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# The UNION STANDARD

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October 2003

Vol. 11, no9

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

### **Dispatch from the Board**

What a great turnout for Atoka!!!! We managed to have 40 men; even with a few walking wounded and men pulled off for staff duties we fielded two nice sized companies. With a little help from our parads in the 9<sup>th</sup> TX it allowed us to function as our own little battalion. I really appreciate the effort so many of you made to make it. Kudos to Pvt. Conway Barton who burned up the telegraph wires contacting folks prior to the event. Our camp had a rather eclectic appearance with everything from sleeping on the ground to A-tents. However, things blended nicely in the campaign layout and you guys did a good job keeping the farby stuff out of sight. Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't pass on our thanks to Sgt. Brook Thomas for the 26 loaves of bread he baked for this weekend. Soft bread sure beats the alternative of hardtack!

Being able to field two brigade standard companies was important to us for two reasons: First it sent a message to the rest of the brigade that in these times of decreasing numbers the 1<sup>st</sup> US alone can field a wing of a battalion. Secondly, and I really don't like to dwell on this but unfortunately it is a fact of life in the hierarchy of reenacting, we made a political statement. The two companies at the "official" brigade event for this year means that we have two votes when it comes to electing brigade leadership and brigade events for next year.

We have two interesting events left this year. November 8-9 will find us at Cane Hill

(Bentonville, AR). Our Battalion Commander, Major "Double quick" Benefiel will be the overall Federal commander and Kip Bassett who normally functions as the battalion adjutant has been brevetted major of volunteers and will command the infantry. Members of the 1<sup>st</sup> are running the show so we know things will be done right! Early November, NW Arkansas, perfect greatcoat weather, good field commanders, what more could you ask for. (More whiskey?...McF...)

December will find us at Camp Ford in Tyler, TX. This will be a different drill. Instead of working on Casey's Tactics we will spend the day building a period prison camp shelter. Work will be done using period tools (no chainsaws) to build a log and earth shelter.

It's not too early to start thinking about what you would like to do next year. There are three events that are already firm: Battalion Muster, February 28-29, Ft. Washita; Gainsville, April 17-18; and Franklin, TN, October 1-3. Franklin is a 1<sup>st</sup> Federal Division National Event. Other than that what we do next year is up to you guys, get some input into any of the board members.

*See you in the field.*

**Don Gross**



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See Cane Hill command info on Page 6.  
Cane Hill driving directions to follow as EMAIL

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

2003

**NOVEMBER**

**7-9** Battle of Bentonville (formally Cane Hill)

**DECEMBER**

**??** Camp Ford, Tyler Texas

## Odd Bits of stuff...

As editor I can (and do...) take the opportunity to make abusive observations from time to time about anything that strikes my fancy. Okay, maybe not abusive unless McFuddy is manning the keyboard. At any rate....

As keepers of the company stores we're a might concerned about the fact that some of our equipment has somehow "flanked the guard" over the last year. Chiefly the most important items being a full set of coots, a bayonet and a rifle. Nice work if you can get it, and No!, McFuddy didn't sell this stuff off to acquire that XXX jug that appeared at Atoka. The rifle is of course the BIG item we'd like very much to return to company care. The serial number on the missing "Enfield class" weapon is - E12111. Anyone who has a clue as to the whereabouts of this strayed device of Mars would be most appreciatively received and accolades from the Quartermaster(s) will no doubt cause church bells to ring backwards clear from here to St. Louie.

To help remind the lenders (for, are we not guilty and remiss in duty to equipment if we don't courteously remind borrowers that they have borrowed?) and borrowers that they should collect/return the gear at the end of the festivities we'll be instituting, at board agreement, the policy of collecting a drivers license from folks what borrow gear (or their legal guardian, as the case may be) at the time of borrowing. Consider the cost to replace a full set of coots and a rifle and it's easy to understand why we need to do this. Many of us have taken advantage of the generosity of the unit in the past with respect to using loaned gear. We'd like to be able to continue that policy for

potential and new members in the future. I'm not exactly ashamed of those old Quaker rifles I slapped together when I was an eager recruit, but I don't want to be down to using those to equip fresh fish unless we plan on engaging enemy Quakers!

