

The UNION STANDARD

May 2009

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

From the desk:

Members of the 1st US,

I hope this correspondence finds you all well and not ill with the Swine Flu...oh, wait N1-H1. Unfortunately the Frontier Forts Muster fell in the line of battle of the "flu" hysteria. I hate that we missed an opportunity to enjoy fellowship, along with a great opportunity to recruit. The NTRS Board Members understand the importance of gathering once a month. So, we have scheduled a Drill on Saturday, May 23rd at the Farmer Branch Historic Village. Please plan on arriving around 8:30am for a 9am start time.

On a side note, I think most of you can tell the 2009 schedule has been a little rough around the edges for the Winter/Spring. I hate to jump on the "wagon of the current economic conditions", but facts are facts...the hobby has taken a hit in numbers of people involved and the number of events. As I have stated before, the weekends we gather are nice distractions from our day to day worries. It looks like the Fall/Winter schedule is more stable and offers some great opportunities to wear the blue, bond, relax, and have fun.

I look forward to seeing you all at the May 23rd Drill. Look for directions and reminder as we get closer to the date.

YMOS,

Beck R. Martin 2nd Sgt 1st US/President NTRS

1st U.S. Calendar

2009

May

23rd Drill (Farmers Branch Historic Village)

June

13th Cartridge Rolling, Fort Worth, Texas

July

19th Ceremony at Honey Springs, OK

August

TBD-1st US Social

September

26th - 27th Fort Washita Reenactment

October

TBD

November

7th - 8th Battle of Myer's Landing, McKinney, TX

December

12th Dallas Heritage Village Candlelight Drill

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

The Texas Frontier (1840-1865)

Written by Tate Landin, Corporal 1st US
(recreated)

About a year ago, I discovered that there is a trail of forts running through Texas. I guess I have always known about this trail, but I never seemed to take much interest in it. Nor did I realize the great involvement of Texas troops in the Civil War. It is not until this research paper that I have fully understood the great history of Texas in the mid-18th century.

Since the establishment of the United States of America, it was the belief that defense should be left to each state's own ability to defend itself. Many people frowned on the idea of a large standing national army. The people were willing however, to change their opinion on the idea of a national army when Indians began threatening the frontier. In 1784, Congress established the First American Regiment; the first regiment in the new nation's regular army. Due to growing threats from the Indians and Great Britain, in 1812, the US standing army stood at nearly six thousand men.¹ Just before the onset of the Mexican War, the US Army contained about nine thousand men. This was still a small number considering the vast amount

of territory that it had to protect.² After the Mexican War, the United States gained the territories of Texas, Oregon, California, Utah, and New Mexico. Although the US Army had a strength of forty thousand men during the Mexican War, Congress cut that number to just under fourteen thousand after the war. In 1849, the white settlement in Texas had established itself beyond its old boundaries. The new boundary was marked by the towns of "Sherman, Farmersville, Dallas, Waxahachie, Ennis, Fredericksburg, and Corpus Christi."³ To protect the white settlement from Indians, a line of military posts were established on the western frontier. These new forts were Duncan, Inge, Lincoln, Martin Scott, Croghan, Gates, Worth, and Graham.⁴ All of these forts were strategically placed to provide a line running north to south through what is now Central Texas. By the early 1850's, the fourteen thousand men left after the Mexican War, stood guard at more than fifty-four posts. That is an average of about two-hundred fifty-nine soldiers per post. After many calls for more troops, Congress allotted for the addition of "two cavalry and two infantry regiments to the existing establishment of four artillery, eight infantry, and three mounted

¹ Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers. P45. ² Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers. P46. ³Texas in Turmoil. P14.

⁴ Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers. P47. ⁵ Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers, P48.

¹ Texas in Turmoil. P14. ² Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers. P47. ³ Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers, P48. ⁴ Texas in Turmoil. P16.

regiments.”² Regiments were composed of companies; artillery having twelve companies, infantry and cavalry having ten companies. A regiment was made up of a colonel, who commanded the regiment, a lieutenant colonel and two majors assisted the colonel, a captain commanded one of the companies, and a first and second lieutenant assisted the captain.³ These new regiments were but a mere fraction of the number of troops that were still needed to defend against the Indians in Texas. With much pressure from the residents in Texas, the Federal government decided to “move its posts westward” to more strategic locations in 1851. The new forts were Belknap, Phantom Hill, McKavett, Terrett, Mason, and Clark. As soon as the creation of the new forts was completed, the old line of forts was abandoned.⁴

