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# The UNION STANDARD

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March 2003

Vol. 11, no 3

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

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## Dispatch from the Board

Excellent job at Fort McKavett gentlemen! Despite the forecast of bad weather (and the snow Friday night), 20 men made the long trip down to Menard County. With the exception of a few electrical heaters brought in to take the chill off in the barracks, we had a remarkably anachronistic free weekend and an excellent experience of 1861 garrison life. There were times throughout the weekend where we lapsed into period conversation with everyone voicing their opinions of the state of succession, how it would affect the army, would there be war, and who would go with the confederacy. The rangers were most impressed at how efficiently we conducted our fatigue duty – clearing brush and stabilizing the powder magazine. Guess they aren't used to working with regulars! Located on adjacent private property our efforts will facilitate further study and restoration of this previously hidden structure. Guard mount was the central training for this weekend. Kudos for your professionalism and alacrity. Making the rounds at night I was impressed at how well the sentinels knew their duties and procedures. On more than one occasion the men were jumpy in the total darkness and alert to night noises – just as it must have been in 1861. As always Don Gates' food was a cut above traditional garrison fare. Brook Thomas has found a new calling as

company baker and thanks to his wife Julie for the pies.

March and April are busy times for us with near back-to-back events. Beaumont ranch is March 28-30 and the Brigade Muster is April 5-6.

Beaumont is a first time event and at 15 miles south of Fort Worth off I35, right in our backyard. While we will be going campaign style (no A tents) our camping area on a lightly wooded ridge will be close to the out of sight federal parking. This will be our first chance to work with the latest members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (77<sup>th</sup> Pa. Volunteer Infantry out of OK) and promises to be an excellent event. Mark Dolive is overall Federal Commander and Gregg Benefiel is the Infantry Commander.

**Late update:** Colonel Samples has canceled the Brigade muster at Prairie Grove on April 5<sup>th</sup>. This means you guys running out of kitchen passes won't have to try and do back to backs. It should also mean everybody can focus their maximum efforts on getting out to Beaumont Ranch at the end of this month!

*See you in the field.*

Don Gross



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## Beaumont Ranch directions:

**From Dallas** - head south on I-35E to Hwy. 67 and then head towards Cleburne. Exit south to I-35W in Alvarado and go south. Now follow the above directions below...

**From Ft. Worth**, - take I-35W south to Exit 15 (FM916 Maypearl). Go east 1\_ mile to CR 202, turn right. Go 2/3 mile to CR 102, turn right, the ranch entrance is on the left.

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

**2003**

**MARCH**

**28-30** Beaumont Ranch, (Cleburne) Texas

**APRIL**

**26<sup>th</sup>** Tactical – Vicinity of Decatur, Texas

**MAY**

**17<sup>th</sup>** Drill – location TBD

**JUNE**

**TBD** **More drill! (Hurrah!!!!) – location TBD**

**AUGUST**

**(TBD)** Live Fire

**SEPTEMBER**

**26-28** Battle of Middle Boggy (Atoka, Oklahoma)

**October**

**(TBD)** Tactical

**November**

**(TBD)** Camp Ford

assisting me were Conway Barton, Kevin Doughtie, Jerome Levy and Kevin Doughtie. Many thanks to Todd Holzaepfel for coordinating a recruiting venture at a theater in downtown Ft. Worth. Todd reports interest was slight, but ample brochures were distributed. It is efforts like this, small in nature, which may garner a healthy prospect. Thanks Todd and do hope you continue the Cause. Also, Glen Hargis worked at an Arlington theater and reports “the thin Blue line was sooo very thin.”

The Granbury reenactment in May has been cancelled which severely impacts the spring campaign. Other recruiting venues as replacements need to be found so please immediately contact me with your suggestions, as Granbury is always good for one or two good men. Events with a historical connection best suit our needs, but should you have other propositions I am always interested. By all means contact me as we soon need to develop a spring schedule.

