
The UNION STANDARD

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

The Captain's Corner

Gentlemen,

The Lt and I can report that we have now participated in the surrender of the Department of Texas to the forces of the State of Texas in some alleged convention at the headquarters for the department, the Alamo, in San Antonio. It's probably unusual to use the phrases "we surrendered" and "we had fun" in the same sentence but honesty forces me to do so. For those who have not done it, there's nothing dishonorable about the affair and I regret not having taken an interest in it years ago. It's quite fun. While the remains of the Alamo are understated in contrast to it's historical significance there was that 'moment' as I stood between the Alamo chapel front and S Alamo street, gauged the size of the mission in my mind, drew the line where the low palisade wall was and realized that I was standing on ground that Travis, Crockett, Bowie and the rest probably walked over uncounted times through those many weeks. And wandering around without a tourist map and finding John Bowen's Island (John Bowen, from the Philadelphia Bowen's), or General Cos's surrender headquarters was entertaining. Then, there's drinking Guinness at Waxy O'Connors on the river, watching the throngs go by, or discovering that the ice in the urinals at the Menger is not a result of some tourist dumping out his beer chest.

What I'm trying to say is, if you have an opportunity next year, take your significant other down to the Alamo in February and honorably surrender the Department of Texas to a rag-tag collection of hooligans. Bear in mind that without the participation of men who are dressed PROPERLY and make a good soldierly impression, the organizers will merely press the rag-tag and rabble into the ranks of the Lord and leave people with the idea that the 'Yankees' were a collection of hillbilly hooligans of no more quality and discipline than the men they surrendered the department to. As for Twiggs (spit), they can have him. And please gentlemen, refrain from being 'Reynolds', forever 'that officer' that turns his sword over and strays from the path of Union.

The next event (this weekend in fact) will be the Irish Festival, where we'll be dangling our unbaited hooks in the flowing streams of music and Guinness (hm, that's become a common theme for this note) in the hopes of hooking a couple of troops. I realize we haven't gotten any there in a while, but if we don't go, we for sure won't get any. We'll be billeted right next to the 9th. This must be a good year as all the booths are reserved.

Then, Port Hudson. To all those going, we've had a note from Mike Bryant, acting sergeant of the 8th Missouri Infantry out of Vicksburg, and they've asked to fall in with us. These are the guys I recall from Port Hudson last, they're a good group of guys and will work well with us. So we're getting closer to full company strength. As I've said, I anticipate we'll form the cadre for larger maneuver units at these away events in cases where we are not fielding a full company ourselves.

The muster went very well, some troops are finding that buying things on credit from the sutler and 'miss' Tula causes a heavy toll to be exacted when pay is disbursed. Mr. Pvt Thomas had some

weak explanations for Mrs. Laundress Thomas at the muster as to why he didn't receive his full measure (well, he did receive it, he just wasn't able to hold on to it from one end of the table to the other, and they say McFuddy is bad). The drills went well, considering we were using only 2 companies to practice, and the dance Saturday night, well, all I can say is if that's a sample of the girls from across the creek and down the road then you men are better off without them. If you men want to discuss entertaining rumors in the barracks you can talk about the officers over in the Major's quarters playing with 'wooden blocks'. To those who were unable to attend, you missed a good time. The Major did keep us busy, but it was fun and the most fatiguing part of the fatigue work was walking down to the fatigue area to help with the fence. There are rumors afoot that we may do a combined muster NEXT year, which would afford the new members a glimpse of the unit in it's heyday with regard to numbers on the parade ground. As well drilled as we are now, I wish we could have that number of men again because we could break it into at least 3 companies (small) and maneuvering as a battalion closed in mass would be something I'd love to see if it was just 'us'. I'm sure we'd make the major so happy he'd be forced to spike his 'neat' coffee in celebration.

We've established the location for the unit social, at the Bingham House in McKinney. For those who haven't heard it in person, it's a period house which is a bed and breakfast and their theme is Civil War (War of Northern Aggression). Think about wearing your uniform this time, even if your wife doesn't dress the part, as the proprietor has talked up getting in a pro photographer to take advantage of our uniforms and her 'civil war' theme if we wear them. I doubt it will qualify us for a discount, but you might get a free photo out of it!

That's all I can think of for the moment – remember Port Hudson, end of this month, and Westport coming up in May, should both be very good away events, and locally we have the Forts Muster in Fort Worth, and the overnight at Farmers Branch Historical park coming up. Consult the calendar enclosed for information on the dates.

