

The Sentinel



VOL.10, No.2 – THE NEWSLETTER OF THE 6TH ARKANSAS INFANTRY, COMPANY A, C.S.A. – DECEMBER, 2006

LIVING HISTORIANS

HTTP://WWW.GEOCITIES.COM/CAPITALGUARDS

"For God, Union, and Miz' Tula's!"

The first weekend of December saw the Capitol Guards and the Greyhounds of the 37th Illinois rolling cartridges, shining up their muskets, and generally getting ready to take the field again as a group for the first time in a coon's age... but then Mother Nature had to get involved.

In the true spirit of campaigning in Arkansas, where nearly every significant campaign was carried out in the dead of winter against adverse weather, Mother Nature chose the Thursday before the event began on Friday to crink up the season's first winter storm in northwest Arkansas. While we'uns of the Deep South in the Little Rock area got little more than wind and cold rain, our pards in Oklahoma, Kansas, and Missouri were deeply snowed in. As early as Wednesday, elements of the 1st Arkansas Battalion were bailing out, and late on Thursday night came the word that the Frontier Brigade -- the entire Federal force -- was cancelling out as well.

Our numbers suffered heavily as well... both due to final exams for our schoolkids as well as the first weekend of the Christmas holidays taking a toll on those able to participate. Steve Shore led out with the advance party, arriving on site around 10:00 a.m. and telegraphing back that while there was snow, the roads were clear, and drying out. I left out of the Little Rock area shortly before noon, and stopped in Conway to pick up new recruits Randy Puckett and Tifney Scott. We stopped once in Morrilton to feed the horses, and arrived in Prairie Grove around 3 p.m. It was easy to find our camp, as it turned out that along with a handful of stragglers, we comprised the entire Union Army!

We finished setting up the tents and got into uniform, cruised by the sutlers (Fall Creek, Galla Rock, James Country Mercantile, the Gentleman's Emporium, and a group selling jams, jellies, soaps, and canned sodas were the only vendors on site), and then went over to visit the Rebels.

Looking at the numbers, them vs. us, I resolved to "take the aggressive" and offered the Confederates to opportunity to surrender outright and avoid the eventual effusion of blood. They decided, however, to take their chances on the morn. We visited for a spell, then returned to our camp to see if anyone else has shown up.

The Boys in Blue were still at a numeric

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The Frontier Brigade's consolidated company, fighting alongside members of the 1st Arkansas Battalion as the 19th Iowa, holds the line with the 6th Arkansas/37th Illinois colors at the Borden House on Sunday afternoon at Prairie Grove

Viking Helmets

and other anachronisms...

Illustrations often show Vikings in horned helmets, and the image is so ingrained in our consciousness that the NFL football team going by the same name has horns drawn on their football helmets. However, it is a generally undisputed fact among historians and archeologists that Norse (Viking) helmets did not have horns at all. In fact, so few original specimens survive that it is speculated that helmets may not have been widely used by the Norsemen. In fact, the artifacts from that era suggest that the protective head gear was at best a thin metal "cap" that was likely covered in leather. Functionally, this protective gear would need to be smooth to deflect blows directed to the head. Horns protruding from the side would result in the exact opposite of the desired effect.

Likewise, in the Civil War enactment and role-playing community, we have our own Viking helmet-type historical revisions. Read the following from the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation¹ "Rules and Regulations."

"WEAPONS: Two-band weapons or cut-down weapons of any kind are not

allowed. No flintlocks, Kentucky Rifles, shotguns, modern style rifles or modern pistols are to be used or displayed. In other words, NO NON-PERIOD WEAPONS."²

The First Confederate Division (now the "Army of Tennessee") impression guidelines simply state: "Only three band rifles should be used in the FCD." Perusing through the safety standards of the member battalions, 2-band rifles typically may be used at the battalion commander's discretion, but are nearly always restricted to the front rank.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

Well, let's go to the ordnance records and see what history says about these "non-period weapons." Of the early Confederate regiments in the Mississippi Valley states, most were armed with flintlock muskets and/or shotguns. The better-equipped units, such as Little Rock's Capital Guards, the Yell Rifles of Helena, the 3rd Louisiana Infantry, and the Clinch Rifles of Augusta, Georgia, among many others, were armed with "Harper's Ferry rifles," and an appreciable number of these weapons were available in several of the state armories (including 154 in the Little Rock Arsenal, and

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Reenactors relive history by recreating Civil War's Battle of Prairie Grove

BY KATE WARD Northwest Arkansas Times
Posted on Sunday, December 3, 2006

PRAIRIE GROVE—Though Tom Ezell was in the U. S. Army for nearly 20 years, he never fought in any battles — until yesterday, that is. Ezell, along with nearly 600 reenactors, gathered to relive the Battle of Prairie Grove on Saturday at the Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park.

“You get hooked on it and it becomes an obsession,” said Ezell, who played the part of a Union rifle company commander. “Unlike the real army, this is just one weekend out of the year. You can draw your own limits and you don’t have to go by the strict military guidelines. Sometimes we even switch sides. This year I’m with the Union.”

The original Battle of Prairie Grove was fought on Dec. 7, 1862. About 22,000 soldiers fought during the day and about 2,700 ended up wounded, missing or dead.

Area residents got to witness the events as they actually unfolded Saturday.

“We use original army tactical manuals from the 1800s,” Ezell said. “I’ll be acting as part of a skirmishing company to clear the path for the battalion behind us.”

Ezell said he and his friends joined a company known as the 37th Illinois Infantry, which consists of two separate living history and Civil War reenactment organizations based out of Central and Northwest Arkansas.

“My friends were working on a Civil War Round Table one year and decided to start a Civil War history buff Web site,” he said. “That’s how we became involved in reenacting. This is a tradition for us. We’ve been doing it for ten years.”

The reenactment, which was fought in the same direction as the original battle along Prairie Grove ridge, featured charges and counter attacks by Union and Confederate infantry and cavalry. A number of cannons were positioned in support of the two armies firing loud smoky rounds of black powder. After the performance, the wounded actors are gathered and taken for medical treatment.

Ezell said many veterans participate in the reenactment as well.

“It’s like a warm familiar blanket to them,” he said. “It creates the climate of brotherhood and camaraderie that they were used to.”

History Interpreter Holly Houser said the reenactment isn’t just a local tradition.

“This is the 144th year,” she said. “We were expecting to have about 1,000 reenactors

this year, but since the weather didn’t want to cooperate with us, I think we’re only getting about 600. They come from all over Arkansas, as well as from Colorado, Kansas, Tennessee... and Louisiana.”

Houser said the Prairie Grove reenactment is performed during the first week of December on a biennial basis. The event, she said, typically brings in between 1,100 and 1,500 visitors each year.

“We came because we thought it would be interesting,” said Linda Childers, who attended the reenactment with her husband, Ron. “We just moved here from Fresno [Calif.] for our retirement and we wanted to visit the rest of the community. We’ve never seen anything like this before. It’s actually pretty amazing.”

The demonstration, which will also take place today at 1 p.m., also features guided tours through the Union, Confederate and civilian camps; various military drills; cooking; spinning; and lace making demonstrations, along with other living history programs. Parking is \$ 4 and admission to the Hindman Hall Museum Visitor Center is free. The event opens at 8 a.m. and closes at 5 p.m.

Prairie Grove: Even shooting blanks, battle’s a draw

BY SHARON C. FITZGERALD Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Posted on Sunday, December 3, 2006

PRAIRIE GROVE — Mike Dolan battled blizzards from Idaho to Northwest Arkansas to make it to the Battle of Prairie Grove reenactment Saturday.

An Arkansas native, Dolan said he was on the last plane that landed at Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport on Thursday before the field canceled all flights because of hazardous conditions.

Dolan, wearing his blue Union uniform, was among 625 men who participated in the reenactment Saturday at Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park. More than 2,700 Confederate and Union soldiers died in the actual battle on Dec. 7, 1862.

The original battle was a draw, but it eventually helped the Union take control of Arkansas and Missouri.

“I get my re-enactment fix every two years by coming here to Prairie Grove,” said Dolan, who lives in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho.

“I’ve been to many battlegrounds, and



Mike Dolan (right), our compatriot who flew in from Idaho to be at Prairie Grove, in Tula’s on Friday evening. Beware of his manicure skills...

here you’re actually seeing what the soldiers actually experienced.”

The re-enactors on Saturday brought muskets, pistols, cannons and horses to recreate a part of the battle of Prairie Grove that centered around the Archibald Borden House.

More than 1,000 spectators watched Union soldiers fight their way up a hill toward the house where Confederate soldiers were camped.

Confederate re-enactor Frank Burke of Springdale stood away from the crowd and fired his cannon as the Union soldiers came forward. He’s traveled to re-enactments in Missouri and Tennessee and usually serves as a Confederate soldier.

“I love history and I love talking to people,” Burke said before the battle began. “As you can tell I love to talk.”

Burke bought his replica cannon 20 years ago, because he “likes to shoot it.” Now he carries the “short and loud” weapon to a few

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Steve Shore and Tom Ezell take a break at the Prairie Grove school house Sunday morning.

Battle of Prairie Grove Re-enactment - December 1-3, 2006



Tom Ezell, Steve Shore, W.J. Monagle, and Randy Puckett



The consolidated Federal company on Sunday morning, with members representing many of the units of the Frontier Brigade: 37th Illinois, 8th Kansas, 10th Kansas, 77th Pennsylvania, 1st U.S., Holmes' Brigade, and 23rd Illinois infantry groups.



Weapons inspection for the front rank...



... and for the rear rank as well, with the company in opened ranks



David Sesser, Tom, W.J. and Sheldon Gately pass a convivial Friday evening with Miz Tula at O'Doul's Irish Pub, just outside the federal camp.



At reveille Saturday morning, we were the entire Union Army! It's 9 degrees outside, by the way...



The assault up Battle Ridge to the Borden House on Saturday afternoon. The Consolidated Federal Company is on the right (3rd Company).

re-enactments and out to the battlefield each summer.

Before and after the battles, re-enactors gather together and talk about history and the re-enactments they've been involved in. Some of the participants spent Friday night camped out at the battleground in 14-degree weather.

"I got a lot colder when I found out that it had been 14 degrees," said Paskell Griffith of Springdale.

Griffith, who carried a wooden canteen bearing the name of the 4th Arkansas Union Cavalry, said he enjoys talking to students about the Civil War.

"I like telling our side," Griffith said. "And the best part of this battle is we can all get up and go home afterwards."

Participants usually read up on the battle before they re-enact it, and they usually decide who is going to "die" in battle before the action begins, Dolan said.

"You have to make it look real for the crowd," Dolan said.

