

# The Sentinel



Vol. 8, No.12 – The Newsletter of the 6th Arkansas Infantry, Company A, C.S.A. – December, 2004

Living Historians

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## Prairie Grove Brings New Spirit, New Leadership

December of the even-numbered years brings one of the more anticipated re-enacting events in Arkansas – the biennial re-enactment of the Battle of Prairie Grove. Despite the wet, clammy weather earlier in the week, the forecasters were calling for a beautiful weekend with a chance of rain on Sunday as I loaded the wagon to head north for the Capitol Guards' last event of the year.

After a side trip up to Pea Ridge National Battlefield to look up a few things and to take a bike ride around the Park's tour roads (there are a lot more ridges than I remember in Pea Ridge, but that's a whole 'nother story) I arrived on site at Prairie Grove at around 3 p.m. Friday afternoon to find a few changes from the last time we were up there... Prairie Grove now charges a \$3 registration fee to participants and spectators alike, for which I apologize for the last newsletter's info. Attendance was a lot more sparse than in the past four or five times for one reason or another, but we breezed through registration and headed for the Confederate camp, located as always in the peach orchard behind the Borden House.

On my arrival in camp, the Sibley was going up, and Bob was adding the latest improvement to the Hotel de Black, central heating. I offloaded and threw up the headquarters tent, and shifted into some semblance of a uniform, and the weekend was off to an official start.

Friday evening was clear and cold, with mass confusion as most of the participants were arriving in the dark and looking for their parent units. Only the 1st Arkansas Battalion had done any sort of site preparation or camp layout, so there was a lot of folks wandering up and down in the Borden orchard with folks asking, "Have you seen \_\_\_\_?" The Capitol Guards' Sibley tent, with both its size and the comfy-looking wisps of smoke emerging from the chimney, attracted a lot of visitors, either looking for direction, warmth, or just to check things out.

We checked in with the Battalion, and took a quick hike over to the sutler area with a few of the guys to see what was there, then settled in around the fire as the rest of the troops straggled in. Supper was foraged from a nearby



*The TMVI gathers for its biennial elections in front of the Borden House on Saturday afternoon at Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park.*

establishment, and we turned in shortly after taps sounded.

The 6th Arkansas fielded 7 men for Prairie Grove: Tom Ezell, Steve Shore, Bob Black, Jim DeCann, Ken Nations, Corey Platt, and David Sesser, and we were joined by SGT Guy Taylor, Bob Hutcheson, Marvin Langrell, Andy Taylor, David Cheney, Justin Priest, Rex Norris, Andrew Burchart, and David Taylor of the 1st Arkansas, fielding 16 men for Saturday's activities. We were designated as the battalion's 1st Company.

Saturday dawned cold, clear, and frosty, cold enough that the water supply for the Confederate camp (a garden hose over on the far side of the parking area) had frozen. This event was also the first time we deployed another of the Company's acquisitions, a 10-gallon wooden keg and spigot for keeping a supply of potable water in camp. Kept in the Sibley during Friday night's freezing temperatures, we had water for Saturday morning.

We got a camp kettle of coffee started, and after a quick breakfast, got the

circulation going with an hour of company drill... teaching the new guys and refreshing our forgetful old guys in the basics of the manual of arms, loading and firing, stacking arms, marching by the flank and in line of battle, and shifting from the flank march into company line. Battalion formation was delayed pending word from the Brigade headquarters, and once called to the color line, the TMVI marched out to the back side of the peach orchard to join the rest of the Brigade and inspect weapons as a whole.

That done, there was time for half an hour of battalion drill, then we rejoined the Brigade to march over to the Federal camp area and join a joint dress parade to mark the "retirement" of TMB general John Beck from the reenacting hobby. The Federal battalion and Confederate Brigade formed on parade, facing one another, while Beck rode up and down the lines to pay his respect and receive "three cheers" from each side. Next, came the uncommon occurrence of marching the Mississippi Valley Brigade *by the left flank* all the way back to camp.

Once back in camp, we stacked arms,

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Prairie Grove '04 (Continued from Page 1)

and had approximately 20 minutes to grab a hasty lunch before re-forming to go out and get into our staging area for the afternoon battle demonstration.

The Mississippi Valley Brigade deployed itself along the crest of the Borden House hill, with the TMVI on the right, posted in the woods along the western edge of the hill; the 1st Arkansas battalion in the center along the crest of the hill; and the 1st Missouri on the left of the 1st Arkansas. With the bulk of the TMVI held in reserve in the woods, the First Company (1st & 6th Arkansas) was sent forward as skirmishers to secure the right of the brigade line from surprise. Moving forward, we deployed skirmishers by the right flank, and took cover in the edge of the tree line, seeking whatever cover and concealment we could find. We were joined by another company of skirmishers on our left, and tied in with the dismounted cavalry on our right. Once everyone loaded and got in position, the Captain checked the line, then moved forward to a small grove of trees to see what could be seen of the enemy.

The Federal line was hidden behind a low rise, but their presence and position was given away when they unfurled their colors and sent a few couriers to the artillery. Shortly afterward, the enemy artillery appeared to our right front, and opened a lively fire into our woods and the nearby hillside, a sort of "reconnaissance by fire" to see what the rebels would do.

Our cavalry took the bait, and charged out of the tree line, going after the Federal colors in the distance. They were in turn surprised by the Federal horsemen debouching from another patch of woods on their left flank. The two groups mingled, firing wildly, and after all their pistols were empty, the gray riders began falling back to our line of skirmishers. The Federals pursued hotly, and for a bit it was difficult to separate the two sides. We let them get into easy rifle shot, and opened fire, bringing down several horses and their riders. The enemy cavalry scampered away, re-formed, and came at us again, but again were frustrated by the skirmishers firing

from covered and concealed positions, and were driven away by our determined fire and marksmanship. They retired off in to the distance toward our right, reloading and trying to get reorganized.

Our skirmish line was then ordered to rise, and to advance in an effort to draw the Federal infantry into the battle. We advanced several hundred yards, and sure enough, here came the Federal battalion in full line of battle. We went to ground again and opened fire, forcing them to stop and deploy in an attempt to deal with us. Their volley fire was largely ineffective against our prone riflemen, but they kept edging toward us, until it was clearly time for us to give ground if we didn't want to spend the rest of the war in one of old Abe's prison camps. At first we gave ground grudgingly, but the Yankees pushed harder and harder, driving us back. They were significantly gaining on us, and as I spotted the battalion emerging from the woods to support us, I gave the order, "Rally on the battalion!" and we ran as if Old Scratch himself were after us – clearing a field of fire for the battalion as they covered our escape.

We reformed the company behind the right wing of the battalion, then took our place back in the line of battle as the TMVI became decisively engaged. Putting out a hot fire, the Yanks outnumbered us 2 to 1, and continued to drive us back. We managed to stabilize and hold the line just inside the woods, when the other two battalions launched their attack directly down the hill and into the Federals' right flank, driving them from the woods at the bottom of the hill and back across the open field. The TMVI reformed and rejoined the brigade line as we kept up the pressure.

Now it was the Yankees' turn to find the sweet spot, as they took cover on the other side of the low rise which our skirmishers had put to such good use shortly before. Ensnared here, they simply could not be moved. We reformed and attacked three times, but in each case our charge was broken up by their concentrated fire before we could get to grips with them. Shot to pieces and low on ammunition, we were simply "used up" as the survivors faded back into our initial position in the woods at the foot of the Borden house.

Having disposed of us, the Federals turned their attention to the 1st Arkansas and 1st Missouri, which were still threatening their right flank. A countercharge by the Federals again failed to gain the foot of the hill. Low on ammunition, the rebel line tenaciously clung to their positions along the slope and foot of the hill, while the Federals in turn took cover in the woods along the opposite side of the field. An uneasy truce developed as both sides, too fought out to do much more harm, attempted to lick their many wounds and recover their fallen.

The TMVI was pulled out of the fight to re-fit, re-supply, and reorganize, and was placed as the Brigade's reserve on the back side of the Borden hill, where we passed a restless night. Rations were brought up – blue beef and potatoes, and we cooked these up in a stew with a few winter vegetables to fill the emptiness in our bellies – the result from a long day's work and scanty grub... even if we had had time or opportunity to try and eat anything.

Down on the field, picket firing broke out briskly from time to time as either side thought the other was trying to gain an advantage under the cover of darkness, but most appeared to merely be shooting at ghosts or perceived movement across the way. Shortly after, rumors came down of a potential withdrawal and retreat because the army was no longer capable of making another fight like this one the following day. As the officers gathered to consider what needed to be done next, confirmation came in the person of the General in his rain slicker, and the Official Word – the army would indeed pull out, and make another fight, another day.

The word was quietly passed on to the troops, as we gathered our friends, slung our knapsacks and began the slow, weary march back southward through an increasing rain.

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AS IN THE REAL BATTLE, both sides could claim victory at Prairie Grove '04... Neither side was "licked," but were simply unable to carry the fight to its ultimate conclusion. In 1862, the rebels were out of ammunition; in 2004 rain set in at the stroke of 6:00 a.m. and kept steadily piling on, and the event was "called" at around 9:00 a.m., the Sunday afternoon battle cancelled.

As far as Saturday's event went, especially the afternoon battle demonstration, this was the best scenario and fight that I can remember, and it was especially enjoyable. A much greater pleasure, at least for me, was that the TMVI Battalion that showed up on the color line Saturday morning was the battalion that I remember from the "good ol' days" of the Good Raymond and Gettysburg – we all worked well as a team, and the group functioned like a well-oiled machine. The TMVI of old was back in the field, and it sure felt good!

While Sunday's Arkansas *Democrat-Gazette* repeated the Park's assertion of a thousand reenactors in attendance, the actual turn-out for this event was very low... This was probably one of the most sparsely-attended Prairie Grove event that I've seen in a long, long time. The TMVI Battalion fielded only 51 men total, with four small companies consisting of the 1st and 6th Arkansas (16

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One of the Sibley's secrets – central heating! This is an original, Confederate-used Sibley stove that Bob acquired last spring from an antiques dealer in Jefferson, TX. It works wonderfully, once you learn how to work the draft.

## 142nd Anniversary Battle of Prairie Grove December 3-5, 2004



*The 1st Company (1st and 6th Arkansas, consolidated) on Saturday morning at Prairie Grove.*



*The officers get The Word shortly before moving out for the Saturday afternoon battle demonstration.*



*Steve Shore, Ken Nations, and Corey Platt wait patiently for the Big Bugs to get their meeting over with.*



*Load quickly, boys,, the Yanks are comin'. Ken Nations and Corey Platt, with Uncle Sam's representatives in the distance.*



*The TMVI holds the line at the foot of the Borden House hill.*

# Timing Of Exit Sign Change Coincidence, City Says

BY JILL ZEMAN  
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Two weeks before the Clinton presidential library opening, Interstate 440 exit signs listing Confederate Boulevard were changed to reflect the renaming of the street which happened 30 years ago.

The timing of the sign change, just before thousands of library dedication visitors flooded Little Rock, has been called suspect by some. The city's leaders defend the change as much-needed and belated.

"We're all trying to be sensitive to the image this city has," Mayor Jim Dailey said Monday. "This city has come a long way in addressing issues relating to racism. This was overlooked, and it needed to be right."

But City Manager Bruce Moore said the timing was "definitely" a coincidence. In October, a resident requested the city look into the issue. The city then asked the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department to change the sign, Moore said.

"It was more to do with when the inquiry came in," Moore said. "If it had come in January, we'd have moved forward in February."

The majority of Confederate Boulevard, which runs north from near Interstate 440, was renamed Springer Boulevard, honoring black community leader Horace Springer and his family. In a two-paragraph resolution approved by the board Jan. 9, 1974, the city voted to rename a portion of Confederate Boulevard, "from the Biddle Shops to Gillam Park," to Springer Boulevard.

But until Nov. 4, two weeks before the Clinton library opening, four interstate exit signs listed both Confederate and Springer boulevards.

Now, the exit sign on the main thoroughfare linking downtown and Little Rock National Airport, Adams Field lists only Springer Boulevard.

Danny Honnoll, commander of the Arkansas Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, said the city was "rewriting history" when it requested the sign change.

