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# The UNION STANDARD

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Jan 2003

Vol. 11, no 1

*The Newsletter of the 1<sup>st</sup> United States Infantry, The Regulars*

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## Dispatch from the Board

A New Year is upon us. We continue the tradition of the first drill each year being held at Veterans Park in Arlington. Our January drill has always been well attended and I expect the same this year. Overall attendance at events last year was down from two years ago. For those who look at numbers we averaged 22 (includes HQ staff) per event or about 31% of our membership. We aren't the only unit that has seen a decrease in participation recently. The federal forces at Prairie Grove were the smallest I've seen in years. But, I'm optimistic about reversing that trend in 03. George Hansen will be stepping down and taking over recruiting duties this year. Additionally, the release of Gods and Generals in February should spark an interest in reenacting, as did Gettysburg a few years ago.

We had 22 men turn out for Prairie Grove last month. Not bad but a few rifles short of forming two companies. Actually that wasn't bad from my perspective as it allowed me to observe and *enjoy* the event from the ranks. The weather was nice, a bit cool at night but nobody actually froze (although maybe it was close for Wes Hanson). After the butchering of the planned scenario on Saturday (so what else is new) the Brigade Commander had some strong words for the cornfeds and Sunday's battle sent everyone home in a good mood. Our Battalion Commander was on detached duty and I missed performing with our normal "alacrity".

*At this months drill (Jan 18<sup>th</sup>) we will take time to vote on events for next year. We will return to Ft McKavett in February where in addition to the unit elections you'll get a real taste of garrison duty.*

March will most likely find us at Beaumont (first time event, 20 miles south of Fort Worth with good terrain and a potential for some good scenarios) and there is the Brigade Muster in April at Prairie Grove. Other than our traditional live fire in August, the balance of the schedule is open for discussion. Gettysburg (July) and Middle Boggy (OK) 26-28 Sept are up for vote as Brigade level events. By now most of you should be aware of the scenario and terrain limitations of Gettysburg. We discussed this at Prairie Grove and most of the members were not inclined to go. We have one last opportunity for discussion of this event at drill. Other events under consideration include (but are not limited to): a local tactical in April; Carthage (MO) 3-4 May; Port Hudson (May); and a tactical in October in western Kentucky. Bring your ideas with you to drill.

The absentee/proxy ballots are included in this newsletter. Use them if you are eligible to vote and you can't make Ft. McKavett in February. For those who are prone to loose things, the ballots will also be printed in the February issue. This year there is a good crop of candidates to choose from. We're a little short of candidates for the Board Member at Large positions and its not too late to volunteer to run for one of these two positions.

Polish up your brass and blacken your leathers.  
We're regulars by God!

*See you in the field.*

Don Gross



**DRILL – JAN 18<sup>th</sup> – DRILL**  
**Veteran's Park Arlington**  
9:30 am  
(Directions Page 3)



# 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Calendar

**2003**

**JANUARY**

18 Veterans Park, Arlington

**FEBRUARY**

7-9 Ft. McKavett, Texas (Secession!?!)

**MARCH**

28-30 Beaumont Ranch, Texas (Cleburne)

**APRIL**

4-6 Brigade Muster, Prairie Grove, AR

**MAY**

TBD...Granbury? Carthage?

## Roster Addition

Congratulations to **Recruit John Tindel** as a new 1<sup>st</sup> US member!

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## Recruiting

### Gods & Generals –

The much-anticipated “Gods & Generals” movie release is scheduled for late January, early February. As with “Gettysburg,” members of the First are asked to visit with the manager at your favorite theater and inquire about recruiting in full uniform when “Gods and Generals” is shown. Civilians are also encouraged to participate. It is probably best not to bring your rifle in order not to violate any local firearms’ ordinances. Recruiting brochures will be sent for your use. Contact George Hansen if you successfully secure a recruiting opportunity, as other 1<sup>st</sup> US members might be available to assist you. George’s e-mail is [beast1st@attbi.com](mailto:beast1st@attbi.com) and his phone number is (972) 529-534.

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### CIVIL WAR QUIZ!