I remain

YMOS A. Prendergast

## The Recruiting Post

by George Hansen

The Granbury Reenactment was successful when considering the rain kept the spectators away on Sunday. We obtained a healthy prospect list with lots of good attitudes. Always enough room on these pages to thank those who recruited Saturday are Blair Rudy, Art Ogle, Jerome Levy, John Schultz, Andrew Schultz, Glen Hargis, Jim Kirkendall, Greg Fett, and Don Rogers. My thanks extended to Brenda Levy for the Granbury photos, as the pictures will be handed out to the 1<sup>st</sup> US and Confederate members at Granbury and also used in our recruiting photo book. Jerome has been most generous forwarding photos taken at our events and refusing reimbursements.

Although the recruiting booth was dismantled Sunday, rain did not deter Capt. Don Gross from making an appearance. Single handedly he represented the whole First US that day and though he didn't recruit a solitary name nor participated in the battle, it's the, uh, effort that, uh, counts. (*Sure then! mark me down, Haven't I been recruitin at the pub for months now to no avail! McF...*)

Contact Regt. Sgt. Maj. Mike Beard if you'd like to try your hand as a mentor. Our new recruits need support and guidance as they seek to establish a foothold into the hobby. Even if you recently acquired your company letter, your expertise is needed. Mike can be reached at [dotmike@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dotmike@sbcglobal.net), or (817) 446-7935.

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## Various After Action Reports

### Rackensackers: We Are!

by Conway Barton and George Hansen

The Rackensackers turned out in force at Atoka, as we fielded two First U.S. companies for the event. Nine additional members confirmed for the reenactment, but were unable to join us due to personal or work related issues. This shows the commitment level present for Atoka as we were able to absorb these losses and still field our two companies.

Our Unit then proceeded to enhance its reputation. Saturday began by participating in the Battalion drill and afterwards the First issued rations, marched onto the field to bivouac, stack arms, boil coffee, enjoy lunch and then advanced onto the battlefield to join the combat action. During the battle reenactment, Cos. A and D excelled at marching at the double quick, marching at the oblique, firing at the oblique, and firing by file, by company and by battalion. We captured cannons, refused our line to combat cavalry and fought as an independent wing of the Federal Force. We loaded on the move, used the land as cover, knelt to load, and rose to fire. We took hits, reformed and moved again. All of our attention to drill and the School of the Soldier paid off as we were able to execute most orders with precision.

The First is fortunate to have officers and NCOs who know how to lead and issue commands straight from *Casey's Infantry Tactics*. One of our own commands the battalion; another commands a division with General's rank. Other members serve as staff officers or NCOs in the battalion and division. Still, others perform as battalion color guard and musicians. So much of what we know and who we are can be attributed to the man known as "Mr. Rackensacker," our own Glen Hargis. This year marks Glen's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the hobby and his contributions have made us better portraying Regulars. "And, Glen, this is appreciated."

Want more? The First U.S. has an excellent cook who excels at preparing delicious meals

over an open flame for a multitude of hungry men, or he can issue campaign-style rations. We can do campaign reenacting and Outpost scenarios using shelter halves or sleeping 'on arms'. The First can do skirmish drill with the best of them. In fixed camp our camaraderie and period songfests around the campfire are legendary and additional musicians and singers have recently been added. Plus, we have a First Sergeant who can lead in the field, or dispense humor in camp with equal expertise. Many members present Living History talks to local schools, civic organizations and reenactment spectators. Plus, our Unit provides speakers for battalion muster classes.

So, fellow Rackensackers, the next time you read or hear about a successful organization, take heart, because as a Regular you are in one, my friend – The First Regiment, U.S. Infantry!

### Gen-U-ine Slavery

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[Being A Peculiar View of that Peculiar Institution from an "intercepted" correspondence.](#)

In my more'n 35 years o' doin' th' mid 19th century I seed a nummer o' real fine impressions thet did th' National Trial right proud. One o' the best wuz thet o' th' rebel slave sojer. It makes folks think thet things iz a site more complex durin' this here War o' th' Rebellion than most folks let on. Shoot, I even seen Crackers react t' this by rethinkin' things they ain't given much thought to since they wuz weaned. Some sable folks refer t' this playin' o' th' Southern card in terms o' th' Reble Rag az, "don't take Down th' flag, jest Take it." It is an effective impression, bu it iz just an impression.