### Recruiting Committee

Volunteers are urgently needed as members of the new Recruiting Committee and applications can be forwarded to Recruiting Sgt. Hansen – [beast1st@attbi.com](mailto:beast1st@attbi.com). Committee members will help at recruiting events (attendance is voluntary, not mandatory), suggest proposed recruiting events, and formulate ideas as to how the 1<sup>st</sup> US can best acquire additional recruits. A gathering at the Beaumont Ranch Reenactment will be announced that weekend and those interested in recruiting are encouraged to participate at this initial kickoff meeting. Current Recruiting Committee members are William Ray and Blair Rudy.

### Fresh Fish

Congratulations to Recruit Ron Myers as a new 1st US member. (...see Ron’s article below...)

### Civil War Quiz time!

#### Here’s another quiz from Keith Brazile

- Q1. What general commanded troops in seven of the ten bloodiest battles?
  - Q2. What was the profile of the typical Union and Rebel soldier?
- .....

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## RECRUITING for REGULARS

by George Hansen

The Irish Festival was a huge triumph and as a result several new recruits are expected within the ranks. Those serving as recruiters were Conway Barton, John Bowen, Don Gross, Pete Graham, and Alan and Sean Prendergast. Kudos go to Parker Brown for walking the entire facility announcing our presence and also to Kevin Doughtie, Art Ogle & William Ray for working both days. Consideration is given to Glen Hargis sporting a shovel thinking a fire pit needed to be dug to keep his pards warm. Did someone forget to tell Glen we were located indoors? This festival has become a favorite site and the organizers have already requested the First’ attendance for next year.

There was mild success at the AMC Theater in Frisco for the “Gods & Generals” shows as those

Q3. What Union politician had four brothers-in-law who fought for the South?

Q4. In 1863, President Lincoln appeared before a secret morning session of the Congressional Committee on the conduct of the war. Why was he there and what did he testify?

(Wirra! That's three questions hidden as one!!!  
...Mcfuddy)

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## A New Recruit's Experiences

By Ron Myers

Joining a reenactment group is a great way to meet new people, learn about the Civil War Era soldier, and have fun. Getting started can be expensive and time-consuming, but there are many resources available to help new recruits. Here is a short guide to my experience in the last month on beginning this hobby.

The best guide is to use the members of the 1<sup>st</sup> US and all their suggestions and information. George Hansen, Jim Kirkendall, John Bowen, and Conway Barton have all given me great info regarding the life of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century infantryman. All the members of the Unit have been friendly and easy to talk to and without exception will answer questions you may have.

Gay Frazer of Frazer Brothers has been a wonderful source of detail regarding outfitting, uniforms, and camping. She is easy to talk to and has a large storehouse of knowledge for the "fresh fish." Call her at 214-696-1865 during the week 10am to 6pm or go to the Frazer Brothers web site at [www.frazerbrothers.com](http://www.frazerbrothers.com). Frazer Brothers is the official outfitter for the 1<sup>st</sup>.

Fall Creek Sutlers at [www.fcsutler.com](http://www.fcsutler.com) is a great company for obtaining gear other than Frazer Brothers. The web site is excellent, and I've purchased a couple of fantastic items from their catalog. Probably the most useful purchase was a two-video tape presentation called *School of the Soldier Part One* and *School of the Soldier Part Two*. Both these videos demonstrate the Manual of Arms, Marching in Squads, Loading

and Firing Rifles, and other examples of Civil War infantry life. Fall Creek has many small items such as dinnerware, blankets, poke sacks which can be helpful. I would personally buy the large items such as uniform, rifle, knapsack from Frazer Brothers and get smaller accessories from Fall Creek.

C & D Jarnagan Company has a web site at [www.jarnaganco.com](http://www.jarnaganco.com) which is another site to obtain items for reenacting or living history. They have terrific leather goods and I think possibly many sutlers get gear from them.

James Townsend and Son, at [www.jastown.com](http://www.jastown.com) have great eyeglasses for those blind like myself and small items for your knapsack or haversack. They have a neat wool cap that I'll be wearing to sleep in camp.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Maine Regiment from Northern California has a terrific web page at [www.homestead.com/rmanual/](http://www.homestead.com/rmanual/) that is a fantastic source for cleaning a rifle, what items to obtain when starting out, and even recipes for hardtack! These guys have been a big help with many sources.