The re-enactments also give people a chance to remember and honor the past, Dolan said.

"Every time I do one of these, I get this feeling that's kind of melancholy and a little sad," said Dolan, who sometimes fights for the Confederate side. "This is a way to honor all the soldiers that fought in the battle and that's what everyone out here is trying to do."

Walking with Ghosts

George Arnold, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Posted on Tuesday, November 28, 2006

PRAIRIE GROVE. Civil War battlefields are haunted places, filled with ghosts. They are also sacred places, consecrated, as Abraham Lincoln said, by the blood of those who died there. There's a peacefulness at these battlefields that always seems the same, regardless of the locale. It can be at Shiloh, Gettysburg

or—closer to home—here at Prairie Grove. But there's usually a moment when a visitor stops to think and listen, and the only sound to be heard is the rustle of wind in the tops of the trees. It's easy enough to mistake the gentle murmur for the muffled footsteps of marching ghosts. Caught up in such thoughts, the visitor is drawn to compare the peace of today with the awful spectacle that gave such places their moment in history. It doesn't take a lot of imagination to call up images. And anyone who's read much about the 1860s appreciates the

magnitude of the slaughter. The Civil War was called the first modern war, which meant they finally got the weaponry down to a real science, and could kill faster and more efficiently than ever before. Fifty-eight caliber bullets the size of a man's thumbtip, ever more accurate artillery—the tools of butchery just kept getting more efficient.

Those who recall know that their fascination with the Civil War stems from more than long casualty lists. Robert E. Lee looked down on one bloody field and remarked, "It is well that war is so terrible, or we should grow too fond of it." The old general was on to something there, something beyond the shedding of blood. The history of his times resonates with the grandeur of sacrifice, the courage to risk life itself for a Cause, for something greater than self.

But those can be quaint concepts to any who would lament that history is boring—and who choose to ignore its study and its lessons. Under the burden of this neglect, history, even our essential national history, fades from memory. As it does, so does the very context of our shared lives as citizens.

One hundred and forty-four years ago next week, Americans fought one of those Civil War battles at Prairie Grove, just outside of Fayetteville. In terms of numbers involved, it wasn't a large battle. It didn't involve any famous commanders. Its result was merely that the status quo was preserved. Had the Battle of Prairie Grove turned out differently, it might loom larger in the few history books that still mention it. Taken for what it was,

Prairie Grove doesn't get a lot of publicity, or respect.

But don't tell that to the soldiers who fought and died there. Significance is a relative term when your life is at stake.

Despite its lack of notoriety, Prairie Grove was a slugging match. Casualties were high, proportionally some of the worst in a war notable for its ferocity. The battle occurred because of one man—Confederate General Thomas Hindman. In late 1862, the general conceived the idea of marching back into Missouri with Rebel troops, most of them newly recruited in Arkansas. The Southern army that had lost the Battle of Pea Ridge earlier in the year had been transferred across the Mississippi, leaving Arkansas defenseless. By the end of the year, however, the energetic General Hindman scraped together another army and moved on Northwest Arkansas.

He hoped to slip between two Union forces—each one smaller than his own and defeat each one separately. Then Missouri, perhaps even Kansas, would lay open before him.

Unfortunately for General Hindman, Union scouts detected his move and the Northern commander sent hasty orders for his units to combine. One wing executed a march of 110 miles in three days, an astonishing accomplishment in that war. General Hindman came upon the first Union contingent and made the mistake of going on the defensive at Prairie Grove, awaiting a Federal attack on his position atop a ridge that overlooks the Illinois River. The attack came, but enough time was lost that the second Union force was able to get to the scene. On December 7, 1862, the battle was fought to a draw by nearly equal forces. Low on supplies and ammunition, General Hindman chose to withdraw that night. His retreat turned the battle into a strategic victory for the North. The planned invasion of Missouri had been stopped. Northwest Arkansas stayed under

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The 37th Illinois at the fence in front of the Borden House on Saturday.



The First Company (consolidated Federal) refuses the right flank to drive away the cavalry dismounts, while 2nd and 3rd Companies deal with the Reb infantry in the peach orchard behind the Borden House.



We rally to the Color, as the Confederates step up the pressure to try and push us back...



... back to the fence where we held the line, before increasing casualties forced us to break contact and fall back to the cover of our artillery. The U.S. colors here are those of the 37th Illinois.

Report of Lieut. Col. John Charles Black, 37th Illinois Infantry

HDQRS. THIRTY-SEVENTH ILLINOIS VOL. INFANTRY,
Fayetteville, Ark., December 10, 1862.

COLONEL: I have the honor of submitting the following report of the marches of the Thirty-seventh Illinois prior to the late engagement, and also of the part borne by the regiment in the battle of Prairie Grove:

On December 4, at 3 a.m., we marched from Camp Lyon, near Crane Creek, some 25 miles south of Springfield, and encamped on Flat Creek at 4 p.m., having made 20 miles.

Reveille was ordered at 2 a.m., and the regiment marched at 4 a.m.,

December 5, passing through Cassville and Keytesville to within 3 miles of the Arkansas line, making 23 miles.

We started the next morning (December 6) at 5 o'clock, and marched to Cross Hollow, 28 miles, by 1.30 p.m. Resting until 12 midnight, we started for Fayetteville, Ark., distant 16 miles, and arrived there at sunrise December 7. A halt of one and a half hours was ordered, to get breakfast and snatch a few moments of much-needed sleep. We were speedily aroused by the cannon of General Herron's advance, skirmishing with the enemy, some 12 miles in advance. Moving rapidly forward, we reached the Illinois Creek, and, crossing it, took position on the battle-field of Prairie Grove at 12 m. of December 7, having made the tremendous march of 66 miles in thirty-six hours, after marching 43 miles in the two preceding days.

By your order, I took post on the extreme right, supporting half of Captain Murphy's battery (F, First Missouri Light Artillery), moving up under cover of a dense chaparral until abreast of our position, and then advancing to the edge of the brush, by the left flank, in line of battle. A halt was ordered and the men ordered to lie down. In five minutes the ball was opened by the artillery on either side, and a fierce cannonade was kept up for an hour. So completely were the men exhausted that I saw them sleeping quietly around, paying no heed to the fierce missiles.

At the end of an hour we were ordered to advance into the open field. A cheer was given, and we moved out a short distance, and remained stationary for some fifteen minutes, when I was ordered by Colonel Huston, commanding the Second Division, to advance the regiment down the slope to the support of the batteries of the Third Division.

Scarcely had this position been reached before Colonel Huston again ordered our advance against the hill, on which the center of the enemy was posted in unknown strength, and from which two regiments had just been driven with heavy loss. Throwing out Company A on the right and Company I on the front and left, as skirmishers, I ordered a charge up the hill. It was executed in fine style, the men advancing steadily and swiftly up to the edge. The firing of the skirmishers in front announced the enemy close at hand. Clearing the edge, we stood face to face with them, their numbers overwhelming (5,000 or 6,000 strong, as it was subsequently proved), one column moving by left-oblique upon our left and the right of the Twenty-sixth Indiana, another moving direct upon our right. They moved in column en masse, with guns at a ready. The firing began first upon the left, and in a few minutes was general along the entire line. But, pressed by overwhelming numbers, the right of the Twenty-sixth gave way after most gallantly contesting the ground. My skirmishers about the same time reported the enemy's artillery posted on our right. Thus overwhelmed, the only hope from annihilation was the bayonet or retreat. The bayonet could not be used; directly in front of us was a rail fence, and it could not have been passed and we reformed before the enemy would have been upon us; so, reluctantly, I ordered a retreat. Not a man had moved from his post till that order. Falling back some 300 yards, they reformed in the rear of the batteries.

In this charge and retreat, Captain [G. R.] Bell, of Company G, was wounded, doing splendid duty with his men. Lieutenant [F. J.] Abbey, Company I, and Lieutenant [N. B.] Hicks, Company K, were taken prisoners, they not receiving the order to retreat until too late to execute it. I was too seriously wounded to retain the command, and so, turning it over to Major [H. N.] Frisbie, I left the field; not, however, until the regiment was reformed and had again commenced its fire. I refer you to Major Frisbie for a continuation of this report.

To Major Frisbie and Adjutant Bandy my thanks are due for the calm, fearless manner in which they conveyed and executed my commands.

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Report of LTC Black (Continued from Page 5)

All officers and men stood nobly at their posts. The hand of death has snatched a brave, true man from our midst—Lieutenant Johnson, Company D, who fell, mortally wounded, at a subsequent movement of the fight. I sorrow for him, and beg leave to pay the last tribute I can to a soldier and a friend—a word of praise and a tear of mingled pride and sorrow for his gallant death. All who fell, fell nobly. Those who serve on, may envy their fate.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

[JOHN] CHAS. BLACK,
Lieutenant-Colonel, Commanding Thirty-seventh Illinois.

Annual David O. Dodd Memorial Service Set for January 6

The R.C. Newton Camp #197, and David O. Dodd Camp #619, Sons of Confederate Veterans of Little Rock will host the 24th annual (and 143rd anniversary) memorial service for Arkansas's "Boy Hero of the Confederacy" on January 6, 2007 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. This year's memorial ceremony will begin with a processional march from the former U.S. Arsenal grounds at MacArthur Park to Mt. Holly Cemetery. The march distance is 0.9 mile, all on paved streets.

For those who wish to participate in the march, you will need to be at MacArthur Park by 10:30 a.m., and absolutely no later than 11:00 a.m. We will form company, conduct the necessary inspections, and move out precisely at 11:00 a.m. For those who cannot make the march for any reason but who wish to be in the ranks for the memorial service inside the cemetery, the Company will make a short halt inside the cemetery gate to place anyone who did not do the march in the ranks, and will then reform prior to moving to the graveside for the memorial service.

The SCV asks that as many drummers and field musicians who want to participate come, and they will use all.

Confederate uniform is desired, and participants should bring their muskets with sufficient blanks and caps to clear weapons and fire three volleys at the graveside.

The marching unit will carry a single set of colors. Other unit colors and flags may be posted at Mt. Holly ahead of time along the entrance way and the street leading to Dodd's grave.

This year marks the 143rd anniversary of Dodd's death. This memorial service is one of the better-attended and publicized events each year, so it's a great way to start off the new year in reenacting, as well as pay tribute to one of the more famous events in Arkansas's history.

November 22, 2006

Gentlemen,

Just a quick note to let you know there will be an off-site overnight tactical in connection with the Shiloh National Reenactment. Mark your calendars for March 15-18.

Information will be conveyed to both CS and US via a series of Circulars to be published by these Headquarters.

