 1 mile south of the Red, on the west side of the Texas road along a wooded draw encamped with other elements of the Division, particularly King's Battalion of the 1st Bde.

After a fitful repose, we arose at dawn Sat. June 1st and broke camp and were ordered to take defensive positions about a half mile back north facing east as we had heard of a massing of some Rebel home guard somewhere to our south and east. As we were preparing our works, we were summoned by Col. Dolive's courier to march to support an attack of Kings battalion on a gathering of Home Guard troops who had drawn up in line of battle perpendicular across the Texas Rd about 3/4 mile north of the village of Gainesville. Col. Dolive, upon our arrival on the scene commanded us to move forward and deploy skirmishers to test the mettle of the home guard. At first we pressed quite close and it looked as if they might break but they were reinforced by what looked to be a Confederate battalion of mustered state troops advancing north and on the home guard's right rear flank. We retreated the line of skirmishers and I detached the reserve of my battalion under Cpt. Mabry to withdraw several hundred yards and then go down a ravine near the woods covering Sweetwater Branch and then advance by the flank back south again hoping to advance unseen to the extreme left of the Confederate line and attack their flank and roll them up.

As Lt. Gross and our skirmish company came to the ravine, they too, started advancing by the flank up to catch the rest of my battalion who at that time had come to another ravine that fed Sweetwater branch that paralleled the Texas Rd. Immediately as they got there, a small platoon of home guard up the hill and to our left started firing on our 1st company that had come up first. When 1st company finally caught up, I advanced the battalion and we forced the platoon of Home Guard off of the crest and immediately found ourselves crossing the T of the Confederate line. After several withering volleys, the Home Guard and State troops began to waiver and pull back toward

the town, but in good order. We continued flanking and King's battalion kept moving slowly forward as we forced the State troops to cover the withdrawal of the Home Guard. The action ended with few casualties but my men were exhausted due to the unforgiving Texas sun.

I must commend our battalion on their swift and agile movements during the battle. 1st Battalion's Winged Mercurys deployed as skirmishers, retreated as such, broke off the engagement, marched north, left into the ravine, marched west, marched and double-quick back south along the Sweetwater, fought up a hill and continued to press the Confederate line back almost to the village in the space of less than an hour. All this after much manual labor in preparing defensive positions over 3/4 mile away.

After the engagement, we rested and refilled our canteens in the branch and awaited orders from Brigade. Lt. Gross received orders to return to headquarters for detached duty so I bid him Godspeed. We had hoped to be called back to support King's Battalion and advance on into Gainesville where we could at least be afforded some creature comforts of civilization in this desolate prairie. This was not to be. After 2:00, we were ordered to march back north as we had reports the Confederates were being reinforced by another Battalion and they were massing south of the village. We withdrew back north to our half-finished works and were told by the Col. to deploy in outpost to provide warning of any demonstration on the left flank of our Brigade. We deployed in outpost with our front several hundred yards paralleling the Texas Rd. and our grand guard and right flank anchored on the Sweetwater. We had good lines of support to each of the posts and our posts were in good defensive positions, with ample sentinel posts to observe the movement of the enemy.

After 5:00, we saw a Confederate Battalion of State Troops marching north on the Texas Rd. I was at a sentinel post of 2nd Company (Gibson Guard), watching them march totally unawares that my Battalion was in lethal striking distance and watching their every move. As I left the sentinel position to garner my Battalion for attack, I noticed that a strange illness began to afflict our ranks as I saw many men of the 1st Company with ashen faces gathering their knapsacks and blanket rolls and wandering aimlessly south in a trance-like state. I have never seen the likes of it before. The heat of the day and the lack of the Quartermasters to catch up to our advance had obviously taken its toll in extreme

cases of sunstroke. When that had subsided, my severely under strength Battalion was now at a 3 to 1 disadvantage to the enemy who *had* their train with them during their advance and was obviously well-supplied. I could not force the issue for I had lost more in strength than my tactical advantage could make up for.

I ordered Capt. Cosloy's 2nd Company to send several patrols to find how far the enemy battalion in question had their pickets set and how deep was their position. Their patrols came back and said that this was the Red River Battalion, consolidated elements of the 9th and 15th TX inf., and they were in a very narrow but strong position along the front of approximately where Outpost #1 was with their left flank open to the south for any demonstration we wished to make. Oh, how I wished we had King's Battalion to take advantage of this situation! I could not, however, send the miniscule remnants of this veteran Battalion into certain death. We could've shocked the enemy and taken our pound of flesh, but eventually their numbers would've taken the day and there would've been empty chairs at many tables this autumn.

We settled for an evening of observation when at about 7:00 pm, an enemy company made a reconnaissance in force on outpost #1, good thing Lt. Bassett, our Adj., was along the left of our sentinel line with his newly acquired Henry repeating rifle. Due to the rapidity in which he dispensed his messengers of death, he attracted the attention of the whole enemy company (which was almost my whole battalion strength) and they chased him pell-mell down the hill and into the field of fire of outpost #1, almost taking out our chicken that Pvt Kirby had "liberated" and was roasting it on a spit in the ravine of the dry Snake Creek. I had heard that this repeating rifle was fast firing but it had a lack of lethality. I can testify to that fact as I could see many of the enemy getting hit by one of the best shots in the Battalion, yet the Henry rounds seemed to not affect the enemy whatsoever. Only after calling for support from Outpost #2 and all of Battalion staff manning Post #1 were we able to stem the rebel horde, and drive them back up the hill to the Texas Rd. We took some more casualties during that action and I had to give the command of first company to its 1st Sgt., Steve Sanders, who at times showed periods of mental instability while we slept on our arms in the outpost. He had found the hindquarters of a pig which was stiff with decay, and slept with it most of the night, mumbling incoherently. At dawn the next day he started to toss it around, comb his lice-ridden hair, and laugh hysterically. I had no others with his

experience, or charisma, with which to replace him. I reasoned if men will follow me why not a lunatic, and a brave one at that?