Finally, The Authentic Campaigner site at [www.authentic-campaigner.com](http://www.authentic-campaigner.com) has many great articles regarding this hobby. Some are outdated and may no longer be on line, but the ones I've found have been very informative. Check it out, but be prepared to find about one-third of the articles are no longer on the web.

As a "fresh fish" I'm just getting started with the 1<sup>st</sup>, but from what I've learned, I can say that the most essential items to get at first are forage cap, sack coat, shirt, drawers, pants, socks (probably two pair is best), brogans, haversack, canteen, and leathers. Try to get these items over a period of time, because they will cost you quite a bit. Before you go camping be sure to get a canteen half or plate, a spoon and knife, a tin cup (dipped is best), a gray wool blanket, a ground cover, and a poncho or gum blanket, ( they are pretty much the same except the poncho has a slit for you head.) The unit has a few rifles you can borrow until you can buy your own.

Someone should also have a tent they can share, or you can “rough it “ and sleep outside with a ground cover on bottom, your blanket, and gum blanket or poncho on top for the morning dew. You can also bring a sleeping bag for cold nights, as long as you keep it hidden away during the day. Finally, if you can, get a knapsack to carry all your gear. If you cannot, use your poncho and gum blanket or an old blanket and roll them up, tie one end with cotton string or a knapsack strap, and throw it over your shoulder.

Remember, this is expensive to start, but once you get your gear the cost goes down dramatically. The unit will provide chow for the weekend (usually about \$10 per member) and you’ll be able to get cartridges from the unit at an inexpensive price. Water and firewood are usually provided for, so bring your canteen and drink lots of water over the weekend (especially here in Texas.)

Special thanks go out to George Hansen, John Bowen, Jim Kirkendall, and Gay Frazer for all their help and patience. I greatly appreciate all of you!

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#### **FORT MCKAVETT, TEX., February 9, 1861**

SIR: A dispatch rider having just arrived, I take this opportunity to report on the activities of this post in recent days. Pursuant to your orders rc’vd yesterday this post will be vacated today and the troops marched to Camp Verde.

On February 7<sup>th</sup> I arrived at this fort with a detachment of ten men of Co. A. I was soon joined by a detachment of Co. D, commanded by Capt. Hansen. Immediately upon arrival dispositions were made to secure the previously abandoned fort. Barracks were suitable for our stay and the men put to work improving the powder magazine.

There were no military stores located in the fort. There are few civilians in this area. On the night of Feb 8<sup>th</sup> our sentinels apprehended a Mr. K Bassett who reportedly resides in the area and who attempted to penetrate the fort, shots being fired. Not having the authority to arrest him, he was released after I confiscated his US issue revolver, a receipt being issued for same. From Mr. Bassett I learned of a supply of military stores being sequestered in the area. Early this morning a patrol recovered four boxes of supplies and returned them to the fort.

As we are bereft of transport these stores were burned. We are preparing to march out immediately, the men carrying what they can and bringing the flag of our dear country with us.

I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

D.W. GROSS,

Captain, First Infantry, Commanding Post

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You can search the Official records of the War of rebellion at:

<http://www.ehistory.com/uscw/library/or>.

There is also a full set in the Genealogy section in the Grapevine Library.

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#### **From “*Everyday Life in the 1800’s, A Guide for Writers, Students & Historians*”**

##### ***SLANG & EVERYDAY SPEECH***

***By John Bowen (our own Darlin Lt/Captain feller)***

Probably the most difficult part of reenacting is doing a credible job at first person portrayals. Aside from doing the actual research on the individual you would like to portray, the hardest concept to grasp is the context of their lives. Without some knowledge of what was occurring and when it occurred, it’s hard not to introduce anachronisms into your attempt. I present the following in the hope that with just a small expense of time and effort, we will all be able to begin to approach a level of authenticity to carry on an intelligent conversation with our resident dean of Civil War mannerisms and vocabulary: yes, I’m speaking of Moses’ brother hisself, brother Glen Hargis...

