

# The Sentinel



Vol. 9, No. 3 – The Newsletter of the 6th Arkansas Infantry, Company A, C.S.A. – March, 2005  
Living Historians  
[http://www.geocities.com/capital\\_guards](http://www.geocities.com/capital_guards)

## Spring Campaign to Open at Port Hudson

The Capitol Guards and the 37th Illinois will kick off the 2005 campaign season with a visit to a new event (at least for us), reenacting the siege of Port Hudson, Louisiana, the last hold-out of the Confederacy along the Mississippi River. At the same time that Sam Grant was campaigning against and besieging Vicksburg, Port Hudson underwent a 47-day siege as well by General N.P. Banks' Army of the Gulf, surrendering five days after the fall of Vicksburg. Arkansas troops played a major role at Port Hudson, however our trip down there will be in Yankee blue – as our parent unit the Mississippi Valley Brigade elected to give the Red River Battalion a chance to use their “clown suits” as the 165th New York Zouaves. We will assume our usual Federal impression as the average chicken-stealing, silver-snitching, barn-burning western Federal soldiers. And unlike the real siege, which stretched from May to July, 1863, the re-enactment typically happens the last weekend in March, when it's still a wee bit chilly, even in Louisiana.

This is our first expedition to Port Hudson in recorded memory, though I have always heard good reports about it. It promises to be a heap of fun, even if we have to wear the Army blue...

Port Hudson State Historic Site and the 7<sup>th</sup> Louisiana Infantry, Company K, invites you to the 142nd Anniversary Reenactment of the Siege of Port Hudson.

Participation in the 142nd reenactment is by invitation only. Only those authentic infantry, artillery and cavalry units that are invited will be allowed to attend. Our Company registration was submitted on February 27, if you're coming and not sure if you are registered or not, please contact Captain Ezell. The event sponsors are pretty adamant: no walk-ons will be allowed under any circumstances.

### SCENARIO

This will be a living history and reenactment of the Siege of Port Hudson and the assaults of the Union army, which occurred in the spring and summer of 1863. These two scenarios will take place on the actual battlefield of Port Hudson.

Saturday morning will begin with the annual



The “Irishmen” at the 2005 Little Rock Irish Parade on March 12. We can almost taste the Guinness from here...

“memorial march” over the trails and ravines used 142 years ago. This march will culminate in the “reenactor only” tactical in the woods and ravines. Spectator battles scenarios will be the re-creation of the assaults of May 27th and June 14th, 1863. All units are expected to participate in all scenarios.

Throughout this event we would like to have reenactor camping to maintain authenticity. That means no modern camping items should be visible. This will allow for spectators and reenactors alike to view a scenario or campsite as it was.

Sunday morning will start with “Officer’s Call” followed by mid-morning church services for those who wish to participate. Living History demonstrations are also encouraged at this time. Sunday afternoon will feature the second assault on the Confederate breastworks.

### DIRECTIONS:

Port Hudson State Historic Site (236 Hwy. 61, Jackson, LA 70748; call 225-654-3775 or 1-888-677-3400) is located on US Highway 61 in East Feliciana Parish, about 25 minutes north of Baton Rouge, Louisiana and 10 minutes south of St. Francisville. The 909-acre site encompasses the northern portion of the battlefield and features an elevated boardwalk over the breastworks in the Fort Desperate Area. Other facilities include three observation towers, six miles of trails, a museum, a picnic area and restrooms.

From Little Rock, take I-530 South 46 miles to PINE BLUFF. 530 turns into U.S. HIGHWAY 65S. Follow Highway 65S 118 miles through LAKE VILLAGE to LAKE PROVIDENCE, LA. Continue 104 miles south through TALLULAH and FERRIDAY, LA, crossing the Hwy 65 Mississippi River bridge into NATCHEZ, MS. Turn right (south) onto U.S. HIGHWAY 61S and go 60 miles, watch for the signs directing you into the Port Hudson State Historic Site. Total distance (from Little Rock) approximately 330 miles,

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## Boy Scout Camporee Living History - March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005



Tom Ezell, Keith Peterson, Harvey Moore, Mike Loum, and George Davis at MacArthur Park



George advises the scouts on the finer points of canteen maintenance and mouse removal.



The coming of Spring brings the reopening of the campaign season, as well as a host of calls for re-enactors to come out and do living history programs for local schools and youth organizations. At the start of the month was a short-notice request to provide a few re-enactors for the central Arkansas Boy Scouts' annual camporee in MacArthur Park. The short notice was mostly my fault, the scoutmaster called me at work back around the middle of February, but with my little black Captain's book in the haversack at home and working on a couple of deadlines, I failed to preserve the note and flat forgot about it until they called back in the middle of the week before the event. Both the Guards and the Greyhounds were extremely gracious about this, and we scrambled a team out there on Saturday morning to "show the flag" and do what we could. However, the Scouts had gone off to tour the Clinton Library and the Old State House, and only started trickling back in shortly after noon, when we were about ready to pack up and head home.

Still, we spoke to thirty or forty young lads who came wandering through, and had a warm, sunny morning for fellowship and chat, and a little drill. Thanks again to George, Mike, Keith, Harvey, and Chuck for sharing their Saturday like this.

Upcoming programs like this have been requested for April 29<sup>th</sup> (9 a.m. to noon) at Theo Jones Elementary in Conway (we still need volunteers for this one) and May 20 at Cabot Middle School (South), which has become an annual event over the past four or five years.



We're here... now where are the Scouts?



### Port Hudson *(Continued from Page 1)*

approximately 6.5 to 7 hours' driving time.

#### EVENT SCHEDULE

##### *Friday April 1, 2005*

9:00 Park Opens; Registration opens  
5:00 Park Closes for visitors

##### *Saturday Morning, April 2, 2005*

6:00 Reveille  
7:00 Officer's Call at the gun carriage behind the museum (near 7th LA camp)  
8:00 Registration Opens.  
8:30 Battalion morning formation in front of museum. Flag Raising Ceremony.  
9:00 March to Alabama/

Arkansas Redoubt. Tactical begins at that point. May the best team win!

9:30 Visitors are invited to visit the Soldier's Camps, Demonstrator's Row and the Sutlers. Demonstrations will be held throughout the day.

10:00 42-pounder Artillery Demonstration near museum

10:30 Musketry Demonstration near museum.

11:00 Artillery duel on battlefield.

11:30 Cavalry Demonstration  
12:00 Registration closed

Reenactors lunch from their haversacks.

##### *Saturday Afternoon, April 2, 2005*

1:30 Artillery shelling & skirmishing begin for the spectator battle.