Circular No.1 will be published as soon as it is endorsed by Tom Doss the producer of the Shiloh event.

Prepare your commands for special instructions in respect to registration. We will probably announce this in Circular No.2.

Hope everyone has a great Thanksgiving.

Jack H. King
Galveston, Texas

Campaigning At Shiloh

Circular No.1

November 25, 2006

I am pleased to report my trip to Tennessee to reconnoiter the Shiloh site proved to be very fruitful. Tom Doss gave me a thorough tour of the event site and the adjacent area we could use for the Friday and Saturday tactical. I was impressed. It rained all night the evening I arrived and until mid morning the next day. The property handles rain well and we were able to drive around on most of the battlefield with little difficulty. Registration and parking areas are immediately accessible to hard service roads and are well drained. Both camps have a combination of woods for protection and open fields for those wanting to set up company streets.

The area we can use for the off-site overnight tactical is ideal. The property is 2 to 3 miles below the south boundary of the National Park and the topography is the same. There will be no need to transport anyone or anything to a starting place. We will simply march out of our camps and when the routes merge, we will engage. We will have winding dirt roads traversing heavy woods, creek crossings, bluffs

and large and small fields. There will be great positions to defend as well as maneuvering room in the cotton fields where the stalks are still standing. The entire route is about 4 miles and encompasses about 1000 acres. We will not cross or be on one public road. There won't be much marching, mostly fighting from position to position for two days. This campaign is doable by anyone who has the desire to make the effort. Our final fight on Saturday will end with the Federals being in position on the right flank of the Hornets Nest ready for the big battle. Fellows, it can't get much better than this.

It will be necessary to arrive on Thursday March 15. Everyone who intends to participate in the tactical will march out Friday morning with your command, no exceptions. Each army will have a static or base camp. Those men who do not wish to venture the overnight tactical can stay in the camp and join their respective commands Saturday afternoon for the main battle. Everyone will return to the base camps after the Saturday battle. On Sunday the Federals will roll the Confederates back on several lines for over a half mile. There is a lot of room to deploy.

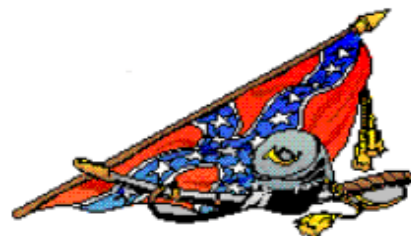
I have worked hard to gain the opportunity to create a tactical for the Second Division, our Confederate Guests and Federal Friends, at the Shiloh National Event. Tom Doss has given me carte blanche in respect to the off-site tactical. I intend to do all in my power to generate an exciting opportunity for the Federals, as well as the Confederates. All of this is happening with full cooperation from Tom Doss. We are deeply indebted to him for working to obtain the necessary property for our use and the logistics to make it happen.

Stand by for registration. Circular No.2 will have specific instructions as to registration for all the Confederate and Federal units wishing to participate in "Campaigning at Shiloh"

In my opinion this has the potential to be the finest extended weekend we have had in years and the best campaign opportunity since the Red River Events. Make your plans for March 15th through March 18. "It's gonna be a stem winder."

J.H. King, Cmdg.
Second Division, AoT

Endorsement:
Gen. T.W. Doss



“God... & Ms. Tula’s!” (Cont.'d from Page 1)

disadvantage. We had at the time a couple of dis-cannozed artillerymen whose field piece had not shown up yet, along with an ex-British grenadier from the 77th Pennsylvania. David Sesser had arrived, along with W.J. Monagle and Sheldon Gately. After warming awhile by the fire, several of us returned across the lines to the Rebel camp to go to supper with our old friends. The pizza place across the street from the Confederate camp has been replaced by a drug store, and so those of us who persevered wound up a little ways down the street at Rhoda’s Cafe for the Friday evening catfish special, and closed down the place around 8:30 or so telling tales and catching up on the past year’s campaigns.

Returning to camp, it was pretty well deserted, and as I went looking for the troops, I found them comfortably ensconced in O’Doul’s Irish Pub, a branch of the 8th Kansas Infantry managed by a citizen of the Indian Territory, Ms. Tula. Finding a convivial atmosphere (and a warm corner) I joined in, and we toasted the success of the Union and current events.

After O’Doul’s closed we returned to camp, somewhat circuitously in the snow, and bedded down. It gets cold up there on Battle Ridge, and this was one of the really cold Prairie Grove events with the mercury dipping down to 9 degrees at reveille Saturday morning. The Boys in Blue fared well and warmly, but the water froze over for the Confederates. After breakfasting on slapjacks and coffee, I was involved in the event planning meeting and a walkthrough on the battlefield, as it turned out I was the senior and only Federal officer on the field. The Federals had 11 men on the ground, a number which would swell to 25 by the time the battle cranked up at 12:30; the Confederates fielded two small battalions (1st Arkansas and the TMVI), two companies of cavalry, and two field pieces.

While the Captain was gone, First Sergeant Shore took care of the troops and morning drill for our new recruits and the others who were clustering around our little consolidated company, and we fielded questions from the small tour groups that began touring the campsites. Sergeant Jeffrey Stewart and friend Jeremy straggled in off the route of march to fill our ranks at mid-morning

As noon approached, we began mustering our company, checking weapons, and getting ready to move out. For the first day’s scenario, the TMVI galvanized their two companies from Arkansas and Louisiana, and we became the 3rd company once we joined forces on the field. As the cannons opened fire, I took our second platoon forward as skirmishers to clear the Rebel cavalry dismounts from the forward slope of the Borden House hill. We opened a hot little firefight, and steadily drove the rebel back into the trees. As the battalion deployed

Viking Helmets (Continued from Page 1)

a like number at Fort Smith). The Harpers Ferry rifle referenced here is probably the two-band Model 1841 rifle, probably better known as the “Mississippi rifle.” Other than the Capital Guards, the remainder of the 6th and 7th Arkansas Infantry regiments were armed with “flint and steel muskets,” which they carried from the time they mustered in until they exchanged them for captured Federal rifle-muskets at Shiloh, or in the case of the 7th, were issued Enfields in the late spring of 1862.

Use of the 2-band rifles continued throughout the remainder of the War, particularly in the western theater and the Trans-Mississippi. The 1st Arkansas Infantry after Shiloh was consolidated with Cleburne’s old 15th Arkansas, and had at least had some companies armed with the P1856 Enfield rifle (the 2-banded version). George Edmonds, formerly of Co. I, 1&15th Arkansas, became a “galvanized Yankee after the War, and wrote home to his family from his post in the Dakota Territory in April 1866: “*Tell him that I have a better gun than the short Enfield that killed the old sow at Nashville.*”

The Texas infantry regiments of Granbury’s Brigade, Cleburne’s Division were predominantly armed with a mixture of M1841 Mississippi rifles and .54 caliber Lorenz rifles throughout the Atlanta Campaign, and carried these weapons with them on the march into Tennessee in the fall of 1864. The Texan’s fondness for these short rifles began early with their service in Arkansas; at least two regiments of the Brigade (then under the command of BG T.C. Churchill) were armed with Mississippi rifles when they were captured at Arkansas Post in January, 1863.

Likewise, the units of Cockrell’s Missouri Brigade were issued “Enfield Rifles, complete” when they were re-armed and returned to service after being exchanged from their parole at Vickburg. Over on this side of the river, reports from the 10th Indiana Cavalry at Helena indicate they took 2-banded Enfield rifles from prisoners from the 10th Missouri and the 9th Missouri Sharpshooters at the battle of Helena on July 4, 1863.

Overall, flintlock and percussion-converted smoothbores dominated the Confederate ranks throughout the first two years of the War. In the meantime, significant effort was made to obtain rifles for the troops, or at least upgrade them to rifle-muskets. Note that these are specific terms in terms of 1860s ordnance, where used, the term “rifle” tends to mean the 2-band rifles, whereas “rifle-musket” refers to the 3-band weapons we are so familiar with today.

The above quotes and examples manage to validate all the non-period Civil War firearms that the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation prohibits. And Cedar Creek is merely representative. These and similarly

anachronistic “rules” are likely to be found in the bylaws of many Civil War enactment units and many events. Ignorance is cheap, and many hobby participants apparently like it.

If not about history, then what is all this about? And exactly what is the nature of the problem with two band weapons? The North-South Skirmish Association shooters use far more two-band rifles for competition than three-band rifle-muskets. They are simply quicker to load and fire accurately, especially in the timed live-fire events sponsored by the N-SSA. The argument against 2-band rifles for use in Civil War enactments is that they create a safety hazard when used by the rear rank for front rank soldiers. The distance between the end of the barrel and the bolster is supposedly not enough to prevent high decibel noise from being directed at the front rank soldier’s ear during firing.

THIRTEEN INCHES

First and foremost, it should be noted that the two primary tactics manuals in use in the re-enacting hobby, Hardee’s 1855 *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics* and its 1861 Mobile update, and Casey’s 1862 *Infantry Tactics* are written (and illustrated) with the use of the M1841 and M1855 rifles in mind, both 2-banded weapons. Col. Hardee made some minor adjustments in the manual of arms in his 1861 update to his manual, but the applicable provisions for loading, firing, and weapons safety remained the same.

The principal problem with the safety of the 2-banded rifle in our ranks is the half-assed manner in which many units teach drill, and in which officers and NCOs enforce safety when firing in ranks. For example, the universal concern about the short rifles is that they cannot be fired safely from the rear rank. However, when I first learned the drill from the officers in my unit, and what I hear time and again in the instruction of new recruits (and forgetful old ones) is that when firing from the rear rank, you should endeavor to aim so that the ear of your front rank file partner is somewhere between the middle and rear barrel band of your musket.

This bit of advice is a pure “re-enactorism” – you will not find that quote in any tactics manual used during the Civil War. What you will find, however, is the rule that “[t]he distance from one rank to another will be thirteen inches, measured from the breasts of the rear rank men to the backs or knapsacks of the front rank men.” The author has tried this, with both 3-banded and 2-banded rifles, with and without knapsacks, and it can be readily demonstrated that if the troops maintain the proper interval in ranks, and that the officers and NCOs ensure the correct interval is kept during loading and firing, then the position of the rifle muzzles – long or short –

Viking Helmets (Continued from Page 7)

will also be correct and no safety problem will result.

As a second safety problem, I have found that most re-enactors in the rear ranks do not move their feet properly when aiming, and this allows for too much distance between the front rank and the rear rank. This is another reason why some consider the 2-band weapon to be dangerous. If the men are trained to use the 2-band weapon and properly supervised by their officers, it is every bit as safe as a 3-bander.

SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

25 years ago the only available reproduction rifles/muskets were the Mississippi, Parker-Hale Enfield and the Zouave; there was also a '63 model Springfield. There was no such thing as a repro '61 Springfield (except for custom builds), and it would be the mid-1990s before you could take the field with a .69 smoothbore other than an original weapon. The Zouave and Mississippi rifles were the cheaper weapons that could get you into re-enacting quickly. The "buffs" in the hobby scorned the Zouave rifles because they existed in so few numbers during the Civil War. Early event regulations often stated (and still do, for that matter) "No Zouave Rifles!" That restriction eventually evolved into "No two-band rifles" in an effort to eliminate the Zouave Rifle from re-enacting (there were lots of them back then) and to stimulate 3-band usage. Perhaps it was easier just to say "no two banders."

A lot of units in the 1970's allowed whatever percussion weapons the individual members bought. It became a goal, a mantra to get everyone into 3-banders, because there was a time they were in the extreme minority. I'm sure any safety claims helped eliminate the 2-bander as well. But I'd attribute its disappearance to the introduction and evolution of more reproduction CW rifles.

The broader point here is that a decided lack of understanding exists in terms of the overall authenticity of reproduction "infantry arms" and it is the most glaring deficiency in the hobby. Field merchants report the three-band, Italian made P-53 Enfield reproduction rifle-musket is far and away the "best seller," year in and year out. It is a reproduction of a later type P-53 Enfield rifle-musket that never saw one minute of action on either side during the Civil War. There are not just a few inaccurate Enfield reproductions in the ranks; they are predominant on both sides.³ How many units enforce stipulations that these reproductions be modified for feature accuracy to reflect at least a slight resemblance to the common British private contractor P-53 Enfields that were imported by the hundreds of thousands and issued to both Johnny Reb and Billy Yank? How many events prohibit their use as

anachronistic?'

And just what is ol' Tom ranting about this month?

I believe time is long overdue to revisit this "reenactorism" tradition so that units historically armed with rifles may be recreated with historically accurate weaponry as well. (Safety is a separate issue that transcends rifle and rifle-musket (musket, or rifled-musket) use.) Anyway, I'd love to see the day where whole units take the field with 2-banded weapons. Historical accounts and soldiers' memoirs are filled with circumstances where they dropped their old smoothbores, or even their "foreign" Enfields to claim a shiny new Springfield on the battlefield. There are, however, no accounts of anyone armed with an M1841 Mississippi swapping it out voluntarily for another weapon.

And so, after a long round of research (briefly summarized in this month's *Sentinel*), I took the plunge and invested in a Euroarms Mississippi rifle (some of you may have gotten to play with it at Prairie Grove.) This is the weapon that the Capitol Guards carried at the outset of the War, and by all accounts, this was a highly desired gun, like the AK-47 of the 1850s. I plan to use it at living histories where it's appropriate over the coming year, and other events as well, in the same manner that I got an M1816 flintlock back in 2000 for the Wilson's Creek and other early War events... to better portray and share the experience of the Boys of '61 who carried these off to the War. Part of keeping our participation in this hobby is seeking fresh experiences, and I plan to lay aside the sword more often this year, and hide in the rear rank more often. (Just watch out for your whiskers there, with either that short little brass rifle, or that big ol' flintlock!)

NOTES:

1 Cedar Creek Battlefield State Park, near Winchester, VA, is a popular location for hosting a multitude of Civil War re-enactment events. In addition to the annual re-enactment of the 1864 battle of Cedar Creek, the park was host to last summer's "1st Manassas" and "Shenandoah 1862" events.

2 "Rules and Regulations," Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation web site, <http://www.cedarcreekbattlefield.org>.

3 The Italian reproductions are all copies of the Fourth Type P-53 Enfield, originally made by the Royal Small Arms Factory after 1863 for the British Army, and not for export. The earlier version, or Third Type Enfield, made from 1858 to 1863, was the rifle-musket imported by both sides in great quantity. It is somewhat similar in appearance, but significantly different in detail. A cottage industry exists in the enactment community to make the necessary corrections, which often cost hundreds of dollars.

Arkansas Muzzle Loading Association 2007 Schedule

By 1st Sgt Steve Shore

The Arkansas Muzzle Loading Association (AMLA) membership dues are due on January 1st, 2006. This is a well organized muzzle loading shooting club located in Hattiesville, Arkansas. There is thirty-seven wooded acres used for camping, a one hundred yard firing range and a newly constructed trap range. A \$25 membership pays for the entire family that resides in the same household and runs from January to December. If interested in a Life Membership, they are available for \$300 or you can pay in four quarterly payments of \$75 each. Send a check or money order to **Robert W. Wiley, AMLA Secretary, 960 Midway Rte., Monticello, AR 71655.**

2007 SHOOT DATES

14 JAN - Medal Shoot at Targets
11 FEB - Blanket Shoot at Targets
11 MAR - Medal Shoot at
Novelty Targets
08 APR - Meat Shoot at Targets
(Spring Rendezvous)
06 MAY - Medal Shoot at
Targets
**18-19-20 MAY - Arkansas State
Championship/Berryville, AR/ CW
Shooting Competition**
10 JUN - Blanket Shoot at
Novelty Targets
08 JUL - Medal Shoot at Targets
12 AUG - Medal Shoot at Targets
09 SEP - Blanket Shoot at Targets
14 OCT - Medal Shoot at
Novelty targets (Fall Rendezvous)
04 NOV - Meat Shoot at Targets
02 DEC - Xmas Blanket Shoot at
Novelty Targets

The 6th Arkansas will be conducting the Third Annual Civil War Shooting Competition at the Berryville Firing Range, Saturday afternoon at 1700 hrs., during the Arkansas State Championship. We invite all Civil War Reenactors to form four (4) man teams to compete. It would be a great time for units to enjoy live firing their muskets, setting around the campfires, visiting the sutlers and a laid back weekend. We are beginning to have a large gathering of spectators that come only to see us compete. This years should be even larger! Contact 1Sgt Steve Shore at spflyboy@hotmail.com for more details.

THE MISSISSIPPI RIFLE

Given the name “Mississippi” rifle in honor of the troops who used it with such telling effect during the Mexican-American War, the U.S. Model 1841 was America’s first percussion rifle, and it served on both sides during the Civil War.

Gen’l. Santa Anna’s Mexican forces were about to turn the American lines at Buena Vista, Mexico, in February 1847 when Col. Jefferson F. Davis was directed to take his 1st Mississippi Rifles to help stem the tide of the battle. Colonel Davis led his regiment forward, and they were armed with the then-new muzzleloading “U.S. Model 1841 Percussion Rifle.” With their excellent marksmanship, the Mississippians were able to help turn back the determined Mexican infantry attacks, and—later in the battle—Davis and his men stopped cold a cavalry charge on the American position by the feared Mexican lancers. After two days of heavy fighting—in which the Americans were outnumbered three to one—the Americans forced Santa Anna and his army to retreat. After the war, Davis returned to the states as a national hero, and, in honor of the men who used it so well in combat, the rifle would forevermore be known as the “Mississippi Rifle.”

The US Model 1841 Percussion Rifle was a notable departure from all previous military smoothbore muskets in several important ways. For one thing, it was much smaller caliber, originally issued in .54—tiny in comparison to .69 caliber US muskets or even larger .75 to .80 caliber European muskets. The Model 1841 also had a patch box, like a hunting gun. And it was shorter, just forty-nine inches overall with a thirty-three inch barrel—a full nine inches shorter than that other stalwart of the Mexican War, the US Model 1842 smoothbore musket. Last, and perhaps most anachronistic, there was no provision for any bayonet attachment! A military arm without a bayonet? Clearly this was a weapon designed for very different tactics than were usually employed at the time by infantrymen. In addition, it was the first military arm made by the US Army not in “tried and true” flint, but with a percussion lock.

Manufactured with a .54-cal. barrel with seven grooves with one turn in 6 ft., the Mississippi was designed to fire a 0.535” patched round ball backed by a charge of 75 grains of blackpowder. The 9-lb., 12-oz. Model 1841 had an overall length of 48 1/2”, and it had a case-hardened percussion lock stamped with the maker’s name and the date of manufacture. The lacquer-brown, 33” barrel was equipped with a brass blade front sight and a “V”-notch rear sight set for 50 yards. The barrel’s breech was stamped with “V.P.”, an “eagle-head” and date at the breech. The two barrel bands, trigger guard, buttplate and patchbox were made of brass, while the steel ramrod was of the trumpet-head type and had a brass tip. The rifle was originally designed without provision for a bayonet.

25,296 U.S Model 1841s were fabricated at the Harpers Ferry Armory, and contracted copies were also made by a number of private contractors, including: Eliphalet Remington, Herkimer, NY; George W Tryon, Philadelphia; Eli Whitney, Jr., New Haven, CT; and the partnerships of Robbins, Kendall & Lawrence and Robbins & Lawrence, Windsor, VT.

Between 1844 and 1855, about 80,000 Model 1841s were delivered

to the Ordnance Department. The Palmetto Armory of Columbia, SC, also manufactured a small quantity of M1841 rifles for South Carolina in the early 1850s, and George Tryon sent a number of M1841s to the Republic of Texas in 1844.

By early 1854, James H. Burton at Harper’s Ferry had developed a modified Minie bullet and, due to its increased accuracy at longer range, the M1841s were modified to use the new .54 cal. Minie projectile. By June 1855, Harpers Ferry had altered more than 3,300 rifles to use redesigned rear sights and modified them for use with saber bayonets—correcting one of the rifle’s earlier shortcomings. To attach the bayonet stud on the barrel’s right, the stock’s fore-end was shortened, and a new shorter front band was fitted. Two new types of rear sights were used—the “screw pattern” and “slide pattern” in about equal numbers.

On July 5, 1855 Secretary of War Jefferson Davis ordered that the calibre of .58 be adopted along with the (combustible) Minie cartridge as the Army’s standard infantry ammunition. This order also adopted the new M1855 Rifle to replace the M1841 Rifle, and production of the M1841 at Harper’s Ferry ceased thereafter. It was also decided to “upgrade” the M1841’s already in inventory with sabre bayonets and long range rear sights to match the new M1855 rifles. In 1859, it was decided to modify the M1841 rifles to take an angular socket bayonet instead of the sabre or sword bayonet (these being M1855 .58 bayonets as well as M1842 .69 bayonets).

Between 1855 and 1859, Harper’s Ferry Armory “upgraded” 8,879 of the M1841 rifles in storage there, as well as made 1,646 Snell Patent bayonets, and 10,286 sabre bayonets. Late in 1859, the decision was made to use up stores of the old M1842 socket bayonets, as well as current production of M1855 socket bayonets.