Keith Brazile has generously offered to share a new book he picked up with the rest of the unit. By nature of a Civil War “trivia” volume, he’s going to help you test your knowledge of the period! Here’s the 1<sup>st</sup> installment.

## Questions:

1. What is the significance of the Mason-Dixon line?
  2. Of the approximately thirty million people living in America in 1860, how many lived in the South?
  3. What Yankee invention was the engine of the Southern economy?
  4. Which of these key mid-nineteenth century technologies were developed by Northerners: the steamboat, the telegraph, the revolver, the steel plow, and the sewing machine?
  5. What was the size of the North's economic base relative to the South's?
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## Lessons From Lincoln

*During the election year of 1864, it was frequently suggested to Lincoln that he step aside, not run for reelection, and let another candidate have the White House. Often, he responded with the following:*

“I have not permitted myself, gentlemen, to conclude that I am the best man in the country, but I am reminded, in this connection, of a story of a Dutch farmer who remarked to a companion once that ‘it was not best to swap horses when crossing streams.’”

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## Members Approve Bylaws Revision

The 22 members present unanimously approved the proposed amendments to the By Laws while in the field (literally) at Prairie Grove. As previously published, the by laws were amended to eliminate the positions of Major and Adjutant, and elect all Board of Directors and Regimental Ranks unit wide as opposed to by companies. Additionally, references to “Major” were eliminated and the role of the Senior Officer and Board of Directors clarified.

The Bylaws were originally approved in May 1999 and amended in September 2001 and December 2002.

# **January 18<sup>th</sup> Drill**

## **Veteran's Park, Arlington**

### **9:30 a.m.**

#### **Directions to Veteran's Park, Arlington**

**From I-20: North on Green Oaks Blvd. from I-20 in Arlington. Green Oaks is about 8 miles west of Hwy 360 and 3 miles east of I-820. Go to Arkansas and turn right (east). Turn right onto Spanish Trail; the park entrance is on the right.**

**From I-30: Take East Chase Blvd. south from I-30 (2 miles east of I-820). East Chase will become Dottie Lynn and then becomes Green Oaks. At 3\_ miles turn left (east) on Arkansas. Turn right onto Spanish Trail; the park entrance is on the right.**

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#### **“Election Standards and Procedures”**

Last summer the Board asked for volunteers to establish guidelines for the upcoming election. Carl Stang and Greg Fett volunteered to fulfill this task and with diligence and hard work they compiled the procedures now known as the “1<sup>st</sup> US Election Standards and Procedures.” The Board approved the document and it served as a template for this election and it will also do so for all future elections. The 1<sup>st</sup> US thank Carl and Greg for providing an invaluable tool which greatly aids the electoral process. The “Election Standards and Procedures” document will be retained in the Unit Manual and a copy is available by contacting the NTRS Secretary, John Bowen.

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#### **Borrowed 1<sup>st</sup> US Equipment**

Those who have any loaned 1<sup>st</sup> US gear are asked to urgently return the items. These items include rifles, coats, leathers, canteens, etc. New members attending upcoming events will need this equipment. Immediately contact one of the below to make arrangements to return the gear.

Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

George Hansen (972) 529-5349  
Alan Prendergast (214) 336-9894  
Steve Sanders (817) 246-8996  
Don Gross (817) 921-5462

#### **QUIZ ANSWERS**

##### **Answers:**

1. To settle a boundary dispute, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon partly surveyed the borderline between Pennsylvania and Maryland from 1763-1767. This became the popular name for the border between free and slave states.
2. About ten million, or one-third. Of these, about three and a half million, over one-third for the South's population, were slaves.
3. The cotton engine, or gin. Yale graduate Eli Whitney's 1793 invention led to the increase of cotton exports from less than one hundred tons per year when it was devised to over one million tons per year by 1850. Cotton was the South's major economic product, and the production of cotton was based on slave labor.
4. All of them.
5. The North's wealth was about nine times larger. The value of all Confederate manufactured goods was less than a quarter of that produced in New York alone.