2:00 Full scale field battle

3:00 A Civil War Doctor Demonstration

5:00 Park Closes for visitors

5:30 Dinner for registered reenactors

7:00 - 10:00 Dance for registered reenactors

##### *Sunday Morning, April 3, 2005*

6:30 Reveille

8:00 Officer's Call at the gun carriage behind the museum (near 7th LA camp)

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## Little Rock St. Patrick's Day Parade - March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005



Jim Briggs, Steve Shore, Bob Black, Jerry Simpson, Jim DeCann, and Harvey Moore.

*It's always a wait for the Big Bugs to make a decision... but at least we took the shade. Jim Briggs, Jerry Simpson, Bob Black, Jim DeCann, Mike Loum, and Harvey Moore; Tom Ezell and Steve Shore standing in the back near Little Rock's Union Train Station*

This made the second time that we were invited to march in the St. Patrick's Day parade, and is getting to be a nice little social event to kick off the spring season. This year was a little shorter, but a little less pleasant due to our being sandwiched between the Corvette Club and the ABF semi-tractor/trailer. The beer was good, though, and the senioritas were even better. We added a small Confederate contingent this time around, which will hopefully grow, too.



*The lovely senioritas fall for the Boys in Blue as we take our place in the march column. Hey, did I mention we're getting together a group for the Mexican War? Deo, libertad, y Tejas! "Up, Guards, and At 'Em!!"*



*There were Irishmen in gray, too... George Davis of the Capitol Guards carried our Hardee flag in memory of General Cleburne.*



*After the long, dry march, we adjourned to the Underground Pub for traditional Irish entertainment. Marcus Dailey, Jim DeCann, Mike Loum, Harvey Moore, Steve Shore, Tom Ezell, W.J. Monagle, Mark Backus, Jerry Simpson, George Davis, Bob Black, and Jim Briggs*

# GET THE LEAD OUT!

by 1st Sgt Steve Shore

That can be taken several different ways. That's why I'm saying it! At our January planning meeting, everyone in attendance was all for having a shooting event in 2005. Something different than the usual re-enactment or living history. An event where we could as civil war soldiers strut our stuff, relax by the fire, sleep in the tents, eat our kind of food and show interested people in how we do things. A major recruiting opportunity for our hobby. The most exciting part about the whole idea was that we would be firing minie balls at targets down range.

Captain Ezell and I went to the Arkansas Muzzle-loading Rifle Association (AMRA) in Hattieville, Arkansas. There we were surprised to find a beautiful secluded 37 acres for camping and shooting. We were welcomed by the AMRA members from all over the state. They are also the governing body behind the Arkansas State Muzzleloading Championships in Berryville, Arkansas. We proposed a four-man event in which teams would fire as many shots as possible at targets fifty yards away within five minutes. They liked the idea so much that they said they are getting two militia units together to see if mountain men or colonialists can outshoot Arkansas Rebs? Now, we're outnumbered!

There was notification in the last newsletter telling everyone of the practice shoots and how to get to the firing range. When it was all said and done, Tom, Aaron and I were the only ones dressed in confederate clothes. You have no idea what a cartridge box loaded with forty rounds against your side really feels like or how to clear a malfunction or how a real musket ball sounds after you fire it and you hear that dull "TAT" that the ball makes as it strikes the target. Guys...WAKEUP! This is our time to shine. An event made for US! It does not matter if we're not expert shooters. What matters is the number of Civil War Soldiers in attendance at the May 6, 7, and 8th shoot in Berryville. We need a good turnout with at least two teams if not more. There will be trophies handed out with bragging rights!

Enough of me preaching, lets get to the 'lead' of the story. I ordered and have in my possession the ball molds for the following bullets. From left to right: the .577 caliber, 530 grain hollow based minie ball for the Enfield Rifled musket. The center is the .58 caliber (.575213), 460 grain hollow based minie ball for the Springfield Rifled Musket and last but not least is the .69 (.662) caliber



round ball for the 1842 Springfield Muskets. These are lead balls that I am proud to say I produced from scrap lead.

Tom and I have found out by experimentation that the muskets need 2ffg black power on the range verses 3fffg in the blanks to improve accuracy. Take a wax candle and melt it in a small can on the kitchen stove and add about the same amount of Crisco shortening or lard. This makes the same bullet lube as the original. I also found that by dipping the minie ball nose up into the wax that no wax goes into the hollow base. You



The AMRA range, near Hattieville



Steve's target - shot with his .58 cal. Colt Springfield. The Captain... well, he got a healthy dose of humility on this trip.

can then wipe off the excess with a paper towel from the scraping rings. You then roll your cartridge tube and place the minie ball inside. Make another tube to protect the powder. Because we are only shooting at 50 yards, drop your powder charge to 50 grains and place it in the paper tube. Your now ready to fold the tail and put it in your cartridge box to go to the range.

After shooting twenty-five shots on the firing range I brought my musket home. By accident, I found that the inside of the barrel was protected against rust for up to a week before cleaning. Then if that wasn't an eye opener... a coffee pot of boiling water had the musket clean as a whistle in less that five minutes. I'm telling you guys... they knew their stuff back then and we are just scratching the surface in researching this!

Here's the deal, if your holding back because you don't have ammunition, I will make you some. For an example, if you bring me four pounds of lead, I will make you two pounds of bullets in return. It's a 50-50 deal no matter how much you bring, but no money is involved. I weighed these bullets and this is the weights:

- 1 pound of lead produces 15 - .69 caliber round balls
- 1 pound of lead produces 16 - .58 caliber minie balls for the Springfield
- 1 pound of lead produces 14 - .577 caliber minie balls for the Enfield

If you had an Enfield that would give you 28 minie balls. If that is still confusing you, write or call me and I WILL explain everything you need to know!

Our next practice shoot at Hattieville will be on Sunday April 10th and Sunday May 1st from 0900 til noon. These are the last two available dates to get a taste of fast pace, heart racing shooting is all about! Please come and enjoy the fun and bring me your scraps! I'll fix you up... if you get the lead out!

## Exhibit Tackles Arkansas's Role in a Forgotten War

*By the late spring of 1846, it was apparent to Arkansans that trouble was brewing to the southwest. Although the conflict allegedly revolved around disputes with Mexico over its border with Texas, darker issues simmered beneath the surface. One was Manifest Destiny and the nation's lust to expand to the Pacific. Another was the South's quest for new lands suitable for slavery and the plantation system, so it might maintain its precarious balance of power with the North. Many in Arkansas were also eager to fight for more personal reasons: to test their metal in battle or to cover themselves in glory to further their political careers. "Try us" was the motto of the Arkansas regiment.*

The Old State House Museum is excited about its upcoming exhibit *Try Us: Arkansas and the U.S.-Mexican War*. The exhibit details Arkansas's role in the under-recognized war between Mexico and the United States during the years from 1846 to 1848.

