
The UNION STANDARD

May 2011

Vol.19, no 2

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

From the Desk:

Gentlemen of the 1st,

Wow, I can't believe it is already late April. The grass is growing or in my case weeds are growing which means mowing and chores around the homestead. But with chores, family and work we need some down time. For most of us reenacting gives us that release of the day to day stress. Especially with today's economic issues, most of us need a little more outside diversions. There is nothing better than on a spring day, than to don the blue and hang out with members of the 1st US. We have plenty of opportunities to do this the next few months. I hope all of you can take advantage of this! Honey Spring is just a few days away. This event is part of the Oklahoma's Sesquicentennial Remembrance. As a reminder, this event will be on the actual battlefield. This will be the last reenactment of the spring season. The weather should be great ...along with the company around the campfire.

The month of May is shaping up to be a busy month and has many opportunities to get involved. On May 14th, we have our yearly event in Fort Worth. The Texas Forts Muster in the Fort Worth Stockyards. This is a perfect event for a drive-by and for mingling with the public.

On Sunday, May 22nd will be gathering at the Plano Heritage Farm. This is a rally for military families. We will be doing some living history and recruiting for this fun event.

May 28th will be celebrating Liberty Fest at the Farmers Branch Historical Park. We may have the opportunity to spend the night on Friday (4/27). More details to follow.

May 30th, we will be attending and participating in the Memorial Day Celebration at the Pecan Grove Cemetery in McKinney. Brook Thomas and Blair Rudy will be getting additional details out this important event.

June 11th we will be meeting for Drill at Farmers Branch Historical Park.

Finally, before Wilson's Creek, we will meet at Fort Washita on the evening of Friday July 15th.

We will be conduct drill starting at 9am sharp on Saturday, July 16th. This will be a final walk through and shakedown for Wilson's Creek in August. As you can see we have some fun events planned for the spring and early summer. I hope that you can use these opportunities to escape from the day to day stresses.

For another piece of business, the NTRS Board held elections for the new board officers a few weeks ago. Your new Board Officers are as followed: President, Brook Thomas, Vice-President, George Hansen, Treasure, Don Gates, Secretary, Bryan Powers. Congratulations to the newest officers, I am sure they will serve to best of their abilities.

I look forward to enjoying a cup of coffee with you around the campfire in the near future.

YMOS,

Beck R. Martin 1st Sgt, 1st US Infantry (recreated)

If you have plans on attending Honey Springs you need to register NOW. Let Captain Brook Thomas know when you have done so.

bnjt33@tx.rr.com

<http://www.okhistory.org/outreach/military/hsregistraton.php>

Please register individually with 1st US Regiment of Infantry and Brook Thomas as CO. Enter NA where it calls for his phone number. We can use his address though: 3517 Ridgedale Drive, Garland, TX, 75041. No need to list other people attending, just yourself.

Battle of Honey Springs
Indian Territory
April 29th – May 1st, 2011

Battle of Honey Springs

The Battle of Honey Springs, the climatic engagement of the Civil War in Indian Territory, was fought on July 17, 1863, and had been in the making since the beginning of the war.

More than two years earlier the United States government had withdrawn its small peace-keeping forces from the forts of Indian Territory for what it considered more urgent military needs in the East. Soon afterward, authorities of the Confederate States signed treaties of alliance with the Five Civilized Tribes, and for a year Confederate control of Indian Territory remained unchallenged. Then, as part of an overall plan for conquering the Confederacy, Federal forces invaded Indian Territory.

After a year of unsuccessful efforts to reestablish Federal authority, Colonel William A. Phillips of Kansas occupied Fort Gibson in April of 1863, and Confederate authority in Indian Territory was successfully challenged for the first time.

At once the Confederates made plans to drive the Federals from Fort Gibson. While Colonel Phillips struggled to keep his supply line open to Fort Scott, Kansas, 175 miles to the north, the Confederates assembled 20 miles southwest of Fort Gibson at Honey Springs. From this location Confederate cavalry detachments harassed the Federals at Fort Gibson and attacked supply trains en route from Fort Scott.

The Confederate installation at Honey Springs consisted of a frame commissary building, a log hospital, several arbors, and numerous tents. Several springs supplied ample water for soldiers and livestock.

Through the encampment ran the Texas Road, the main pre-war transportation route connecting Indian Territory with Texas, Kansas, Missouri, and Arkansas. Honey Springs had served for some years as a stage stop, provision point, and watering place on the Texas Road. Early in the Civil War it became an important depot for the Confederates. It took on increased significance as the Confederates planned to drive all Federal forces from Indian Territory during the mid-summer of 1863. For this purpose about 6,000 soldiers were collected. Supplies were brought from Fort Smith, Arkansas, as well as from Boggy Depot, Fort Cobb, Fort Arbuckle, and Fort Washita, all located in Indian Territory.

