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# The UNION STANDARD

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March 2010

Vol.18, no 3

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

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## From the Desk:

Members of the 1<sup>st</sup>:

Thanks to everyone who made it to the muster. This year, the weather was just about perfect – not too cold, hot, sunny, rainy, or windy. The remainder of the spring schedule is somewhat travel intensive with Port Hudson LA the last week of March and Fort Scott KS two weeks later. Keep in mind, however, that we have no other travel on the calendar until the fall so please try to make it to both of these events. Veterans will remember Port Hudson as a quality event and Sgt. Martin assures us that Fort Scott is every bit as cool as it looks on the web site. If you have the extra time, the *Arabia* exhibit in Kansas City is truly amazing and well worth the additional drive. Our willingness to support these regional events is an excellent opportunity to forge stronger relationships with like-minded units outside of Texas with whom we would like to play more often.

As we prepare for Port Hudson, I thought I'd share my latest communiqué to Battalion Headquarters, apprising them of our situation:

22 February 1863

To: Lt. Col. D. Gross, Commanding, Frontier Brigade

Sir-

As ordered, D Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry, marched from Fort Washita, Indian Territory, on the 7<sup>th</sup> instant en route to Port Hudson, Louisiana. Transportation and supplies have been procured, albeit at a significant premium over usual and customary Government rates. Local proprietors seem very concerned about rumors of "hope and change" emanating from Washington City. Unfortunately, additional expenses were incurred due to a clerical error resulting in a double quantity of whisky being ordered. Although he was utterly unable to satisfactorily explain the source of the error, 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Rudy assured me that the bizarre "VFB" cipher emblazoned in large letters upon the extra barrels indicated product originally intended for a local political rally rather than some dire warning against consuming the contents. In the interest of the safety of the men, I will personally investigate to assure that all stores are of acceptable quality.

Our travel through Texas has been somewhat hampered by the weather. Recent significant snowfalls have caused the local residents to recall the fabled Winter of '36. Despite the delays, I remain confident that we will arrive in the vicinity of Port Hudson to rendezvous with the Battalion no later than 27<sup>th</sup> March. In addition, I am pleased to report that we have encountered a detachment of the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry who will accompany us to the Port.

I remain YMOS

Capt. B. Thomas, USA



**Battery of Parrott Guns Manned by Company C, 1st Connecticut Heavy Artillery - Fort Brady, VA, 1864**

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

2010

March

27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> Port Hudson, Louisiana

April

10<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> Fort Scott, Kansas (Federal Encampment at the National Historic Site)

May

8<sup>th</sup> Texas Forts Muster, Fort Worth Stockyards

June

TBD, Drill

August

1<sup>st</sup> US Social (TBD)

September

TBD Cabin Creek Indian Territory

October

Drill TBD

November

13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> Twin Rivers Campaign, Memphis TN

December

4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Prairie Grove Arkansas

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

## Port Hudson March 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>

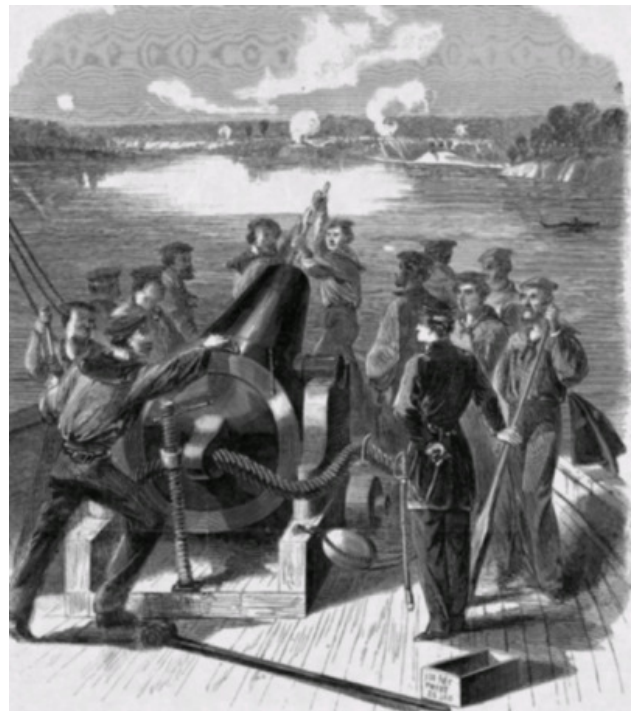
Once again the 1<sup>st</sup> US will heading down to Cajun country for a great time. Port Hudson is one of the few reenactments we attend that we actually get to “fight” on part of the actual battlefield.