*Try Us* will be comprised both of artifacts loaned to the Old State House Museum and from the museum's collection including ornate military uniforms, embellished weaponry, original flags from Arkansas units that fought in the War with Mexico, oil paintings, and intimate personal affects from soldiers—items like letters, pictures, pens, canteens, maps, and saddles.

Some of the most notable artifacts to be included are those that once belonged to Santa Anna, Zachary Taylor, Samuel "Colt" Walker, Braxton Bragg, and Mrs. James Conway. JoEllen Maack, curator of the Old State House Museum says that the exhibit will show not only the military aspect of this war but also the social and political impact. The museum is seeking prints and daguerreotypes from the period as well as household items—both Arkansan and Mexican—to provide a better understanding of topics like death and mourning, racism, and life on the home front.

*Try Us* is the museum's first bilingual exhibit. Two guest curators will present two different views of the war and its impact. Bill Frazier, editor for the Commercial Appeal in Memphis who has researched and written about the U.S.-Mexican War, will provide an overview of the Arkansas's role in the war. Laura Herrera, curator for the National Museum of the Interventions of the National Institute of Anthropology and History in Mexico City, Mexico, will portray Mexico's role in the war, and how the war has influenced the country's present day relationship with

the United States.

Exhibit-related programs include bilingual tours, living history presentations, curriculum-building workshops for educators, symposia, and scholarly publications.

The Old State House Museum will open the exhibit *Try Us: Arkansas and the U.S.-Mexican War* on June 18, 2005.

## Ho! for the Halls of the Montezumas!!

In support of the Old State House exhibit opening on June 18<sup>th</sup>, the Museum is interested in sponsoring a Mexican War group to portray the Guards over the coming biennium, and even to the point of trying to sponsor or support such a group in central Arkansas. From Ian Beard, the new living history coordinator at the Old State House, I've received the following on the June event and follow-on efforts:

"The Old State House staff is very excited about the exhibit and during its year and a half run we will have numerous opportunities to do living history. The "Try Us!" exhibit will cover Arkansas's role in the war to a greater extent than it ever has been. Actually, the idea of a local Mexican War group doing the Arkansas volunteers has already garnered so much interest at the museum, there is talk of the Old State House officially sponsoring the group in some way. Right now it looks like they might even have a good reproduction of the Guards' company flag as early as June (to go with the original we will have in the exhibit). Please spread the idea around the local reenacting community.

Let me address the clothing issue first as it relates to our Saturday, June 18 event. The account of the flag presentation in the *Gazette* describes the Guards as wearing their militia uniforms, "a blue jacket and grey pantaloons, with red stripes at the side." Do you know any other details of this uniform? And is it something some of your people could easily simulate? While the *Gazette* implies that the whole company was in uniform, it doesn't come out and say it. I'm sure the core members who were already part of the Guard did have uniforms, but they had swelled the company's ranks well past the norm for the war effort. Therefore I would assume there would be quite a few, if not a majority, in civilian clothes. The *Gazette* with it's Whig leanings at the time would have wanted to make fellow Whig Pike and his men look more professional than the other company there that day, headed by Democrat Solon Borland.

The *Gazette* describes Borland's men as having "irregular garb" and a "rough exterior."

Ideally, we would have a handful of people in militia uniform, including Pike, and everyone else portraying volunteers can be in civilian clothing. The men in the crowd portraying a generic volunteer or towns person can probably get away with 1860's civilian in a pinch. We hope to have some civilian clothing rented that can be made available as well, although much of this will probably be for women. We want a good turn out of folks in period dress so the crowd will be a good mix of reenactors and visitors.

The event itself will be in two parts. Around mid-day, we will have the flag presentation, which will be accompanied by a free barbeque and speeches from local pillars of the 1846 community. This will be held on the front lawn of the museum. Reenactors will be able to mingle during this, and living history stations can be set up afterwards for the rest of the afternoon (the out of state guys can handle this if our people aren't ready for that sort of thing yet).

During the evening, we will have a dance. We plan on having a period band with a dance caller. This is currently planned for in front of the building as well. This will be open to the general public and again this will give reenactors an opportunity to mix with the general public.

Now for future clothing needs. The Arkansas Volunteer Cavalry regiment, also known as Rackensackers and Mounted Gunmen, had two distinct periods of clothing. On the journey from Arkansas to San Antonio, the regiment had not been issued much of anything in the way of supplies from the war department. That included equipment, clothing, and weapons. The volunteer in this period would generally wear their civilian clothing and have with them the arms and equipment a civilian of that time would normally travel with. After they reach San Antonio, they get army supplies but no uniforms. As with the Guards, some companies would have had some militia uniforms, but I don't know how common that was and whether they wore them all the time. Do you think the Guards with uniforms would have worn them for the entire 6 months before receiving army uniforms, or would they have gone back to their civilian dress? Let me know what you think about this, and I'll continue to look through the newspapers for clues. They didn't receive real uniforms until they were in Mexico and had been in the service for half a year. They were actually issued standard dragoon uniforms, complete with "D" buttons and yellow stripes down the leg. The army supplies included better tents, cooking kettles, 457 carbines and accoutrements, 457 pistols and holsters, 457 sabers and belts, and 458 rifles and accoutrements with forty cartridges and

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## Mexican War (Continued from Page 5)

two flints per gun. Half of the regiment were outfitted as mounted rifleman, and the other half as traditional cavalry. The Guards were in the group outfitted as cavalry, and Pike complained "Half the men have snaffle bits, with which a horse cannot be managed in the ranks, and saddles totally unfit for packing their baggage. The pistols given us are old, the sabres soft, and the caps for the carbines only one in two or three will explode."

Anyone who wants to participate on June 18 is welcome to. We will allow camping on the front lawn for the out of towners, and hope to be able to help with the traveling expenses. All of the main events will be on June 18, but they can camp on the lawn on June 17 as well, and there will be opportunity for drill and demonstrations on June 18 and 19.

### The Expensive Stuff: Impressions

In looking at the requirements for a basic Mexican War outfit, I checked with some of the established MW community, most particularly the "Cottonbalers" of the 7<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry, which does a Regulars impression at various sites in Oklahoma and Texas. Per the standards for one of their MW events near Houston last year, here are their recommendations, to give a little idea of what the hardcore folks in this period are looking at. These are NOT the standards for the June event, but are purely informational for future reference.