I remain, your most obedient servant

A. (Oh my God! They killed Branigan! You b#s!rds!)
Prendergast

Co D, 1st US, commanding

**Review of *My Life in the Old Army; The Reminiscences of Abner Doubleday*
By Bob Zebian**

This book is a collection of unpublished writings from Abner Doubleday, covering his service in the U.S. Army from 1842 to 1860. Joseph E. Chance, a professor at University of Texas-Pan American compiled this book from the Doubleday archives at the New York Historical Society.

Doubleday's writings describe his service in the Mexican War, the Seminole War of the 1850's, and the Texas frontier. He emerges as a competent and humane officer, who is able to laugh at life as well as at himself.

While a West Point grad (class of 1842), he doesn't write much about strategy and campaigns. Instead he writes about the everyday lives of soldiers and officers doing a dirty, boring, and occasionally dangerous job. While some of the stories, especially his accounts of the Mexican War, reflect the tragedy of war, many are wry reflections on life in the antebellum army.

Two examples stand out in my mind. An Irish soldier was being drummed out of his regiment for repeated drunkenness, and an empty bottle was placed around his neck. He turned to an officer and asked, "Lieutenant don't you think you could put a wee drap in it?" He then added, "Oh it is not fit that I am for infantry at all. I must enlist in the artillery."

During the Mexican War, an armed soldier was seen marching up and down a street like a sentry. An officer asked him:

"Who put you on guard there?"

"I put meself, Sor."

"For what purpose?"

"I'm standing for bait."

"What do you mean by that?"

"The General says that if the Mexicans fire on us from any of the houses we can go in and sack them, and I'm standing for bait. Them's all jewelers shops."

I enjoyed this book and recommend it to anyone interested in the old army. It is published by Texas Christian University Press and is available through their web site (<http://www.tamu.edu/upress/TCU/tcugen.html>). It's also available on half.com and other used book Web sites.

Oh, and none of his writings mention baseball.

1st U.S. Calendar

2008

March

28th – 30th 145th Anniversary of the Battle/Siege of Port Hudson, Louisiana

April

19th Living History Event/Drill, Farmers Branch Historical Park (Friday evening (18th) overnight stay)

May

3rd and 4th Fort Chadbourne Days (Living History)

10th – 11th Texas Frontier Fort Days, Fort Worth Stockyards, Recruiting Event

17th - 18th **Battle of Westport (Stands of Colors) K.C. Missouri. Battalion Event**

June

14th **Flag Day at Fort Worth Civil War Museum (Living History/Recruiting Event)**

July

Nothing planned (stay cool)

August

9th Historic Bingham House, McKinney Texas

September

27th and 28th **Battle of Honey Springs, Oklahoma. Battalion Event**

October

(Tentative) Drill or Camp Ford, Tyler Texas

November

8th **Veterans Day, Dallas Heritage Village (OCP) Living History, Recruiting & Battle**

December

6th and 7th **Battle of Prairie Grove, Arkansas. Battalion Event**

*Note: **Bold** are scheduled maximum effort events. Italicized dates are available events or recruiting activities. **See website for full event calendar***

Additional Port Hudson information (mess cost and directions) will be sent out in the near future.

Siege of Port Hudson

The **Siege of Port Hudson** occurred from May 21 to July 9, 1863, when Union Army troops assaulted and then surrounded the Mississippi River town of Port Hudson, Louisiana, during the American Civil War.

In cooperation with Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's offensive against Vicksburg, Mississippi, Union Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks's army moved against the Confederate stronghold at Port Hudson on the Mississippi River. On May 27, 1863, after their frontal assaults were repulsed, the Federals settled into a siege that lasted for 48 days. Banks renewed his assaults on June 14 but the defenders successfully repelled them. On July 9, 1863, after hearing of the fall of Vicksburg, the Confederate garrison of Port Hudson surrendered, opening the Mississippi River to Union navigation from its source to New Orleans.^[2]

Background

From the time the American Civil War started in April 1861, both the North and South made controlling the Mississippi River a major part of their strategy. The Confederacy wanted to keep using the river to transport needed supplies; the Union wanted to stop this supply route and drive a wedge that would divide Confederate states and territories. Particularly important to the South was the stretch of the Mississippi that included the mouth of the Red River. The Red was the Confederacy's primary route for moving vital supplies between east and west: salt, cattle, and horses traveled downstream from the Trans-Mississippi West; in the opposite direction flowed men and munitions from the east.

In the spring of 1862, the Union took control of New Orleans and Memphis. To make sure it could continue to use the middle section of the river, the South fortified positions at Vicksburg, Mississippi, and Port Hudson, Louisiana.