"Most people want to put the Civil War in a nice, neat package, and now they want to put it back on the shelf and into the back of a museum," he said. "My ancestors were honorable people who were defending their homes because they were being attacked."

Honnoll said five of his great-great grandfathers none of whom owned slaves fought for the Confederacy. Promoting Southern heritage is about preserving history,



not encouraging racism, he said.

"I'm just kind of melancholy about it," Honnoll said. "It hurts that everyone wants to jump onto my ancestors."

The inquiry about the signs came

from a vice president at Little Rock's Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods public relations firm, Moore said. Skip Rutherford, president of the William J. Clinton Presidential Foundation, also is a vice president at the firm.

Rutherford said that although he was aware of the inquiry, the Clinton foundation had nothing do with it.

Moore agreed, saying there was "absolutely no correlation" between the sign change and the library opening.

Dailey said, however, that the request came at an appropriate time.

"We were made aware that we had not done this, and with a major event occurring, we thought, 'Sure let's go ahead and do what we should have done before.'"

Before he received the request, Dailey said he hadn't thought about what image Confederate Boulevard creates for the city.

"Oftentimes, we accept things without realizing or without being sensitive to that might have some sort of negative identifying aspect to a certain culture or a certain group," Dailey said. "And that's something that we must always try, as a community, to be reflective of."

Dailey said he's willing to look into renaming all of Confederate Boulevard. It would be more consistent, he said, if the entire thoroughfare had the same name.

As for the argument that the word "confederate" is historic, Dailey said, "I respect it, but I know there were those who made arguments for the Confederate flag, too."

Rutherford, though he didn't request the change, said he thought the city made the right move.

"I think Springer is much more appropriate," he said, "because that's the name of the street."

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# Sanitized History II:

## The Case of the Disappearing Confederacy



BY PAUL GREENBERG  
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

WELCOME to Potemkin Village, U.S.A., formerly known as Little Rock, Ark. Now that the Clinton Library has been safely dedicated, it can be revealed: Just a month before the doors were formally opened, Mayor Jim Dailey asked the state highway department to change the signs on Interstate 440 from Confederate Boulevard to Springer Boulevard, which is the official name of the south-bound part of the same road. That way, our Yankee guests wouldn't be embarrassed by the reference to the Late Unpleasantness. Maybe the geographically challenged among them might even be led to assume Arkansas was somewhere in the Midwest.

Now wait just one cotton-pickin' minute, says Bruce Moore, who is Little Rock's city manager. (Or should that be one corn-pickin' minute now that we're trying to de-emphasize our Southern roots?) According to Mr. Moore, the timing of the change had nothing to do with the opening of the presidential library and museum—which is not averse to altering a little history itself. (See its "objective" description of the whole Clinton impeachment imbroglio as nothing but the doings of a vast right-wing conspiracy.) Dropping the reference to Confederate Boulevard on those highway signs was "definitely" only a coincidence, says Mr. Moore. You know, like trying to clear the homeless out of their unsightly camps just as the Clinton Library was about to open.

Mayor Dailey, however, doesn't deny the connection between opening the library and changing the highway signs, for which he deserves high marks for candor, whatever he gets for history. "We did have an incredibly significant event that was occurring here," says the mayor, "and that [the highway signs mentioning Confederate Boulevard] was bothersome. We have a city that is in every way trying to dispel those things that divide us."

The mayor couldn't have been more up-front about hiding the past: "We're all trying to be sensitive to the image this city has. This city has come a long way in addressing issues related to racism. This (the Confederate Boulevard signs) was overlooked, and it needed to be right." And by right, it's clear, he meant gone. Erased. Down the memory hole.

The mayor really should pass the word to

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**Sanitized History** *(Continued from Page 4)*

his city manager, who still contends all this was just a coincidence. Bruce Moore explains that City Hall just happened to get an inquiry about the highway signage before the library was due to open and just acted on it. The inquiry, by the way, came from Skip Rutherford, president of the William J. Clinton Presidential Foundation. (Mr. Rutherford says the foundation itself had nothing to do with the inquiry, and we believe him. A good foundation president doesn't have to be told to do some things behind the scenes; he just goes ahead and does them.) To sum up, city hall's credibility problem is back—if it was ever gone.

AS FOR the mayor's pretty much equating any reference to the old Confederacy with racism. . . . Where does one start? Even those of us who recognize slavery as the underlying cause of The War, and thank Providence the Union was preserved and men made free, must note in fairness that whole generations of historians have debated just why The War came, or if it had to. (Though of course we recognize that fairness had nothing to do with the mayor's action and PR had everything to do with it.)

Lest we forget, the states of the Upper South, including Arkansas, did not secede until after President Lincoln issued his call for troops, making it clear he was determined to hold the Union together by force. To quote Danny Honnell of the Arkansas Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, "My ancestors were honorable people who were defending their homes because they were being attacked." Certainly that's the way they saw it.

In part, the Late Unpleasantness was but a disagreement over constitutional law: Was this an indissoluble union of indissoluble states, or a contract any state could terminate when it wished? Opinions differed. So strongly that over half a million men lost their lives resolving the issue—and those were just the military losses.

But perhaps the most impressive thing about the war, and its great difference from the ideological crusades that have bloodied old Europe since the French Revolution and its Terror, is that Americans had the sense to let it be over. The leader of the victorious Union spoke of charity for all, malice toward none. The greatest commander of the Confederate forces, rather than re-fight the war, applied for a pardon and settled down to teach school, showing the same greatness in peace as he had in war. Veterans of the blue and gray joined their encampments. And out of the crucible of civil war, the United States emerged as one nation indivisible. Not by erasing its history but by honoring it, meeting it, hiding nothing.

TODISMISS the old Confederacy as but

racism is simplistic at best, disrespectful to the dead at worse, and disrespectful to history at worst. For what is history but the way the present comes to terms with the past? Just wiping out any mention of it, the way you'd erase Confederate Boulevard from a highway sign, is not to come to terms with the past but to forget it. And those who fail to remember the past, it has been said many times before, are condemned to repeat it.

That's the mistake made by all those who believe they can suppress history. They succeed only in driving it underground, where it festers unresolved. Which is why it is so important to make a decent peace with our past, and with each other. Without remembrance, there is no conciliation. And without conciliation, there is no continuity. That is why it is so important to call things by their old names, and hide nothing. Let us take a lesson from Scripture: Isaac not only restored the wells his father Abraham had dug—he called them by the same names.

Besides, is any mention of this past to be removed just from a narrow, sterilized corridor from the airport to the Clinton Library? Are we doing this just for company? Or shall we put blinkers on ourselves, too? Should we pretend all those Confederate monuments on the state Capitol grounds aren't there? And remove the statue dedicated to the Capital Guards outside the military museum in MacArthur Park? What are we going to do with the Confederate cemetery—call it something else, too? And if we're going to change the name of Confederate Boulevard, what about Lee Avenue? That awkward star symbolizing the confederacy on the state flag may be a problem, too.

Then there are those ubiquitous statues of the Confederate soldier in every county seat in Dixie, still standing guard. They're as common in Southern towns as Martin Luther King Drives, and should be. For the genius of American politics has been our ability to achieve a consensus of our opinions, our heroes, our differing ideas and memories... till each symbol and idea belongs to all, and our legacy, like the Union itself, is one and indivisible. That is the secret of the remarkable continuity of American history. Not that we forget and dismiss the past, but that we remember and honor and absorb it.

But Jim Dailey has adopted the European style in these matters. Which is to blot out the names of the losers à la russe. To the victors belongs the past. Change the names of the highway signs, indeed of whole cities if necessary. Create a new, history-free present in step with whatever is now politically correct. That's how St. Petersburg became Petrograd became Leningrad, which is now back to St. Petersburg. Is Stalingrad now Volgograd again, and does it matter? Trying to erase the past

rather than come to terms with it is a sure recipe for aimless discontinuity.

Memory endures, and in these latitudes grows even stronger when attempts are made to erase it. Sure enough, nothing has so powerfully brought Confederate Boulevard back into the news and the public consciousness than this mayor's attempt to quietly wipe out the mention of it. Suddenly it's not just the name of another thoroughfare but a cause. Forget, Hell! Thanks, Mr. Mayor. Thanks, Mr. City Manager. Thanks, Skipper. Y'all have succeeded—in opening old wounds.

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## The Case for Kersey... And why it is flawed logic

*"It always puzzles me why so many "unreconstructed" Confederates are always so insistent about wearing Yankee pants"*

— Capt. Ezell TMVI

The above quote sums up the confusion that comes from an intellectually honest review of the logic behind the persistence to keep sky blue kersey trousers as a mainstay of the western Confederate impression. The intent of this article is not to argue the authenticity of a Confederate impression minus the blue pants. There is more than enough documentation available to those who care to accept the truth, which does not need to be restated here. Rather, this article is a brief attempt to shed the light of logic upon the common arguments given in favor of keeping the Federal trousers.

Let us begin, kind reader, with the first and most prominent of argument, cost. It is traditional in most mainstream units to advise new recruits to purchase Federal sky blue trousers so that one may simple change jackets to portray either side. This is meant to save \$75 to \$100 on the cost of two pairs of pants. This is especially necessary because a Southern reenactor are often called upon to galvanize due to the lack of Federal troops in the Deep South. At first glance this seems to be a reasonable and wise advisement. However, what is the inevitable result? Correct, a Confederate impression that is *not* authentic and therefore does not represent the uniform that our namesakes wore into battle some 140 years ago. It does accomplish one thing however and that is a darn good Federal impression when the time comes to switch sides. Now, upon hearing this argument from my former command, I issued an order that simply stated

*"Federal uniforms are not required for members of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas infantry. Should the*

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**The Case for Kersey** (Continued from Page 5)

*need to galvanize present itself, we will make do with the uniforms and equipments available. Meaning, that if we must fight under a US flag wearing Confederate uniforms, so be it. If a member desires a complete Federal uniform he may purchase that on his own initiative."*

Why do you suspect that I might issue such an order? Very simply because we are a **Confederate** unit and thus our emphasis (and priority) needed to be on putting together a correct **Confederate** impression. To the pit with the Federal uniform! That is not our concern. We galvanize for the benefit of the event at hand. If we can do that in the proper uniform it is a bonus and that is all. Money is short to many of our members, so why are we wasting it on a Federal impression?? I opted to put that as a secondary effort.

I expressed this to another unit and I was told that this would not set with them because *they wanted to have a good Federal impression when it came time to galvanize*. Now, gentle reader, take a moment to reflect upon that thought ...

*...Intermission for Reflective thought...*

What these particular troops were stating was that their Federal impression was far more important to them than their Confederate impression. In fact, one could deduct that *it really did not matter if their Confederate impression was correct at all so long as the Federal impression was good*. Is that not a backwards point of view? I had to ask if they preferred to portray Confederates and to my surprise the answer was yes! Why, I wonder, if the love is so deep for the Union impression?

It is important to note that a desire to have a solid Federal impression is a noteworthy goal and is a credit to any Southern reenactor. However, this should not come at the expense of the primary **Confederate** impression.

Yet another side effect of this policy (which is supposed to be the quick start-up solution) is that the soldier never, ever saves the money to buy the correct pants. Instead, the seduction of status quo takes hold and he for ever wears the sky blue trousers. And thus the Confederate impression is marred... but thankfully the Federal impression is saved, Uozzah!

The second argument takes less time to examine. *"I took them off of a dead Federal"* is a common argument used to imply that the issued trousers wore out so replacements were found on the battlefield. Unfortunately for the defendant of this argument it just does not make much practical sense, not to mention the severe historical improbability of such an occurrence.

Imagine what would be involved both in time and energy in stripping a dead body of its clothing. And when would a soldier have time to stop and complete the act? Furthermore, consider the carnage of battle and how difficult

it would be to find trousers not completely stained with blood, fecal matter and other nasty human fluids. Then one must find a quality garment like this in his size!

I believe that the honest reader can see that this is not a very reasonable argument. It is far more likely (and historically probably) that replacement trousers would have come from the local sutler or from home. Therefore, civilian pants should be the replacements if one is not going to purchase a jean-wool military pair of pants.