For the June 18 event, we are looking at the following: "Little Rock Guards": 1) dark blue shell jacket; 2) gray uniform trousers with a red stripe down the outer seam (sky blue trousers are okay); 3) black or dark colored civilian hat; 4) .69 caliber smoothbore muskets; 5) Pattern of 1839 cartridge boxes (.69 cal.) on white buff box belts, and white buff waist belts; and 6) white haversacks and wooden or (CS) tin drum canteens. Alternative militia: 1) Wool or cotton flannel overshirts; 2) civilian wool, broadcloth, or jean trousers; 3) civilian slouch hats, 4) civilian hunting rifle, shotgun, or simply come unarmed. In both cases, if you have a decent "Arkansas toothpick" (D-guard Bowie knife), wear it!

For the beginner in Mexican War living history who doesn't want to lay out a large amount of cash, a simple solution would be sky blue, or any woolen period trousers with a woolen or jean overshirt. These were very popular in the time period we are portraying.

Those portraying **Regular U.S. Infantry** should have:

- Pattern 1832 sky blue winter service jacket for infantry
- Pattern 1832 or 1845 sky blue winter service trousers or civilian trousers
- U.S. Army Issue domed flannel

shirt, or civilian shirt

- Leather stock
- Woolen or other period stockings.
- Military brogans
- Pattern of 1839 (.69 cal) cartridge box on white buff sling with eagle breast plate, US plate on box OR 1828 or 1832 pattern box on white buff belt without plates.
- Waist belt with bayonet scabbard or white baldric with eagle plate and scabbard.
- US pattern Flintlock musket with bayonet. 1842 pattern percussion weapons or Charleville flintlocks also acceptable
- Extra flints and cleaning rags
- Issue or period blanket(s)
- Pattern 1832 great coat
- Pattern 1839 forage cap ("wheel hat") or period civilian head wear circa 1835-50
- Knapsack or bedroll

Those Portraying **Regular U.S. Dragoons** (e.g., the Little Rock Guards after their arrival on the Mexican frontier) should have:

- Pattern 1833 winter service Dragoon Jacket or red woolen flannel or jean overshirt
- Pattern 1833 or 1845 winter service Dragoon trousers or civilian trousers
- Issue shirt
- Leather stock
- Woolen or other period stockings.
- Military bootees
- White sword belt of 1833 or 1839 pattern
- 1833 or 1840 "Wristbreaker" Dragoon saber
- Horse pistols in saddle holsters
- 1833 or Grimsley saddle
- Valise
- Horse with current Coggins test
- Tent
- Extra flints and cleaning rags
- Issue or period blanket(s)
- Pattern 1833 mounted services overcoat
- Pattern 1839 forage cap or period civilian head wear circa 1835-50

Those portraying **Militia or Volunteer Infantry** should have:

- Roundabouts (shell jacket), overshirts, hunting frocks (No Rev War period styles please!) or frock and tailcoats circa 1835-50 Out of

date US uniforms are also acceptable. (No Rev War please!)

- Vests, if wearing frock or tail coats circa 1835-50
- Shirt 1835-50
- Stock, or cravat
- Woolen fall front or fly front trousers. CW style is marginally okay. Can be more acceptable if covered by an overshirt. Jean cloth is also okay.
- Woolen or other period stockings
- Military or civilian style brogans or boots.
- Surplus black or white belts of 1812 era vintage
- Cartridge boxes or belly boxes on either white or black belt.
- Bayonet and scabbard on belt if using a military musket.
- .69 caliber Musket or Mississippi rifle
- Extra flints and cleaning rags
- Period blanket(s)
- Period overcoat or blanket coat
- Knapsack or bedroll
- Pattern 1825, 1833, 1839 forage cap or period civilian head wear circa 1835-50.

Some general clothing notes, etc.: The above serves as a good guideline to aid you in your impression. It is by no means complete. Some things should go without saying, but will be reiterated for good measure: No wristwatches, modern eyeglasses, tennis shoes, hiking boots, speckle ware enamel, cigarettes, cigarette lighters, cola cans, beer cans, modern candy bars, Doritos, Fritos, or what have you! Modern medicines are an exception. But please put them in period containers! Weapon-wise, no Enfields or .58 caliber Springfields. These won't come along for another 9 or 10 years.

One thing I have noticed so far in my research is that the soldiers of the Mexican War did camp heavily, even on campaign. Common (A-frame) tents were the norm. In several cases the Regular Army officers would scoff at the volunteers and state militiamen, noting that a regiment of Regulars would have their tents aligned and erected, guards posted, and supper sizzling on the campfires within 20 minutes of breaking ranks at the end of the day's march, while the volunteers would fumble around and even wind up sleeping under the stars. Quite the opposite from what we consider the "progressive" or "hardcore" outlook for the Civil War!

Sources for uniforms is a bit of a problem so far. Unlike the Civil War, there are no commercially patterns for Mex War clothing, so we are striving to find a solution. Over shirts and modifications to the Federal mounted

**Mexican War** (Continued from Page 6)

service jackets appear to be the solution at this point in time. C&D Jarnagin, in Corinth, MS, offers a full line of Mexican War kit for the U.S. Regulars, and have a very decent (e.g., before June) turnaround time.

**References:**

There hasn't been a great deal of popular books issued on the Mexican War over the past decade or so, with the exception of Jeff Shaara's 2001 pre-quel to *The Killer Angels and Gods and Generals*, titled *Gone For Soldiers*, which summarizes the experiences of Shaara's characters in the war with Mexico. In doing some hasty research, I found a few books in my "other" military library which proved to be of good use. Richard Bruce Winders (curator of The Alamo and its associated museum in San Antonio, TX) has written an excellent account of what it was like to be an MW soldier in *Mr. Polk's Army: The American Experience in the Mexican War*. For the campaigns, I found John D. Eisenhower's (son of General and President Dwight D.) *So Far From God: The U.S.-Mexican War 1846-1848* to be an excellent and well-written source. Expanding on the material culture of the period, Ron Fields' *Brassey's History of Uniforms: Mexican-American War 1846-1848* is a treasure trove, discussing not only the U.S. Regulars, but the volunteers and militia of each state mustered and deployed for the War, as well as their opponents, the *soldados* of the *Permanente* and *Activo* battalions of the Mexican Army. I have these in the library at Chez Tom, so please holler if you're interested.

The Frontier Guard Living History Association maintains a forum on their web forums for discussion of other-than-Civil War history, the Manifest Destiny Forum at <http://p197.ezboard.com/ffrontierguardfrm2>. This is an excellent resource for advice and discussion on the time period.