The Confederates at Honey Springs were ready to march on Fort Gibson and awaited the arrival of approximately 3,000 reinforcements and additional artillery from Fort Smith on July 17 under the command of Brigadier General William L. Cabell, a West Point graduate distinguished for bravery in combat. In command of the Confederate forces at Honey Springs was Brigadier General Douglas H. Cooper, a former United States Choctaw-Chickasaw Indian Agent and an officer veteran of the Mexican War. He was highly respected by the Indians he faithfully served in both civil and military life.

Confederate deserters and Federal spies had kept Colonel Phillips informed of the impending attack on Fort Gibson. Supplies and troops were rushed from Fort Scott. On July 1 and 2 at Cabin Creek, Confederate forces attempted to intercept a large military supply train of 200 wagons en route to Fort Gibson. They did not succeed and

the Federals were able to hold Fort Gibson and prepare for an offensive against the Confederate forces at Honey Springs. The supply train had barely reached its destination when Major General James G. Blunt arrived from Kansas with additional troops and artillery. Altogether only about 3,000 Federals were then at Fort Gibson and available for field operations. Information soon reached Blunt that Cabell planned to bring 3,000 men to join Cooper's 6,000 Confederate troops for the planned attack on Fort Gibson.

Blunt's background was unique. Although first a sailor, he became a physician by profession and a general through politics. Before he assumed command of the District of the Frontier, which was his assignment in the summer of 1863, his military campaigns had been uniformly successful and strongly characterized by offensive operations. The challenge of again taking the battle to the Confederates was before him. In addition he considered the Federal situation at Fort Gibson especially critical because of the anticipated arrival of Cabell's troops at Honey Springs on July 17. Thus, Blunt took immediate action to attack Cooper's forces before Cabell could bring reinforcements. But on July 14, several days after starting campaign preparations at Fort Gibson, Blunt came down with an intense fever due to encephalitis. Although still severely ill after spending all day in bed, he decided to begin the advance on Honey Springs because of Cabell's threat.

With the completion of the construction of a number of flatboats to ferry his forces across the Arkansas River, Blunt issued six days of rations to his men. He then took 250 cavalry and four pieces of light artillery at midnight on July 15 and rode about 13 miles up the north bank of the swollen Arkansas River to a ford. At this location he drove away the Confederate pickets, crossed the Arkansas River, and turned downstream to the mouth of the Grand River.

Blunt then ordered the remainder of his troops to cross the river, an operation that was completed by 10:00 p.m. on July 16 except for several cavalry units. The Union force consisted of about 3,000 men equipped with late-model Springfield rifles and twelve pieces of artillery, including several efficient Napoleon guns.

Blunt's men proceeded immediately down the Texas Road. At about midnight, during a rain shower, the first skirmish occurred near Chimney Mountain when the Union advance guard encountered a Confederate scouting party. It was then that the Confederates, who slowly fell back, discovered that some of their gun powder had absorbed moisture and sometimes would not fire. At daybreak, Blunt's cavalry came upon Confederate advance units about 5 miles north of Elk Creek, skirmished briefly, and drove the Confederates back to their main line.

While the Federal force was collecting north of Elk Creek on the Texas Road, Blunt and his staff rode forward to examine the main Confederate position. He discovered their line, about one-and-one-half miles wide, concealed in the timber immediately north of Elk Creek. At about 8:00 a.m., he ordered his wet and exhausted troops to rest and eat lunch behind a little ridge about one-half mile from the Confederate line. When a rain shower occurred during this two-hour rest period, the Union troops filled their empty canteens with water taken from depressions in the Texas Road.

At about 10:00 a.m., Blunt formed his force into columns, one to the left of the road under Colonel William A. Phillips and the other on the right under Colonel William R. Judson. Both columns moved to within a quarter-mile of the Confederate line, and then were rapidly deployed to the left and right. In less than five minutes they were in a line of battle across the entire Confederate front. Blunt's force was composed

of units from Wisconsin, Colorado, Kansas, and Indian Territory.