I ain't niver seed REAL Slavery 'till we done th' Livin' History Fest down at th' Kaufman, Texas, Poor Farm. jest a while back. I wuz fixin' t' spend th' day settin' on a castoff army box in front o' a Turkomen rug thet wuz slung tent d' Arab style over a ripped out bannister rail when I seed m' first gen-u-ine slave.

He wuz wearin' a white an' orange stripe suit o' clothes wit "County Jail Trustee" writ on th' back. Ther wuz a raft o' these fellers 'round 'bout

th' camps. They wuz hewers o' wood an' drawers o' water. They was thar t' do whut ivver work ya pretty much wanted done. They wuz meek an' curtious an' eager t' please. I figgered out thet iffen they wuzn't, they'd surly git innta trouble wid th' uniformed overseers thet wuz alla time patrolin' about.

Now it wuzzan't so much thet they wuz forced innta involuntary servitue fer thar crimes, th' Constitution permits it az punishment. No, it wuz how seductivly insidious it wuz fer US t' have such a body o' servants 'round t' do for us. I kin now see why slavocrats hung on so tight t' th' Peculiar Institution. It made even us in th' \$13 a month Unionist set feel like sojers o' th' leisure class. B' Gawd, it jest slipped up on us. Afore we noticed, we wuz takin' in th' whole set up like it wuz our due.

Hargis, G. 5 A-1  
1st U.S. & U.A.V.

Sure isn't it the very truth though!  
I meself seen the like when we did that bally-hoo for his lordship Mr. Trammel-Crow back some years gone. There was all them brasaro fellers just waitin to tote and step and fetch on our behalf. I recall grand Greg Lehman came into camp with a string of 'em trailing behind that recollected me of the writings of some explorer feller venturing into the jungles of Afrikay. What with a troop of porters to carry all his worldly possessions and here's himself strollin along as free and easy as you please at the head of the whole train. Lord High Private no doubt.

Maybe it's not in my blood though, every time I've ever been waited on hand and foot like that, some part of me mumbles that those of my 'blood' wuzan't intended to be waited *on*, we wuz intended to *DO the waitin*.

Oddly enough it wuz the very same Greg Lehman that reminded me on that too. T'was when Spoons Hansen and I were set at his honors wedding announcement party (he being harnessed in tandem with a fine lady of well to do family, and himself being from a fine family of the like, they have them kind of shindys

which, again, was too many for the likes of us from the start).

Here were all these servin lads and lasses dashing round about, filling up glasses and handing out petti-fours. They wouldn't let a man get the glass half empty but they were plying him with another pour off the bottle. With the lot of them well dressed elegant folks wanderin about the shindy without a care or want like this was not but the natural way for life to be! I couldn't help mindin I was head and shoulders out of my social class and that my natural place wuz with the fillers, not the fillee's if you follow my meaning...

Regards  
McF A. 99 Q-1

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## PEARCE MUSEUM

An After action report

To The Union Standard  
From the Field  
Hargis, G. Reporting

### Tenting That Day on a New Old Campground

The federal horde (OK, so it was a small horde) set up its company street on the soft, damp lawn, hardby the Pearce museum at Navarro College in Corsicanna. To our rear, cavalry mounts were hobbled amidst the profusion of NASSA rocket boosters and sundry equipage from a day to come. On either flank of our canvas community were were citizens of the Republic, not all of whom acknowledged their true allegiance to the same; and there were a raft of sesech fellers in gray prison cloth. But we all got along tolerably well.

Those of us blue coated unionists mounted on Shank's Mare were a mixed bunch comprising elements of companies from the First U.S. and Union Army Veterans. To the outsiders, we were all just Damned Yankees in our entire. We had the novel experience of volley firing for an audience hermetically seal off from the fire and powder stench INSIDE the museum,

viewing all through a huge solarium window. We could, if we listened closely, hear their muffled applause.