In addition to reboring to .58, “long range” rear sights and bayonets were added. On the .58 alterations, the M1841 brass tipped trumpet shaped ramrod was usually always replaced by an all steel one more in line with pushing a Minie than a round ball. However, brass-tipped ramrods are sometimes found which raises questions as to it being proper, or just that the all-steel one was lost and replaced during the War or in 1961 with an earlier version?

When President Lincoln called for 42,000 volunteers to join the U.S. Army on May 3, 1861, the Ordnance Department realized it may not actually have enough .58 weapons to issue them, so a look was given to what was “in inventory.” One of the ideas from Chief of Ordnance Lt. Colonel James Ripley was to alter the existing stocks of .54 M1841 rifles to .58 caliber.

Samuel Colt was offered a deal to rebores and add sabre bayonets, and sold the rifles at a price of \$10.00 per gun (but without what his charge would be). He was sent a sample rifle in June of 1861, and agreed to do the work. By July, 11,368 of the M1841s in store at New York, Washington, Watertown, and Watervliet Arsenal were shipped to Colt in Hartford, CT.

Colt pulled somewhat of a fast one, adding sabre bayonets without reboring, and quickly sold of 468 of them to Connecticut to fulfill a contract, but at \$25.00 a rifle. (a nice profit).



The U.S. Rifle, Model of 1841, was the U.S. Army’s first percussion rifle. It became a very popular weapon following its debut in the War with Mexico -- becoming the Gold Rush and 1850s equivalent of the AK-47 in its ubiquity and popularity with the arms-bearing public, and serving with distinction in the Civil War. This particular weapon has been upgraded with a long-range rear sight, but has not been modified to fit a bayonet.

Mississippi Rifle (Continued from Page 8)

The Ordnance Department was furious, but desperate. By August, work was allowed to start. In February of 1862, a price was agreed upon of \$18.50 (Colt's cost in bayonets, parts, and labor being \$4.07 on top of the \$10.00 cost of the rifle for a total of \$14.07).

The saber bayonets and splines came from Collins & Company for \$3.00 and 6.47 cents each. The adjusting screws on the splines came from American Screw Company for 60 cents per hundred. And Colt's labor came in at just under \$1.00 per gun.

Through the winter of 1862, some 2,000 altered rifles were shipped out to Washington (going to a number of NY regiments) and 8,400 to the St. Louis Arsenal (some of which may have come back for several NY regiments). On December 31, 1862 the remaining inventory at Colt was reassessed at \$5.00 and in 1863 sold to Schuyler, Hartley, & Graham for \$19.00 each plus appendages.

Colt made a profit on \$30,201.34 on the alterations sold to the U.S. Government, roughly \$5,500 on the guns sold to Connecticut, and \$7,110.00 to Schuyler, Hartley, & Graham. Roughly a return of \$42,800 on the "job."

Altogether, U.S. government modifications to convert the M1841 to .58 caliber fall in the following categories with particular differences:

1. Colt Contract Alterations: with Colt M1855 "revolving rifle" rear sight dovetailed to the barrel, long 1841 double loop front band. A blued screw clamp-fastened bayonet ring with lug was attached to accept a saber-style bayonet. These were serial numbered to the bayonets. .54 or .58 caliber, M1841 brass front sight.

2. Harper's Ferry and/or Whitney 1854/1855 Alterations: with very early M1855 1,000 yard "low" long range rear sight (.706 high X 2.25 wide) soldered to barrel, "1854" short double loop noseclip, "Mississippi" bayonet lug with one inch guide rail, .54, M1841 brass front sight.

3. Harper's Ferry Alterations: with early M1855 1,000 (with rare 50 yard increments) "low" long range rear sight (.706 high X 2.25 wide) soldered to barrel, "1854" short double loop noseclip, "Mississippi" bayonet lug with one inch guide rail, .54, M1841 brass front sight.

4. Harper's Ferry Experimental Alterations: with early M1855 900 yard (with rare 50 yard sidewall increments) "low" long range rear sight (.706 high X 2.25 wide) soldered to the barrel, "1854" short double loop noseclip, "Mississippi" bayonet lug with one inch guide rail, .54, M1841 brass front sight.

5. Harper's Ferry "Benton Screw Sight" 1854/1855 Alterations: with Benton long range rear sight dovetailed to the barrel, "1854" short double loop noseclip, "Mississippi" bayonet lug with one inch guide rail, .54 or .58, M1841 brass front sight, M1841 brass front sight. (The other Benton alterations were with Snell bayonets. I have the specs, but there are no repro Snell bayonets for this.)

6. A. J. Drake Contract for Massachusetts Alterations: with M1855 Rifle (1858 pattern) rear sight, but with the rear projecting "dovetail" on the sight base removed and squared off. M1841 double loop front band, .54 calibre, M1855 Rifle iron front sight, mounted backwards (low end of the blade to the rear)

7. Harper's Ferry Alterations: with early pattern M1855 Rifle 1,000 "high" long range "high" rear sight (.750 high X 2.47 wide) dovetailed and screwed to barrel, "1854" short double loop noseclip, M1855 bayonet lug (no guide rail), .58, M1855 iron rifle front sight, brass front sight (not backwards).

8. Harper's Ferry Alterations: with early pattern M1855 Rifle 1,000 "high" long range "low" rear sight (.706 high X 2.25 wide) soldered to the barrel backwards, "1854" short double loop noseclip, M1855 bayonet lug (no guide rail), .58,



Closeup of the M1841 showing the brass patchbox on the right side of the gunstock, and the weapon's graceful similarity to the M1842 musket.

M1855 iron rifle front sight, brass front sight (not backwards). Maker's marks and stamps for the Harpers Ferry and various contractor-made M1841s are as follows:

- Harpers Ferry barrels are marked with a VP and eaglehead at rear of breech. PM over P, AW over P, WW over P all in small letters, No cartouches but JLR or JHK in block letters opposite lock. Patchbox has three small router holes and no US on buttplate.

- Remington barrels are marked US over JH or JCB or ADK over P. Barrel flat is marked Steel with two cartouches opposite lock.

- Robbins, Kendall & Lawrence barrels are marked US over JCB or NWP or JAG over P. Two cartouches opposite lock.

- Robbins & Lawrence barrels are marked US over JH or JPC, JAG, JCB, LBC, GW, or SK over P. Two cartouches opposite lock.

- Tryon barrels are marked US over JH or NWP over sunken P. Small US on barrel and buttplate. Two cartouches opposite lock.

- Whitney barrels are marked US over SK, SM, GW, JH, JCB, JPC, or ADK over VP. Marked STEEL on barrel flat. Two cartouches opposite lock. This is not to be confused with a small VP, eaglehead found on Harpers Ferry made rifles.

Patina and consistent wear is the key to evaluating all original guns. Many Mississippi Rifles were mixed during the arsenal alterations: some have Springfield musketoon locks in them since actual use. Snell Mississippi rifles can have confederate modifications, etc. Experience is crucial. The more you examine, the more you will learn.

Military Service 1846-1860

At the outbreak of the Mexican War, Jefferson Davis was a U.S. congressman from Mississippi. For his vote on a tariff bill, President James K. Polk made arrangements for Davis' regiment to be issued the new percussion rifles as fabricated by Eli Whitney, Jr. The U.S. Regiment of Mounted Rifle was the second unit armed with M1841s in Mexico. Interestingly, the Mounted Rifles were armed with both the M1841 and Colt Walker revolvers by the end of the war. After the conflict, both the Regulars and the state militias were receiving M1841s. By June 1854, more than 22,000 had been delivered for field service, and the rifles adapted to use the .54 cal, Minie bullet were used against Sioux Indians in 1855. At Ash Hollow, a Sioux warrior dashed out in front of the group and rode down the Indian line about 300 yards away from the infantrymen armed with the long-range-sighted Mississippis. One volley from the Regulars brought the poor fellow down.

Three years later, in September 1858, at Four Lakes, Wash., the infantrymen and dragoons armed with .58-cal. rifles opened up on a large force of Indians at 600 yards. The Indians, with their old muskets and bows and arrows, were no match for the soldiers. In that action the Indians suffered 60 killed and several wounded, while the soldiers suffered no casualties.

In addition to their use by the military during that time, Mississippis were also sold to the emigrant trains leaving for Oregon, California and

New Mexico. The price was set at \$13.25 each. To protect the Pony Express relay stations from Indian attacks in 1860, the Army sold the Pony Express 60 Mississippis for their defense.

The Mississippi shows up in scattered use and issued to the Regiment of Mounted Rifles until 1854. Some have "long range" sights added and new .54 elongated balls issued for trial (along with some M1842 muskets that have been rifled). These end up in a few scattered companies of infantry and the RMR. In 1855 .58 caliber is adopted as the Army's new standard, but the M1855 weapons do not enter production until later 1857.

In 1855 the 9th and 10th Infantry regiments are organized and equipped as "Riflemen". First hand accounts and pictures from the "Mormon War" show that at least the 10th Infantry was indeed equipped as such, but with modified M1841's, not M1855 rifles. Other primary sources show that the entire RMR had .58 by this time (no sword bayonets noted in any returns for this unit, they carried cavalry sabers by 1854-1861). Still other primary sources show various companies of other regiments armed with them too. Including the 6th Infantry, 2nd Cavalry, 1st Dragoons to list a few. There is also extensive evidence of their use by RIP Ford's Texas Rangers in 1858-59. Most that had belonged to the RMR end up in storage in Fort Bliss and Fort Union when the regiment re-equips with the M1855's in 1858 or 1859. It has been theorized that these are the ones Baylor used to re-equip his shotgun armed 2nd Texas Mounted Rifles with prior to his forays against Fort Fillmore and the Fort Union weapons being issued to New Mexico Volunteers and Militia.

Southern Deliveries and Confederate Service

In December 1859, Secretary of War John B. Floyd directed the chief of the Ordnance Department to ship 115,000 small arms from the Northern arsenals to arsenals in the South. Among them were 10,000 .54 cal. Mississippis. Prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, Southern forces seized these locations and the captured arms were turned over to the Southern state militias. Southern states also received a quantity of Mississippi on their yearly small arms quotas from the Ordnance Department. Between 1856 and 1860, more than 3,000 Mississippi rifles were sent to the various Southern states on their yearly militia allotments. In 1858, Georgia received 248, Mississippi 323 and Texas 836. These included original .54 cal. as well as modified .54s and .58s with long-range rear sights. Louisiana had 1,385 .58 cal and 2,103 .54 cal "Harpers Ferry Rifles" on hand in the federal arsenal at Baton Rouge arsenal in January of 1861, and a number of these were used to arm the 3rd Louisiana Infantry for service in north Arkansas.