Those who attended this event two years ago can tell you how much fun it is/was. The “street fighting we did down the trails had the rebels on their heels. Good time indeed.

If you have not yet let 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt Rudy know if you are attending; please contact him ASAP.

[brsuv1@verizon.net](mailto:brsuv1@verizon.net)

There will be more detailed correspondences in the near future.



## North Texas Irish Festival

The 1<sup>st</sup> US had a great time and turn out at the NTIF the first weekend of March. Our booth received the 2nd place award in the “Culture Exhibited” category. GREAT JOB!

There was some discussion that we really should focus on this event next year and make it a priority. This is a fun event to bring the spouse or family as well.



# THE FIRST REGIMENT OF INFANTRY

Compiled in the office of the MILITARY SERVICE INSTITUTION.

By Don Gross

The original First Infantry was first organized under Resolve of Congress of date June 3, 1784, to serve twelve months, and was continued by subsequent Resolves until it was recognized by the Act of September 29, 1789, as the "Regiment of Infantry" in the service of the United States. The Act of April 30, 1790, more fully completed its organization and when a second regiment was formed under the Act of March 3, 1791, the older organization became the "First Regiment of Infantry."\*

Brevet Brigadier General Josiah Harmar was the first "lieutenant colonel commandant" of the regiment and commanded it until his resignation in 1792. He was also "General in Chief of the Army," and in that capacity conducted the expedition against the Miami Indians in Ohio in September and October, 1790. His regiment was with him, Captain John Armstrong and a detachment of 30 men taking part in the engagement on the Miami River, October 19; and a detachment of 60 men under Major Wyllys being engaged, October 22, near the same place. In this action Major Wyllys was killed.

Arthur St. Clair, Who had been a major general in the Revolutionary Army, was appointed "General in Chief" in March, 1791, superseding Harmar.

St. Clair in his turn proceeded against the Miamis, and was even more thoroughly defeated than Harmar had been, suffering a loss in killed and wounded of nearly 900 out of his total strength of 1400. The battle took place near the sources of the Maumee of the Lakes, and the fugitive army did not halt until safely within the palisades of Fort Jefferson, 29 miles to the rear, where the First Infantry, about 300 strong, was found in garrison.

The Act of March 5, 1792, gave the army a new organization, with the title of "Legion of the United States." The Legion provided for a total strength of 5120 officers and men and was divided into four "sub-legions," each of which was composed of one troop of dragoons, one company of artillery, two battalions of infantry and one of riflemen, each battalion having four companies. The First Infantry was merged into the First Sublegion.

The Legion participated in the Battle of the Maumee Rapids under General Wayne, August 20, 1794, in which the Indians were utterly defeated and disheartened. The First Sub-legion was at this time commanded by Lieutenant Colonel J. F. Hamtranck

[sic], and among the officers mentioned by General Wayne in his report of the battle as deserving special mention, were Colonel Hamtranck, Captain Prior, and Lieutenant W. H. Harrison (afterwards President of the U. S.) all of the First Sub-legion.

The Act of May 30, 1796, discontinued the Legion, and the line of the military establishment was made to consist of the "Artillerists and Engineers," two companies of dragoons, and four regiments of infantry, the First Sub-legion resuming its old designation of the "First Regiment of Infantry." Colonel Hamtranck was continued as the lieutenant-colonel commandant of the regiment until the reorganization of 1802, when he became its first full colonel. He died April 11, 1803, while commandant of Detroit and its dependencies.

Colonel Hamtranck had the faculty of inspiring men with confidence, and although he was a rigid disciplinarian, was beloved by his men, for he was kindhearted, generous and brave. The officers under his command placed a stone upon his grave, which is in the grounds attached to St. Anne's Orphan Asylum at Detroit, as a "grateful tribute to his merit and his worth."

In the year 1803, the Government determined to explore the newly acquired territory, known as the Louisiana Purchase, as far as the course and sources of the Missouri River are concerned, and to determine upon the feasible water communication to the Pacific Ocean. To accomplish these purposes, the Lewis and Clarke expedition was organized by the President. Captain Meriwether Lewis, the head of this expedition, was an officer of the regiment, and at the time secretary to the President, Thomas Jefferson. The party proceeded in boats from St. Louis, examining the country along the Missouri river to its sources, thence through the Rocky Mountains and down the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean. The expedition set out on May 14th, 1804, and reached St. Louis on its return, September 23, 1806.

In 1807, Captain Lewis was appointed Governor of Louisiana, and by his firm but just conduct, soon harmonized the various factions which at one time threatened serious trouble in the territory. Captain Lewis inherited hypochondria, and whilst suffering under a temporary derangement of mind, he put an end to his life, while en route from St. Louis to Washington, in September, 1809.