On the other side, the Confederate units, with 5,700 men present for duty in the battle, were arranged in battle formation as Brigadier General Cooper had directed three days before the engagement. About one-quarter of them were without serviceable firearms, and they were supported by only four pieces of light artillery. Several units of Texans were serving with the Indian forces. Colonel Stand Watie had been scheduled to be present at Honey Springs, but at the last minute was sent by Cooper with a small cavalry unit to conduct a diversionary movement in the direction of Webbers Falls. All available Confederate forces were to be committed in case of attack except for the First Choctaw and Chickasaw Regiment and two squadrons of Texas cavalry, which were to be held in reserve.

The Confederates opened the battle by firing on the Federal artillery, which replied with spherical case shot, shell, and solid shot for one-and-one-quarter hours. The four Confederate field pieces of Captain Roswell W. Lee consisted of three 12-pounder mountain howitzers and a scarce Confederate Mountain Rifle, an even smaller experimental bronze field piece rifled to take a 2¼-inch diameter explosive shell. Only eighteen of these were made by the Tredigar Iron Works in Richmond, Virginia, in 1862. It is not known how this rare little experimental cannon found its way to the Indian frontier. General Cooper ordered this four-gun battery to support the 20th and 29th Texas Cavalry Regiments in the line of battle opposite the Federal First Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

The Federal artillery consisted of twelve field pieces brought from Kansas under the command of Captains Edward A. Smith and Henry Hopkins. Six of these cannons were the big 12-pounder Napoleons with which the Union Army was

generally equipped; two of the field pieces were iron 6-pounders; and four were 12-pounder mountain howitzers mounted on prairie carriages. General Blunt assigned four of the Napoleons to support the First Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry Regiment in the center of the line opposite the four Confederate field pieces backing the 20th and 29th Texas Cavalry Regiments. Blunt assigned the two remaining Napoleons, together with the two iron 6-pounders, to support the 2nd Colorado Infantry Regiment opposite the 29th Texas Cavalry Regiment. Two of the 12-pounder mountain howitzers bolstered the 3rd Wisconsin Cavalry Regiment on the far right of the Federal line, while the two other 12-pounder mountain howitzers buttressed the 6th Kansas Cavalry Regiment on the far left of the Federal line.

During the early minutes of the artillery duel, the four Confederate mountain cannons concentrated their fire on the four Napoleons of the Kansas Infantry Regiment. One of the Napoleons took a direct hit, thus removing one Federal gun from action. Killed in the attack were a section sergeant and a private, as well as four horses, with four more horses wounded. But the Federal gunners quickly located one of the Confederate howitzers in the underbrush and put it out of action by the concentrated fire of two of the big Napoleons. Within minutes the little howitzer was wrecked and its entire crew and horses killed. The Confederate artillerymen then utilized the accuracy and long range of their experimental mountain rifle field piece to pick off Union officers who could be seen on the high open ground beyond the Union battle line. One of Major General Blunt's aides was killed by a shell from the little mountain rifle and another shell narrowly missed Captain Smith while he directed the fire of his battery.

Meanwhile, Blunt had dismounted his cavalry units to fight as infantry and ordered all

commands to fire rapidly as possible against the Confederate line. For over two hours the Confederates effectively held their position while attempting a spirited flanking movement on the Federal left. The fighting in the underbrush was slow moving and confusing as the lines swayed under the impact of close-in and hand-to-hand combat. With many more men committed to the battle than were available to the Federals, the Confederates appeared to be compensating satisfactorily for their inferior gun powder, firearms, and artillery.

Then a set of unusual circumstances prevailed to turn the tide of the battle. Blunt ordered Colonel James M. Williams, the commanding officer of the First Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry Regiment, located near the center of the Federal line, to capture the four-gun Confederate artillery battery supporting the 20th and 29th Texas Cavalry Regiments. Williams, of abolitionist beliefs, had told his men before the battle that no quarter would be given if they were captured. He then ordered them to "fix bayonets" and move forward in formation. Soon the Federal and Confederate lines fired simultaneously. Colonel Williams and Colonel Charles DeMorse of the 29th Texas Cavalry Regiment received severe but not fatal injuries. Incessant firing continued.

As the battle progressed, units of the Federal Second Indian Home Guard Regiment unintentionally moved in between the First Kansas Colored Volunteer Regiment and the Texas dismounted cavalry regiments. Williams' successor, Lieutenant Colonel John Bowles, ordered the Indians to fall back to their position in the battle line. The Confederates heard this command and assumed that the Federals were falling back. The order was then given to pursue the Federals. The Confederates approached to within twenty-five paces of the Federals, to be met with a volley from the deadly accurate

Springfield rifles of the Kansas Colored Regiment. The Confederate color bearer fell, but the colors were immediately raised, and again promptly shot down. They were raised again, and once more they were leveled by a volley from the Kansas Regiment. Then Federal soldiers from the Indian Home Guards picked up the Confederate colors, much to the dismay of men and officers from the Kansas Regiment, who asked permission to break ranks and secure them. Permission was refused, but they were promised that the matter would be righted later.