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#### **Dispositions of The 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment, January/February 1861**

The 1<sup>st</sup> US was located at the following posts on January 1, 1861. An inspection was taking place on the Frontier by Inspector General James K. F. Mansfield. The inspection was cut short on January 23, 1861. This would be 26 days prior to the surrender of Federal Forces in the Department of Texas. Mansfield terminated the inspection “in consequence of indisposition”. No doubt the inspection was a victim of secession fever.

## Department of the West

The country west of the Mississippi River and east of the Rocky Mountains except the State of Texas and the territory of Utah, and all of New Mexico east of the 10<sup>th</sup> degree of west longitude.

Fort Cobb, Indian Territory Co's B, C, D & F  
Fort Arbuckle, Indian Territory Co E.

## Department of Texas

Fort Lancaster Co. K  
Fort Chadbourne Co. G  
Camp Cooper Co. H (Originally located at Ft. Stockton, H Company had orders to proceed to Camp Cooper as soon as they were relieved by a company of the 8th Infantry from Ringgold Barracks. By Feb 1<sup>st</sup>, Co H. was at Camp Cooper.  
San Antonio Barracks Co. I  
Camp Verde Co. A

Camp Verde – Established in 1856 on the Northern bank of Verde Creek near Bandera Pass, about 65 miles from San Antonio. It was nicknamed “Little Egypt” as a result of being the headquarters of the Camel Corps. The post consisted of 2 sets of officers quarters, a barracks for 1 company, a band practice building, blacksmith shop and stables for cavalry horses. The post return for January of 1861 showed the post to be under command of Carlos A. Waite, Colonel, commanding the 1<sup>st</sup> US Infantry. The camp's regular garrison consisted of Company A, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry. Company A was commanded by Captain James N. Caldwell. This company consisted of two officers and 60 enlisted men. The headquarters staff of the First Infantry and a regimental band consisting of 1 officer and 15 enlisted men were also located at Camp Verde.

Taken from “The Exodus of Federal Forces from Texas, 1861” by J.J. Bowden

Fort Cobb - The military post of Fort Cobb was established October 1, 1859, by two companies of the First Cavalry (formerly the First Dragoons) and one company of the First Infantry, under Major W. H. Emory. It was built

of pickets and adobe, on the high ground east of the present townsite. Unfortunately as of this writing I have been unable to find the post returns for Fort Cobb but I will continue to seek the information.

## Fort McKavett weekend

The following is a high level overview of a considerable piece of U.S. history. To try and condense the cause of the Civil War into a few paragraphs, let alone pages is nearly impossible. The following roughly accounts for the weeks before February 1861 where we will find ourselves at Fort McKavett. Following this are the official “orders” that explain our presence at the Fort for the weekend of Feb 8<sup>th</sup>.

Some of the information below would almost certainly NOT have been known to us, but you may as well have it, as it should help provide you with information about our situation as Regulars in the 1<sup>st</sup> United States Infantry at the outbreak of the Civil War.

February 1861, Fort McKavett, Department of Texas  
By this time all sensible men of the Republic with an ear to the news cannot have missed the sound of trumpets and the baying of the dogs of war. Several states from the deep south have already seceded from the Union, and more are certain to follow their traitorous example. The reasons given for this calamitous action are many; from an honest belief that the tariffs levied by the Federal government are being used to finance Northern business and destroy the South (unsubstantiated and rife with unproven numbers), to the deep seated idea that one of the rights any state has is the right to withdraw from the Union at will.

The underlying issue is without question the future of the institution of slavery in the United States. With the demographic changes leading the majority of the population to cluster in the cities of the North, the United States House of Representatives is already filled with more representatives from “Free” states than “Slave” states. With the admission of more free states into the Union (California and Oregon in particular) it appears to Southern members of the state and Federal governments that soon they will also lose their voice in the Senate as well. The consequent result will be that the Northern (Free States) controlled Union will then enact legislation that will surely mean the ruin of Southern interests and the ultimate demise of the right to own slaves.