For many years following General Wayne's victory the Indians appear to have given little or no trouble and the regiment remained in garrison at Detroit and vicinity until the outbreak of the War of 1812.

On the 25th of July, 1812, the first blood of the War of 1812 was shed in a skirmish not far from Detroit, and in August General Hull sent an expedition from

that place to open communication with the River Raisin and to escort an expected supply train into Detroit. Among the troops so sent were two detachments of the First Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant D. Stansbury and Ensign R. A. McCabe. The enemy was met at Maguaga, August 9, and defeated, yet the troops were recalled to Detroit without accomplishing anything farther, and on the 16th of the same month were included in Hull's disgraceful surrender of the troops under his command.

Heald's Company of the First Infantry was at this time stationed at Fort Dearborn (now Chicago), and Captain Heald had received orders from General Hull to evacuate his station, distribute the government property among the Indians, and proceed to Detroit. He obeyed orders but had hardly begun his march (August 15) when he was attacked by ten times his force of Indians, and after two-thirds of his men had been killed or wounded was forced to surrender.

Later in the year (September 5 to 8) the Indians attacked Fort Madison, a short distance from the present city of St. Louis. Lieutenants Hamilton and Vasques of the First Infantry with a small detachment of the regiment garrisoned the fort, and after a gallant defense drove the enemy away.

A general "Return of the Army" of date July 1, 1814, reports the First Infantry, 214 strong, as under orders to join the "Division of the Right," which garrisoned the Lake frontier from Buffalo to Sacketts Harbor, and it is probable that the detachment of 99 men under Captain John Campbell, First Infantry, which was attacked by the Sac and Fox Indians while in boats near the mouth of Rock River on the Mississippi, was moving in obedience to these instructions. The detachment lost 36 in killed and wounded.

The regiment joined General Brown's army on the Niagara River on the day of the battle of Niagara, July 25, 1814, and during the action was not attached to either brigade. At this time it was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel R. C. Nicholas, as its colonel—Jacob Kingsbury—was the inspector general of the military department in which it was serving. The regiment took part also in the siege of Fort Erie,—August 1 to September 17, 1814.

The war had no sooner come to an end than the army was reduced (Act of March 3, 1815) to a total of 10,000 men, to consist of artillery, infantry and riflemen, in such proportions as the President should judge proper. He fixed the proportion by the order of May 17, 1815, at one regiment of light artillery, the Corps of Artillery (32 companies), 8 regiments of infantry and one of riflemen. Special pains appear to have been taken in this reorganization to prevent any continuance in the new organizations of the

regimental traditions of the old, for not a single regiment of infantry retained its original number. The First Infantry of the preceding pages became a part of the new Third Infantry, while the old Second, Third, Seventh and Forty-fourth, were united to form the new First Infantry. The old Fourth went into the new Fifth; the Fifth into the Eighth; the Sixth into the Second, and the Eighth into the Seventh.

The present First Regiment of Infantry was organized pursuant to Act of March 3, 1815, and General Orders of date May 17, 1815, from the Second, Third, Seventh and Forty-fourth Regiments of Infantry, and was assigned to duty in the Division of the South with headquarters at Pass Christiana, La. Not one officer of the old First Infantry was assigned to it nor were any from the old Second or Seventh, although the reorganization order would seem to require it. Seventeen officers of the 3d and 44th Regiments which had so recently greatly distinguished themselves at the battle of New Orleans, were so assigned, and the remainder were apparently selected from the army at large.

Brigadier General Daniel Bissell was retained in the army with reduced rank, being made colonel of the First with the brevet of brigadier-general. Lieutenant Colonel George Croghan, who afterwards became the inspector general of the army, was made the lieutenant-colonel; and Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Thomas K. Jesup, who was afterwards quartermaster general was the major.

The Act of March 2, 1821, again reduced the army, the ordnance and artillery being consolidated into four regiments, the number of infantry regiments reduced to seven, and the rifle regiment being disbanded.

General Bissell left the service and was succeeded by Colonel Talbot Chambers. Lieutenant Colonel Croghan had resigned in 1817 and had had several successors; Lieutenant Colonel Z. Taylor was now assigned to the regiment. Major Jesup had been promoted in 1817 to the Third and had been succeeded by Major R. Whartenby, who now retained his place as major of the regiment. Many changes also took place in the lower grades.