The morning of Sunday dawned still and humid, and at approximately 6:30 am I made my way to outpost #2 and observed the enemy cavalry still in fitful slumber at the Cowpens, about 350 yds forward of our position. No movement along the enemy's front and their outriders napping like babes. I thought it would be a good time to assemble the men for a harassment raid on their left flank and perhaps bag some cavalry as well. As I let my field glasses down, we heard the unmistakable sound of a bugle sounding the reveille to the south. Blast!! At that moment I raised my field glasses and observed 4 heads pop up out of their blankets near the Cowpens but they didn't roll out of their blankets. I figured it was now or never so I assemble my humble force (18 effectives) and we set off across and down the draw toward the Cowpens. As we came up the opposite slope we saw to our front one of the cavalymen anxiously trying to saddle up his horse. He really started in earnest after seeing Yankees for breakfast. We fired at him as he rode toward their camp! Blast!! As we double-quickd forward I sent Capt. Cosloy's men toward the Cowpens to bottle up the other cav and the rest of us moved toward the Confederate left. As we went over the rise and saw their camp to the north, we noticed them buzzing about in their camp like so many hornets. Not wanting to slink back to camp and wait for the inevitable Confederate sledgehammer, I always err on the side of aggressiveness, so we moved with alacrity toward an opening in the trees toward a wooded rise to the northeast. When we arrived, we were almost 180 degrees opposite our camps with the Rebel hordes between us and our camps. The Confederates split their forces to send one company to the east toward our rise, one company back to the south to seal off our retreat toward the Cowpens. Where was their other company? We were in very defensible ground with open area toward all of their approaches and at least 20 -30 feet in elevation all around, with a small pond to the north-northwest at the bottom of the steepest slope. If the enemy sent in their forces piecemeal to attack we could've parried their thrusts. But I didn't see their third company and if the company coming directly at us tied us down and allowed the second company to link up, we'd be in Texas for the duration of the war. My adjutant, Lt. Bassett, advised me that we shouldn't advance just to defend, so after still no sign of the third company I decided to do what the enemy didn't think possible and most units could not even attempt. I ordered my Winged Mercurys again to fly down the steep north

slope of the hill where there was no sign of the enemy. As we came down the hill, a few of their toothless band screamed, "There they go, they're moving again!" We ran like the enemies of our souls were chasing us and we came to the eastern edge of the pond and found a way across - just to come up against a deep gully. I jumped in the gully and scrambled up the other side. It was there that I saw the third enemy company - huffing through the woods to attempt to seal us off! If we moved quickly we could make it around their right flank and back across the pickets lines to our camps. They had the angle on us and we had to run uphill, firing as we went. Finally they had a few that attempted to cut us off but we dispatched them to the infernal regions with a few well-placed rounds. As I made it to the crest, I looked back and saw our tiny band in a skirmish line firing from the flank and the Confederates firing at us from the wood line. We would make it! We did on foot what JEB Stuart did on horseback stealing a circuitous march against an enemy three times our size. True, it was awfully lucky, as the plan developed on the fly due to unfortunate occurrences beyond our control, but I credit the never-say-die attitude of these men and the NCO's who pushed them to the limits.

Afterward, due to the severe loss of men and material under my command, I was relieved of command and we collapsed into a company under the leadership of the only company commander to survive the actions of the last two days instant.

I was never more proud of any group of men I ever led. Each and every one deserves months furlough and a commendation from the Brigade.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregg Benefiel, Major U.S.A.
Commanding, 1st Battalion
3rd Bde.

Lessons From Lincoln

President Lincoln told the following story to General Grant after calling him aside to discuss his appointment as general-in-chief:

“At one time there was great war among the animals,” Lincoln began, “and one side had great difficulty in getting a commander who had sufficient confidence in himself. Finally, they found a monkey by the name of Jocko who said he thought he could command their army if his tail could be made a little longer. So they got more tail and spliced it onto his

caudal appendage. He looked at it admiringly and then thought he ought to have a little more still. This was added, and again he called for more. The splicing process was repeated many times until they had coiled Jocko’s tail around the room, filling all the space. Still he called for more tail and, there being no other place to coil it, they began wrapping it around his shoulders. He continued his call for more, and they kept on winding the tail until its weight broke him down.”

General Grant then assured Lincoln that he knew what the president was talking about and that he would not call for more troops unless absolutely necessary.

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Haines Bluff, Miss, July 3d, 1863.

We are now twelve miles from Vicksburg and eight miles from the Big Black. I can still hear the thunder of artillery, morning and eve, at the former place. If Grant celebrates the Fourth inside of Vicksburg, as reports says he intends to do, he must do something decisive soon. He may be doing that very thing this minute. When I began writing, his cannon kept up a continual roar. It has almost ceased. Perhaps he is now storming their works. Our men are still throwing up fortifications. The whole country for fifteen miles around Vicksburg is little less than a fortification. The inhabitants around here did not run away at our approach.... The reports of want and destitution with which the papers are filled, and which I doubted, are true. Many families draw all their supplies from our Quartermaster. Soon all must do.

– David Layne, USA

REMINDERS

Newsletter contributions - E-Mail/Mailing submissions to **The Union Standard** – D1stus@gte.net or C/O Alan Prendergast, 1403 Barclay Drive, Carrollton Texas, 75007 (please help out by using Times New Roman font if available on your machine...)

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