The election in 1860 has only intensified a long heating situation as Abraham Lincoln is elected President. Lincoln believes that the Constitution forbids presidential action against slavery where it already exists, but he has pledged nonetheless to halt it's further spread; he says "*On that point hold firm, as with a chain of steel. The tug has to come, and better now than any time hereafter*". South Carolina for its part warned that she WILL secede from the Union if a president so pledged were to be elected. In a four candidate campaign the south votes largely for John C. Breckinridge, Missouri votes for Stephen R. Douglas, Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia go for John Bell and the majority of Northern states vote for Lincoln. When the election is over, Lincoln has 180 electoral votes, Breckinridge 72, Bell 39 and Douglas 12.

A hasty attempt at yet another compromise (The Missouri compromise and the Kansas Nebraska act being previous examples) is sought. On December 18<sup>th</sup> 1860, a plan is put forward by John J. Crittenden of Virginia. Known as the Crittenden Compromise it recommends 6 amendments to the Constitution.

The first amendment extends a line at 36 degrees-30 minutes Latitude (such a line would run *very roughly* across country along the northern borders of Oklahoma, Arizona and New Mexico) all the way to California and forbids slavery in all territories north of it, but recognizes and protects the institution south of that line. Future states south of the line are to be admitted with or without slavery according to the wishes of the people in the new state.

The second amendment forbids Congress to abolish slavery in any place of national jurisdiction inside a slave state (for example, a U.S. Army Fort).

The third prohibits abolition in the District of Columbia so long as either Virginia or Maryland has slavery, or without the consent of the people in the district.

The fourth would protect from Federal interference the interstate transportation of slaves.

The fifth would enable Congress to furnish compensation to slave owners of fugitive slaves returned by force, the indemnity to be borne by the county responsible. The last would forbid any future tampering with the Constitution as it applied to and shielded slavery.

This plan was rejected by the Republican members of the recommendation committee. In any event, on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, ignoring all talk of compromise, Florida, Mississippi and Alabama have all elected conventions with decisive secessionist majorities. On January 5<sup>th</sup> a caucus of Southern states was held, it is said in the very Capitol itself.

Members from Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Florida, Mississippi and Texas determined that immediate secession was imperative and that they should meet before Feb 15<sup>th</sup> in Montgomery Alabama to organize a Confederacy. In the meantime they are retaining their seats in an effort to protect their movement and block hostile legislation. Talk of secession runs rampant through the South, while the somewhat bewildered North believes that a compromise can and will be reached before the ultimate dissolution of the Union can occur.

General David Emanuel Twiggs in command of the Department of Texas at this time has repeatedly requested what form of action he is to take should Texas secede. He has written to General Scott on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January, expressing sympathy for the cause of Southern Liberty, and requesting to be relieved of command on or before the 4<sup>th</sup> of March. The Federal Government is eager to avoid war, and cautions Federal forces NOT to precipitate a conflict, but neither will they allow them to withdraw from the Department of Texas.

Throughout the South "Conventions" of secessionist sympathizers are gathering. While sympathy for staying in the Union is high in Texas, the sympathy for secession is higher. Throughout the settled areas of the state, men are already engaging in argument and discord, forwarding their views by word or violent deed. Union supporters have already been strung up, physically beaten, or browbeaten into "agreement" with the secessionist stand.

The governor of the State, the much respected Sam Houston, argues against secession;

*"Some of you laugh to scorn the idea of bloodshed as the result of secession, but let me tell you what is coming....Your fathers and husbands, your sons and brothers, will be herded at the point of the bayonet....You may after the sacrifice of countless millions of treasure and hundreds of thousands of lives, as a bare possibility, win Southern independence...but I doubt it. I tell you that, while I believe with you in the doctrine of state rights, the North is determined to preserve this Union. They are not a fiery, impulsive people as you are, for they live in colder climates. But when they begin to move in a given direction...they move with the steady momentum and perseverance of a mighty avalanche; and what I fear is, they will overwhelm the South."*

Lead by South Carolina on December 20<sup>th</sup> 1860, Mississippi secedes on January 9<sup>th</sup>, followed by Florida on the 10<sup>th</sup>, Alabama on the 11<sup>th</sup>, Georgia on the 19<sup>th</sup>, and Louisiana on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, prior to the actual ratification of the Ordinance of Succession by the people of the state Texas withdraws from the Union. Although the general vote by the population of the state is not scheduled until the 23rd, the members of the convention behave as though the ordinance has already been ratified, which it will be.