We then were "at home" for a time, engaged in such diversions as plate sanding, cabbage wearing, card playing and general lolling about as soldiers of the leisure class.

I briefly enjoyed these pleasures and then packed up my Tent d'Arab and quickly piked it for a second posting in Fort Worth. Report to follow Hargis, G. 5 A-1

a.k.a. deacon o' th' Rakensacker Mess

Added in haste:

It was good to see so many of my old pards serving together.

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## Campaigning Amongst the Village People

After being detached for a patrol from Corsicanna to Fort Worth I plied swift knees to the northwest on a trail that passed without incident through the Heart of Midlothean and thence to Log Cabin Village.

In heavy marching order I wound through the bosky woods till I came at last to the rustic community. It was packed with civilians from the outlying farms all caught up in celebratory frolic.

.I joined Pvt.. Furman of the 1st and Bass of the UAV. Myself being an organizational mongrel, I fit in well amongst 'em. 'Ol Bob had brought his pine arsenal of Quaker rifles, so every time we'd accumulate a knot of children, we'd put them through their paces 'cording to the gospel of Casey.

Also present at our duty station was a Unionist officer of critter soldiers sans command and sans cheval for that matter who'd saddled up a snail fence and a reb of the big hat and even bigger knife school. We were also graced with a gaggle of civilian ladies who demonstrated all the really fun things one can do with corn shucks.

As for me, I idled my time away with cup & bayonet coffee crunching, cabbage wearing and recurring demonstrations of the knapsack as nap

time furniture, generally playing the part of a soldier of the leisure class.

Those of us who've been using cotton to bring their blanks to live ball cartridge dimensions might want to rethink the practice. We were firing at high elevation, a safety practice of dubious utility, when a flaming cotton ball alit upon a split cedar shingled roof, threatening to set it alight and spread a holocaust of dreadful proportions. Fortunately, acting in the highest tradition of the service, pvt. Bass sprang atop the cabin and with his canteen drenched the danger. All in all, not a bad day's work.

Hargis, 5 A-1  
1st US & UAV

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(As I recall, we damn near burned down the blacksmith shop at Prairie Grove several years ago by similar elevated practice. Something our noble NCO's and Officers should take heed of in future?) Ed....

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*The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry*

*Presents*

*A Grand Ball*

*January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2004,*

*7-12 pm.*

**Dancing to start at 7:45 pm.**

*Cost of the Ball is \$45.00 per person (nonrefundable).*

*Make checks payable to 9th Texas. This will include dance instruction from 10 - 3 at the Restoration Church in Euless. There will be a 30-minute lunch break for you to get lunch during dance instruction. There are places close by to get your lunch.*

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*Please call if you have questions.*

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*Jill Modlin 817-595-1935*

***Deadline for registration is  
November 15, 2003!!!***

Limit 120 people. Registration is first come, first serve. Notification sent upon receipt of your money.

*(See page 9 for registration form)*

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### **Lessons From Lincoln**

Gen. John H. Littlefield, who studied law with Abraham Lincoln, tells this anecdote in his recollections of this great figure. "All clients knew that, 'Old Abe' as their lawyer, they would win their case – if it was fair; if not, that it was a waste of time to take it to him. After listening some time one day to a would-be client's statement, with his eyes on the ceiling, he swung around in his chair and exclaimed: 'Well, you have a pretty good case in technical law, but a pretty bad one in equity and justice. You'll have to get some other fellow to win this case for you. I couldn't do it. All the time while standing talking to that jury I'd be thinking, "Lincoln, you're a liar," and I believe I should forget myself and say it out loud.'"

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### **November Event - Cane Hill**

#### *From Headquarters, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion*

Timeline for this event is late February 1862 - just days prior to the Pea Ridge conflict. Uniform guidelines are as stated - GUIDELINES - not a hard and fast rule. Our effort is to make an accurate portrayal of the mid-19th century American soldier, but we understand there are always new guys/units in the hobby who are putting together their kit. Therefore, without any further adieu:

- Officers - no subdued rank patches. Early war shoulder straps should be *de-rigueur*.
- Enlisted ranks may sport some early war headgear - some wheel hats, numerous Hardees, etc.
- Shelter halves came to the West in late 1862. Wedge tents should be the rule or *au natural*. We are assumed to be in position for several days, leaving time for the baggage train to catch up to us.