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# THE MEXICAN WAR EXPERIENCES OF ALBERT PIKE AND THE "MOUNTED DEVILS" OF ARKANSAS

By  
WALTER LEE BROWN

In April, 1846, the United States went to war with Mexico over the disputed question of the Rio Grande boundary. To vindicate the shedding of "American blood upon the American soil," Congress on May 13 gave President James K. Polk authority to call into service up to 50,000 volunteers. Two days later Secretary of War W. L. Marcv addressed a letter to Governor Thomas S. Drew of Arkansas, requesting him to organize immediately one regiment of cavalry, or "mounted gunmen," and one battalion of infantry. The cavalry regiment was to rendezvous at Washington, Arkansas, where the men would be mustered into the service of the United States. The infantrymen were to report to Fort Smith as replacements for the troops on the frontier, now all ordered to the Rio Grande by General Taylor.<sup>1</sup> In response Governor Drew issued a call for volunteers on May 27.<sup>2</sup>

Albert Pike, the Whig leader of Arkansas, who had been since 1843 captain of the Little Rock Guards, an artillery company of the state militia, received this news with little joy. He knew that his men would be anxious to go to Mexico and that he would be expected to lead them. He also knew that it would mean a great personal sacrifice to surrender his valuable law practice for a year; but greater still must have been the humiliation he felt at the thought of serving in a Democratic war with which he had little sympathy.<sup>3</sup> With these things in mind, Pike, who was absent from Little Rock attending a session of the Hempstead County Circuit Court when the

request for volunteers appeared, immediately dispatched a letter to the chief executive of the state offering him the "service of one company of infantry."<sup>4</sup> But when Pike returned to Little Rock a few days later, he discovered that his men would not be satisfied to sit out the war at Fort Smith. At a special meeting on June 7 the Guards voted to volunteer as a company of "Flying Artillery" for duty in Mexico. Should their

services as artilerists not be accepted by the governor, they requested to be sent as a company of horse in the Arkansas cavalry regiment.<sup>5</sup> Pike, notified by Governor Drew that his company would be received in the service of the United States only as mounted gunmen, accepted the inevitable, hurriedly converted the Guards into a cavalry corps, and arranged with Jessie Turner of Van Buren, Arkansas, to assume charge of his law practice during his absence.<sup>6</sup> By June 15 Pike's command had acquired its full complement of horsemen and had held a new election of officers. In the voting Pike was the unanimous choice for captain, while Hamilton Reynolds and William H. Causins were elected first and second lieutenants respectively.<sup>7</sup> On June 20 the company left for the rendezvous in Hempstead County.<sup>8</sup>

All ten companies of the Arkansas regiment were assembled at Washington on July 7 when the election of regimental officers took place. Pike was nominated for regimental colonel to oppose Archibald Yell, who had resigned his seat in Congress and returned to Arkansas to enlist as a private in Solon Borland's company. Pike was easily the most experienced and capable leader in the Arkansas cavalry, but ability counted for little in the eyes of the volunteers. Pike's Whig affiliation, his aristocratic air, and his reputation as a "strict disciplinarian,"<sup>9</sup> most surely gave the citizen soldiers of Arkansas a dark view of what they might expect from him. In the balloting only the officers participated. Pike was passed over in favor of Yell, who was popular as a politician if he knew nothing whatever of military matters.<sup>10</sup> Two other Democrats, John Selden Roane and Solon Borland, were elected lieutenant-colonel and major, respectively.<sup>11</sup>

The regimental election over, the Arkansas volunteers were mustered into the service of the United States government on July 13.<sup>12</sup> Five days later the regiment marched with 800 men and a train of forty wagons for Shreveport, Louisiana, 110 miles away, the first lap of the journey to San Antonio, Texas, where they were to report to Brigadier General John E. Wool, then busily engaged training and organizing an expedition against the State of Chihuahua.<sup>13</sup> After a six day march the Arkansas column reached Shreveport, where it was learned that they were to march overland to San Antonio. The march from Shreveport



Regular infantry of the U.S. Army in the Pattern of 1832 winter fatigues and M1839 forage caps worn by the U.S. troops throughout the Mexican War, and issued to the Volunteers when their militia uniforms wore out. White buff leather stands out, as well as the white trouser stripe of the NCO. Weapons are M1842 .69 caliber smoothbores.

request for volunteers appeared, immediately dispatched a letter to the chief executive of the state offering him the "service of one company of infantry."<sup>4</sup> But when Pike returned to Little Rock a few days later, he discovered that his men would not be satisfied to sit out the war at Fort Smith. At a special meeting on June 7 the Guards voted to volunteer as a company of "Flying Artillery" for duty in Mexico. Should their

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got underway on July 26. Eleven days later the column arrived at Robbin's Ferry on the Trinity River, some 165 miles southwest of Shreveport. Here the regiment lay by to receive supplies which had been shipped up the Trinity by steamboat. Bad weather and incessant rain delayed the departure from Robbin's Ferry until August 10, when the regiment again took up the march. Sunday, August 16, found them ferrying across the Brazos River at the town of Washington, a former capital of the Republic of Texas situated just below the mouth of the Navasota River. At last on August 28 the column reached the general rendezvous at San Antonio.<sup>14</sup>

General Wool ordered the Arkansas regiment to encamp at a point some four miles from San Antonio on the small stream that ran through the town.<sup>15</sup> In getting the companies into camp Colonel Yell not only placed them in reverse order, but also failed to make provisions for sanitation in the area. When General Wool came out to inspect the Arkansas regiment a few days later, he noted the unorthodox position of the companies and the unusually poor condition of the camp and immediately ordered them out. "We broke camp," said Pike, "and marched out on a ridge a mile or two away where there was no water. It was a hotter place than 'purgatory'. My company dwindled to sixteen men fit for duty."<sup>16</sup> Another officer in the Arkansas cavalry, while highly pleased with the first encampment, described this last campground as lying "in an open plain, without a particle of shade ... during an excessively hot time." "We have suffered terribly," he went on, "... [and] one morning had nearly 200 on the sick list."<sup>17</sup>

Such stern measures on the part of General Wool did little to make him popular among the "Arkansas Devils," as he soon came to call the Arkansas volunteers. A glimpse of the esteem in which "Old Wool" was held by Colonel Yell's men may be had from the diary of a private in one of the Illinois companies :

General Wool is liked less every day by the volunteers because of his aristocratic manner and his harsh treatment of them. The Arkansas Volunteer Cavalry, which General Wool calls Colonel Yell's Mounted Devils, if provoked by him, would at the first opportunity blow out his life. Recently an Arkansas volunteer passing the General's tent, stopped and out of curiosity looked in. It displeased the General, and he told him to leave ; as he did not leave immediately, he told his orderly to point his gun at him. The Arkansas soldier pointed his gun at General Wool and said, "Old Horse, damn your soul, if you give such orders I will shoot you for certain." General Wool withdrew quickly. Another Arkansas soldier who met the General wearing civilian

clothes in his tent, asked him, "Stranger, have you seen my bay horse this morning?" although he knew it was General Wool. Another time General Wool sent his orderly to the Arkansas camp with the request not to make too much noise. The Arkansan replied, "Tell Johnny Wool to kiss our ass."<sup>18</sup>