The 1<sup>st</sup> United States Infantry regiment has been in Texas since the conclusion of the War with Mexico. Commanded by Colonel Carlos A. Waite since the death of Colonel Plympton on June 5<sup>th</sup> of 1860, the regiment is stationed here and the Indian territories (Oklahoma). Five companies are physically stationed in Texas, at Forts Chadbourne (G), Lancaster (K), Camp Cooper (H), Camp Verde (A) and San Antonio (I). The other companies being positioned at Forts Cobb (B,C,D,F) and Arbuckle (E) in the Choctaw Nation of the Indian Territories. General Twiggs was officially relieved of command on January 28<sup>th</sup>, but did not receive the relief order in San Antonio until February 15<sup>th</sup>.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of February Texas forces seize the Arsenal and Barracks at San Antonio Texas. Outnumbered by a force of nearly 1000 Texans, in poor health, and with only the garrison company (I) and some staff available, General Twiggs on February 18<sup>th</sup> will surrender the military forces in the Department of Texas, not to the State of Texas, or the Governor of Texas, but to a commission appointed by the Succession convention. He will do so three days after notification of his relief from duty and with Colonel Waite in the vicinity and able to assume command.

He will also do so before the ratification of Secession by the general population of Texas.

Approximately \$1.6 million in government property is seized. According to the terms of surrender the Texans will take possession of 20 military installations, 44 cannon, 1,900 muskets, 400 pistols, 2 magazines of ammunition, 500 wagons and 950 horses.

The Federal garrisons companies are ordered out of the state and are to rendezvous for seagoing transport at Green Lake, which is about 20 miles from Indianola on the Gulf Coast.

What *we* don't know *yet*, but you should know is that A, H and I companies will get away safely. Companies G and K, along with the non-commissioned staff and band are captured on April 25<sup>th</sup>, on transports, at Saluria by Texas forces (and in

violation of the agreement between Twiggs and the Convention),

They are immediately paroled agreeing not to serve until properly exchanged and sail on the schooner Horace reaching New York on May 31<sup>st</sup>. Companies A, H and I traveled via ship to Fort Taylor in Key West and then to Fort Hamilton, New York. The companies in the Indian Territories (B, C, D, E and F) marched to Fort Leavenworth, reaching that post on May 31, 1861 under the command of Lt. Colonel W.H. Emory. Companies B, C and D formed for battle in August of 1861 as part of Captain Plummer's Battalion at Wilson's Creek.

Ed...

### FOR SALE

- Brogans, 10 1/2 to 11 size, good condition, w/heel plates - \$50.00
- Original Enfield bayonet, bright polished, excellent cond. Not a Repo!! \$100.00
- Parker Hale 3-band Enfield, w/sling. Excellent shooter, perfect cond, low serial nbr. Glass bedded barrel, refinished (oil) stock, period correct sling and swivels - \$650.00. (Bayonet fits this rifle, if interested, they can be bought as a package for \$700.00)

Ted Cross  
817-429-6317

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## REMINDERS

Newsletter contributions - E-Mail/Mailing submissions to

**The Union Standard** –

[d1stus@gte.net](mailto: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...)

Newsletter – contact George Hansen if you did not receive your newsletter, [beast1st@attbi.com](mailto:beast1st@attbi.com) or (972) 529-5349.

Address/Telephone changes – any mailing/e-mail address changes or telephone number changes should be submitted to John Bowen, [bowen01@dellepro.com](mailto:bowen01@dellepro.com) or (972) 539-6167.

## February Drill at Ft McKavett

Drill will take place at Ft McKavett on February 7-9. Official drill period will commence at Noon Saturday and end at Noon Sunday. Officers, NCOs, and other key personnel should be in place Friday evening. All are welcome Friday! Official start is to accommodate those who can't make it on Friday evening. Rations will be provided.