**Acknowledge the corn:** to admit the truth, to confess

**Across lots:** to push on straight thru despite obstacles

**Adventuress:** euphemism for prostitute or wild woman

**Albert:** a short chain connecting a watch to a buttonhole

**All creation, all nature, all wrath:** everything and everybody

**All-fired:** hell-fired

**All on one stick:** a conglomeration or combination

**All-overish:** uncomfortable

**Allow:** to admit, to be of the opinion

**All possessed, like:** like someone or something possessed by the devil

**All too pieces:** completely, absolutely

**Almighty:** huge

**Anti-fogmatic:** raw rum or whiskey

**Apple jack:** apple brandy, liquor distilled from apple cider

**Arkansas toothpick:** a long knife (also known as a California or Missouri toothpick)

**Backing and filling:** changing one's mind, waffling

**Bad egg:** a bad person, a good-for-nothing person

**Balderdash:** nonsense, foolishness, empty babble

**Baldface:** slang for old brown whiskey

**Balls:** shortened from ballocks

**Bawdy house:** a house of prostitution. Washington D.C. was home for an estimated 450 bordellos; among them: the Blue Goose, the Haystack, the Ironclad, Hooker's Headquarters and Mother Russel's Bake Oven. Also known as an **Assignment House or House of ill-fame.**

**Beans, don't know, don't care:** anything something, nothing

**Beat the Dutch:** to beat all or beat the devil

**Biddy:** a hen

**Big Bugs:** bigwigs, important people

**Biggest toad in the puddle:** the most important person in a group

**Black soldiers:** 178,975 blacks in some 166 regiments served in the war

**Blackstrap:** slang for any cheap alcohol, named after the thick molasses used in the processing of industrial alcohol

**Blame:** euphemism for damn

**Blazes:** euphemism for hell or the devil

**Bodaciously:** an exaggeration of 'bodily'

**Body:** a person

**Boiled shirt:** popular slang for a clean shirt

**Boodle:** a crowd of people/ or counterfeit or stolen money

**Born days, in all's one's:** lifetime, since one was born

**[Not] Born in the woods to be scared by an owl:** one who is experienced and not afraid

**Breast:** not used in mixed company. 'Delicate' citizens went so far as to call a chicken breast a bosom.

**Brick in one's hat, to have:** to be drunk

**Bub and sis:** brother and sister, especially applied to children

**Bucket shop:** a gin mill, a distillery

**Bully for you!:** well done, good for you

**Bully soup:** a hot cereal comprised of cornmeal and mashed hard tack boiled in water, wine and ginger, and served to Union troops

**Bummer:** the original word for a bum, a lazy hobo or a drunk

**Bunkum:** claptrap  
(*We will call a halt at the end of the B's as the list is quite extensive!...Ed*)

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## QUIZ ANSWERS

**A1.** Robert E Lee was the Rebel commander at Gettysburg, Seven Days, Chancellorsville, Spotsylvania, Antietam, The Wilderness, and Second Bull Run.

**A2.** Civil War soldiers, both Northern and Southern, were typically farmers, unmarried between the ages of 18 and 29, white, native-born and Protestant.

**A3.** President Abraham Lincoln. Mary Todd Lincoln was from Lexington, Kentucky, and had many confederate relatives.

**A4.** The committee had been secretly investigating Lincoln's own wife as a possible Confederate spy. Because of her Southern roots and visits to the White House by Confederate sympathizers, Mary Todd Lincoln was suspected of disloyalty. Lincoln's testimony was terse and unequivocal: "I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, appear of my own volition to say that I, of my own knowledge, know that it is untrue that any of my family holds treasonable communication with the enemy."

## On Guard Duty at Ft. McKavett

by Pvt. Conway Barton

*The following takes place in Texas in February 1861.*

This is it. We just received word that Texas has voted to leave the Union, and join the Confederacy. We all 'couted up' with a sense of urgency as we prepared for the evening's guard mount. No more boring watches. Rumor has it that we will be probed or out right attacked by Rebel sympathizers. I draw first relief, post number two. Corporal Thomas marches us out from headquarters and posts us smartly, giving each man the countersign and parole (New Orleans and Scott respectively). Post two is about 150 yards from headquarters but it might as well been a mile. There is no moon and visibility is about twenty yards for shapes and five yards for faces. I am alert to every noise, rifle at the ready, peering intently into the dark at