Realizing he could no longer hold his position north of Elk Creek, Cooper ordered his Confederate forces to remove the artillery, vigorously defend the bridge across the creek, and stand firm on the south bank of the stream. They made several determined efforts to hold the bridge, but finally superior Federal firepower prevailed. Many Texans died holding the bridge long enough to move the Confederate artillery across it. As the Federals poured across the bridge and the fords of Elk Creek and onto the prairies beyond, the Confederates were in orderly retreat for about a mile and a half down the Texas Road to Honey Springs Depot. Here a final but effective stand was made, mainly by the reserve Choctaw and Chickasaw Regiment and the two squadrons of Texas cavalry, giving the Confederates time to evacuate virtually all of their forces, artillery, and baggage train. All buildings and supplies at Honey Springs were fired by the retreating Confederates; the Federals arrived soon enough to extinguish some of the flames and save quantities of bacon, dried beef, flour, sorghum, and salt.

By 2:00 p.m., the battle was over--four hours after it began. The Confederates moved east from the battlefield and at about 4:00 p.m. joined Brigadier General Cabell's 3,000-man force en route with four mountain howitzers from Fort Smith, about 50 miles distant. If

Cabell had arrived in time for the battle, the Federals would likely have lost. Cooper attributed his defeat not only to inferior ammunition and superior Federal arms, but also to the lack of Cabell's reinforcements. Blunt decided not to pursue the Confederates because his men and horses were fatigued and his ammunition was almost exhausted. Still suffering from an intense fever that forced him to go to bed, he ordered his forces to bivouac for the night on the battlefield, treat the wounded, and bury the dead, including the Confederates. Late on the day following the battle, Blunt directed his forces to return to Fort Gibson.

Cooper reported his losses as 134 killed and wounded, with 47 taken prisoner. He maintained the Federal killed and wounded exceeded 200. Blunt reported his losses as 17 killed and 60 wounded. He said he buried 150 Confederates, wounded 400 of their men, and took 77 prisoners. The exact numbers will never be known. Cooper afterwards sent a letter of appreciation to Blunt for his burial of the Confederate dead. Their unmarked graves may still be in the Honey Springs area. The bodies of the Federal dead were later reinterred in the Fort Gibson National Cemetery.

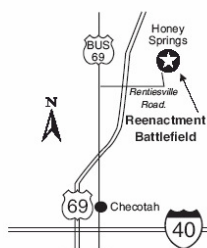
The Battle of Honey Springs was in both size and importance the Gettysburg of the Civil War in Indian Territory, for it marked the climax of massed Confederate military resistance and opened the way for the capture of Fort Smith and much of Arkansas. Perhaps, in terms of results, Honey Springs was the Gettysburg of the Trans-Mississippi West. It is significant also because it was one of the earliest engagements of the Civil War in which blacks proved their qualities as fighting men. General Blunt heaped praise on the blacks who fought with him at Honey Springs. He said of them in his official report on the battle: "The First Kansas (colored) particularly distinguished itself; they fought like

veterans, and preserved their line unbroken throughout the engagement. Their coolness and bravery I have never seen surpassed; they were in the hottest of the fight, and opposed to Texas troops twice their number, whom they completely routed. One Texas regiment (the 20th Cavalry) that fought against them went into the fight with 300 men and came out with only sixty." The fateful attack by blacks at Fort Wagoner, South Carolina, under the command of Robert Gould Shaw, occurred only one day after the battle of Honey Springs.

- Uniform is "western", sack coats, kersey blue trousers.

Remember, we are portraying (and playing at) soldiers of the mid 19th century

Please consider your fellow enactor and Do Not make obvious use of modern items.



I-40: exits 264B, 265
US 69: Rentiesville exit

For more information contact:
Honey Springs Battlefield (918) 473-7659
Checotah Chamber of Commerce (918) 473-2070
Friends of Honey Springs, Box 756, Checotah, OK 74426

**Take Rentiesville exit and follow signs.
North on Battlefield Road at Rentiesville,
Ok.**

1st U.S. Calendar

2011

April

29th - May 1st. Honey Springs Sesquicentennial Reenactment, Checotah, OK.

May

14th. Texas Forts Muster, Fort Worth Stockyards. (8am – 4pm)

22st. (Sunday, 12:00p – 5:00p)Plano Heritage Farm. Rally for military families. Recruiting and Demonstration.