Uniform is *Heavy Marching Order*. If you don't have a knapsack be prepared to make a bedroll. More detail to follow in next month's newsletter. I call your attention to the following orders:

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY.  
Washington, January 18th, 1861.

Lieutenant Co. W.H. Emory  
COMMANDING OFFICER, FORT COBB:

SIR: in pursuance of special instructions, dated Headquarters U.S. Army Jan 12<sup>th</sup>, you will direct one company of infantry of your command to march immediately to Fort McKavett, Department of Texas. For this purpose additional transportation will this day be sent you from the quartermaster's depot at Fort Smith.

You are instructed to determine if there remains any government property at Fort McKavett, any ordnance, ordnance stores, cavalry or infantry clothing, livery goods, wagons or other military stores. Officers in charge of the detail are to rendezvous with a company of infantry to be dispatched from the Department of Texas and cooperate with them in inventorying any equipment, and if necessary securing and removing if feasible. If military stores cannot be salvaged they are to be destroyed in place. Stores of civilian usage may be left at your discretion.

Owing to the delicacy of the situation with regard to the states in secession from the Republic you are, under no circumstances, to initiate military action. If in doubt you are to withdraw to Fort Cobb and await further orders.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E.D. TOWNSEND,  
Assistant Adjutant-General

SAN ANTONIO, January 27th, 1861.

To the COMMANDING OFFICER, CAMP VERDE:

SIR: I am directed by the commanding general of the department to address you as follows:

The secession conventions in several southern states have acted to secede from the Union. It is expected the State of Texas may follow suit. With that in mind you are to dispatch 1 company of infantry and transport to the location of Fort McKavett in the Department of Texas. There you will rendezvous with a second company of infantry to be dispatched from Fort Cobb, Indian Territories.

You are instructed to ascertain the presence of government property at that location that may be worthy of salvage. A proper inventory of such property is to be taken and forwarded to this office. If it is deemed inappropriate to salvage any material on post you are to take all necessary action to ensure said property is destroyed or made otherwise unavailable for use by possible secessionist forces.

You are ordered to take whatever action necessary to secure and or destroy the material but must avoid conflict with State forces possibly in the vicinity.

By order of Brevet Major-General Twiggs:

W. A. NICHOLS,  
Assistant Adjutant-General

“A Fort, Forsaken by Soldiers, Time. McKavett: ‘Prettiest Post in Texas.’”

by Bob Boyd

Fort McKavett – This sometimes eerie, often beautiful part of Texas history is more isolated than it was as it’s founding in 1852. Then, there were hundreds of soldiers and nearly as many civilian laborers. Today, there are four park rangers and 20 or 30 visitors a day. Now, as then, the town of Fort McKavett in Central Texas consists of one general store. For 20 miles around there is almost no indication that human hand has intruded on the sage, mesquite and scrub-oak surroundings.

At Ft. McKavett, southeast of San Angelo, the present meets the past in a sometimes jarring, sometimes exhilarating feeling. You can feel the presence of the past while standing in the present, because nothing has come between the two. The view you see out the window of the restore bakery is the same one seen by a private fresh from infantry basic training in St. Louis in 1852.

You can walk down the same path, through blooming red cactus and bluebonnet field to the springs at the head waters of the San Saba River and know a captain’s lady or a combat-veteran sergeant may have stumbled on the same limestone outcropping you did. To say that Ft. McKavett is off the beaten path would do its isolation much injustice. It has practically fallen between the cracks of history, saved only by the determined work of Park Supt. David Bischofhausen, his diligent staff and a couple tour buses a week. But at one time it was crammed with life and importance. It was one of the most important to the frontier forts built to protect settlers and travelers from Indian attacks.

In 1871 Gen William Sherman called it “the prettiest post in Texas,” and in 1874 the legendary Col. Ranald Mackenzie launched his campaign that resulted in the battle of Palo Duro Canyon and the end of a significant Comanche presence in Texas. Mackenzie was the army’s best Indian fighter and his exploits have been portrayed by John Wayne and others in thinly disguised movie plots such as Rio Grande. After the Custer debacle at Little Bighorn in 1876, it was Mackenzie and the 4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry (often stationed in Ft. McKavett) that the generals sent to do the job right. Mackenzie was the most colorful of the fort’s commanders.