For his part, Pike held such conduct among the Arkansas volunteers to be contemptible. He maintained, with probable truth, that their treatment at the hands of General Wool was a direct result of poor leadership by Colonel Yell, whom Pike thought "totally incompetent and unable to learn... [He] is the laughing stock of the men for as yet he has never undertaken to give an order without making a blunder."<sup>19</sup> It would seem that only two of the company



The dragoons winter fatigue uniform issued to the Little Rock Guards for the Northern Campaign in Mexico. This fellow wears the dark blue mounted services jacket with yellow or orange trim, mounted pattern trowsers with a yellow stripe down the outer seam, and the 1839 forage cap. Our fellow here has a Mississippi rifle and the 1840 "wristbreaker" cavalry sabre; while indications are that the Guards were issued the M1843 Hall's carbine.

commanders—Pike and John Preston—had attempted to drill their men since their arrival at San Antonio. Indeed, Pike had the distinction of being the only officer in the regiment who drilled his men while en route from Arkansas.<sup>20</sup> Doubtless Pike's criticism of Colonel Yell was for political consumption on the home front, and it may have been in part the result of soreness over his defeat by Yell in the regimental election. But even such a good Democrat as Major Solon Borland reported from San Antonio that "things in our regiment [have not] been well managed."<sup>21</sup>

By the middle of September General Wool's army was collected at San Antonio. He marched September 26 with some 1,950 men upon his assigned mission of going to Chihuahua. Four companies of the Arkansas regiment remained behind under Major Borland to come up with the rear party with additional supplies. Pike's company, its sick left with Major Borland, marched with the advance column under Colonel Yell.<sup>22</sup> On October 12 the Arkansas cavalry, along with the remainder of General Wool's force, crossed the Rio Grande opposite the Mexican town of Presidio.<sup>23</sup> Once across the river the army encamped to await orders from General Taylor, who, it was learned, had taken Monterey and signed an armistice. A member of Pike's company wrote home :

"Since the news of the Armistice; and our peaceful and bloodless entry into Presidio, all are convinced that the war is quite concluded, are anxious to return—none more so than myself.

I am sick of ranging over uninteresting country, looking for an enemy we cannot find. ... Capt. Pike ... would, himself, gladly be on his way home. He is most anxious for our immediate discharge, which may take place."<sup>24</sup>

But the Arkansas volunteers were not destined to return home at this juncture. General Wool determined to move on to Monclova. Pike's and Preston's companies were separated from the Arkansas regiment and formed into a squadron under command of Pike, the senior captain. Pike was then ordered to escort the topographical engineers in reconnoitering the route to Santa Rosa, which was to be the first stop for the main army on the road to Monclova.<sup>25</sup> Pike's party left Presidio on the morning of October 15. Four days later the detail reached Santa Rosa, 105 miles west of Presidio. The next morning, October 20, Pike's "squadron marched into town with flags flying and sabres drawn" to accept its surrender. He then waited for the main army to come up on October 24.<sup>26</sup> From Santa Rosa General Wool's column moved to Monclova, situated 200 miles south of the Rio Grande, thence on November 24 was ordered to march to Parras, 120 miles west of Saltillo, which the army reached on December 5.<sup>27</sup>

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Pike's squadron was placed under Colonel Yell's command at Parras, where it remained until December 17, when a false alarm from General Worth at Saltillo that the enemy was advancing upon him resulted in a hasty march to Agua Nueva, "twenty miles south of Saltillo, on the San Luis Potosi road." There Pike again encamped with the Arkansas regiment.<sup>28</sup> On January 31 his squadron was permanently detached from Colonel Yell's corps and ordered to report to General Wool at Saltillo. From Saltillo he was ordered on February 8 to Las Palomas, "a narrow pass through the mountains" twelve miles northeast of Saltillo, to relieve the Kentucky cavalry regiment posted there. From Las Palomas on February 14 Pike reported he was

"... putting up a small fortification—a redoubt 24 yards square, with a small lunette covering the entrance..."

We do not know whether Santa Anna is at San Luis, or marching this way as reported; but we are instructed to use all possible vigilance and make daily and nightly reconnaissance of the roads. So, with picket and camp guard, inspection at Reveille, dress-parade at Sunset, and brick-hauling and port-building all day beside, our men are pretty busy; but they have all hardened into good soldiers and stand it admirably.<sup>29</sup>

Meanwhile the remainder of the Arkansas cavalry had been faring poorly. Major Borland, who had rejoined the regiment at Monclova in October, and thirty-four Arkansas volunteers were captured on January 22 while on a reconnaissance detail to La Encarnacion, a town forty miles south of Agua Nueva.<sup>30</sup> And during the first week of February a member of Captain Christopher C. Danley's<sup>31</sup> company was murdered by Mexican civilians. In retaliation a secret party among the men of Danley's and Edward Hunter's companies rode forth to Cantana, two or three miles distance from Agua Nueva, and killed and wounded several innocent people suspected of the murder. The affair was investigated, said Josiah Gregg, but "owing to the difficulty of identifying the men," who, it seems, were not accompanied by any officers, nothing was done with them.<sup>32</sup> General Taylor made a diligent attempt to discover the Arkansans guilty of the atrocity, threatening for awhile to discharge the two companies as an example to other volunteers; but at last changed his mind out of fairness to the innocent men in the commands involved.<sup>33</sup>

Pike was still at Las Palomas when he learned on February 20 that Santa Anna had reached Encarnacion. The following day he was ordered back to Saltillo to strengthen the city's defenses. On the morning of February 22 Pike was ordered to march with General Taylor to Buena Vista, seven miles south of Saltillo, where the American army was

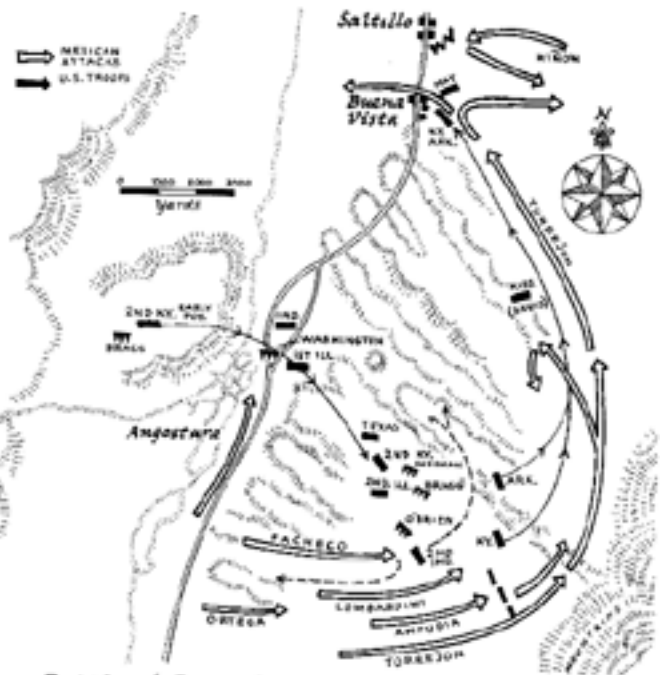
deployed to receive the expected attack of Santa Anna's forces. But Pike was ordered back to Saltillo before the party reached their destination. Returning to town, he dismounted his squadron and deployed them upon the housetops along the central plaza.<sup>34</sup>