28th. Liberty Fest; Farmers Branch Historical Park. (Possible overnight, arrive May 27th)

30th. Memorial Day Ceremony – Pecan Grove Cemetery , McKinney , TX

June

11th. Drill. Farmers Branch, TX.

July

17th Drill, Fort Washita, OK. (overnight, arrive Friday, July 16th)

August

11th - 14th. Wilson's Creek Sesquicentennial Reenactment, Springfield, MO. National Event.

September

Unit social. Location TBD.

October

Date TBD. Army Days Muster, Fort Sill, OK.

November

TBD

December

Date TBD. Dallas Heritage Village Candlelight.

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



*****2011 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 1st US.

Make check payable to NTRS and mail to:
Don Gates
1205 Balboa Circle, Plano, Texas 75075
Or bring to Honey Springs

WILSON'S CREEK

Pre-registration is now up for the Wilson's Creek reenactment, and can be done online at:

<http://www.wilsonscreek.com/content/involved/Anniversary.aspx>

Girl Scouts Honor Our Troops

If you or someone in your family served or is serving

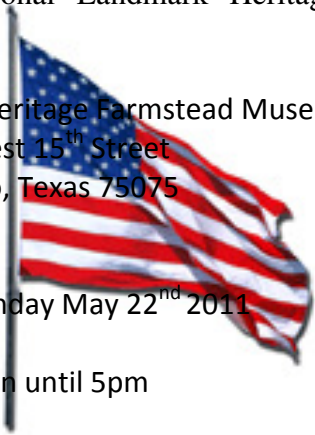
In the Military Please join us for a day of fun at the

Heritage Farmstead Museum with your family!
(The National Landmark Heritage Farmstead Museum)

Where: Heritage Farmstead Museum
1900 West 15th Street
Plano, Texas 75075

When: Sunday May 22nd 2011

Time: Noon until 5pm



ACTIVITIES include:

Speaker Max Glauben- Holocaust Survivor,
Holocaust Documentary, Write Letters to the
Troops Activity

Hay Rides, Historic Crafts and Games, World
War I Exhibit, World War II Exhibit, Civil War
Exhibit.

Bee Keeping Demonstration, Blacksmith
Demonstration

Open Fire Cooking Demonstrations, Live
Entertainment by Dr. O's Medicine Show and
No Turning Back

A Girl Scout Gold Award Project

THAT THEY MAY NEVER BE FORGOTTEN"

The 27th Annual Pecan Grove Cemetery Memorial Day Program

Monday, May 30, 2011

*Coordinated By: Harry McKillop, President of Pecan Grove
Cemetery*

0930 OVERTURE - "THE MCKINNEY ISD ALL-CITY
MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND"

1000 ASSEMBLY AND WELCOME - HARRY MCKILLOP -
PRESIDENT - PECAN GROVE CEMETERY

1005 MASTER OF CEREMONY - JUDGE KEITH SELF -
COLLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

1010 INVOCATION - REVEREND BRUCE BRADLEY - ST.
MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

1015 PRESENTATION OF COLORS - HONOR GUARD -
MCKINNEY POLICE DEPARTMENT

1020 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - BOY SCOUTS OF
AMERICA - TROOP 303

1025 STAR SPANGLED BANNER - JAMES SHELBY

1030 MAYOR BRIAN LOUGHMILLER - CITY OF
MCKINNEY

1035 CONGRESSMAN RALPH HALL and CONGRESSMAN
SAM JOHNSON

1045 AMAZING GRACE - BAG PIPERS - MCKINNEY FIRE
DEPARTMENT

1050 ROLL CALL - CHIEF MARK WALLACE - CITY OF
MCKINNEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

1100 TAPS - DALE LITTRELL

1105 FLYOVER
STEARMAN OPEN COCKPIT WWII
TRAINER AIRCRAFT
CHED BART - AVIATION MANAGER
AND CHIEF PILOT - THE PEROT GROUP

1110 BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC - "THE
MCKINNEY ISD - ALL CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND"

1115 BOY SCOUT TRIBUTE - CAMERON CHANDLER, SR.
- SCOUT MASTER - TROOP 303

1120 GO IN PEACE - HARRY MCKILLOP - PRESIDENT -
PECAN GROVE CEMETERY

1125 RETREAT TUNES - BAG PIPERS - MCKINNEY FIRE
DEPARTMENT

1130 COMMUNITY PICNIC BARBEQUE - COOKED BY
THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA TROOP 303

The Union Standard
Newsletter of the 1st U.S. Infantry
9091 Creede Trail
Fort Worth, Texas 76118