It is important to note that this article is not intended to be cynical or condescending but rather to open the eyes of our members to the flawed logic handed down to us concerning sky blue trousers. Sometimes we resist change through tradition and we fail to look at what we believe with an open mind. Some of us are stubborn for the sake of being stubborn. But I pray that you, kind reader, will take a look at the failed logic of these traditions and choose to do the right thing.

It takes courage, determination and effort to be the best. Some times the greatest courage comes in admitting that long held opinions are incorrect. It takes a special person to admit that; an above average person. Not everyone has what it takes to be above average. In fact many are quite pleased with status quo. That is acceptable for other units but not for the Mississippi Valley Brigade. We will be the best, the example to the Division. I hope you choose to join the ranks in that effort.

Gen. Mark Griffin  
Mississippi Valley Brigade

## John Beck Retires from Trans-Mississippi Brigade

WICHITA, KS - John Beck has announced his retirement as Brigadier General Commanding the Trans Mississippi Brigade of the First Confederate Division, citing health reasons. The First Confederate Division is a member of the North-South Alliance and is comprised of four brigades, making it the largest organized Civil War reenacting organization in the United States.

John Beck started his Civil War reenacting career as a private soldier in the First Colorado (US) Infantry in 1981. In 1985, he joined Company B of the 9th Texas (CS) as a Corporal, rising to the rank of Captain by 1990.

With the formation of the First Confederate Division and the North-South Alliance in 1990, John became Colonel of

what was then called the Fourth or "Extra" Battalion of the First Confederate Division. The Extra Battalion grew in numbers and became the Trans-Mississippi Brigade in 1998 and John Beck rose to the rank of Brigadier General as Commanding General of the Brigade.

John was very active in creating four events for the North-South Alliance - First Belmont, MO in 1993; Pea Ridge, AR in 1995; Second Belmont, MO in 1997 and Wilson's Creek in 2002.

John Beck is well known in Civil War reenacting circles. He is a published author of Civil War historical tracts, has appeared on both then front and back covers of *Camp Chase Gazette* (in the same issue) and is well known for his "Ape Lord" speech.

"It has been my privilege and pleasure to participate in this great endeavor we call a "hobby" for over twenty-five years," said Beck in announcing his retirement. "Together, gentlemen, we have not only re-created historical events, but we have made history ourselves. The events of these years have been often epic in their scope, sometimes difficult in their execution, but always memorable."

"We'll miss John Beck's presence in the First Confederate Division," stated Division Commanding Brigadier General Mike Moore. "John was there in the beginning and has contributed to the growth and influence of the FCD. We wish him well and want him to know that there will always be a place reserved for him at our campfire."

Born in Texas, John Beck has been a resident of Wichita, KS since childhood. He has been married to Yvonne for almost 30 years. He has been an avid motorcycle enthusiast all his life — even pursuing some professional racing for a time. At one time he was a partner in a local motorcycle dealership. He taught motorcycle and small engine repair at the Wichita Area Technical College for a number of years, before retiring from teaching. He is currently employed as the senior technical writer for Big Dog Motorcycles.

John is an avid reader and student of Texas Revolution history, as well as the Civil War. Ask him just about anything about the Alamo and he will know the answer. John is also an avid collector of Civil War flags with a collection numbering almost 50 flags.

Also retiring is Lieutenant Colonel Mike Bolley who has served as General Beck's Chief of Staff.

Colonel Willie Huckabee, commanding the First Arkansas Battalion has been promoted to Commanding General of the Trans-Mississippi Brigade to rank as Brigadier General as of December 8, 2004. Colonel Rob Sanders has been promoted and selected to

**Beck Retires** (Continued from Page 5)

command the First Arkansas Battalion. The Trans Mississippi Brigade is also made up of the First Missouri Battalion commanded by Colonel Doug Moody and the Independent Guard Battalion commanded by Colonel Warner Todd Huston.

The First Confederate Division will take the field September 30 - October 2, 2005 near Corinth, MS to recreate key elements in the Battle of Corinth, fought October 3-4, 1862.

Mike Ventura  
Chief of Staff  
First Confederate Division

**Trans-Mississippi  
Brigade Gets a Leader**

The following dispatch was received on December 9:

From: HUCKTMR@aol.com  
Date: Thu, 9 Dec 2004 13:31:13 EST  
Subject: Trans Mississippi Brigade

Gentlemen,

*After talking to Colonel Huston and Colonel Moody and my staff Lt. Colonel Sanders and Major Griggs and the rank and file, I have decided to take command of the Trans Mississippi Brigade. I will try to lead this Brigade as I have done my battalion to the next level in reenacting and we will lead by example to be the best Brigade in the Division.*

*As you all know by now the 1st Confederate Division has picked up the level of our hobby and we are going to raise the bar for ourselves also. This means adhering to the guidelines and always trying to improve. Our Brigade consists of the 1st Arkansas Battalion, 1st Missouri Battalion and the Independent Guard Battalion.*

Colonel Wm. Huckabee  
Commanding Trans Mississippi Brigade

**TMVI Command &  
Staff Meeting Set for  
Jan. 22**

For the third year in a row the staff and company commanders of the TMVI will gather to discuss issues concerning the battalion and to look at events for the coming year. Input from all the members of the battalion is encouraged so anybody who has questions or issues they would like to see raised at the meeting should express them to their com-

pany commanders. However, this meeting is limited to commanders and their second in command.

In the past it was standard practice to go find a tree to sit under at an event to conduct meetings like this. Eventually it became obvious that little was accomplished at these ad-hock meetings because of the normal distractions of a reenactment. Col. Gary Canada conceived of the annual commander's meeting as an opportunity for the leaders of the TMVI to gather and focus on how to help the battalion grow and how to improve the experience of reenacting for all it's members. The first two meetings held in Texarkana and Little Rock proved to be very productive and no doubt have contributed greatly to the growth of the Battalion.

The 2005 Commander's Meeting will be held Saturday, January 22 at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel, intersection of I-30 and Stateline Avenue, in Texarkana, Texas.

**2005 N/SA Annual  
Meeting Set for July**

The annual meeting for the North/South Alliance will be held in Corinth, Mississippi this year at the Executive Inn. The location of the meeting was changed from Memphis, presumably to allow a visit to the 2005 Corinth event site. The dates of the meeting are July 29th, 30th, and 31st.

Suggested places to stay are:

**Executive Inn**  
(45.00 Double - 2 Beds, 49.00 King - 1 Bed)  
2104 Hwy 72 West & Hwy 45 Bypass  
Corinth, MS 38835  
(800) 354-3932 or (662) 286-6071

**Holiday Inn Express**  
(66.00 Double - 2 Beds, 71.00 King - 1 Bed)  
2106 Hwy 72 West & Hwy 45 Bypass  
Corinth, MS 38835  
(662) 287-1407

When booking your room, use "North South Alliance" for the code to the rate listed above. That's supposed to work at either hotel. Please note that there's a 9% sales tax in that neck of the woods.

**22nd Annual David O.  
Dodd Memorial is  
January 8th**

The R.C. Newton Camp #197, Sons of Confederate Veterans of Little Rock will host the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual (and 141<sup>st</sup> anniversary) memorial for Arkansas's "Boy Hero of the Confederacy" on January 8, 2005 at Mount Holly Cemetery, located just south of I-630 on Broadway in Little Rock. Charles Durnette of the R.C. Newton Camp is this year's event coordinator.

We will not hold the march from MacArthur Park to Mt. Holly as has been done in past years; but will assemble at 11:00 a.m. and form a company just inside the cemetery gates, inspect and clear weapons, and proceed to the grave site from there. This will be a very simple, military service, following the format laid out in Article XXIX of the Confederate Army regulations (summarized at <http://www.geocities.com/capitalguards/memorial.html>). Following a benediction, the troops will march back to the cemetery gates to be dismissed.

Each person participating in the military honor guard (e.g., if you are falling in with us for the graveside service) should be in uniform preferably Confederate), with musket, cartridge and cap box, waist belt, and canteen. Uniform and equipment items should be appropriate for a Civil War impression; e.g., no kilts, modern items, etc.

Bring sufficient caps and blank cartridges so as to be able to clear weapons and fire three volleys. You will wish to visit the referenced web site and become familiar with Reverse Arms and Rest on Arms... Parade Rest will be as per "Hardee's"/"Casey's" (across the body). That given in the C.S. Army Regulations will not be used. We will practice this a time or two when we form up at Mt. Holly, but the more familiar you are with this ahead of time, the smoother everything will go.

The conclusion of the graveside service will end the formal activities of the day; and the remainder of the afternoon is usually devoted to unit meetings and other get-togethers. For our part, the Capitol Guards will have their annual meeting at the Pizza Hut next to MacArthur Park beginning at 2:00 p.m., or as soon as we get everyone re-gathered from Mt. Holly.

# The Right Tool for the Job:

## Musket Tools and Gun-Cleaning Gear

Gun tools were a small, but important part of the soldier's equipment. Without them, his trusty musket would eventually become useless, and "a soldier who cannot shoot is useless, and an incumbrance to the battalion."<sup>1</sup>

One of the banner days in a reenactor's career is when he gets his very own musket. We think of the musket, and maybe

the bayonet and sling, but just as important a need is to acquire the proper tools to maintain your investment, both at home and in the field. The proper musket tools are a vital part of your impression, and in this issue we'll look at just what those are, and how they were carried and used by the troops in the field. Weapons maintenance is under-represented in the field. This is not to say we should be tearing down the muskets past the point where a private soldier was allowed, but there are things they did that we don't. This can be a good living history activity, too.

There are two basic types of musket accessories used by the soldier – first, those items that were issued to him by Uncle Sam or Jeff Davis, and second, those that the soldier or the units were expected to procure for themselves.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, both the U.S. and Confederate War Departments procured, stored, and issued muskets as a "stand of arms"... that is to say that when the army issued you a weapon, you also received a number of accessories to go with it. These included not only the bayonet and accoutrements such as the cartridge box, cap puch, and belts, but also the tools you would need to clean and maintain the weapon.

Throughout the Civil War, the principal tools for the rifle musket, issued to every private and corporal, included the wiper, the cone (or nipple) wrench, the tompon, the cone pick, and a spare cone. This last item is actually a spare part – not a tool – but it was issued and inventoried just like a musket tool. The wiper, wrench, and spare cone were supposed to be carried in the implement pocket of the cartridge box; the cone pick was kept in



Musket tools as issued with the U.S. Army's .58 caliber Springfield rifles. 1 is the mainspring vise, 2 is the M1855 combination cone wrench and screwdriver, 3 is the spare cone, 4 is the wiper, 5 is the ball screw, 6 is the tompon, and 7 is the tumbler and spring punch, or drift.

the cap box, inserted into a special leather loop sewn into the cap box.

One of the most important things to own is a well-fitting **wiper** for your musket. This is often called a "worm" by both sutlers and reenactors, and it looks like a double helix attached to a little steel cone (Springfield) or small barrel (Enfield). It screws onto the threaded end of your ramrod and is used to push and pull cleaning patches through the bore of the weapon to remove powder fouling and lightly oil the bore to prevent rust. It can also be used to retrieve a lost patch or other small object which may find its way into the bore. When not in use, it lives in the little implement pouch under the big flap of your cartridge box.

It may sound silly, but that little tool can really do a number cleaning your weapon. Most of us were (wrongly) taught that the slot on the tip of an Enfield rammer was just the thing for a cloth swatch and a good cleaning session. No doubt some soldiers back then did try to use that slot for the same purpose. Just where they found their Vise-Grips to remove those oft-stuck rammers is the next good question, and a Springfield tulip is a sure-fire winner for a jammed rammer. It's bad enough when the wagon park is nearby, but it really sucks when you are 5 miles from nowhere.

What of wipers, then? The two key measurements are matching the thread on the base of the rammer with the thread in the wiper. Often, our rammers have bunged-up threads, but a quick turn of a die cleans them with ease. The second measurement is the fit in the barrel itself. Some are .577, some are .69, and some are .58. Some seem to be .59, too, and just don't fit. Once in a while a wiper

will appear with reversed threads, so be mindful of that.