every perceived sound. Someone approaches! "Halt! Who comes there?" The figure stops, but when I ask for the countersign he replies "Scott". I go to full cock and once again ask for the countersign. "New Orleans". It is Captain Gross, officer of the Day, who must also be somewhat nervous. Shortly after his visit I am relieved by Cpl. Thomas and the second relief. But before we can return to HQ we hear a challenging cry from my relief at post number two! We rush back and are informed by Pvt. Benefiel that he was approached by a 'shape' who ran when challenged. After a fruitless search for the intruder we return to headquarters ready to assist as reinforcements to any threatened post. A yell from post three and a musket report! Officer of the Guard Hansen takes off for post three with the third relief. We remain with First Sgt. Prendergast ready to go to any sentry's aid. Another musket roars in the dark and return fire by pistol! The pistol flash has given us the position of our intruder. The 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt orders us to advance towards the spot in skirmish order. But before we can arrive, Captain Hansen has captured the enemy who turns out to be a rather formidable fellow with a sinister mustache named Bassett. During interrogation by Captain Gross, Bassett finally breaks down and reveals many things including how he got within 15 yards of my position by cover of trees earlier in the evening. Such is guard duty at night in enemy territory.

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**ORDERS**

**HEADQUARTERS NORTH TEXAS**

No. 3. March 3, 2003

Members of Co. D and Co A, 1<sup>st</sup> US Infantry are directed to assemble in the vicinity of Beaumont Ranch on March 28 for the purpose of joining with other Federal forces in the area to form a battalion of infantry under the direction of LtCol. Benefiels. Said battalion will work with the artillery and cavalry present to subdue the confederate forces known to be operating in that area. Being located only 20 miles south of Fort Worth just off the turnpike at exit 15 it is anticipated that we will be able to field a large force.

We will operate under campaign style conditions. The encampment will be located close to the wagon park however tentage should be limited to shelter halves. Be prepared to use your knapsack or bedroll. Each soldier should carry 100 rounds minimum, as re-supply may be limited.

Rations will be provided. \$10.00 in federal currency should be sent to the treasurer, NTRS by March 26<sup>th</sup> to insure sufficient rations are drawn from the depot. Your availability and intentions for this short campaign should be passed to the company commanders immediately.

D.W. Gross  
Captain, 1<sup>st</sup> US

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**BATTALION REPORT**

Officers, NCOs & Men of the 1st Battalion,

A belated greetings for the New Year! I am as anxious looking forward to 2003 as I am to see 2002 go. 2002 was a tough year for me personally, but I'm rip-raring to go now with a new slate of events and a new movie coming out that could potentially help all of us recruit. And boy, do we need to recruit!

A lot of you I haven't seen since the last Battalion Muster at Ft. Washita I.T., but am looking forward to seeing you again at our Brigade Muster at Prairie Grove the first weekend of April. All of the branches of the Brigade will be in attendance and Col. Sample has assured us that we will have plenty to do.

I wish to welcome a new addition to our Battalion - the 77th Pa. Vol Inf. - commanded by Cpt. Danny Hill. I look forward to seeing Cpt. Hill and his men as they plan on attending the Beaumont Ranch event south of Ft. Worth the last weekend of March. I trust that all of you will tender a welcome to Danny and his men as we get back together this campaigning season.

The Brigade max effort events have been named as: Brigade Muster April 4-6; Gettysburg July 4-6, and Middle Boggy I.T. September 26-28. Let's do our best to support the Brigade in these endeavors!

On another note, I have been apprised of other events that may be of interest to members of the 1st Batt. that we may want to support as a 1st Battalion regional event. Two which come to mind are the Beaumont Ranch event that most of the State of TX reenactordom will be attending March 28-30, and the Carthage Mo. event in May. Does anyone have any input on these?

I can tell you as far as the Beaumont ranch event, it is in a remote area approx 20 minutes south of Ft. Worth that includes a rebuilt post-CW frontier town. The battlefield is quite large with approximately a mile between the small recreated village and a commanding hill that will be the Federal camp for the weekend.