A “typical” Texas “fort” was “composed of a group of buildings erected at different times by different persons for different purposes.”⁴ From this point on I shall refer to the Texas forts as “posts,” for that is what they really were. These posts were built “simply for “quarters,” and not for a strategically defensive location.⁵ Today, a military post contains efficient sanitary facilities to ensure good hygiene, but in the 19th century, soldiers had to bathe in rivers or creeks. Toilets were far from what we might think of today. “Communal latrines were usually behind the company barracks.”⁶ These latrines needed constant cleaning so that disease did not spread among the post. As you can

imagine, many soldiers and officers avoided the disgusting duty of cleaning the latrines. I mentioned earlier how buildings at the Texas posts were built at different times. Well, they were also built with different materials. The result of this led to a lack of a post’s uniformity in the 1850’s. “An observer remarked that ‘had the buildings been deposited on the ground as a result of a cyclone there would have been no less regard for regularity or uniformity.’”⁷ At many posts, soldiers contributed their own pay to purchase better building materials such as stone. Although a few civilian were hired to help construct buildings, most of the construction was done by the soldiers in order to save money.⁸ Today, soldiers on post stay in a comfortable barracks, but in the mid-18th century, they were forced to live in tents, or make shift picket cottages. Overcrowding or a lack of building materials usually led to lack in housing.⁹ Eventually, more barracks were built, and the military adopted the “T-shaped” barracks. This barracks contained the main barrack room along the horizontal part of the “T,” a mess room just below the barrack room, a gallery that split between the barrack room, a kitchen just below the mess room, and a storage room below the kitchen.¹⁰ Air space was often inadequate in barracks. Small air space meant that soldiers lived in closer proximity to each other, which led to more disease and sickness. In 1863, the Army set a minimum of 426 cubic feet of air space per man south of the 38th

⁴ Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers. P43.

⁵ Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers. P44.

⁶ Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers. P40.

⁷ Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers. P41.

⁸ Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers. P29.

⁹ Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers. P27.

parallel, but this regulation was often ignored.¹¹ You might have figured by now that with such small living space, and lack of sanitation, pests would have infested near everything. Well, you figured right. “Pests of all sorts infested virtually every building. The green logs used in construction shrank as time passed, and ‘the rats and mice came and went without ceremony’ in the Lanes’ house at Fort Clark.”¹² If you think rats and mice are gross, I am sure that you think roaches are gross. They [the roaches] “covered the kitchen floor until it was black.”¹³ Robert E. Lee wrote his wife in 1860 about the infestation he dealt with in his own quarters. He found that “it was better to keep quiet, you only aroused them by lighting your candle and after a little while you did not mind them.”¹⁴ Lt. Col. Robert E. Lee, who kept constant communication with his wife, wrote her a letter from Fort Brown explaining, “the more I see of Army life in Texas, the less probability do I see your ever being able to join me here.”¹⁵ Although it seems that living conditions on post in Texas were completely horrific, comfort was still found in some housing. Many wives planted flower beds outside their residences, and Mrs. Lane at Fort Bliss remembered seeing “only one snake and very few insects indoors.”¹⁶ Lydia Lane said that Fort Lancaster was the “worst of all the posts in Texas.” She states, however, that “the ladies I have

met at the post seemed cheerful and contented.”¹⁷ Different people had different experiences on the Texas posts, but overall, living conditions were never kept up to regulation, yet the soldiers and their families braved through life on post.

The final part of this article will be published in the June 2009 Newsletter.

**Dues Reminder
Also, if you have not sent your dues in,
please
make it a point to get them in soon.
Again the cost is \$25.00, make the check
out
to NTRS and send to
Captain Prendergast.**

**Alan Prendergast
1403 Barclay Drive
Carrollton, TX 75007**

¹⁰ Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers. P34.

¹¹ Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers. P35.

¹² Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers. P37.

¹³ Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers. P37.

¹⁴ Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers. P37.

¹⁵ Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers. P38.

¹⁶ Soldiers, Sutlers, Settlers. P38.

History Of Memorial Day

Following the end of the Civil War, many communities set aside a day to mark the end of the war or as a memorial to those who had died. Some of the places creating an early memorial day include Sharpsburg, Maryland, located near Antietam Battlefield; Charleston, South Carolina; Boalsburg, Pennsylvania; Richmond, Virginia; Carbondale, Illinois; Columbus, Mississippi; many communities in Vermont; and some two dozen other cities and towns. These observances coalesced around Decoration Day, honoring the Union dead, and the several Confederate Memorial Days.

According to Professor David Blight of the Yale University History Department, the first memorial day was observed in 1865 by liberated slaves at the historic race track in Charleston. The site was a former Confederate prison camp as well as a mass grave for Union soldiers who died in captivity. The freed slaves reinterred the dead Union soldiers from the mass grave to individual graves, fenced in the graveyard and built an entry arch declaring it a Union graveyard. This was a daring action for them to take in the South shortly after the North's victory. On May 30, 1868, the freed slaves returned to the graveyard with flowers they had picked from the countryside and decorated the individual gravesites, thereby creating the first Decoration Day. A parade by thousands of freed blacks and Union soldiers from the area was followed by patriotic singing and a picnic.