Originals are better than reproductions, but not by much. Some of the reproductions are of good steel, have sharp tines, and clean well. Avoid the stamped sheet metal dull tined copies. They are mostly useless, and bend terribly when used. It is a good idea to have your

rammer with you when you buy one. The various musket makers have different ideas as to thread count and diameter.

Soldiers were advised to keep the **tompon** (usually called a "gun stopper" by the privates) in the gun barrel at all times when the piece was not in actual use. In addition to the typical issue tompon (made of turned maple wood for U.S.-issue weapons such as the M1861 and M1842 muskets, and a special brass-tipped, cork-lined tompon for the imported Enfields), sutlers and military outfitters of the period often sold a wide variety of "patent tompons."

The most notable feature of the **cone wrench** used by the U.S. Army between 1855 and 1863 is that it has **three** screwdriver blades – in addition to the two traditional blades sized for the lockplate and other screws used on the stock, a smaller blade was added to turn the small clean-out screw in the side of the bolster of the .58 caliber rifled muskets. The wrench was changed from a box to an open-end, because a cap-flash shield had been added to the rear of the bolster, and the shield did not provide enough room between the cone and itself to get the old-style wrenches over the flats of the cone.

In 1863, the Army adopted the M1863 Springfield, which among other improvements, no longer had the bolster clean-out screw. The cone wrench issued with these weapons consequently had only two blades, and these are the source of the two-bladed nipple wrench that show up on most of the sutlers' tables and in reenactors' hands today. Like the M1855 wrench, the M1863 wrench was also rust-blued.

The **cone pick** was made of 18-gauge

Continued on Page 9...



**Musket Tools** *(Continued from Page 6)*

wire, with a half-inch diameter loop and a pointed end, and was used to punch through and clear a clogged nipple or remove powder fouling from the flash channel.

Sergeants carried all the above tools as well, but were usually issued additional tools to perform maintenance on the weapons beyond what the junior enlisted men were authorized to do. Privates weren't authorized to disassemble the lockplate or to remove the barrel from the stock without direct supervision from a sergeant, which is why the sergeants were entrusted with these special tools. The additional items included a mainspring vise, tumbler and spring drift, and a ball screw, or puller. The official allowance was that these tools should be issued at a ratio of one each for every ten muskets, however the actual numbers issued varied widely in actual field use.

Sometimes called "sergeant's tools," these were supposed to be carried in the implement pocket of the cartridge box as well, and numerous period photographs show NCOs with visibly bulging cartridge boxes as a result of the overloaded implement pocket.

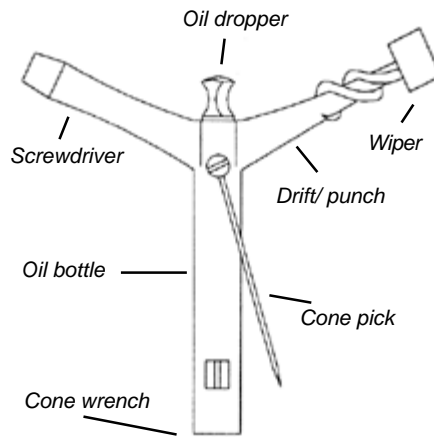
Of the three tools, the one that saw the most use was definitely the **ball screw**, or ball puller. There are only two ways to unload a muzzleloading rifle – you either fire the piece, or draw out the bullet and charge. Although the soldiers were sometimes allowed to fire their weapons into a backstop to clear them, the standard practice in camp or on the picket lines was to draw the charges when relieved from guard. Easily identified by the threaded holes left in their noses, drawn minie balls are commonly found in battlefield bivouac, as the troops either drew their old charges before battle to replace them with a fresh load, or removed charges loaded in battle when preparing to clean their dirty weapons. The ball screw is also the best way to draw a lost wiper from the inside of a musket barrel.

The **mainspring vise** was used to remove the mainspring from the musket lock. The originals are beautiful little products of Victorian-period manufacturing; with hardly a machine mark to be seen, and finished with a lustrous rust blue.

The **tumbler and spring punches** were made like the cone wrenches, with pivoting arms connected by a pin and collet arrangement. The small diameter drift was used to drive the barrel band springs out of the musket stock, and the larger diameter one was used to separate the hammer from the tumbler in the musket lock.

**Enfield Tools**

The Enfield long arms imported from Great Britain were issued with a very handy and well-designed little Y-shaped multi-tool which included an oil bottle and dropper, wiper, drift punch, cone wrench, screwdriver, and cone



*The No. 1 Private's Tool for the P1853 Enfield rifle and rifle-musket, issued with each Enfield rifle.*

pick in a single unit. A second, "sergeant's pattern" tool included a spring clamp, bullet drift, and ball screw. (It probably should be noted here that the slot in the end of the Enfield rammer was placed there so that the screwdriver tip of the musket tool could be placed there to serve as an improvised handle when using the wiper or ball screw on the ramrod.)

The Enfields also came with two other accessories, a cone protector that was secured to the rifle by a small chain, and a brass-headed tompon. All of these items are often dug from Civil War campsites and battlefields, but the "loss rate" (for tompons in particular) was such that veteran soldiers were probably using the U.S.-style turned wood items after their first year in the field with the weapons.

Being more than a little bit of an Enfield fan, I found an offer for a reproduction Enfield Private's Tool from the Blockade Runner Sutlery, and consumed by curiosity, I ordered one. It arrived in the mail while I was at Prairie Grove, and I was very pleased with it. The Enfield "No. 1 Private's Tool", overall, is very visually pleasing and looks exactly like the originals you see in C.H. Roads' book, *The British Soldier's Firearm*. This is a very nice, Y-shaped tool where one side of the Y serves as a general purpose screwdriver that "fits any screw on the Enfield rifle," the other side of the Y has a threaded tip that serves as a drift punch as well as to hold the wiper, stored inverted. In the junction of the Y is a screw-in cap that serves as an oil dropper, the body of the tool being an oil bottle. At the bottom end of the Y, there's a socket that serves as a cone wrench. Hefting this thing in your hand, it looks just like it came out of the Royal Small Arms Factory.

Having a stack of dirty Enfields immediately at hand (post-event, &c...), I decided to give the new toy an immediate field test. I admit that I cheat a little bit with respect to the lubricants I use on my rifles, so

I filled the oil bottle with CLP. Except for a little bit that ran over when I put the stopper/dropper combination back in, it has proved to be oil-tight (e.g., not leaking) so far.

The Enfield wiper was a new experience. This is a pretty substantial little appendage, and the barrel on the thing is just a hair under .560 caliber, making it a very tight fit with a patch. Actually, it gets stuck if you try to wrap a patch around the wiper and run it down the bore. What works, I found, was to stick a patch in the bore, then drive it down with the wiper, work it back and forth a bit to scrub out the fouling, and the patch always came back with the wiper. It worked a lot better than I thought it would, and running a lightly oiled test patch through with the old wiper, it came back just as clean as if I had cleaned it with the old wiper in the first place.

The nipple wrench worked just fine and dandy, and I actually found this a lot easier and nicer to use than my old M1863 combination wrench.

The cone pick is quite substantial and while it doesn't go all the way through the vent on my Armisport cones, it's very efficient at cleaning out powder residue, and working it from both ends of the cone, it does a good job of clearing the flash channel.

The screwdriver tip is an entirely different story. Advertised to fit "any screw" on the Enfield, as delivered, it didn't fit *anything*. The blade tip is about two times too wide, like many of the cheap \$10 cone wrenches you see on the sutlers' shelves. I rectified this problem by working the flat of the blade with a file until it fit all the screws on the musket, then re-bluing the filed areas with cold bluing solution until it blended back into the original finish.

Save for the problem with the too-thick screwdriver blades (which could be fixed simply) I was very pleased with the item, and in addition to improving my impression as an Enfield-equipped Rebel private, this tool exactly meets the unexpected need that I have found in two years as a line officer, the need to have a set of musket tools to fix or otherwise deal with musket problems in camp or on the field, especially with the new guys. This is a welcome addition to the stuff I pack around in my officer's haversack, as well as my other Enfield gear.

**Non-Issue Articles**

Any experienced re-enactor knows that there are more items needed to clean and maintain a musket besides the tools we've discussed so far. The U.S. Army of the 1860a knew this, too, but for some reason decided against assuming the responsibility for supplying the troops with the "consumable" gun-cleaning stuff, and the Confederate Army followed suit. Besides the aforementioned tools, a soldier needed to supply himself with lubricants,

*Continued on Page 10...*

**Musket Tools** (Continued from Page 7)

abrasives (for polishing metal and removing rust), cleaning patches, and rags.

**Lubricants**

Research has identified four different lubricants in common use by Civil War soldiers.

**Animal fat** was a normal by-product of the soldier's fresh meat rations and was sometimes used as both a lubricant and a rust inhibitor. Soldiers quickly learned, however, that the salt-saturated fat obtained from salt meat actually causes rust. This writer found this out the hard way – after greasing his rammer and rifle barrel with the grease from a piece of bacon, he returned to the weapon a few days later to find both parts covered with a thick coat of rust! Animal fats, particularly from salt-preserved meats, should **not** be used as gun grease if you appreciate your investment in your weapon.

**Sweet oil** was the period term for olive oil, and was sold to soldiers by sutlers as well as sent from home. Sweet oil is completely non-toxic and works quite well as a lubricant for moving parts, but its anti-rust qualities leave something to be desired.

**Armor oil** was the preferred lubricant, and is what the period ordnance manuals called for, and its use is supported by sutler inventories (at least from the 1863-1864 time period) which list stocks of "armor oil" and little or none of "sweet oil." Unfortunately, the records don't tell us what armor oil was. It may refer to an early petroleum product or perhaps even a fish, whale, or coal oil. The author has seen at least one reference to mineral oil as a good equivalent, and in practice, this has worked very well.

Common grease was used by some soldiers in lieu of one of the thinner oils. Unlike oil, which can be carried in a small bottle, grease is more efficiently carried in small open-topped containers with tight-fitting lids, resembling pill boxes or small cans of shoe polish. In 1982, a relic hunter excavated three items laying side-by-side: a grease can, a patent tompon, and a .58 caliber wiper. The two-piece grease can (still containing grease!) measured 2" in diameter and was about 3/4" thick. The top and bottom parts were slightly bulged outward.

With the near-universal need for gun oils, it's a bit surprising that the soldiers were not provided with a greater variety of purpose-made oil bottles. The British Enfield tool, as we have seen, took care of this need by incorporating an oil bottle and dropper into the private's musket tool. A few metal bottles (mostly British-made) have been dug up by relic hunters in various camp sites and battlefields, but the average soldier most likely carried his gun oil (if he indeed had any) in small glass bottles or vials.

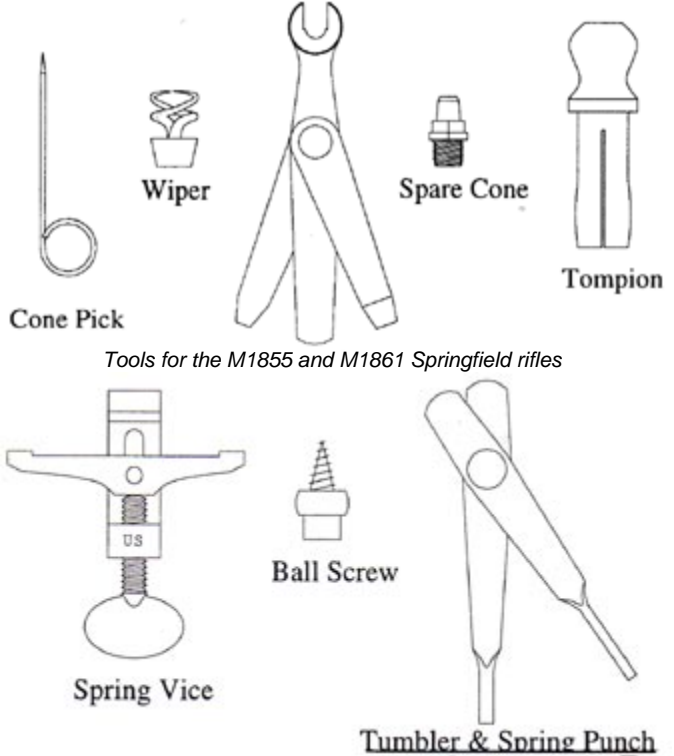
**Abrasives.** As most of us have seen on our muskets after a day's rain or a morning of heavy dew, Rust must be scoured off the muskets. A high polish (needed for those Sunday inspections) can only be obtained by applying a lot of elbow grease. The Army regulations specified "rottenstone" for polishing muskets and brass insignia; fine sand is what was commonly used when available.