Here in Arkansas, the Capital Guards of Little Rock were armed with the M1841 at the onset of the war, and an additional 154 weapons were seized in the stocks of the Little Rock Arsenal. An additional quantity of M1841s were acquired in the seizure of the federal arsenal at Fort Smith in late April 1861. Patrick Cleburne's "Yell Rifles" of Helena armed themselves with "Minie rifles," most likely M1841s or M1841 contractor clones seized from passing river traffic along the Mississippi. An additional 1,000 of the short rifles were delivered to Little Rock by the riverboat *S.H. Tucker* in the early spring of 1861.

Mississippi rifles were issued in small quantities to both infantry and cavalry regiments during the four-year struggle for Southern independence. At the Battle of Gettysburg from July 1-3, 1863, several Confederate infantry regiments were at least partially armed with Mississippi, including the 18th Georgia; 18th and 21st Mississippi; 1st and 7th Tennessee; 4th, 6th, 9th and 23rd Virginia; and the 3rd, 8th and 15th South Carolina Infantry regiments. On the second day at Gettysburg, Maj. Gen. James Longstreet's infantry attacked the Union forces in the Wheatfield, Devil's Den and the Peach Orchard and forced them back with heavy losses. The South Carolinians and the men from Mississippi armed with some 1841s took part in these attacks. The next day, in Pickett's Charge, the 9th Virginia Infantry was with Brig. Gen.



A view of the lockplate, with "HARPERS FERRY" stamped behind the hammer, and "U.S." and eagle stamped in front.



A look at the weapon's left side. Note the flip-up long range sights; this is the "late" version of the M1855 rifle sight.



The hammer is similar to that of the M1842 smoothbore; note the proof mark on the barrel, and the manufacture date stamped on the barrel tang.



An overview of the barrel, showing the rear long-range and front blade sights, as well as the "long" upper barrel band.

Mississippi Rifle (Continued from Page 11)

Lewis Armistead when he reached the “Clump of Trees” on Cemetery Ridge – the “high water mark of the Confederacy.”

The Confederate field inspection reports for May 1864 shows that Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest’s cavalry was armed with nearly 2,600 Mississippi rifles and, to a lesser degree, breechloading carbines. The next month at Brices Cross Roads, Forrest routed a superior Union cavalry and infantry force in one of the most brilliant feats of the war. The Confederate cavalry regiments issued these rifles included: the 18th and 19th Mississippi; 8th, 11th and 23rd Texas; and the 12th and 14th Virginia.

The 10th Texas Infantry and 24th Texas Cavalry (dismounted) of Granbury’s Texas Brigade in Cleburne’s Division, Hardee’s Corps were armed with a nearly equal mix of .54 caliber Austrian Lorenz rifles and M1841 Mississippi rifles throughout the Atlanta Campaign, and the Texans carried these weapons on the 1864 Tennessee campaign to Spring Hill, Franklin, and Nashville. The 24th Texas was also armed with M1841s when the brigade was initially surrendered with the garrison of Arkansas Post in January, 1863.

The Confederate Ordnance Department firmly believed in the utility of the Mississippi rifle, as well as other two banders, and made the Mississippi the most-often copied weapon by Southern arsenals. A perusal of the pages of *Echoes of Glory: Arms and Equipment of the Confederacy* shows that other than the Richmond rifle musket, most Confederate-made weapons were 2-banders patterned on the M1841 or less commonly, on the P1858 Enfield rifle.

Civil War - Union Service

During the first year of the Civil War, large numbers of original .54-cal. Model 1841s were altered to take bayonets. New York sent the Remington factory 5,000 .54 cal. Remington-made Model 1841s. The firm added bayonet studs to the barrels for the attachment of sword bayonets and supplied the bayonets at \$4.55 each. The rifles remained in .54 caliber, but the factory ran out of sword bayonets after 3,268 had been made and, therefore, the state had to look for other means to supply the balance. Those had their barrels turned down, and small studs to accept a triangular socket bayonet were added for the balance of the rifles. The 45th New York Infantry was one of the regiments armed with the sword bayonet Mississippis. In the fighting and retreat through the streets of Gettysburg on July 1, 1863, the 45th lost two thirds of its men. In the 1864 Richmond Campaign, the 15th New York Heavy Artillery left the Washington defenses as infantry and were armed with New York State altered Mississippis. The 7th and 9th Maine Infantry regiments were armed with the M1841 throughout the Peninsula Campaign and the Seven Days of 1862, and then on through the summer of 1863.

Colt in Hartford, CT, performed the largest number of M1841 alterations. The bores were increased to .58 cal., Colt M1855 rear sights were added, and the barrels were fitted with serial-numbered spline bands near the muzzles having guide studs for the sword bayonets. In all, Colt altered 10,400 Mississippis for the Ordnance Department by the spring of 1862. These Colt-altered rifles were issued to both Union infantry and cavalry. When first organized in 1862, the 1st Wisconsin Cavalry was issued the Colt-altered rifles. The 5th Minnesota Infantry also received them in 1862. The 5th was in Minnesota when the Sioux Uprising broke out in the summer of 1862. At Fort Ridgely, two companies of the 5th and a company of rangers was able to hold off the determined Indian assaults on the fort.

In the first year of the Civil War, Union infantry regiments issued the Mississippis to their two flanking companies while the other eight companies were usually armed with various types of muskets. Infantry regiments such as the 13th, 14th and 16th Illinois Infantry followed this pattern. In the fall of 1863 at Chattanooga, Tennessee, the Confederates had the Union army surrounded in the city. On November 25, part of the Union army was assigned the task of attacking the Confederate rifle

pits at the base of Missionary Ridge. Included in this force were the 200 men of the 42nd Illinois Infantry armed with Mississippis. The attacking force was only to capture the rifle pits, but it did not stop until it had reached the top of Missionary Ridge and captured the heights from the Confederates in one of the great achievements of the war.

During the war, nearly 50 federal infantry regiments were partially armed with the M1841s. Some of these included: the 5th and 8th Connecticut; 9th Delaware; 6th and 9th New Hampshire; 12th New Jersey; 55th Pennsylvania; and 1st Washington Territory Infantry. The major use of the Mississippi rifle by the Union cavalry during the war was on the Western frontier. The 1st New Mexico Cavalry, led by Colonel Kit Carson in 1863, was armed with both .54 and .58 cal. Model 1841s. At that same time, the 2nd California Cavalry was partially armed with them. The cavalymen felt that the Mississippis were cumbersome and difficult to carry on horseback and, therefore, unfit for cavalry use. One regiment that issued them throughout the war was the 1st Oregon Cavalry. Other cavalry regiments partially armed with the Model 1841 during the conflict were: 1st, 2nd, 5th, 6th, 9th and 14th Missouri State Militia; 1st Colorado; 2nd, 3rd and 4th Iowa; 2nd and 9th Kansas; and the U.S. Mounted Rifles. The Mounted Rifles had been partially armed with the Mississippis from the days of the Mexican War, until they were rearmed with Sharps carbines in 1862.

M1841 rifles remained in the hands of Union and Confederate soldiers throughout the war. With the surrender of the Confederate armies in 1865, the war had come to a close. Union soldiers, when mustering out, took nearly 200 Mississippis home with them. It is very interesting to note that while there are numerous accounts of soldiers putting aside their smoothbores and even their “foreign” Enfields in exchange for American-made Springfield rifles as battlefield pickups, there are no accounts of soldiers armed with Mississippi rifles making the same sort of exchange. This speaks much for the quality of this weapon, and implies that the boys of ‘61-’65 recognized something about these short rifles that escapes us reenactors today.

In the post-Civil war period, the muzzleloader was replaced by the breechloader. The days of the muzzleloading rifle were coming to an end, but the Mississippi rifle had played its part in the development and defense of the country.

Reproduction Mississippis

The US Model 1841 is offered in both .54 and .58 caliber by Euroarms. Which to choose? If your primary impression is Confederate, go with the .54 caliber. Wiley Sword gives reference to tabulated data showing that only 1,385 out of 15,060 US Model 1841s held by Southern arsenals in 1861 were .58 caliber. Also, the presence of a bayonet lug does not necessarily mean that the rifle was re-bored to .58 caliber. After the Mexican War, rifles of both barrel sizes were fitted for bayonets, whether the bore was enlarged at that time or not. Saber bayonets were primarily of three types. It is correct to portray a scenario sans bayonet or fit it with a bayonet if you prefer, but have the fitting done professionally. Solder with “crazy glue” will not do the trick.

Between 1855 and 1860, 8,879 US Model 1841 rifles received these combinations of modifications in the US Army Armories, and obviously some received none at all. Original specimens are found in a variety ways. The Euroarms version(s) has no provision for a bayonet—hence you will need to get the bayonet lug modification if you go that route. (Fall Creek Sutlery offers a correct sword bayonet for the M1841 Colt conversion, along with the Colt clamp-on bayonet lug and a scabbard, for \$140... *ouch!*) Please note, if you are portraying or using a US Model 1841 in .58 caliber (US Armory alteration), there is a difference in the ramrod. The .54 should feature a steel ramrod with a brass tip. The armory conversion should have a steel ramrod without a brass tip and an exaggerated tulip head profile. The Euroarms is incorrect in this detail as well.

Continued on Page 15..

From Camp Chase Gazette, XXV, 2, (Holiday 1997)

A HARDSCRABBLE CHRISTMAS

As the gray dawn cast a halo through the limbs of the maple and chestnut trees shading Sam and Julia's cabin, signs of life filled the air. First there was the crowing of the family rooster. Then came the crunching of frozen ground as Sam tramped into the fields to work.

Today, however, there were no crops to tend. Even in the best of times, the ground was much too rocky to turn a ploughed furrow, let alone a meager profit. Today Sam carried a homemade axe over his right shoulder.

As he set to his daily chores, the two oldest children, Fred, age 7, and Buck, age 5, came bounding out behind him, their cheeks exuding a healthy ruddiness in the brisk December air. They tagged along for a while, then scampered onto the beaten path leading to town and the schoolhouse beyond.

Sam paid them little attention. He was too intent upon the task at hand. Besides the wife and his two boys, he had another toddler to provide warmth, clothing and food for here in the little cabin he had nicknamed, in a spat of good humor, "Hardscrabble."

He was not laughing today; he was not even smiling. Things had been considerably better. More so, in fact, when he had still been in the Army and stationed along the rough edges of the California wilderness. But his wife had been raised in St. Louis, and it was here they had decided to make their homestead.