The official birthplace of Memorial Day is Waterloo, New York. The village was credited with being the place of origin

because it observed the day on May 5, 1866, and each year thereafter. The friendship between General John Murray, a distinguished citizen of Waterloo, and General John A. Logan, who helped bring attention to the event nationwide, likely was a factor in the holiday's growth.

Logan had been the principal speaker in a citywide memorial observation on April 29, 1866, at a cemetery in Carbondale, Illinois, an event that likely gave him the idea to make it a national holiday. On May 5, 1868, in his capacity as commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, a veterans' organization, Logan issued a proclamation that "Decoration Day" be observed nationwide. It was observed for the first time on May 30 of the same year; the date was chosen because it was *not* the anniversary of a battle. The tombs of fallen Union soldiers were decorated in remembrance.

Many of the states of the U.S. South refused to celebrate Decoration Day, due to lingering hostility towards the Union Army and also because there were relatively few veterans of the Union Army who were buried in the South. A notable exception was Columbus, Mississippi, which on April 25, 1866 at its Decoration Day commemorated both the Union and Confederate casualties buried in its cemetery.

The alternative name of "Memorial Day" was first used in 1882. It did not become more common until after World War II, and was not declared the official name by Federal law until 1967. On June 28, 1968, the United States Congress passed the Uniform Holidays Bill, which moved three holidays from their traditional dates to a specified Monday in order to create a convenient three-day weekend. The holidays included Washington's Birthday, now celebrated as Presidents' Day; Veterans Day, and Memorial Day. The change moved Memorial Day from its traditional May 30 date to the last Monday in May. The law took effect at the federal level in 1971.

After some initial confusion and unwillingness to comply, all fifty states adopted the measure within a few years. Veterans Day was eventually changed back to its traditional date. Ironically, most corporate businesses no longer close on Veterans Day, Columbus Day, or President's

Day, with the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and/or New Year's Eve often substituted as more convenient "holidays" for their employees. Memorial Day endures as a holiday which most businesses observe because it marks the beginning of the "summer vacation season." This role is filled in neighboring Canada by Victoria Day, which occurs either on May 24 or the last Monday before that date, placing it exactly one week before Memorial Day.

Waterloo's designation as the birthplace took place just in time for the village's centennial observance. The U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate unanimously passed House Concurrent Resolution 587 on May 17 and May 19, 1966 respectively, which reads in part as follows: "Resolved that the Congress of the United States, in recognition of the patriotic tradition set in motion one hundred years ago in the Village of Waterloo, NY, does hereby officially recognize Waterloo, New York as the birthplace of Memorial Day..."

On May 26, 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed a Presidential Proclamation recognizing Waterloo as the Birthplace of Memorial Day.



Memorial Day Ceremony

Pards,

It is my pleasure to extend an invitation to members of the 1st US Infantry, NTRS to join with the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Camp #18, Harold Sickler Commanding that we may honor our Nation's Warriors on Memorial Day, May 25, 2009.

This is not a 1st US event and no roll will be taken.

Date: Memorial Day, Monday, May 25th .
Location: Pecan Grove Cemetery, McKinney, TX .

(SE corner of Eldorado/Industrial and South McDonald Street, State Highway 5).

Time: 8:30 am to around 11:30 am.

Uniform: Full Dress with bright brass and white gloves. Frock with scales and Hardie if you have them.

Arms: Assume we will fire several rounds in salute.

Entry to the cemetery is on SH 5. Look for one of us to direct you to the assembly point at Captain Boyd's grave side. We will conduct a brief SUVCW remembrance ceremony at 8:45 then proceed to the main program location.

The 25th Annual Pecan Grove Cemetery Memorial Day Program begins at 9:30 and includes local politicians, some speechifying, a fly over of a Stearman WW II Open Cockpit Trainer and Battle Hymn of the Republic played by the McKinney All City Middle School Band. Following the program a Community Picnic Barbeque will be served by Boy Scouts of America, Troop 303.

This is as All American as it gets.

Please invite your family and friends. Have them bring a lawn chair and water to enjoy the proceedings. As it is spring in north Texas I suggest liberal application of critter repellent is a good idea.

Whatever you do on Memorial Day I encourage you to find a way to express your appreciation and honor those who have served our nation defending our US Constitution and freedoms. We owe them much.

Let me know if you have questions or are planning to join with us. Regardless of the weather or pandemic the SUVCW, Camp #18 will gather at 8:30 to honor our veterans. We hope to see you there.

In Fraternity, Loyalty and Charity,
Blair G. Rudy, PDC
Camp #18
Department of Texas, SUVCW
214-505-1452
brsuv1@verizon.net

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