Another commonly-used abrasive was the white ash remaining from the camp fire. A dampened rag is dipped into the white ash, and used to scrub the metal until the proper shine is obtained. Campfire ash is caustic (wood ash was a primary source of potash (potassium hydroxide) as well as used for making lye (sodium hydroxide), so after using ash to shine anything, rinse the surface with clear water and carefully dry it to avoid aggravating the rust problem.

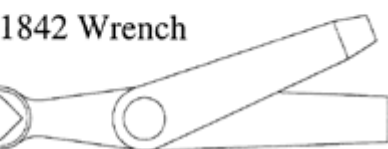
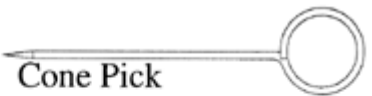
The wiper needs cloth patches. If you look in the manual for maintaining the '55, '61, or '63 Springfields, you'll see what the preferred cloth is; however, we usually use scraps of cotton, cotton flannel, jean, wool, and maybe a little wool flannel now and then. A bit of that \$2 per yard cotton osnaburg from Wal-Mart or the local fabric store will keep you in patches for a full season. Cut it in 2x2-inch squares. Keeping 10-20 of these swatches in the implement pouch is a great idea, otherwise the mess rag or your shirt tail gets clipped for little bits of cloth.

Lastly, a dangled ol' rag is a good thing to have in order to wipe down your weapon and apply a thin swipe of armor oil across the exposed metal surfaces.

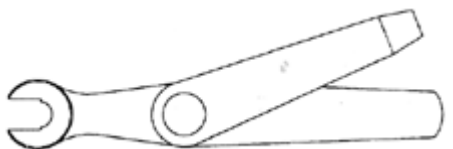
**"M1855" Cone Wrench**



Tools for the M1855 and M1861 Springfield rifles



Tools for the M1842 Springfield and Harpers Ferry smoothbores. Note the closed-end wrench and the different cone pick.



M1863 pattern combination cone wrench and screwdriver

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- Paul D. Johnson, *Civil War Cartridge Boxes of the Union Infantryman*, Lincoln, RI, Andrew Mowbray, Publishers (1998)
- C.H. Roads, *The British Soldier's Firearm: From Smoothbore to Smallbore, 1850-1864*. Livonia, NY, R&R Books (1964)
- John E. Tobey, "Musket Tools and Gun-Cleaning Gear," published in *The Columbia Rifles Research Compendium*, .Boxborough, MA, The Columbia Rifles (2001) pp. II-22.

<sup>1</sup> Calhoun Benham, *A System for Conducting Musketry Instruction*, Richmond, VA, HQs, Army of Tennessee (1863).

From *The Watchdog*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Winter 2004)

# One “Cook-off” You May Not Want to Attend

by Craig L. Barry

*“The biggest problem with black powder reproduction firearms is the people who shoot them.”*

— John G. Zimmerman, Master Gunsmith of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

We all have our reasons for “campaigning” every year. The more common ones I have heard include paying homage to the brave men who fought there, authenticity and a spirit of camaraderie. Some can lay claim to being descendants of actual combatants. Well, I cannot personally claim a direct lineage to a relative who fought on either side of the Great Conflict, so I am left out of all that. My closest relation to real history is an obscure connection to WW I. My son’s history teacher asked if anybody in class had a famous relative. He replied that we had a relative on his grandmother’s side that signed the Treaty of Versailles. This is true, but let me hasten to add that he signed for the Kaiser, not Uncle Sam. In other words, no Sons of Confederate or Union Veterans membership for me.

Some of us participate to educate the public, though it does not appear we enactors have made much progress with our mandate there. The depth of the ticket-buying public’s interest in our hobby seems to be along the lines of remarking how hot that wool “suit” must be, and how heavy the musket looks to carry. Yes, it is true they were probably thinner than we are now and thank you for pointing that out. I have been present for epistles on the Constitution that somehow tied that most sacred of documents to modern Civil War enacting. Then there are those wonderful bumper stickers for sale at events that you just do not find anywhere else. They really jazz up the old mini-van, and make a great addition to those “*My child is an honor roll student at Wheel-of-Pain Middle School*” bumper stickers that everybody has but me. Undoubtedly, some of us love the uniform, because unless we are in the real Army, or work at Burger King, we do not get a colorful uniform to wear anymore. My place of employment has long since gone to “business casual” attire, which as near as I can ascertain, means golf clothes, but not golf shoes.

What then are my reason(s) for participating? Since I am honest to a fault, there is an element of spouse avoidance in the hobby, which has some appeal to me. It is all socially acceptable, of course, since my teenage son comes along with me. If I may be allowed a general observation on the fairer sex, based on having served over twenty-one years (of a life sentence), it is that women hate it when you have fun without them. However,

father/son activities are a horse of a different color. What father, upon removing a teenager from the house, is going to be criticized? The roads around our hometown will certainly be safer for the weekend he is away. My advice to any of you recently married enactors out there is if you do not have a son and you want to continue in this hobby, go get one. However, do not bring your wife, no matter what. Nothing she sees in camp is going to improve her opinion of you, or make her feel any better about the money you spend on this hobby. Trust me on this one.

Another reason to enjoy the hobby is the temporary substitution of the worries of the modern day for the simpler problems of 140 years ago. There are very few decisions for me to make in camp or on the battlefield, as most of them seem to have been made for me (like it or not). One last thing, it is always my intention to come home after the event is over, and bring my son back in roughly the same condition as we left the house. This is an unwritten agreement between “The War Department” (my wife) and me. Let’s face it, most Moms historically do not like seeing their husbands and sons go off on a hazardous adventure. Those that have a choice want to get them back in one piece. There are certain risks in the hobby that cannot be controlled. One risk that can, and must, be controlled is firearm safety. The best way to achieve reasonable safety is through training in use and proper cleaning/maintenance of the firearm.

There are many good reasons why we as re-enactors should devote time and effort to proper cleaning of our muskets. Yet, I am willing to bet there was no owner’s manual with your musket when it was purchased new or used. An AM-FM radio comes with an owner’s manual in at least two languages, but a reproduction of a 140-150 year old muzzle-loading black powder firearm comes with nothing but a schematic diagram of parts. We drill ad-nauseam, but has anybody ever showed you how to properly clean your musket?

Black powder consists of a fuel (charcoal), an oxidizer (saltpeter) and a stabilizer (sulfur) to allow for a stable chemical reaction. [1] After firing, what remains in the barrel is highly corrosive. If a musket is fired once or twice with a sixty grain black powder load and left in that state over night, the odds are pretty good for a misfire the next time it is used. If it is fired over three times, it may as well be fired fifty, in terms of fouling. However, a misfire is not the worst that can happen, by far. If a firearm is dirty it is much

more likely that deposits have built up in the bore that can be left smoldering after a discharge. It only takes a spark to ignite black powder. This unintentional ignition of the charge is called a “coke-off” (often mispronounced as “cook-off”) [2] and can lead to serious injury or death. Truly, this is one “cook-off” to avoid. The Indianapolis *Star* reported that a man was fatally injured when he used a cigarette lighter to check the barrel of a muzzleloader that had not been firing properly. [3] A smoldering ember just as easily ignites black powder, as does a flame. The resulting discharge often blisters the hand of the person loading with third degree burns and powder fragments imbedded in the injury. If this happens, your weekend is over and you will be visiting the Emergency Room to have the powder scrubbed out and your burn treated. Expect a three to four week recovery period. This is excruciatingly painful, I have heard. [4] Worse yet, if this happens in the rear rank, there is a very good chance that the front rank soldier will absorb some of the discharge right in the back of the neck, peppering it with black powder. When this happens, you will be treated like Old Jubal Early at the Longstreet family reunion.

Also, in a dirty musket, fouling builds up in the flash channel. When this finally clogs, the charge from the cap has nowhere to go and the pressure has to be relieved. It goes right back up the nipple, often with enough force to split the cap – sending fragments of metal to the side. This can draw blood, and in the worst-case scenario, cause blindness if it hits someone in the eye. It has happened recently with poorly designed six-sided caps. You may well say that muskets in poor condition will not pass the safety inspection conducted before every battle. I know of weapons that pass inspection every time and the nipples (cone) have not been removed for cleaning in years. In that state, the nipple becomes frozen to the barrel and a professional gunsmith must repair the firearm. This is asking for trouble and it is completely avoidable. In our unit, Company K of the Forty-fourth Virginia, First Regiment, PACS, guns are field cleaned and inspected before anyone is dismissed to visit Merchant’s Row or even eat dinner. When is the last time the sergeant in your unit spot-checked a musket by removing the nipple and looking at the flash channel? He may find they do not all come off. I have sent a few soldiers back to work on their muskets, but I also take the time to instruct them on how to do the job properly. This hands-on training is time well invested and usually does not need to be

*Continued on Page 12...*

“Cook-Off...” (Continued from Page 11...)

repeated.

I have heard nonsensical arguments that a dirty musket is somehow more “historically accurate.” This is a myth. To those who believe a little rust is a good thing, please read this quote from an actual Civil War veteran. In *Story of a Common Soldier*, Leander Stillwell of the Sixty-first Illinois Volunteer Infantry [5] wrote:

*“In our time we were required to keep all their metal parts (except the butt plate) as bright and shining as new silver dollars. I have put in many an hour working on my gun with an old rag and powdered dirt, and a corncob, or pine stick, polishing the barrel, the bands, lock-plate, and trigger guard until they were fit to pass inspection. The inside of the barrel we would keep clean by use of a greased wiper and plenty of hot water. In doing this we would ordinarily, with our screwdrivers, take the gun to pieces and remove from the stock all metallic parts. I never had any head for machinery, of any kind, but, from sheer necessity, did acquire enough of the faculty to take apart, and put together, an army musket—and that is about the full extent of my ability in that line. We soon learned to take care of our pieces in a rain by thoroughly greasing them with a piece of bacon, which would largely prevent rust from striking in.”*

A dirty musket is the worst kind of “farb” item. It is worse than all the modern eyeglasses and wristwatches put together. Nothing else is as bogus. According to Zimmerman he is “kept in business by the neglectful firearm maintenance of re-enactors.” And he goes on to say, “People act surprised that I expect to be paid because the repairs are not that complicated.” It is also easy to avoid having your musket require costly repairs in the first place.

I serve in the unofficial capacity of amateur gunsmith for our regiment. Let me say that I am no Bill Osborne (Lodgewood Manufacturing) or John Zimmerman. Very often neither of these two, or any other gunsmiths, is available on-site. I have put quite a few arms back in the ranks in time for the afternoon battle. The weapons generally come to me with one of two complaints:

1. When the hammer is pulled back it will not hold at half or full cock; or
2. If it cocks, when the trigger is pulled, it does not fire.

Like Private Stillwell, I have “no head for machinery” either, but I have “acquired enough of the faculty to take apart and put together an army musket,” as he did 140 years ago. The majority of the problems that come my way for a “field repair” could be easily avoided through regular cleaning of the barrel and bolster and simple oiling of the lock

assembly. Jerry Bayer, a longtime enactor who works with Zimmerman, told me of emergency repairs he has performed in the field using oil from the dipstick in his car to free a frozen lock assembly.