The headquarters of the First Infantry were established at Baton Rouge, La., and appear to have remained in Louisiana until 1828, when the regiment relieved the Fifth at Fort Crawford (Prairie du Chien), Fort Snelling, and Fort Winnebago (Green Bay). In 1831 the garrison of Fort Winnebago was moved to Fort Armstrong (Rock Island, Ill.).

The Black Hawk War of 1832 took place in the region garrisoned by the First, and Companies A, B, G and K were with General Atkinson at the battle of the Bad Axe, August 2, 1832. In this action Major Bliss

commanded the battalion, and Colonel Taylor, who was now the colonel of the regiment, the brigade to which it was attached.

In 1837 the regiment was transferred to Florida and, with the exception of Company C, was present at the battle of Okeechobee, December 25, 1837. On this occasion Colonel Taylor commanded the entire force engaged, and Lieutenant Colonel Davenport the regiment, which was held in reserve until the action was nearly over in this report Colonel Taylor says:

"To Lieutenant Colonel Davenport and the officers of the 1st Infantry I feel under many obligations for the manner in which they have under all occasions discharged their duty; and although held in reserve and not brought into battle till near its close, yet their eagerness to engage and the promptness and good order in which they entered the hammock when the order was given for them to do so, is the best evidence that they would have sustained their own characters, as well as that of the regiment, had it been their fortune to have been placed in the hottest of the battle."

Colonel Taylor was brevetted brigadier general for this action, and on the 15th of May, 1838, succeeded General Jesup in the command of the army of Florida. The regiment now was kept almost continually on the move, until the arrival in Florida in May, 1839, of General Macomb, who held a great council with the Indians, and was led to believe that he had concluded a treaty of peace with them; yet on the 23d day of July following they treacherously attacked Colonel Harney's command of 28 men at Charlotte's Harbor, killing more than half of them. Hostilities were resumed but the Indians avoided any direct conflict with the troops, and kept them, as formerly, constantly scouting, almost always without tangible result.

Early in 1840 General Taylor requested to be relieved from duty in Florida, and his request was granted to take effect on the 1st of May. The regiment was still in Florida in November of that year, but early in the summer of 1841 returned to its old stations,—Forts Winnebago, Snelling, Crawford and Atkinson,—in the northwest. General Taylor was given higher command from this time forward and his immediate connection with the regiment ceased, so that when Lieutenant Colonel Davenport was promoted to the Sixth in 1842 and was desirous of remaining with the First, a mutual transfer was arranged and Colonel Davenport became the colonel

of the First in July, 1843. In 1845 regimental headquarters were moved to Jefferson Barracks, and the regiment garrisoned that station and Fort Scott, Mo.

### **\*\*\*Year Membership Dues\*\*\***

**Yes, it is that time again for everyone to pay their yearly membership fee. The annual \$25.00 cost is applicable to individuals/families and is now due. Please make your check payable to NTRS, not the 1<sup>st</sup> US.**

**Make check payable to NTRS and mail to:  
Don Gates  
1205 Balboa Circle, Plano, Texas 75075**



**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

## 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.

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

"Quaker guns" made of pine logs were mounted in a ruse to fool the Union into believing that the Confederates were much better armed at Port Hudson in 1863. Black rings were painted on the end of the logs to make the muzzles look convincing. It worked. After Farragut's two vessels passed by Port Hudson, the Union chose to never attack from the river again.

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 Guard. 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:

“ For about three-quarters of a mile from the river the line crossed a broken series of ridges, plateaus and ravines, taking advantage of high ground in some places and in others extending down a steep declivity; for the next mile and a quarter it traversed Gibbon's and Slaughter's fields where a wide level plain seemed formed on purpose for a battlefield; another quarter of a mile carried it through deep and irregular gullies, and for three-quarters of a mile more it led through fields and over hills to a deep gorge, in the bosom of which lay Sandy creek. ”

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 to the Union forces with rifle and artillery fire. 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 laid 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 surrender gave the Union control of the Mississippi River, severing communications between the eastern and western states of the Confederacy. 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.<sup>[1]</sup>

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.

## Fort Scott, Kansas

April 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010

The 1<sup>st</sup> will be traveling to Fort Scott Kansas to join up with other Federal Troops for a weekend encampment. This event will be held at this National Historic Site. For those who have not been there; it is outstanding well preserved pre-war fort.

Also, this will give the 1<sup>st</sup> US a chance to meet other units that we may have not meet before.

More details will be coming out soon, but this is a weekend not to miss.

<http://www.nps.gov/mwr/customcf/apps/eventcalendar/events/foscevent72201625.html>

<http://www.nps.gov/fosc/index.htm>

# **The Union Standard**

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

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