Sam cast a quick, backward glance at the rough-hewn logs he had chopped to build the one-room cabin. Wispy trails of smoke curled along the roof from the rock chimney. Inside, beneath a beautiful quilt Julia's dear departed mother had given them on the eve of their wedding nine years ago, his life's soul-love read Scripture to their third offspring, a two year old daughter they had christened Ellen, but affectionately called Nellie. Times were tough; the winter had been hard. Earlier this month, he had run into Cump, an old friend from his days back at the Point, as he made his weekly trip to the open-air farmer's market.

In the bright chill of an early December afternoon, his red-headed friend seemed even more quick-tempered than usual, having just helped close another bank in the once-bustling Mississippi River town.

"I don't know what these politicians are going to do now," he had said, his wild, deep set eyes blazing. "They sure have got everything in a mess. Before long, every bank in this town is going to be closed because of this damn recession we're in."

Sam understood, and agreed. At times he felt like Job, that man in the Bible stories his wife sometimes read to him in the evenings, as they sat, side by side, with firelight flickering across the bare cabin walls.

As if God Almighty was testing the young family's faith, this tough Missouri winter found Julia seven months with child. Her family had money, granted, and they had willingly helped them plant their roots at Hardscrabble Farm, but Sam refused to call on them in times of need. Long, long ago, he had vowed that he would provide for his family on his own. It was the only honorable thing to do.

Sam thanked God for what he had, and he knew this fourth child was a blessing to be sure, but at what cost? He could barely make ends meet as it was. With a prayer and skyward glance, he quietly appraised a particularly tall, straight cedar tree and threw his ax deep into its side.

Later that same week, Sam stood alone, bundled in his cloth sack coat against the blustering

winter's cold, cradling an armful of fire logs in his thick calloused hands.

Christmas was only a few days away.

What was he going to do? How was he going to feed his family? His silent, long-suffering wife needed medicines for the son or daughter she was now bearing. The children needed warm clothes and had grown ill over the past several days. And what of presents, gifts, good will toward men?

In the twilight snowfall upon a muddied St. Louis street, Sam raised his voice to be heard above the clatter of rickety wagon wheels, noisy businessmen rushing to after-hour appointments, and throngs of children happily singing Christmas songs.

"Firewood!" he called from the lantern shadows of his busy corner on Fourth and Cerre Streets. "Firewood for sale! Cheap, dry! Must sell!"

All around, people bustled past him without hearing, caring or buying what they already had - and didn't need.

The pretty calendar hanging inside the dry goods store said that today was December 23, 1857. Life looked idyllic, simple and pure in the wood-carved etching featured on the cover of *Harper's Weekly*.

In the end, it had come to this: A scratched daguerreotype of a squat, solid, little man, a once-heroic leader of arms and conqueror of Mexico, selling his last and most prized memento of past glory ... and better days.

Sam withdrew a gold fob from his patched blue vest. It was the stylish European pocket watch he had carried with him during his years at the Point and in the war with Mexico. In battle, he had considered it a good luck piece, but now his luck, and time, had finally run out.

Smiling perhaps a little too broadly, the clerk on the opposite side of the counter looked down, peering into the crystalline face of the fantastic clear orb. It was clearly an expensive piece, exquisite in its Victorian details and craftsmanship.

Christmas was, by far, his most prosperous time of year. Gradually, like clockwork, men grew either desperate or extravagant in equal proportion to their present station in life. And before him was a man down on his luck.

"Too bad," he thought.

Although the clerk knew the fabulous imported watch was worth much more, he offered the poorly-clothed farmer \$20 for what was obviously a prized possession.

Stifling an expression mingled with shock and insult, Sam reluctantly countered with an offer to sell at \$25. At last, the two settled for \$22, and the deal was done. Christmas would come to Hardscrabble

Farm after all.

Julia would get medicines. The family would have food, maybe even a goose or hen. The boys would wear warm coats to school. And if there was money left, each would find a shiny wooden toy beside their bed when they awoke Christmas morning.

With determined, optimistic warmth filling his soul for the first time in several weeks, the grizzled farmer hurriedly scribbled his signature on the purchase receipt placed on the counter before him.

It read: "Received, Dec. 23, 1857, U.S. Grant."



Grant's cabin, "Hardscrabble," relocated in the early 1900s to its present location on Anheuser-Susch's "Grant's Farm" Park south of St. Louis, MO, is the only building handbuilt by a President of the United States.



The Captain's Tent

by Tom Ezell

BACK IN THE FIELD!

Prairie Grove this year was a little special, mostly because it marked the first time I had been able to return to service since Arkansas Post this past year, and the Irish Parade. The usual pre-event anxiety grew a little bit as the weather went south (or more appropriately, north) on us on Wednesday and large units began pulling out, to include the entire Frontier Brigade around 9 p.m. Thursday night. Still, we had a commitment from our pard in the 1st Arkansas that they would be there, and if they could do it, so could we. There was a good bit of snow left on the ground even on Sunday afternoon, and it was bitterly cold in the evenings, but the roads were clear by the time we got there and most importantly, many of our friends were there. I had a few unexpected concerns, such as finding myself to be the senior Federal officer on the field, but all together, I had a great time, and some of our new friends got to "see the elephant," even if he was a little blue.

This year also marked the first time in a long long while that the Confederates have had to galvanize at this event, and it was a bit cheering to see that most of those guys had indeed brought their blue uniforms along on the long cold march from wherever. It did gald them a little bit to be standing out on the field as we came marching up, singing the Union version of Dixie:

*Away down South in the land of traitors
rattlesnakes, and alligators,*

*Right away! Come Away, right away, come
away!*

*Where Cotton's king, and men are chattels,
Union boys will win the battles!*

*Right away! Come Away, right away, come
away!*

*Then we'll all go down to Dixie, away!
away!*

*Each Dixie boy must understand
that he must mind his Uncle Sam!*

*Away, away, and we'll all go down to Dixie!
Away, away, and we'll all go down to Dixie!*

It's always good to get in the right frame of mind for these things ;-)

COMING CHANGES

One of the items brought up in the officer/event staff meetings at Prairie Grove was a pending proposal from the Arkansas Depart-

ment of Parks and Tourism of a policy for re-enactments and living history demonstrations on State Parks. Since getting involved with the galtroup litigation from Old Washington back in 1996 or '97, The Department has been concerned with its potential liability as a host of these types of events, and the intent of the proposed policy is to shift any such legal or accidental liability away from Parks and Tourism and onto the responsible reenacting unit. Later this coming spring, Parks & Tourism will be proposing a three-part policy for registration and participation in re-enactments on Arkansas State Parks property or facilities:

1) Participants must be members of and listed on a roster provided by arecognized re-enacting organization (Said organization must have and enforce a written safety policy);

2) No home-made or less-than-full-scale artillery pieces; and

4) The reenactment unit must be insured with a current accidental and liability insurance policy.

The first two instances can be easily met, however the third point, group liability insurance, may be a major issue with most groups in Arkansas. None of the units I spoke to at PG meet this last criteria (nor do the 6th Arkansas or the 37th Illinois). With the small membership of most units, this could cause some spectacular rises in unit dues, if groups decide to manage this on a unit by unit basis; another alternative would be to form a non-profit organization along the lines of the Missouri Civil War Reenactors Association, and seek coverage for the larger pool of members.

This policy isn't final yet, and Parks & Tourism is seeking input from the re-enacting community as to its feasibility during the coming winter and spring season.

STATE REENACTORS' MEETING ON JANUARY 6

Following the conclusion of the David O. Dodd memorial service on January 6, most of the reenacting groups in attendance plan to have a meeting at Vino's (7th Street and Chester in downtown Little Rock) to discuss how to better coordinate and cooperate with each other for in-state events. Getting attendance numbers back up is an issue, as well as trying to boost the number of Federals supporting events in Arkansas. Flatly, the Confederate companies are frustrated at having to galvanize all the time, and are looking for more full-time Federals at local events, particularly the small hometown heritage festivals and hoote-nannies.

This will cut into the time that we have historically used for our company get-together and planning meetings, so I'm open to entertainng a different time to plan our year's

events and activities. One good opportunity would be the living history weekend down at the Arkansas Post State Museum on the following weekend, or perhaps an evening get-together at a local restaurant or pub. Let me know your preferences, and we'll get something set up. At any rate, come on out to the Dodd event, and join us for pizza and more convivial refreshments at Vino's on the afternoon of January 6th...

ON THE BOOKSHELF

This month's reading list expands on that a little, with two books that I have admired at a distance for some time, but finally invested in the new paperback versions last weekend. This month's choice at the local booksellers put these two favorites together with Woodworth's *Nothing But Victory: The Army of the Tennessee, 1861 to 1865*. This recounts the story of one of the greatest armies the world has known, from its formation in southern Illinois in 1861 through the end of the War. Woodworth tells this story in an entrancing, often humorous style, covering not only the generals' perspective but also the experiences of the men in the ranks of what really was the Grand Army of the Republic.

On the other hand, this month's Confederate selection is one that really surprised me in how pleased I was with it. After the Texas-centricity of our former battalion, I have been unduly prejudiced against the Lone Star State and its contribution to the War, but that has been wiped off with the reading of Richard Lowe's new book: *Walker's Texas Division, CSA: Greyhounds of the Trans-Mississippi*. Lowe has taken advantage of the wealth of both cultural and material research that has been done over the past seven or eight years, and woven this into a fascinating story of the Texas soldiers who came to Arkansas to hold the line against Curtis' Yankees in the summer of 1862, and then formed the largest and most cohesive of the Southern forces in the Department. Lowe covers the Texans from top to bottom: why they joined up, the background they came from, and their experiences serving in what was wrongly considered a backwater of the War. For the student of the War here in the wild, wild West, Walker's Texas Division is an essential addition to your library. (Steven E. Woodworth, *Nothing But Victory: The Army of the Tennessee 1861-1865*. New York, NY, Vintage Books (2005) 760 pp. ISBN: 0-375-72660-8 (\$19.95); and Richard Lowe, *Walker's Texas Division, CSA: Greyhounds of the Trans-Mississippi*, Baton Rouge, LA. Louisiana State University Press (2004) 339 pp., ISBN 0-8071-3153-9 (\$24.95))

See ya'll in January at Mt. Holly,

Tom

Coming Events

As of the time the *Sentinel* went to press, the following events had been scheduled, or at least proposed as candidates for the 2007 campaign calendar. If you are aware of an additional or different event, please contact Tom or Steve and we'll add it to the list for consideration. We'll discuss next year's events at Prairie Grove, and vote on our schedule for next year at the first Company meeting in January.

January 6, 2007. David O. Dodd memorial service. Mt. Holly Cemetery, Broadway & I-630, Little Rock. 12 noon.