Be honest, when is the last time you disassembled your lock and cleaned all the parts before an event? Have you ever done it? Since there is no formal owner’s manual, let me suggest that a sensible interval for this is twice per year. More often if you shoot regularly in addition to reenacting. To disassemble your lock, you will need a mainspring vise, available for \$13.50 from Dixie Gun Works. Do not use pliers even if you have three hands, or you may damage the mainspring. Lock disassembly should always be performed at home, not in the field. It is not necessary to pack everything a gunsmith brings to an event, but you should have at least a cleaning kit with you that includes (at a minimum):

1. A rod, cleaning jag, bristle brush and cloth patches.
2. A nipple wrench or 1/4-inch open-end wrench.

Cleaning kits and nipple wrenches are available at most general line field merchant. Together, both cost between fifteen and twenty dollars. They should be included with every musket purchase, unless you can honestly say you have no intention of loading and shooting the firearm. There are many excellent articles available from a variety of sources on the cleaning of black powder firearms. I will not attempt to duplicate their content here. [See “A Receipt for a Happy Musket” elsewhere in this issue.] However, my approach is by no means the only permissible way to clean a musket, or even the best. Every article I have read seems to have a slightly different procedure, but as long as you are faithful in cleaning the musket every time you fire (even once), it does not much matter. If you want much greater detail and photos, let me recommend *The Civil War Re-enactors Black Powder Guide* by David T.T. Smith.

Whether you learn hands-on or by reading, the important thing is to service the musket as soon after firing as you can. Apparently, Leander Stillwell was able to keep his musket free of rust with bacon grease. We ought to be able to do as well with the excellent cleaners and lubricants available today. I use Hoppes #9™ for a cleaner, and Ballistol™ as a penetrating lube. I maintain the moving lock parts with lithium-based white grease, which will not burn in the heat generated by firing the weapon (unlike bacon grease).

It is equally important to clean the bolster area of the musket as the barrel (and probably more important if you use a 1861 US Springfield or CS Richmond). This is where

the action is, in terms of the chain of events necessary to fire a black powder round. To clean the bolster, the nipple or cone has to be removed. The nipple wrench works best for this because it has a T-handle and grabs two sides of the nipple. If you cannot remove the nipple with moderate effort, get your gun to a competent gunsmith at the event or as soon as you return home. Worse case scenario, it may need to be drilled out and you will not want to damage the barrel (which can run \$150 and up to replace) or strip the threads for want of cleaning a five dollar part. If you regularly clean the bolster and oil the threads on the nipple every time you shoot, the nipple will not become “frozen.” This results only from long-term neglect. Lastly, if you carry a US Springfield or CS Richmond model, you may wish to invest in a stainless steel nipple. If you do this and keep the bolster clean as a dinner plate, the chance of misfires during the battle is greatly reduced. You will have more fun at the event (which is the best reason of all to participate). This is an accuracy versus firearms safety issue that you will have to make.

And if we should find ourselves falling into line together, let me thank you in advance on behalf of your file partners for respecting us all enough to safely enjoy the battle enactment together. There is a quote in *The Museum of the Confederacy* in Richmond, Virginia, which reads: “Trust in God, and Jefferson Davis, but keep your powder dry.” The message there is that we must take responsibility for the variables we control to have the best chance of success out there. They did not take foolish chances with their own health or life. Why would we?

Mr. Barry

**NOTES:**

- [1] Helmenstine, Anne M., “How to Make Black Powder or Gunpowder” at [www.chemistry.about.com/cshowto/gunpowder.htm](http://www.chemistry.about.com/cshowto/gunpowder.htm)
- [2] Beck, Tony, “Clean as a Whistle” at [www.civilwarguns.com](http://www.civilwarguns.com)
- [3] “Dunkirk, Indiana Man Killed In Black Powder Accident,” *The Indianapolis Star*, 4 December 4 1996.
- [4] See “About Burn Injuries” at [www.burninjurylawyersnetwork.com](http://www.burninjurylawyersnetwork.com). The DOG’s publisher, Mr. Christen, can verify that from his own experience back in 1981, and he still has black scars on his finger to prove it.
- [5] Stillwell, Leander, *The Story of a Common Soldier 1861-1865*, Franklin Hudson Publishing Co., Second edition, 1920. (Stillwell served in Arkansas, by the way...)

# A Receipt for a Happy Musket

## Field Cleaning.

1. Place a folded cleaning patch between the hammer and the nipple (cone).
2. Fill a tin cup full of hot, soapy water. Pour about one half of the cup carefully (so as not to scald your hand) down the barrel. A funnel is helpful here. Cover the end of the barrel with your finger or place a tampion in the muzzle. Swish the contents up and down several times and then pour it out on the ground. It should look black and cruddy if you did it right.
3. Pour the other half of the hot, soapy water into the barrel. Place a bristle brush or wire brush on the end of your cleaning rod. With the water still in the barrel, run the brush up and down several times. Pour the water out and repeat if the musket is especially dirty. The water should be coming out more or less clean.
4. Run a few patches down the bore to remove residual fouling. Four or five patches should be adequate.
5. Place hammer at half cock. Remove the nipple (cone) with a nipple wrench.
6. Using cotton swabs and pipe cleaners, or a patches and a nipple pick, clean all the fouling out of the bolster and flash channel. While you are doing this, soak the nipple (cone) in some hot water.
7. After the bolster is clean, remove any fouling from the inside of the nipple using a pipe cleaner or nipple pick. Hold it up to the sunlight and look through the larger end. You should be able to see light through the opening at the bottom. If not, continue until you can.
8. Lightly oil the threads of the nipple and screw it back into the barrel slightly past "thumb tight." Do not over tighten.
9. Keep an oily rag in an empty cap tin with your field kit. If you choose to polish your metal parts, some field merchants sell emery powder in period envelopes. Keep in mind that this procedure is just for field cleaning. To really care for a firearm, read on.

## Cleaning Once you Get Home.

1. Follow Field Cleaning steps Number 1 and 2 (above), then:
2. Remove the ramrod. Place the hammer at half-cock and loosen the lock assembly. Remove the barrel screw from the tang of the barrel. Remove the barrel bands. Turn the musket upside down and lightly tap the butt of the stock on the ground. Carefully lift the barrel from the stock.
3. Remove the nipple (cone) and place it in some Hydrogen Peroxide to soak.
4. Place the barrel in a pail of hot, soapy water, bolster end in the water.
5. Pour a little warm water down the barrel. Use a sectional cleaning rod with an un-slotted jag. The jag has a flat bottom to clean the back of the breech.
6. Run your cleaning rod with the un-slotted jag attached and run a patch up and down the barrel. Repeat with a wire brush attached to the cleaning rod, up and down the barrel. The brush will create suction

drawing water from the pail. Remove the barrel from the pail after several passes with the brush.

7. Run a few patches down the barrel until they come out basically clean.
  8. Soak a patch in Hoppes #9™ and run it down the barrel until patches come out clean. Another product recommended is Shooters Choice™ because it gets the lead and copper out of the pores in the metal. Soak a cleaning brush in solvent and run up and down the barrel a few times, and then go back to the patches again.
  9. Dry the bore until the patches come out clean.
  10. Oil the bore. Much has been written on the best oil for black powder firearms. Break-Free™ is recommended because it has the right consistency to stay on the metal without getting too gunky and attracting dirt (like grease). Oil both the bore and the outside of the barrel. Only use grease on the moving parts of the lock assembly.
  11. Clean the bolster and flash channel with cotton swabs, a tooth brush and pipe cleaners. Clean any fouling from around the outside of the bolster area, light abrasives like Comet cleanser or a wire brush can be used for built up fouling if necessary. Remove any rust from barrel with Ballistol™ and steel wool or a brown 3M™ pad. Clean the inside of nipple (cone) with pipe cleaners.
  12. Remove the lock assembly. Spray with penetrating oil such as Ballistol™. Apply white lithium grease to the moving parts (tumbler and sear). Clean visible dirt away with pipe cleaners.
  13. Reassemble the musket. Clean fouling or rust from ramrod if needed. Put some oil on the underside of the barrel bands and on threads of nipple (cone) before reinstalling. Grease is probably better because it is heat resistant and it will keep the threads from freezing up under fire.
  14. Run an oiled patch, or some "bore butter" (beeswax-based lube) on a patch down the barrel. Lightly oil the outside of the barrel and lock assembly.
  15. Leave musket out of carrying case to "air." Do not store in canvas bag or carrying case. Leave hammer at release position so all springs are stored un-cramped.
  16. In about a week, run a couple patches down the barrel to remove any residual fouling that came out of the expansion cracks in the barrel as they cooled down. Place a folded patch between hammer and nipple (cone). Re-oil inside and out.
- There, you are done until the next time you shoot.

*NOTE: The US Army published three Rules for the Management and Cleaning of the Rifle Musket, Model [1855, 1861 and 1863 respectively], for the use of Soldiers with Descriptive Plates. They have been reprinted in various forms since the late 1970s. Currently, copies for each of the three Springfield Models can be purchased (\$4 each) from Bob Sullivan of Sullivan Press (3405 Main St., Box 407, Morgantown, PA 19543 and [owner@sullivanpress.com](mailto:owner@sullivanpress.com)) Reprints can also be found at some of the general line field merchants.*





## The Captain's Tent

by Tom Ezell

### Winter Quarters, Winter Thoughts

As I sit here in my comfortable home, basking in the glow of central heating (an entirely benign Yankee contraption) and connected to the world wide web during an altogether unfamiliar cold snap here in Arkansas, my thoughts turn to the conditions and circumstances of the Old Boys as they spent their various winters from 1861 to 1865. I wonder at the sights, the hunger, the smells and the warmth or cold they'd have experienced; the company of their fellows; mourning the loss of so many fine and promising young men who were their friends and messmates, succumbing to wounds, but more likely to cold or pneumonia or other disease for which the doctors of the day were so ill-equipped. I wonder at the sounds that might have filled the company street as you strolled past the rude log or pole structures... laughter, cursing, the inevitable and ubiquitous cough.

I recall the various accounts I've read from Jake Rittner, Tom Stevens, Leander Stillwell, Joshua Calloway, and Sam Watkins, as well as Wilbur Fisk, Elisha Hunt Rhodes and Augustus Dickert way back East. The winters were tests to be endured and survived to face the killing seasons of the spring, summer and fall, but as many or more fell to the evil of disease as the bullet or shell. Their diaries and letters are longer and more detailed as a result of the greater time for reflection and recollection.

I wonder if we, as reenactors, living historians, recreators of the period, might not also benefit from some quiet time, some time for reflection. Me, I've been using this "quiet time", however, to reassess where I want to take my participation in this hobby and the quality of effort I am looking to direct toward this goal. I hope that others of you get the opportunity to go through the same process. It is my sincere hope that each of us will approach the coming campaign season with a renewed commitment to authenticity, to doing things accurately and guided by the historical record rather than some modern interpretation which reflects who we, as individuals, are or think we might have been if we lived in that time.

I have heard spectators applaud at reenactment battles. I have heard spectators laugh at reenactment battles in the past. I have

never heard spectators cry at reenactments. I hope never to hear the laughter (save at the humor that kept soldiers going), but this year I would like at least to see some folks walk away shaking their heads at the waste and the loss and the tragedy of this great family fight – because we presented something that was real, and that touched them because it told the truth.

I'll see you 'round the campfire.

### Who Moved the Cheese?

In gathering around the various campfires and unit meetings at Prairie Grove, the coming enforcement of the new Division standards was probably the hottest topic. Listening to the guys from the 9<sup>th</sup> Arkansas, the Texans, and assorted groups over in Huckabee's battalion, a lot of the boys just flat ain't happy.

Simply said, the Division and Brigade guidelines that were published late last year will become the standard for uniform and equipments that you have to meet in order to participate in a First Confederate Division event. At Brigade and Division events from here on out, units will be inspected for adherence to the Brigade/Division impression standards. Those not meeting the standards will be asked to leave the ranks until they can meet the standards. Officers and NCOs of individual units will be the persons of primary responsibility in ensuring that their people and unit meet the standards. ALL weapons will be initially inspected at registration check-in - and again when reporting to the unit and prior to each battle scenario. (Remember Raymond 2001?).

Per a memo from Mike Ventura, the new Division chief of staff, all sutlers will be at Corinth by "invitation only." All the sutlers that were at Franklin (they participated at the request of the *Civil War Courier*, not the N/SA) were secretly inspected and evaluated by the 1<sup>st</sup> Confederate Division staff. 90% of those sutlers at Franklin will NOT be invited to participate at Corinth. Only 30 or so sutlers will be allowed at Corinth - and discussions are underway with the historically accurate providers – C.J. Daley, the Jersey Skilletlicker, etc. General Moore does not want any cheap or inferior goods sold to either participants or spectators at the Corinth or any other Division event.