In May 1863, Union land and naval forces began a campaign they hoped would give them control of the full length of the Mississippi River. One army under Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant commenced operations against the Confederacy's fortified position at Vicksburg at the northern end of the stretch of the river still in Southern hands. At about the same time, another army under Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks moved against Port Hudson, which stood at the southern end. Banks's lead division encountered Confederates on May 21 at the Battle of Plains Store. By May 23, Banks's forces, which increased in strength from 30,000 to 40,000 men as the operation progressed, had surrounded the Port Hudson defenses. Banks hoped to overrun the entrenchments quickly, then take his army northward to assist Grant at Vicksburg.

Sailors aboard the USS *Richmond* shell Confederate forces at Port Hudson.

Within the Confederate fortifications at Port Hudson were approximately 7,500 men. Their commander was Maj. Gen. Franklin Gardner, a New Yorker by birth. His goals were to have his men defend their positions as long as possible in order to prevent Banks's troops from joining Grant, and to keep Confederate control of this part of the Mississippi.

The fighting and siege

On the morning of May 27, 1863, under Maj. Gen. Banks, the Union army launched ferocious assaults against the lengthy Confederate fortifications. Among the attackers were two regiments of African-American soldiers, the 1st and 3rd Louisiana Native Guards. The attacks were uncoordinated, and the defenders easily

turned them back causing heavy Northern casualties. Andre Cailloux, a free man of color from New Orleans and the Captain of the 1st Louisiana Native Guard, Company E, died heroically in this first assault. His death became a rallying cry for the recruitment of African-American soldiers. Union generals Thomas W. Sherman and Neal Dow were both seriously wounded and Col. Edward P. Chapin was killed in this attack.

Banks's troops made a second, similarly haphazard assault on June 14. Again they were repulsed, suffering even more dead and wounded soldiers, including division commander Brig. Gen. Halbert E. Paine, who fell wounded, losing a leg.

These actions constituted some of the bloodiest fighting of the Civil War. The Confederates began building their defenses in 1862, and by now had an elaborate series of earthworks. One of their officers provided the following description of the line of these barriers, which, as their name suggested, were made mainly from hard-packed dirt:

Capt. Edmund C. Bainbridge's Battery A, 1st U.S. Artillery, at the siege of Port Hudson, Louisiana, 1863.

The elaborate defenses they built and difficult terrain in the area assisted the Confederates in keeping this part of the Mississippi under their control. The Federals had no choice but to besiege Port Hudson to obtain access to the full length of the Mississippi.

The fighting at Port Hudson illustrated how artillery affected the conduct of a siege. The Union Army combined artillery fire with sharpshooting riflemen as it attempted to keep the defenders from getting supplies of food or other necessities; the Union Navy added their big guns to the bombardment. The Confederates responded by firing their rifles and artillery at the Union forces. Recognizing how dangerous this type of fighting could be, each side also built elaborate earthworks to protect themselves.

The siege created hardships and deprivations for both the North and South, but by early July the Confederates were in much worse shape. They had exhausted practically all of their food supplies and ammunition, and fighting and disease had greatly reduced the number of men able to defend the trenches. When Maj. Gen. Gardner learned that Vicksburg had surrendered, he realized that his situation was hopeless and that nothing could be gained by continuing. The terms of surrender were negotiated, and on July 9, 1863, the Confederates lay down their weapons, ending 48 days of continuous fighting. Captain Thornton A. Jenkins accepted the Confederate surrender, as Admiral David Farragut was in New Orleans.

Aftermath

The siege of Port Hudson affected the Civil War and the men who fought there in a number of ways. The surrender gave the Union control of the Mississippi River, cutting off important states such as Arkansas and Texas. Both sides suffered heavy casualties: about 5,000 Union men were killed or wounded, and an additional 5,000 fell prey to disease or sunstroke; Gardner's forces suffered around 750 casualties, several hundred of whom died of disease. Six thousand five hundred Confederates surrendered and were sent North into custody.^[1]

After the war, a small number of former soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor for their actions at Port Hudson, including George Mason Lovering of the 4th Massachusetts

Members of the NTRS and 1st US Infantry,

Thank you for attending the 1st Battalion Muster at historic Fort Washita February 9 & 10. Your turn out and participation is appreciated. Major Gross and staff are to be complemented on assembling this fine event. The weather was very mild to warm for an Oklahoma winter weekend and the fellowship outstanding. If you missed this unique experience ensure you make the next one in 09.

There were a number of first and different aspects at this Muster. First to be recognized and three cheered are the ladies in the kitchen. Our own Miss Julie was chief organizer and officer of the mess. Also Miss CJ and her outstanding lettuce wraps and other pre event preparation were a wonderful addition. Our mess was authentic and tasty as could be.