All of the famous black regiments of “Buffalo Soldiers” spent much time at the fort, including the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry.

There was another commander of Ft. McKavett who probably has had more impact on the average American’s life than any frontier figure. Col. Abner Doubleday undoubtedly used the fields around the fort to perfect his invention of the game of baseball. That rock you’re standing on might be the original third base.

Built on a high hill on the south bank of the San Saba River, the fort had an ample water supply and a healthful climate. Native limestone and oak and pecan groves furnished basic building materials, although finished lumber had to be freighted from the supply depot from San Antonio. Large gardens were cultivated in the rich river-bottom soil. Watercress was available the year around and eliminated the possibility of a scurvy outbreak. The only real health problem was an occasional case of malaria fever, a fact that could not be explained by doctors at the time and which still remains a medical mystery.

The fort became a State Historical Site in 1968. It currently consists of 14 restored buildings, including officers’ quarters, barracks, hospital, schoolhouse, bakery and post headquarters, and the stabilized ruins of numerous others. Interpretive exhibits in the old hospital ward trace the history of the fort area from ancient times through the frontier period to the present.

A self-guided trail leads to the military lime kiln and the springs near the San Saba headwaters. The trail is less than a mile long but loaded with surprises, including a vast array of wildflowers, blooming cactuses and stately riverbank oak trees. The buildings are reconstructed using original material as much as possible and refurbished exteriors.

In many ways, however, the stabilized ruins are the most fascinating part of the of the Ft. McKavett experience. You can walk through doorways and sit by fireplaces where soldiers from the past and their wives walked and sat. The limestone walls glisten in the Texas heat, and it is easy to let your mind wander past the Indian wars of the 19<sup>th</sup> century all the way to Stonehenge and Druid ruins because that is what they look like.

“Conan the Barbarian” had its birth in the ruins and the mystical mind of author Robert E. Howard. Howard was from Cross Plains and one of the few places he ever traveled to was Fort McKavett. He loved the feeling of romantic mystery created by the fort ruins, according to Tim Prather, Texas A&M librarian and Conan junkie. Prather once made a pilgrimage to Ft. McKavett to find the exact place where one of the few surviving pictures of Howard was taken. The picture dates from the 1930’s, and the spot – in the bachelor officers’ quarters directly across from the commander’s house – looks exactly the same today.

In a sense, civilization passed Ft. McKavett by. In its heyday in the mid-1870’s, a bawdy town had spring up outside the fort’s perimeter (as in almost all Southwestern forts, there were no walls enclosing the fort). Had the past taken a few

different twists, that town might have developed into something like San Angelo (to the northwest). It certainly had the same beginnings with bars, houses of ill repute and gambling dens. But that was not to be.

The Army had crushed all Indian resistance in Texas by the end of the 1870's. In 1883, the demands of the frontier Army were farther west, as the last of the Apache resistance was being methodically eliminated. The troopers finally pulled out, donating the fort buildings to anyone who wanted them. The townspeople moved in, but couldn't make a go of it. The trade routes and the railroads lay many miles away. The town withered and died. But the buildings, the paths and kiln that contain so much history remained.

The Texas frontier was a combat zone for 40 years. Most of the movie exploits of the frontier cavalry were taken from Texas history, because history is where Anglo civilization first clashed with and finally crushed the resistance of the Plains Indians. The Comanches were the finest fighting horsemen in the world, and for decades they maintained a war against civilized encroachment in Texas. More white men and women were killed on the Texas frontier by Indians than all the other Indian frontiers put together.

In short, the men and women at Ft. McKavett were in a war zone. Soldiers who barracked where you are standing could look forward with certainty to fighting the most savage and frightening Indian warriors on the frontier.