January 12-14, 2007. Arkansas Post living history. Arkansas Post State Museum, on Highway 165 7 miles south of Gillette, AR

March 2-4, 2007. The Immortal 600 living history. Fort Pulaski National Historic Site, Savannah, GA. Hardcore, immersive event, sponsored by the Wool Hat Boys.

March 14-18, 2007. "Banks' Grand Retreat" week-long campaign event, also known as the "Red River Campaign III."

March 16-18, 2007. 145th Anniversary re-enactment, Battle of Shiloh, Michey, TN.

March 17, 2007. Little Rock Irish Parade, Markham Street and River Market, Little Rock.

March 23-25, 2007. Battle of Port Hudson Re-enactment, Port Hudson State Commemorative Area, Zachary, LA.

March 24, 2007. Annual Gen'l Patrick Cleburne Memorial Service, Maple Hill Confederate Cemetery, Helena, AR. 12 noon.

April 7, 2007. Confederate Flag Day observance, Arkansas State Capitol grounds, Little Little Rock.

April 13-15, 2007. Battle of Pleasant Hill battle re-enactment, Pleasant Hill, LA.

April 13-15, 2007. 145th Anniversary Shiloh Living History, Shiloh National Battlefield Park, Shiloh, TN.

April 27-29, 2007. Battle of Marks Mill re-enactment, Marks Mill Battlefield State Park, near Fordyce, AR.

May 4-6, 2007. Annual Homecoming and Civil War Weekend, Jefferson, TX.

June 8-10, 2007. Vicksburg Living History, Vicksburg National Battlefield Park, Vicksburg, MS. Sponsored by the Western Independent Grays.

June 8-10, 2007. "Battlefire" Civil War Weekend, Tribbey, OK.

June 29-July 1, 2007. Kennesaw Mountain Living History, Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, Kennesaw, GA.

September 8-9, 2007 (PROPOSED/TENTATIVE) Battle of Little Rock re-enactment or living history (new event)

September 14-16, 2007 145th Anniversary Reenactment, Battle of Antietam, Sharpsburg, MD. (national event)

September 21-23, 2007. Battle of Cabin Creek re-enactment, Oklahoma.

September 21-23, 2007. Battle of Fort Davidson re-enactment, Pilot Knob, MO

September 28-30, 2007. Battle of Mill Springs re-enactment, Somerset, KY. North/South Alliance Maximum Effort Event.

October 12-14, 2007. Battle of Columbus-Belmont re-enactment, Columbus, KY

October 12-14, 2007. White Sulphur Springs living history & Confederate memorial services, Sulphur Springs, AR

October 27-28, 2007. Civil War Weekend, Degray Lake State Park, near Bismarck, AR.

November 2-4, 2007. Civil War Weekend & Battle Demonstrations, Old Washington State Park, Washington, AR.

November 2-4, 2007. Battle of Pea Ridge re-enactment (formerly "Cane Hill"/"Battles Around Bentonville"), Bentonville, AR.

Last, if you are inclined to add a bayonet lug, you would be well advised to change the rear sight to one of the various leaf or ladder types found on originals. Clearly the least expensive way to be "correct" with your US Model 1841, especially for a Confederate is to use no bayonet at all, and leave the weapon in its original "Mexican War" condition. In this case, the only time that it makes a difference between the .54 and the .58 versions of the Euroarms repro is if you should desire to live-fire your Mississippi -- .54 round ball and accessories are less expensive and more available than the corresponding .58 caliber supplies.

Other than that, the Euroarms US Model 1841 Percussion Rifle is a very nice reproduction. The barrel has an excellent "brown" finish, which is correct.

The lock is color case hardened, as is the hammer. However, the lock is unmarked with the exception of the eagle and "US" stamped forward of the hammer. Likewise, the barrel is missing the proof marks ("VP" and eagle-head stamps). The barrel is otherwise unmarked with the exception of the weapon serial number and ".58 CAL BLACK POWDER ONLY" stamped inconspicuously along the lower left hand side, and "EUROARMS OF AMERICA" stamped on top of the barrel

forward of the rear sight. The information on the different maker's marks earlier in this article would be a good guide to follow if you are copying the details of a specific contractor.

Most Euroarms Civil War black powder firearms are much heavier than the originals they seek to duplicate (due to their thicker barrels, etc). In this case, the original already had a very thick barrel, and an original target weight of over 9.25 pounds that makes it a half pound heavier than the longer US Model 1861 rifle-musket. Here is that rare case where the reproduction is more or less identical in weight to the original. Hence, we should not complain, just do not expect this shorter two-band rifle to be lighter than the three-band rifle-muskets in weight because it certainly is not! The Euroarms lock is slightly different from the original in that it utilizes a tumbler link (fly) and with the original the mainspring rests right on the tumbler. In both weapons checked in this survey, there was a slight creep in the lock as you press the trigger to fire; this can easily be eliminated by carefully tuning the lock.

In conclusion, the Mississippi will make a fine addition to your reenacting arsenal, particularly for early war impressions, and if you portray a cavalryman, mounted or dismounted, the M1841 or 2-band Enfield is an ideal choice.

The 6th Regiment, Arkansas Volunteer Infantry, Co. A, the "Capitol Guards" is 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.

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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 4)*

the control of Union troops, and General Hindman's unlucky army fell back into history, leaving this battlefield to its ghosts.

This year, as in every even-numbered year, the Battle of Prairie Grove will be re-enacted on the old battlefield. Some 1,000 reenactors, in period uniforms and costumes and bearing period arms, will put on a show for the thousands of spectators expected to attend. This year's re-enactment starts on Saturday and continues through Sunday afternoon. It's an entertaining way to learn some history.

"God... & Ms. Tula's!" *(Cont.'d from Page 1)*

into line of battle behind us and moved forward, I assembled the 2nd Platoon behind the battalion, brought them back into line of battle, and together we crested the hill and moved through a farmstead, encountering the Rebels' main battle line at the edge of an orchard some distance away. We delivered several solid volleys into the Rebs, dropping their front rank, and pushed forward to drive them off the hill. However we were then taken on both flanks by the Rebel cavalry and subjected to enfilade fire. I had been given specific orders to guard our left flank against a mounted attack, and did so by watching for the horsemen and driving them away with company volleys whenever they threatened to move against us. The TMVI was taking intense pressure to our

front and to our right, however, and our line was being driven slowly back through a series of fence lines. We fell back slowly, contesting every yard of ground, and made a most gallant stand at the crest of the ridge behind a rail fence. Here, we rallied to the color, and stood our ground to cover the battalion's withdrawal. Our cartridges were running low, casualties were heavy, and we were indeed driven to the point where we could stand only with our bayonets, or retreat to the safety of our artillery.

By this time, the remainder of our battalion had disappeared, and the 3rd Company commenced a fighting withdrawal back down the slope to the safety of our own lines - bringing our colors and our wounded with us. The Captain seized the colors and taunted the rebels, while we reformed our line at the foot of the ridge.

Despite our nearly desperate circumstances, the men were still full of fight!... as the rebel cavalry found to their dismay when they pressed us closely, too far forward of their own supports. We wheeled the company into line, gave them a sharp volley, and then rushed them with the bayonet, gobbling them up as our prisoners while their supports could only watch helplessly. Despite this rally and counterattack, we were still heavily pressed by the rebel line of infantry, so we reluctantly again began our fighting retreat.

We were heavily pressed all the way across the field, until we reached the safety of our own gun line and watched vengefully as the artillerymen's cannister and shell broke the rebels who were foolish enough to chase us so far.

Saturday evening began with our refitting and recuperation... accounting and caring for our wounded and preparing for a continuation of the fight on the next day. The warming fires were stoked, weapons were cleaned, and spirits refortified with coffee. Ms. Tula, alarmed by the nearness of the Confederate lines, had packed away her wares and fled to the safety of the Indian Territory nearby. So it was a cold and dreary night. Several sought shelter in the buildings in the nearby community -- wisely, it turned out, for as the evening temperature warmed up to 11 degrees, a cold wind stirred up from the northwest to drive the perceived temperatures even lower.

After reveille and a breakfast of slapjacks, bacon, and coffee, we again saw to our supplies and made ready to renew the fight. Additional stragglers arriving from the line of march were nearly sufficient to replace our losses from the day before, and we set out again to assault that forbidding ridgeline, nineteen strong.

This day, the two companies of the 1st Arkansas Battalion, primarily Oklahomans, put on the blue to fight alongside us. The scenario was essentially the same, with exception that we now formed the 1st Company

on the battalion's right flank, and once a small party of skirmishers had shakily taken their position, the battalion moved in column of companies to swiftly move unopposed up the hillside, only to be surprised by the rebels hiding deeper in the fruit orchard. The rebels swiftly pushed back, launching their trap and getting use nearly into a box, then energetically trying to slam the lid shut on us. On the right flank, we were very closely engaged by the dismounted cavalry, and fell back in steps to the successive fence lines. More confusion reigned in the ranks in this fight than the previous one, frankly because there were too many chiefs for the indians that we had, and each of the chiefs felt that they had to be doing something at the same time. The rebels continued to press us very closely, and we again had to slowly give ground, firing, then rallying further down the hill, making another stand, then dancing away as the rebels tried to trap us, again and again.

We retreated again to the cover of our artillery, however the Rebels had apparently learned from their previous lesson and did not pursue us so closely as to receive the bellyfull of cannister and grapeshot they had gotten before.

Again, we regrouped and sought to care for our losses under a flag of truce with the rebels. However, the wily johnnies took advantage of this to pull out and retreat southward, leaving us in command of the field, most dearly and expensively won.

The men of the Frontier Brigade served most gallantly, and upheld the highest traditions of the service. While our consolidated company was small: 24 men on Saturday, 19 on Sunday counting our color guard and all attachments, they performed ably and in the highest tradition of the Brigade. Clustered around the colors of the 37th Illinois of Little Rock were members of the 8th Kansas, 10th Kansas, 77th Pennsylvania, 23rd Illinois, 1st U.S., and Holmes' Brigade. Despite being such a polyglot company, everyone came together to work as a well-honed team, clearly the best-drilled and best performing company on the field. The men responded readily and ably to all commands and requirements on the field, and gave ground only when forced to do so. It was a rare and exquisite privilege to fight alongside, much less to lead these men of the Consolidated Federal Company at Prairie Grove. Any credit for our hard-won victory on the slopes of Battle Ridge is due strictly to the gallant rifles of the Brigade and the men who wielded them so well -- bully boys, all!

I have the honor to be, yr. obed't svt, etc.;

Shaw. Ezell
Major, 1st Artillery Reg't, &
Bvt Captain, comd'g Company B,
37th Illinois Volunteers