The drill Saturday morning was a push down to the NCO level to the extent that we were all participating in a learning curve. Thank you all for your understanding and forbearance with these our future commanders out front working through the commands of maneuver.

While the men drilled on the field the officers and Senior NCOs' led by Major Gross also had a chance to hone their Company and Battalion evolutions. Classroom drill with the historically correct application of red and blue colored blocks representing Companies, Officers, and NCOs' were pushed around the table in response to Battalion commands. The blocks were a surprisingly effective tool in unifying the Battalion's finer points of field evolution. Good discussions and interaction ensued.

These table top maneuvers were put the test during the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning field drill. I can remember not so long ago that we would not have been able to maneuver a Battalion skirmish line let alone be driven by the bugle as we did on that wonderful Oklahoma hillside. The close column maneuvers by the front AND the rear companies was an advance in rapid Battalion deployment that will shine next time we face the elephant.

Our Battalion was lucky to have had a visit by the Regimental Paymaster Saturday afternoon. A rousing and noisy settling of affairs by the Commissary Officer and Miss Tula often left many of the men on short resources until the next pay day. Oh how familiar that sounds, even today. We then fell out to help the Fort with a bit of barb wire fence setting. The Fort staff were very happy to have our help even though it did not seem like much we saved them many long tedious hours of twisting connectors at each wire and post. Thanks to all for your contribution on the fence line.

Following a well deserved and lengthy soldier's time we fell in for mess (feast) followed by a brief Battalion meeting and the soiree. The soiree was a first of it's doing at a Battalion Muster. The fare was nothing short of fantastic. Salmon spread, cakes, pies, and the warm lettuce wraps stuffed with

sausage were what I remember best. There was so much to enjoy that I am sure I forgot to list ALL the tasty morsels.

Once the mess was complete the tables were moved back, the "coffee" poured and the music started. There was a bit of gaily dancing and heel flinging in the candle light while our own "Provost Choir" and friends filled the room with Irish and patriotic tunes. What a wonderful evening. I hope we do this again next year too.

Thank all of you who planned, prepared and participated in this most memorable Muster.

Our next event takes us to Louisiana on 29+30 March for the siege of Port Hudson on the banks of the Mississippi River. Many historians feel the Civil War was won in the West and the Mississippi conflicts were as intense and important as any of the Eastern battles. The Rudy brothers have a GGG Uncle, Enos Buckwalter, who was buried at Port Hudson following a week of typhoid fever shortly after the siege so this event has added relevance for us. I know it is a long drive but it sounds more than worth the effort and time to participate. Find a way to car pool or hook up with pards to make the journey.

I look forward to seeing all of you in the ranks. Safe travels.

Respectfully,
Henry Rochford, Sgt Co A



LOUISIANA.

“Greatness requires Perseverance “

Who suffered the following setbacks before he became one of our nation’s best-known citizens?

- He lost a job in 1832
- He was defeated for the state legislature in 1832
- He failed in business in 1833
- His sweetheart died in 1835
- He had a nervous breakdown in 1836
- He was defeated for Speaker of the Illinois House in 1838
- He was defeated on his first try for Congress in 1843, though he later won a seat
- He lost his bid for renomination to Congress in 1848
- He was rejected for the post of land officer in 1849
- He was defeated for U.S. Senate in 1854
- He was defeated for Vice President in 1856
- He was again defeated for the U.S. Senate in 1858

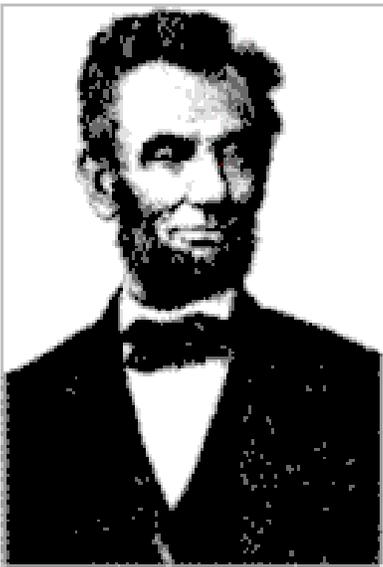
But, he was elected President in 1860

*****Yearly Membership Dues*****

Yes, it is that time again for everyone to pay their yearly membership fee. The annual \$25 cost is applicable to individuals/families and is now due. Please make your check payable to **NTRS**, not the 1st U.S. Any check payable to anything other than the NTRS will be returned, as our bank will only accept items payable to NTRS. Thank you.
Alan Prendergast

Make check payable to **NTRS** and mail to:
Alan Prendergast
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Carrollton, TX 75007

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