- Senior NCOs have the option to wear NCO swords & baldrics
- Other than the above exceptions, the basic western Federal impression works. Frocks should be well represented in the ranks.
- No repeating infantry arms for this event.
- NO knives, scimitars, claymores, tomahawks, hatchets, adzes, picks, shovels, pitchforks, tuning forks, gladius hispanicus', cutlasses, LeSabres, Grecian spears, Grecian Formula, tridents, Efferdent, or sharpened false teeth will be sported, brandished, shown, coveted, lifted, thrown, tossed, fallen on, or thought about during any of the battles. *Can I be any more clear?*

Adj. Bassett has been brevetted to Major of Volunteers, commanding the Federal Infantry for the Bentonville event.

Situation Report - Elements of the Federal Army of the Frontier has been ordered into position near Little Sugar Creek in anticipation of an advance of the Confederate Army of the West from NW Arkansas. Scouts tell us that this force is on course to advance up the Telegraph Road through the small village of Bentonville on its way toward an assumed invasion of Missouri. This thrust must be defeated or so bloodied that it is forced into a tactical defensive position or a strategic withdrawal. By all accounts, we should have our hands full with the Johnnies...

An engineering survey of the position has been completed and pioneers will be "selected" from each unit to serve under the leadership of Capt. Barfield. He will supervise the general improvement of our position. If I could ask all units could bring their well-marked engineering implements (axes, shovels, mattocks, mauls, saws) it would greatly be appreciated. I promise you we will not be building pyramids or any other wonders of the engineering arts.

All company commanders and Sr. NCOs need to be familiar (not experts) with the theory of the Outpost, and if not, feel free to contact

myself, Maj. Bassett, or Capt. Don Gross of the 1st US Infantry

I look forward to seeing you in the field again and may God bless each of you and your families.

I remain, YMOS,

G. Benefiel, Maj.  
1st Battalion Infantry  
3rd Bde., 1st Div.  
Army of the Frontier

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## **The Stubborn Colonel**

Submitted by Ron Myers

From a veteran of the Iron Brigade

“The colonel of the Seventh Wisconsin was Joseph Vandor (sometimes spelled Van Dor) of Milwaukee. He was an old Hungarian campaigner, stiff and stubborn, and recommended to Wisconsin Governor Alexander Randall as “a brave man and thorough disciplinarian.” The fact Vandor was still trying to master English became apparent at an early drill in firing by front and rear ranks. Vandor, mounted and at his proper place behind the regiment, ordered, “Rear rank, about face! Read, aim . . .” The order “brought the long line file closers and officers to their knees, while the gallant lieutenant colonel and major were seen charging toward some friendly trees.”

The adjutant shouted, “Colonel, that is not correct, you will shoot the file closers.” But the stubborn Hungarian straightened up. “I don’t care a tam. If your colonel is the mark, fire anyway,” he said, and a thousand muskets emptied their blank cartridges at the noble colonel.

Vandor was soon “promoted to a foreign Consulship”, a polite way Mr. Lincoln had of banishing general officers not wanted in the field.”

From the book *Four Years with the Iron Brigade - The Civil War Journal of William Ray*

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## **Hospital Conditions and Care for the Wounded**

We as reenactors tend not to re-create the gorier side of the Civil War, and that is the pain and misery inflicted upon the participants of the battles we reenact. Part of the reason is that we are certainly reluctant to ‘assault’ the spectators’ senses with a show that may become too unseemly, and that is a consideration. Aside from the bloodied bandage that you may find among the ranks at the end of a battle, little is displayed to the public about the aftermath of the battle except in the instance of units like the 173<sup>rd</sup> who do a fine job of educating the public about the horrid conditions the soldiers endured who were unfortunate enough not to immediately succumb to the effects of a battlefield injury. Even during the battle, our portrayals of the wounded are somewhat misleading. A typical hit consists of the soldier dying on the spot whereas you would actually suspect many of those hit were actually ‘walking wounded.’ We should see more of our ‘fallen’ brothers on the field trying to find and ‘patch’ their wounds or at least more movement, crawling, limping back, crying out, etc. Comrades helping the wounded to the rear would also be appropriate if it weren’t for the fact that we rarely have the numbers in our ranks to justify losing men from the line. Brook has mentioned that we could assist the 173<sup>rd</sup> after the battle with their living history presentations of field hospital conditions and I would recommend those of you so inclined to give it a try. This type of activity usually draws a good crowd and would ‘bring home’ the actual sacrifices our ancestors endured.