The Division staff is working with vendors to establish "approved vendors" who will supply accurate uniforms and equipment to Division members at discounted rates based on sales volume. These vendors will know the Division standards and will not sell anyone in the Division anything that does not meet or exceed these standards. There will be "good, better, best" classifications of products based on quality/price. Even the "good" quality would be acceptable at most every "hardcore"

event.

Most of "The Word" put out at the Grove was second-hand, "the General says..." filtered through the various colonels. And herein lies a big part of the problem – the salesmanship for this program has been pushed down to the colonels and captains, many of whom are not completely sold on the idea themselves, but are being told to "get with the program, or else..." It's going to be a tough sell to many. The guys that the Big Bugs need to sell this too – directly – are the privates and corporals and sergeants – e.g., for this project to succeed, the guys holding muskets down in the rank and file need to buy in and agree on the standard, then they look to the leadership - captains, colonels, and generals, to fairly and consistently enforce that standard.

When approached about the idea of guys not being able to meet the standards and dropping their memberships in the companies and battalions, the General said that there would be some "acceptable losses," but that he hoped we would pick up new membership from some of the more authentically-minded independents that are still out there somewhere. This especially riled, and to a lesser extent, confused company and battalion commanders who are worried about declining participation (and their affiliated leadership positions) already. As tough as it is to get guys recruited, outfitted, and on the field, plus the typical attrition as old members leave the hobby or find new pastimes, I'm not sure you'll find any of these folks admit that there's such a thing as an "acceptable loss." And I can really see and appreciate their points, too. This new standard will definitely make a tough job a lot tougher.

The TMVI staff and commanders present at the Grove sat down and talked things over for about an hour or so Sunday morning... a good bit of which time was given over to letting the captains and others vent for a bit about their perceptions and what the troops are saying about it. Neither Steve nor I said a whole bunch, but we used the opportunity to listen to the other points of view.

While we were trying to come to grips with this at Prairie Grove, Pat Craddock from the WIG discussed the issue with General Moore at the Nashville Civil War show, and after hearing the General explain things, he remarked, "Mike, before too long I suspect you will be commanding the 1st CS BRIGADE." To which Moore answered, "Or I'll be voted out. Either way it may not be a bad thing, but at least they will know I have the balls to stand up and enforce the rules I make. OK?"

That being said, I think that what Generals Moore and Griffin are trying to do is The Right Thing to Do. It might not be the easiest way to go about it, but if they had not drawn

**The Captain's Tent** (Continued from Page 2)

a line somewhere and required people to toe up to it, then it would never have happened. A great general of a later time remarked that you ought not to waste time telling people exactly how to do something, but to tell them what to do, provide some resources, hold tight to a standard, and they'll amaze you at how they can do it.

I do not expect either the Division or the Brigade to back down a bit from their current stance on the new standards. We are talking about the 1<sup>st</sup> Confederate Division that created a forced galvanizing rule years ago, and enforces it. Part of Moore's General Order refers politely to the prior Division administration that let things go, and never enforced anything. They are going to turn around a big-assed truck and you can't do that without slowing down, swinging wide and negotiating some space. This Order is essentially "putting your foot against the brake pedal." There is a long way to go yet.

At the same time, I don't see this issue as having a real big impact on the Sixth Arkansas. For the most part, it's something we've been doing for some time, and the selected impression fits right in with our standard impression that we already pursue. There may be some friction on some small points, but we could go out there and pass muster next weekend, if we had to. We'll talk about it some more at the Company level at the January meeting, and the impact that things may have on us. The TMVI Battalion staff, commanders, and first sergeants are going to meet down near Texarkana on January 22 to hammer out a Battalion schedule for the coming year and to re-visit the issue of the brigade standards. I'll be looking for your input to this meeting when we get together on January 8.

**A Cornfed Companion**

In talking to folks and Prairie Grove, and in a number of conversations since that time, I found that a lot of folks simply didn't know much about what Confederate uniforms looked like, or a host of other things that I guess I've taken for granted for a long time. Shortly after I got started in re-enacting, I signed up for an e-mail listserver on the topic, met a bunch of new friends, and started looking into the material culture of the 1860s. After a while, I started going to some of the "hardcore" events in the area, and expanded my circle of learning a little more. I learned of and subscribed to (and read) periodicals like the Camp Chase Gazette and the Watchdog. I read ccrapbooks and collections of information like the Hardcracker Handbook, the 3rd Mississippi Camp of Instruction, and others. To these, I added more clippings and notes from my other readings and research. Some of those articles and resources have appeared here in the pages of the Sentinel

from time to time... some that I wrote, some from others. I still read, clip, and collect a good bit, though I'm a little more picky and a little more specialized in my studies these days.

Then there's the past eight years' worth of *The Sentinel*. Larry Hulsey started this project back in the fall of 1997, and I got involved sometime around April of '98 (Vol. 2, No. 4, according to the records). It's a little awesome to look at the header of the issue-in-waiting to see that next month (next week) will see our little newsletter go into its 9th year of publication, and nearly a thousand pages of newsletter, since the average over this time has been 12 pages per month.

For the past couple of years, I've been giving out copies of a small "resource CD" with the old newsletters and some other basic information on them at the Company annual meeting, and a few here and there as a recruiting gig. Over the "snow days" I spent a bit of time at the computer assembling and reformatting some of the stuff from the archives as it dealt with portraying the Western Confederate soldier, and patching it together in an eBook (actually a couple of them) for easy reference.

It includes a widevariety of researched articles and photographs of Confederate uniform items, from hat to jacket to pants, shirts, socks and shoes from the various depots. A separate eBook will cover weaponry and musket maintenance; and a sample of the new content is included in this month's Sentinel, sort of an appetizer.

We'll also include a number of period manuals this time around, under philosophy that instead of listening to other re-enactors tell us how to do something, we ought to go to the original sources themselves.

There are a number of these references out there for Federal impressions, but the diversity of Confederate material culture has made it a hefty undertaking to do a similar project for the Southern side of the field. Hopefully this is a good start, and I think you'll be pleased with the 2005 edition of the Capitol Guards Resource CD.

**2005 Annual Meeting**

With all the hoop-la that wraps around the Dodd Memorial each year, we need to take a little time to reflect on our own futures as a group. So it is, that after we break up at Mt. Holly, the Capitol Guards will adjourn to the Pizza Hut next door to MacArthur Park for our annual business meeting. We will take no longer than two hours, so as to allow time for our more far-flung members to get back home with a minimum of delay. The proposed agenda is much the same as last year, and will look something like this:

1. **State of the Company – Confirm the Unit Muster Roll.** We'll count noses to

see who will be with us for the coming year, and briefly look at recruiting opportunities and membership retention.

2. **Election of Officers.** All elected positions will be up for grabs again this year, so it's a good time to brush up on your Hardee's, the Army Regs, and maybe a little tact... Elected officers will include the positions of Captain, First Sergeant, Second Sergeant, and at least one Corporal, depending on the number of troops we will be fielding. Nominations will be taken from the floor, so it's time to start twisting arms and buying your votes in the good ol' Southern fashion.

3. **Event Schedule for 2005.** We'll lay out at least a draft schedule of events for the coming year so as to help those of our members who need to plan or schedule their vacation time well in advance. A list of currently scheduled events is posted in the inside back cover of this newsletter; if you have other events that you are interested in, please bring them to the meeting and be prepared to talk about them with the Company. In addition to this list, Sgt. Shore has been working on the possibility of fielding a team for the state blackpowder marksmanship competition this year, which is a definite change of pace...

The TMVI Battalion has not yet laid out a set of events that it wishes to use for Battalion maximum effort for the coming year, but will try to cobble something together from the company schedules at Texarkana. We'll lay these out, and see what interest there is...

4. **Special Topics.** We'll have an opportunity for the membership to bring any (hobby- or Company-related) issue to the floor that they'd like to see somebody try to do something about. Dues (\$15 per family) for both the 6<sup>th</sup> Arkansas and the 37<sup>th</sup> Illinois are due again as of the first of January; Steve Shore will be collecting for the 6<sup>th</sup> Arkansas, and Mike Loum will be collecting for the 37<sup>th</sup> (and no, payment to one doesn't cover membership in the other).

Thank you all again for your hard work and participation in the Capitol Guards. We've had another excellent year in 2004, and we will seek to build on and surpass those accomplishments in 2004. This is a group, that when we put our mind to it, can "turn goat whizz into gasoline." There's a great deal of positive energy here, and I'm very proud to be one of the Capitol Guards. I hope you are, too.

Your pard,

Tom Ezell

## Arkansas Post Museum hosts Winter Camp Jan 15-16

On January 15-16, 2005, the Arkansas Post Museum, just south of Gillett, Arkansas, will be staging an encampment to note the anniversary of the Battle of Arkansas Post. This will be their 3rd annual winter encampment, and is an excellent opportunity to come out and knock off some of the rust after winter quarters, as well as interact with a very appreciative audience. This is the weekend after the David O. Dodd Memorial and would give us another opportunity to get something started in the southeastern part of Arkansas. This event is intended to build on and expand our efforts at the first such event last January. This can be a very good event for the museum, as well as for the living history groups. The Museum will have some "indoor" areas for in case it gets too cold or wet (or both).

Firewood, straw and water will be provided. You may come down on the 17th if you'd care to set up ahead of time and feel free to leave anytime on the 19th that suits you. On the 18th our tentative schedule has three speakers with two drills. The museum will provide hamburgers that night for those taking part in the event to be cooked over an open fire. We're still working on this based on what people wish to do. Suggestions are welcome.

**Date(s): January 15, 2005 to January 16, 2005** (Due to the MLK holiday on the 17th, living history people are more than welcome to stay over the 16th and leave on the 17th).

### General Information:

- This is an encampment (not a reenactment, a reenactment is a much larger event) noting the American Civil War Battle of Arkansas Post (January 9-11, 1863).

- We are not holding this the weekend before, which is closer to the actual dates, because that is Little Rock's big Confederate celebration, David O. Dodd Weekend.

- If you would like to take part in this event, please contact the Arkansas Post Museum and we'll be glad to put you on our list of participants. Email us at [pete.jordon@arkansas.gov](mailto:pete.jordon@arkansas.gov)

### Participant Information:

- No fees to participate in this event.
- We request that participants register in advance so we can have a head count to help us plan on providing a food item (probably chili in some form) on Saturday night.

- Museum will provide firewood, straw, water and restrooms

- No fire pits (please use firewood to ring fires).

- In case of severe weather, space indoors will be available for those wishing to use it. (This has often been the case with this event. Our first year we had temperatures down to sixteen degrees, our second rain. The betting for this year, which calls for a wetter and colder winter than usual, is for snow.)

### Uniforms and weapons:

- Uniforms and accouterments must be authentic in style and material.

- Weapons should be accurate with infantry carrying military issue black powder rifles or muskets, cavalry armed with carbines, shotguns and/or revolvers.

- Artillery will be full scale reproductions only.

- As circumstances dictate, additional standards may be added as needed.

- During public hours camps are requested to remain as authentic as possible with modern objects hidden from the view of the public and all vehicles unpacked and parked in the designated parking area by 9:00 AM Saturday morning, January 15, 2005.

### Schedule (Tentative):

Friday, January 14, 2005

All Day: Early set up for those wishing to come in and already be in place for the weekend. If coming after 5:00, make arrangements with museum staff. (Director's cell phone (when he pays attention to it after hours) (870) 830-0182)

### Saturday, January 15, 2005

8:00 AM Arkansas Post Museum Opens  
9:30 AM Commander(s) Meeting,

Museum Director's Office

Before 10:00 AM Arrival and set up.

10:00 AM Camp(s) open to the public.

11:00 AM Drill / Demonstration including firing demonstration (plans to be finalized at Commander(s) Meeting).

1:00 PM Ellen DiMaggio as Miss Ellie. Indoor program on Women in the Civil War, Arkansas Post Museum Peterson Building "Lobby" area.

2:00 PM Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park Driving Tour Program. A look at the new driving tour and CD created by the staff at Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park to help visitors understand their driving tour.