Interspersed between are two large creeks with wooden bridges and several wooded areas criss-crossed by draws that give plenty of maneuver room and scenario possibilities for the weekend. Overall Federal command for this event will be our own Div. commander Mark Dolive. This will not be a "traditional" campaign event as it will have spectators and a battle schedule, but as Fed. infantry commander, we will be portraying late-war western Federals in bivouac in the presence of the enemy. Therefore this event, while not physically demanding, should be attended with the mindset of an army on campaign with the duties and responsibilities that go along with such an endeavor. If you have any further questions about this event, please e-mail or call me. My phone number is 817-451-7780.

Again, I am looking forward to see all of you in the field very soon. Please contact me or Adjutant Bassett with any questions you may have or concerns, and please forward this to the NCOs and men of your companies.

I remain, Your most Ob't Servant,  
G. Benefiel, Commdg.  
1st Inf. Batt.; 3rd Bde.

1st Fed. Div.

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## ELECTIONS RESULTS (from out west!)

Greetings,

This note should have probably gone out quicker, but we were busy moving the unit to Indianola for evacuation from the Department of Texas. As you know by now Texas has voted to secede from the Union and we have been ordered to withdraw for redeployment in states remaining loyal to the Republic.

The results of the unit election held at Fort McKavett on the 8th of February are as follows:

Don Gross	-	Senior officer
John Bowen	-	Junior officer
Alan Prendergast	-	1st Sgt
Greg Fett	-	2nd Sgt
Jim Kirkendall	-	3rd Sgt
Brook Thomas	-	4th Sgt
Don Gates	-	1st Cpl
Sean Prendergast	-	2nd Cpl
Kevin Doughtie	-	Member at Large
Greg Benefiel	-	Member at Large

Those elected to office will serve on the board of the NTRS and in the case of officer and NCO positions, in the field at reenactments.

We would like to recognize all the candidates for their participation in this election.

Every candidate performs a vital function in standing for office, as our existence is based on everyone's involvement in helping to determine our leadership for the next two years.

Those who did not have the honor of being elected still performed an admirable and necessary duty and have the thanks of the whole membership for volunteering themselves.

We remain, respectfully, your servants  
NTRS Board of Directors

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**FORT McKAVETT, TEX., February 4, 1861**  
Department of Texas  
Ft. McKavett, February 4, 1861

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

Sir: pursuit to your January 27<sup>th</sup> orders as to double the guard details due to a possible outbreak of a civil war, I submit this report as to a recent hostile occurrence on February 3.

Guard Relief 2 was posted that evening at 7:45 p.m. and shortly afterwards the Sergeant and Corporal of the Guard were called to sentinel position number 2, who reported hearing footsteps, and a disturbance in the thickets. The NCO's checked the area between posts 2 and 3, and with the evening being dark with cloud cover, and sparse moonlight, little could be seen or appraised; and the Sgt. of the Guard reported to me that all sentinels were warned of the incident. As Officer of the Day, I immediately performed rounds at all posts.

Afterwards, at 8:40, the sentinel at post 3 fired his rifle at what he determined to be a moving intruder in the darkness. I immediately proceeded to that post dispatching the Corporal of the Guard and three guards. The interloper fired his weapon at the guards, and he was then fired upon, apparently slightly wounded, and was immediately captured. The intruder was marched to HQ and turned over to the Officer of the Day, Captain D. W. Gross, who started to question the intruder, who appeared to be poorly groomed, malnourished, weak-minded and unintelligible. I will leave it to Captain Gross' report as to the interrogation. Capt. Gross and I did dispel rumblings amongst Co.A that the intruder be hanged, and rest assured, sir, that his treatment was humane and civilized, though considering his heinous acts would dictate otherwise.

I, respectfully, submit commendations to Privates Graham, Schultz, and Doughtie, as to their acts in apprehending the intruder; Private Smith, who acted with alacrity by alarming the garrison by firing his weapon at the intruder; and to Corporal Thomas, for his responsiveness and steadfastness. These men were well prepared by Sergeant Kirkendall, who, a seasoned veteran, when considering the recent hostile climate, ensured the Guard remained alert and attentive to duty.