I’ve copied some excerpts from a book about Walt Whitman’s life working in hospitals in Washington, D.C. from 1862 to 1865. At the time, he was already a known writer for “*Leaves of Grass*” but his life was in turmoil and he was suffering with some depression when he heard his brother George was wounded at Fredricksburg. He found his brother in D.C. (who was recovering) and got interested in visiting the wounded in hospitals to help where he could. The following quotes from the book will give you a better understanding of those

conditions and maybe inspire some to create some 'living history' along with members of the 173<sup>rd</sup>.

From "*The Better Angel, Walt Whitman in the Civil War,*"

by Roy Morris, Jr., Oxford University Press, 2000

...the sights, the sounds, and the smells of the army hospitals-they were literally a world unto themselves. At the end of 1862 there were approximately thirty-five hospitals in and around Washington, accommodating some thirteen thousand suffering soldiers. Despite the recent influx of wounded from Fredericksburg, the winter of 1862-63 actually represented something of a downtime for the hospitals after the extended bloodletting that followed Major General George McClellan's Peninsula campaign, the Seven Days battles, Second Manassas, South Mountain, and Antietam, when a grand total of 56,050 cases had been treated in Washington during the last four months of the year. (p88-89)

Whatever their design, the hospitals in Washington were places to be feared and despised by any soldier. Medical care in the early 1860s was not much advanced from the Middle Ages. The great discoveries in bacteriology and antiseptics by such European medical pioneers as Louis Pasteur, Robert Koch, and Joseph Lister were still a few years in the future. American doctors, by and large, were poorly trained and woefully under-equipped. (Harvard Medical School, for example, did not even own a microscope until 1869.) The cause and prevention of disease were unknown. Typhoid fever, malaria, and diarrhea, the three most prevalent and deadly killers of the Civil War, tore through every hospital and camp, spread by infected drinking water, fecally

contaminated food, and disease-transmitting mosquitoes.

(To Be Continued...)

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## **For Sale: (Recruits take note!)**

Contact Wes Hanson at

[Wes.Hanson@weblinkwireless.com](mailto:Wes.Hanson@weblinkwireless.com), or (972) 223-8502:

Daley Sack Coat 48" (brand new) - \$165  
Jarnagin 1857/61 Cartridge Box, w/sling, plates, tins (never used) - \$120  
Trousers (Frazer's) about 42" - \$40  
Sack Coat (Frazer's) 50" - \$40  
Brogans 10 1/2 - \$20 or best offer!

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### **Newsletter Costs**

Members who receive the newsletter by mail can help the First US save money by requesting a newsletter copy only by e-mail. The postage and printing costs will help the treasury pay for a needed national flag and other items essential to our impression. Should you wish to contribute to this goal contact G. Hansen at [beast1st@comcast.net](mailto:beast1st@comcast.net).

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**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 font!!!)

**Newsletter** – contact George Hansen if you did not receive your newsletter, [beast1st@attbi.com](mailto:beast1st@attbi.com) or (972) 529-5349.

**Address/Telephone changes** – any mailing/e-mail address changes or telephone number changes should be submitted to John Bowen, [jbowl1stus@comcast.net](mailto:jbowl1stus@comcast.net) or (972) 539-6167.

# **Grand Ball Registration**

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*Address*

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*City* *State* *Zip*

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*Phone Number*

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*Email Address*

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*Amount Enclosed \$*

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*Please make checks payable to I<sup>PH</sup> Texas*

*Names of Attendees and age if under 18*

*Age*

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*Age*

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*Age*

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*Age*

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*Please Remit to:* *Cindy Stuart*  
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## **The Union Standard**

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

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