2:30 PM Mark Christ, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Indoor program on his most recent book on the Battle of Poison Springs. Arkansas Post Museum Conference Room.

3:30 PM If needed. Commander(s) Meeting, Museum Director's Office, to determine program for 4:00 PM Drill / Demonstration.

4:00 PM Drill / Demonstration including firing demonstration (plans to be finalized at Commander(s) Meeting).

5:00 PM Museum and Camp(s) close to the Public.

6:00 PM Music Program by V.O. and Sue Johnson. Location to be determined by the weather.

### Sunday, January 16, 2005\*

9:00 AM Nondenominational Religious Service, Reverend Chad Phillipp, St. Paul's Lutheran Church presiding.

11:00 AM Camp(s), Arkansas Post Museum open to public.

12:45 PM Commander(s) Meeting, Museum Director's Office, to determine program for 1:00 PM Drill / Demonstration.

1:00 PM Drill / Demonstration including firing demonstration (plans to be finalized at Commander(s) Meeting).

5:00 PM Camp(s), Arkansas Post Museum closes to public.

After 5:00 PM Thanks to all involved, take down. Vehicles allowed into camp area.

\*The Arkansas Post Museum realizes that some participants will need to leave early on Sunday in order to return to their regular lives. We would appreciate their staying on our grounds for as long as possible while there are members of the public available to visit the camp(s), however we also understand your need to leave when you feel you have to. We only ask that should you do so, please do not bring your vehicles into the camp area(s) (unless there is no one around to see).

We are still working to locate at least one more speaker, so if anyone knows anyone, please let us know and we'll see what can be done.

### Contact Info:

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## Drill Bits

"The inevitable result of such inexperience was embarrassingly evident in the early months of the war. At drill especially, most regiments were like unto the mute leading the deaf. Infantrymen at bayonet drill stuck each other in the back when orders were garbled. Cavalrymen inflicted more saber wounds upon themselves and their horses than they ever later visited upon their enemies. There were a number of accepted drill manuals available, especially *Rifle and Infantry Tactics* by William J. Hardee, now a general in the Confederate Army. But others with conflicting ideas were also used and it wasn't until 1862 that the War Department in Washington issued a standard new manual by Silas Casey.

When time came for battalion drill of more than one company at a time, and one captain had trained with Hardee and another with Casey or Winfield Scott's old manual, the result could be chaos. More than one officer simply skirted the whole issue by abandoning military jargon and telling the men plainly what he wanted them to do. Seeing his command approaching a mud hole and not knowing the proper commands to have the men march around it, one finally shouted "Boys! Break up, scoot the hole, and git together on t'other side." In the end, one Tennessee colonel used three commands "Form line", "Forward march", and "Fix bayonets." Colonel Robert Preston of the 28th Virginia apparently saw nothing incongruous about ordering his men: "Fall in Twenty-Eighth, fall in! if you don't fall in, I will march the regiment off and leave everyone of you behind." William C. Davis, *Classic Conflicts of The Civil War*, Salamander Books, 1996, p. 220.

Fortunately now that you know the meaning of "Scoot the hole", you will be prepared at your next reenactment to promptly and accurately obey. No need to thank me.



## Coming Events

**January 8, 2005 – David O. Dodd Memorial Service**, 12:00 p.m., Mt. Holly Cemetery, Little Rock.

**January 8, 2005 – Capitol Guards Annual Planning Meeting**, 2:00 p.m., Pizza Hut at 9th & McMath Streets, Little Rock (next to MacArthur Park).

January 15-16, 2005 — Living History & Winter Encampment, Arkansas Post State Park, Gillette, AR

January 22, 2005 — TMVI Battalion Command & Staff Meeting, Four Points Sheraton Hotel, I-30 and Stateline Ave., Texarkana, TX

February 5, 2005 – Little Rock Arsenal living history, MacArthur Museum of Military History, MacArthur Park, Little Rock.

February 18-20, 2005 – Battle of Round Mountain Reenactment (Yale, near Stillwater, OK)

March 11-13, 2005 — 1st Arkansas Battalion Spring Muster, Fort Gibson, OK

March 19, 2005 – Cleburne Memorial Service, 12 noon, Maple Hill Cemetery, Helena, AR

March 26, 2005 – Confederate Flag Day, State Capitol grounds, Little Rock.

April 1-3, 2005 — Siege of Port Hudson Re-enactment, Port Hudson SCA, Zachary, LA

April 1-3, 2005 — Battle of Pleasant Hill, near Pleasant Hill, LA

April 8-9, 2005 – Shiloh Living History, Shiloh National Military Park. Sponsored by the Salt River Rifles, by invitation event. (Federal impression).

April 23-24, 2005 – Battle of Marks' Mills Re-Enactment, Fordyce, Ark. Sponsored by the 1st Arkansas.

May 6-8, 2005 — Jefferson Homecoming & Civil War Weekend, Jefferson, TX

June 10-12, 2005 – "Battle Fire" Civil War Weekend near Tribbey, OK.

July 31, 2005 — N/SA Annual Planning Meeting, Corinth, MS

August 6-7, 2005 – Battle of Athens Reenactment/Living History, Athens, MO. Hosted by the Western Independent Grays

August 20-21, 2005 – Battle of Perryville, OK Reenactment, near McAlester, OK

September 23-25, 2005 – Battle of Honey Springs Reenactment, Rentiesville, OK (near Checotah)

**October 2-4, 2005 – Battle of Corinth Re-enactment**, Corinth, MS. Sponsored by the North/South Alliance, N/SA maximum effort event

October 22-23, 2005 – "Battles Around Bentonville" reenactment, (The Event Formerly Known As Cane Hill) Bentonville, AR.

November 5-7, 2005 – Civil War Weekend at Old Washington, Washington, AR

The 6th Regiment, Arkansas Volunteer Infantry, Co. A, the "Capitol Guards" is affiliated with the Arkansas Reenactors' Alliance, the Trans-Mississippi Volunteer Infantry Battalion, Mississippi Valley Brigade, and the 1st Confederate Division. We are dedicated to the faithful and historically accurate portrayal of a unit of Confederate infantry in the War Between the States in 1861-1865.

The *Sentinel* is published on a more-or-less monthly basis by the "Capitol Guards", 6th Arkansas Infantry reenactors. Subscriptions are included as part of Company dues; or are available separately for \$15.00 per year. Back issues are \$2.00 each (index available upon request). Send subscription requests, inquiries, and article submissions to the Captain below.

<p><b>Captain</b> Tom Ezell 338 Johnson Road Scott, AR 72142 (501) 961-1937 (501) 912-1047 (cell)</p>	<p><b>1st Sergeant</b> Steve Shore 68 Stonewall Drive Jacksonville, AR 72076 (501) 985-0560</p>
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Visit us on the Internet at  
<http://www.geocities.com/capitalguards/>

The 6th Arkansas is always in need of "a few good men" to fill the ranks in service of the Cause. If you are interested in Civil War Reenacting, please call the Captain as listed above.

The 6th Arkansas living historians are available for living history presentations to schools, public and private organizations, and community events. Please contact the Captain.

### Prairie Grove (Continued from Page 2)

men), the 19th Louisiana, the 19th Texas, and the 9th Arkansas (12 men). Colonel Blanco and Major Schell were unable to attend the event, and the Battalion was under the command of Lt. Col. Ricky Hunt, assisted by Adjutant George Strawn, Sgt. Major Preston Ware, and Capt. Scott Solice of the 3rd Louisiana.

The 1st Missouri Battalion was about the same size we were, with 60-70 men; the 1st Arkansas Battalion fielded a little over a hundred. All in all, there weren't more than 300 Confederate infantry present, a couple dozen mounted cavalry, about the same for the dismantled cav, and half a dozen artillery pieces.

On Uncle Sam's behalf, the Frontier Battalion fielded something like 100 to 120 Federal infantry, and a like amount of cavalry and artillery. Over in the Civilian camp set up in the little hollow between the visitors center and the Borden House Hill, there were only about a dozen tents. Sutlers on-site were Mercury Sutler, Fall Creek, Coon River, James Country Mercantile, Gentlemen's Emporium, one vendor selling somewhat period jellies

and jams in Mason fruit jars (as well as canned sodas), and one of the mountain man/ rendezvous vendors.

### TMVI Elections

The TMVI held its biennial meeting and elections after the Saturday afternoon battle, gathering around the Borden House to hear the candidates speak for themselves. Since Gary Stephens of the 12th Louisiana later declined to run for the lieutenant colonel's position, all candidates for sergeant major (Preston Ware), major (Rick Schell, 12th TX), and lieutenant colonel (Ricky Hunt, 19th TX) were unopposed, and upon a voice vote of the Battalion were declared to be elected by acclamation.

Ricky Hunt had also been nominated for colonel, and gave a short talk on his behalf in that race, noting that he has been with the TMVI since its inception in 1996, and has been at every single battalion event in the past four years. Ballots were passed out, and when they were all back and tallied, Ricky Hunt had been elected as the new Colonel of the TMVI for 2005-2006. The actual vote was 34 for Lt. Col. Hunt; 11 for Col. Blanco.

With Ricky's subsequent election to Colonel, the TMVI's LTC position is now vacant. Company commanders will be polled at a later time for new nominations for the LTC, and a special election will be held at the next battalion event to select a new Lt. Col.

Colonel Hunt and Sgt. Major Ware then went to meet with General Griffin, commander of the Mississippi Valley Brigade, to advise him of the change in command, discuss the new Brigade uniform and authenticity standards, and get follow-up orders for the next day's activities.

### Battalion Meeting

The battalion staff and the company commanders present met in the 6th Arkansas's camp on Sunday morning to start work on planning for next year's battalion activities. Present were Col. Hunt, Lt. Strawn, and Sgt. Major Ware of the battalion staff, and Will Hardage (9th Arkansas) Ralph Falconer (19th Texas), Scott Solice (3rd Louisiana), Tom Ezell and Steve Shore (6th Arkansas). Richard Holloway and the 19th Louisiana had already started their long march home.

Despite the low attendance numbers at this event, the TMVI is said to be in fairly good shape, with three companies applying to join the battalion at this time, at least two of them from Louisiana, who served with us at Pleasant Hill this past year.

Communications was very briefly mentioned, Col. Hunt prefers to deal with the companies by telephone, so this will be the prime means of battalion coordination and

event preparation.

An extensive discussion followed concerning the new Division and Brigade uniform standards, which I'll report elsewhere. The bottom line is that we do not anticipate that either the Division or the Brigade will back off much from this line, so we need to start looking at ways to "suck it up" and get with the program.

For 2005 battalion events, the TMVI is again seeking to hold one event in each state where we have member companies (Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas), plus attend the Division & N/SA maximum effort event for the year (Corinth). The Mississippi Valley Brigade has proposed Brigade events at Port Hudson, LA; Tribbey, OK, Corinth, MS (Division max effort event) and Washington, AR.

For Battalion events, the TMVI staff proposed the same schedule as we followed in 2004: Pleasant Hill, LA; Jefferson, TX, and Old Washington. The only brigade event (other than Corinth) actively considered was Old Washington, and selection between Old Washington and a different Arkansas event hinged upon the ability to get planning information from the Park staff in a timely manner in the next couple of months. Port Hudson was rejected due to its proximity to the date for Pleasant Hill. Tribbey was considered, but the companies were non-committal at this time.

On behalf of the 6th Arkansas, I stated that one of the problems we see in the Battalion is that they attend the same old same old events each and every year. For example, we had been to Pleasant Hill on the same weekend each year for six years in a row. Jefferson and Old Washington were nearly the same way. We had attended the past two events at Old Washington and were not at all impressed with the way these had gone. We were looking for something different - something fresh. Steve Shore addressed the same concerns, suggesting that the battalion consider providing a greater variety in events, perhaps rotating them on a 2 to 5 year basis so that we have something new each year to look forward to, other than the Division event as the only break in the monotony.

Our concerns were at least taken under advisement, and the staff will schedule a meeting with the field & staff and the company commanders and first sergeants at a central location early in the coming year. (Currently set for January 22, 2005 in the Texarkana area.)

With that, the news arrived that the rest of the event had been called off, and the meeting broke up as we went to go get the word to the troops to break camp and head for home stations.