That afternoon the Mexicans attacked at Buena Vista, but nothing except light skirmishing and indefinite movements occurred before dark. In the evening General Taylor returned to Saltillo, the central depot of the American force, reported still in danger of an assault

from General Minon. Taylor provided for the city's defense and the next morning returned to Buena Vista, taking with him beside May's squadron and Davis's regiment, Pike's squadron.<sup>35</sup>

By the time Taylor reached the battlefield on the morning of February 23 Santa Anna's forces had turned the American left flank and were threatening the rear supply train at Buena Vista Ranch. At dawn Colonels Yell and Marshall at the extreme left flank had received the main shock of the Mexican charge, and their inexperienced men, along with the Second Indiana Regiment and four companies of Arkansas volunteers under Lieutenant Colonel Roane, who before daybreak had been transferred to the left center to support the Indiana brigade, had been routed. Exactly what happened to the Arkansas troops during this early morning action is a matter of controversy. James Henry Carleton, an officer and eyewitness to the battle, reported that the four Arkansas companies at the left center retired almost at the first firing. He thought that as individuals "they were as brave as any men in the world. But their being entirely without discipline, or any habit of strict military obedience, and their consequent want of confidence in their leaders and in each other, may be fairly assigned as the principal reasons for their precipitate retreat."<sup>36</sup>

Augustus F. Ehinger, a private in the Second Illinois Regiment, who had been shocked, and therefore prejudiced, by the unsoldierly conduct of the Arkansas volunteers who murdered the innocent Mexicans at Cantana,<sup>37</sup> recorded on March 7, 1847, that "The Arkansas Regiment, just as Gen. Taylor predicted, though they boasted, were very



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cowardly in battle. The most of them left their brave Colonel when he made his charge on the Lancers, where he met his death."<sup>38</sup> Josiah Gregg, another eyewitness, said that he did not "expect raw volunteers to stand the severe fire" of the superior numbers of the Mexican force. "In truth," he said, "the 4 companies of Ark. riflemen (commanded by Col. Roane), were, I believe, almost entirely dispersed."<sup>39</sup> And Pike, airing past and present grievances, wrote home to the Arkansas public a week after the battle that the men under Colonel Yell at the extreme left behaved poorly. Exposed to the fire of a Mexican eight-pounder battery, said Pike,

Col. Yell ordered... [his men] to retreat a little way, in order to avoid the cannon range, intending then to wait a charge of the lancers supporting the battery. But the men untaught to maneuver and totally undisciplined, understood the word *retreat*, to be an order to make, each man, the best of his way to the rear... turned and ran off in great confusion. Col. Yell, who behaved most gallantly, the *adjutant*, [Major Gaston] Meares... and others, succeeded in rallying a portion of them... but a great many of them ran to Saltillo.<sup>40</sup>

Others reported, however, that Marshall's and Yell's men put up a stubborn fight for several hours before being driven from the mountainside by a Mexican force which outnumbered them three or four to one.<sup>41</sup>

Seeing the critical state of affairs along the left flank, General Taylor immediately ordered Davis's regiment to the left to meet the advancing Mexicans. He then sent May, with Pike's squadron added to his command, to reinforce Colonels Yell and Marshall, who

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with their partially rallied troops were withstanding a severe charge directly east of the Buena Vista Ranch buildings.<sup>42</sup> In the melee that followed Colonel Yell, "facing the foe and trying to rally his men," was killed,<sup>43</sup> though May's and Pike's timely arrival dispersed the Mexican lancers and sent them scampering to the west to the safety of the hills on that side.<sup>44</sup> In the mean-time Davis's Mississippi Rifles, Colonel Joseph Lane's Third Indiana Regiment, and Sherman's and Bragg's batteries had repulsed a heavier charge southeast of Buena Vista, putting the Mexicans in full retreat at the American left. An unexplained flag of truce, which passed between the two armies at this point, enabled the imperiled Mexican soldiers to re-gain the main army. Late that afternoon the American artillery broke the back of Santa Anna's last great effort. When night came on, his army retreated leaving Taylor's forces victorious.<sup>45</sup>

Because there was some degree of jealousy and friction between the officers and men of Pike's squadron and those of the Arkansas regiment the two commands remained separated after the return to Saltillo following the battle. In April Pike and twenty-five of his men went to Chihuahua to deliver a message from General Taylor to Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan.<sup>46</sup> By the time Pike returned the twelve months' enlistment of his squadron was almost up. Consequently near the end of May the squadron was ordered to Monterey, where he and his men were on June 7 paid and mustered out of the service.<sup>47</sup> Anxious to return home, Pike and the majority of the squadron took deck passage on a ship to New Orleans, thence by steamboat up the Mississippi and Arkansas Rivers to Little Rock. Arriving at the hometown landing on July 9, the volunteers were welcomed by a large crowd. On the same boat with Pike and his men were Colonel Roane and several members of the Arkansas regiment. William F. Pope tells that as the men were debarking the father of one of Colonel Roane's men, J. D. Adams, greeted his son and said, "I hear you all fought like hell at Buena Vista." But J. D., who was still in his teens, gave "one of his characteristic laughs [and] replied: 'We ran like hell at Buena Vista.'" "The Joke," said Pope, "was greatly relished by some, but not by all."<sup>48</sup> Within two weeks the joy of the homecoming was to be marred by a much more unpleasant occurrence—a duel between Pike and Roane.

For the genesis of this quarrel it is necessary to go back to Saltillo, where, on March 8, Pike wrote home to the editor of the *Gazette* a description of the battle of Buena Vista. He passed up no opportunity to criticize the leadership of the regimental officers — Yell and Roane—during the action of February 23.

It is a sad thing [Pike said] that brave men, for they were brave, should be... destroyed for want of discipline. In the first place, the companies of our Regiment engaged there, had been hardly drilled at all, except what little the company officers had done. The Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel had never drilled them since they left San Antonio. Their order once broken could not be restored, and a retreat was bound to be a rout... Had they... possessed that mobility and facility of changing front which only discipline could give, they could not have been routed as they were. Poor Yell! He atoned for his error with his life; but other brave men died with him, who were not in fault... .