This singular, hostile act might indicate hostilities have commenced in this region, although this could be the act of a single individual, rather than a conspiracy.

I am, sir, with the greatest respect, yours,

G. Hansen

Captain, Commanding D Company  
1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Infantry  
Department of Texas

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### **From the Pen of Mark Twain**

Sam Clemens spent a good portion of the Civil War outside of the Union, trying to strike it rich off the Comstock load in Nevada. It's pretty clear from his writings that he wasn't terribly fond of slavery, and that he did consider himself a Union man. In any event he left Virginia City or Virginia, as he mostly refers to it, to depart for California – I'll let you guess the approximate date from the following.

#### **Excerpt from Roughing It**

by Samuel Langhorn Clemens.

It is not without regret that I took a last look at the tiny flag (it was thirty-five feet long and ten feet wide) fluttering like a lady's handkerchief from the topmost peak of Mount Davidson, two thousand feet above Virginia's roofs, and felt that doubtless I was bidding a permanent farewell to a city which had afforded me the most vigorous enjoyment of life I had ever experienced. And this reminds me of an incident which the dullest memory Virginia could boast at the time it happened must vividly recall, at times, till its possessor dies. Late one summer afternoon we had a rain shower. That was astonishing enough, in itself, to set the whole town buzzing, for it only rains (during a week or two weeks) in winter in Nevada, and even then not enough at a time to make it worth while for any merchant to keep umbrellas for sale. But the rain was not the chief wonder. It only lasted five or ten minutes; while people were still talking about it all the heavens gathered to themselves a dense blackness as of midnight. All the vast eastern front of Mount Davidson, overlooking the city, put on such a funereal gloom that only the nearness and solidity of the mountain made its outlines even faintly distinguishable from the dead blackness of the heavens they rested against. This unaccustomed sight turned all eyes toward the mountain; and as they looked, a little tongue of rich golden flame was seen waving and quivering in the heart of midnight, away up on

the extreme summit! In a few minutes the streets were packed with people, gazing with hardly an uttered word, at the one brilliant mote in the brooding world of darkness. It flicked like a candle-flame, and looked no larger, but with such a background it was wonderfully bright, small as it was. It was the flag!—though on one suspected it at first, it seemed so like a supernatural visitor of some kind – a mysterious messenger of good tidings, some were fain to believe. It was the nation's emblem transfigured by the departing rays of a sun that was entirely palled from view; and on no other object did the glory fall, in all the broad panorama of mountain ranges and deserts. Not even upon the staff of the flag—for that, a needle in the distance at any time, was now untouched by the light and undistinguishable from the gloom. For a whole hour the weird visitor winked and burned in its lofty solitude, and still the thousands of uplifted eyes watched it with fascinated interest. How the people were wrought up! The superstition grew apace that this was a mystic courier come with great news about the war – the poetry of the idea excusing and commending it – and on it spread, from heart to heart, from lip to lip and from street to street, till there was a general impulse to have out the military and welcome the bright waif with a salvo of artillery!

And all that time one sorely tired man, the telegraph operator sworn to official secrecy, had to lock his lips and chain his tongue with a silence that was like to rend them; for he, and he only, of all the speculating multitude, knew the great things this sinking sun had seen that day in the east – Vicksburg had fallen, and the Union arms victorious at Gettysburg!

But for a journalistic monopoly that forbade the slightest revelation of eastern news till a day after its publication in the California papers,

the glorified flag on Mount Davidson would have been saluted and re-saluted, that memorable evening, as long as there was a charge of powder to thunder with; the city would have been illuminated, and every man that had any respect for himself would have got drunk, - as was the custom of the country on all occasions of public moment. Even at this distant day I cannot think of this needlessly marred supreme opportunity without regret. What a time we might have had!

## **REMINDERS**

### **Membership Dues Deadline**

March 21<sup>st</sup> is the deadline day for dues acceptance or else a newsletter interruption will occur. The annual \$25 cost is applicable to individuals/families and is now due. Please make your check payable to **NTRS**, *not the 1<sup>st</sup>* U.S. Forward your check to:

George Hansen  
3407 Palmtree Dr.  
McKinney, TX 75070

### **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)

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

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