(Recently rummaging through old newspaper clippings, the above was found on the backside of a Walt Disney World article, which was published August 7, 1988, in the "Dallas Morning News." Although the author, Bob Boyd, emphasizes the fort's history during the 1870's, the fort and its surroundings have changed little since its founding in 1852. Ft. McKavett is site of the February muster and those 1<sup>st</sup> US members who visited the fort last April will attest to its unique setting and pristine condition. Truly, it is a magnificent facility for garrison duties and heavily requested by the membership to return for such activity. - George Hansen)

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## **Elections to be Held**

In accordance with the Bylaws the 1<sup>st</sup> US will hold its Bi-annual elections at the February meeting at Ft McKavett. Standards for rank were published and eligibility to vote is in the Bylaws:

### ***Article IV, Voting.***

1. Only dues paid Regulars, Recruits, and Civilians are eligible to vote.
2. Regulars and Civilians must attend four meetings in the previous year to vote.
3. Recruits who have been members for at least 60 days and attend one meeting during that time in the previous year can vote.
4. Regulars and civilians can give written consent for proxy voting to other Regulars.
5. Regulars and civilians can send an absentee ballot to the election chair prior to the election.

This year's elections are under the direction of Steve Sanders and the election committee of Beck Martin and Ed Prejean. There were enough volunteers to come forward and run so that there are at least two candidates for each position. For those not able to make the February meeting an absentee ballot or proxy statement is located in this newsletter. Remember, your dues need to be paid up and you must have attended four meetings in the past year.

### ***Article II, Organization.***

**A. Unit will generally be organized along the military rank structure found in the Regular Army of the 1860s.**

### **B. Election of Officers, Board of Directors and Regiment Ranks:**

1. The unit will elect a Board of Directors as follows: The military ranks will elect two company grade officers, six NCOs, and two military representatives at large. The civilian organization associated with the 1<sup>st</sup> US, with at least ten active members, may elect a representative at-large to serve on the board.

We are electing the Board of Directors, which is the governing body of the unit. Their job is twofold. They provide the legal direction for the unit (we are a 501(c) (3), incorporated in the state of Texas) and, with the exception of the two members at large, also have field command duties (officer or NCO). Every election year at the first board meeting following the elections the Directors elect from among themselves the corporate officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer).



# 1<sup>st</sup> US 2003 Election Absentee Ballot

Submit in lieu of a proxy vote

**Absentee ballot must be delivered to the election chair (Steve Sanders – 8012 Emerald Crest Drive, Apt 221, White Settlement, TX 76108) prior to Election Day.** I understand that there are no provisions in this ballot for run-off elections. Circle choices.

**Senior Officer** (vote for one)

Mark Dolive  
Don Gross

**Junior Officer** (vote for one)

John Bowen  
Clark Kirby

**1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant** (vote for one)

Alan Prendergast  
Brook Thomas

**Sergeant** (vote for 3)

Greg Fett  
Clark Kirby  
Jim Kirkendall  
John Schultz  
Brook Thomas

**Corporal** (vote for 2)

Keith Brazile  
Greg Fett  
Gene Fogerty  
Sean Prendergast  
Andrew Schultz  
Brook Thomas  
Brad Walsh

**Member at Large** (vote for two)

Keith Brazile  
Rick Brockman  
Don Gates  
Kip Bassett  
Greg Fett  
Gene Fogerty  
Sean Prendergast  
Andrew Schultz  
Brook Thomas  
Brad Walsh

\_\_\_\_\_ Write in

\_\_\_\_\_ Write in

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*I certify that I am eligible to vote according to Article IV NTRS ByLaws*

----- cut here -----

## 1<sup>st</sup> US 2003 Election Proxy Vote

Submit in lieu of an absentee ballot

**Proxy ballot may be delivered to any regular member prior to Election Day.** You may provide special written instruction for balloting or give your proxy total freedom to vote as he sees fit on all ballots.

I, (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ release my proxy to (please print) \_\_\_\_\_, Company \_\_\_\_\_.

This ballot may be used for all Regimental Ballots.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

*I certify that I am eligible to vote according to Article IV NTRS By Laws*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Special Instructions:**

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**DRILL**      **January 18th**

**Ft. McKavett**      **February 7th – 9th**

## **The Union Standard**

*Newsletter of the 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Infantry*

1403 Barclay Drive

Carrollton Texas, 75007