It must not be understood that I intend to accuse any, much less officers, of a lack of bravery — on the contrary, the universal testimony is that the officers behaved with great gallantry—but the astonishing confusion for want of discipline, utterly broke up, dispersed and disorganized their commands, so that they could not be collected together. Many of the men behaved heroically, but their individual courage and conduct could not restore confidence or order to the mass...<sup>49</sup>

Soon after writing this letter Pike went to Chihuahua. When he returned to Saltillo on May 22, he was confronted by certain members of the Arkansas regiment with a complaint that he had accused their corps of cowardice in face of the enemy. Pike immediately requested General Wool to appoint a court of inquiry to investigate the false report, which he felt had been spread among the men by the regimental officers, and which, Pike told the general, if not looked into would result in "great difficulty and perhaps loss of life."<sup>50</sup>

The court assembled on May 24 at General Wool's Buena Vista headquarters. Colonel Roane, who had succeeded the deceased Yell, and Captains Hunter, English, Desha, Dilliard, and Pike were summoned for examination. In a statement before the court Pike reiterated that he had never "accused the regiment of cowardice," but he openly declared that the regiment had been "badly managed, owing to want of discipline, and lack of military skill in the commander, which exposed it to great disadvantage." Roane and his subordinate officers, perhaps apprehensive that a full scale investigation of the behavior of the Arkansas cavalry would uncover unpleasant truths, declared themselves satisfied with Pike's statements and announced to the court that the dispute had been "amicably adjusted."<sup>51</sup>

When Pike returned to Little Rock in July, he discovered—evidently what had been concealed at the hearing on May 24 — that both Colonel Roane and Captain Edward Hunter had asserted in letters to the *Banner*

not only that his squadron had been separated from the regiment on February 22-23, but also that it had taken no part in the battle on either of those days, being, as Hunter declared, "without the range of gun-shot."<sup>52</sup> Pike apparently became so vexed at this deception that he took up the matter with Roane personally.

Most writers have attempted to lay the principal blame for the duel that followed upon Pike, whose criticism of the Arkansas regiment, according to these accounts, grew out of the fact that he was brooding over the defeat that Colonel Yell handed him in the regimental election the year before.<sup>53</sup> Surely no one can deny that bad political feelings prompted both Pike's and Roane's statements. The records indicate, however, that Pike's assertions are supportable by evidence while Roane's statement that Pike's squadron was not at the battleground on February 23 was a wilful lie. It may be that Roane intended to embroil Pike in an editorial dispute and thus allow the truth of Pike's case to be confused and destroyed in the eyes of the anti-Whig Arkansas public. But whatever Roane's intention, his plan was disputed by Pike's challenge.

Pike and Roane met on July 29, 1847, on a sandbar in the Arkansas River opposite Fort Smith, in the Cherokee Nation. Only a few spectators were present.<sup>54</sup> Both men displayed admirable courage. At the "call" they stepped forward ten paces, and a pair of dueling pistols was loaded and placed in their hands. Both fired at the word, but neither was hit. The second round proved no more damaging than the first.<sup>55</sup> Fortunately, at this point, while the seconds were arranging for a third fire, Pike's and Roane's surgeons intervened and stopped the combat, apparently threatening to leave the principals helpless on the field if they chose to fire again.<sup>56</sup> This unorthodox interruption proved effective. The duel was stopped; Pike and Roane shook hands and agreed never to refer to the difficulty again.<sup>57</sup> Thus it was, said Rector, that the of fair which he had "calculated" to end with a funeral resulted in a "banquet."<sup>58</sup> Both men returned unharmed to their anxious families and friends in Little Rock.

**Footnotes:**

- 1) W. L. Mares, Secretary of War, to Thomas S. Drew, Governor of Arkansas, War Department, Washington, D. C., May 15, 1846, in Little Rock, *Arkansas, Gazette*, June 1, 1846. Hereafter cited *Gazette*.
- 2) *Gazette*, June 1, 1846.
- 3) Albert Pike, *The Evil and the Remedy* (Little Rock, 1844), 183; Albert Pike to Jessie Turner, Washington, [Arkansas], July 13, [18146, Jessie Turner Papers, Duke University Archives. Microfilm copy in possession of author. Pike requests Turner to assume responsibility for his cases during his absence and informs Turner that "Circum-

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stances forced me to this expedition..."

4) Albert Pike, "To the Little Rock Guards," May 29, 1846, in *Gazette*, June 1, 1846.

5) *Gazette*, June 8, 1846.

6) *Ibid.*; Pike to Turner, July 13, 1846, Turner Papers.

7) *Ibid.*, June 15, 22, 1846.

8) *Ibid.*, June 22, July 13, 1846.

9) Pike had severely disciplined, thereby acquiring the dislike of, several of his men who had gone home without his leave on July 4. See G. B. B. "To the Editor," Washington, Arkansas, July 7, 1846, in *Gazette*, July 13 1846.

10) Josiah Gregg, the famed author of *Commerce of the Prairies*, who accompanied the Arkansas volunteers as a sort of "interpreter-scout," considered Colonel Yell "a very clever, pleasant, sociable fellow, but decidedly out of his element" as a military leader. Gregg thought Pike was the "best disciplinarian and drill officer in the corps . . . and decidedly 'number one' in point of talent and acquirements;" but he considered Pike, in despite of his superior ability, "too stiff and aristocratic in his manner to be popular . . . [and doubted] if he could be elected by a general vote to any office in the regiment." Maurice Garland Fulton, ed., *Diary & Letters of Josiah Gregg* (2 vols., Norman, Oklahoma, 1941), I, 218-219.

11) *Gazette*, July 13, 1846; see; also in *ibid.* a copy of a petition of Pike's men in which they requested him not to participate in the regimental election but to remain in command of their company.

12) *Ibid.*, July 20, 27, 1846.

13) Fulton, ed., *Diary & Letters of Gregg*, I, 208; *Senate Executive Document 32*, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., Serial No. 558, p. 5; George Lockhart Rives, *The United States and Mexico, 1821-1848* (2 vols., New York, 1913), II, 195-219

14) Fulton, ed., *Diary & Letters of Gregg*, I, 201, pp. 206-217.

15) Solon Borland to Major William Field, Camp Yell, San Antonio, Texas, September 28, 1846, in *Little Rock Arkansas Banner*, November 11, 1846; "Auto biography of Albert Pike," *New Age Magazine*, XXXVIII (March, 1930), 142, hereafter cited "Autobiography." Also hereafter *Little Rock Arkansas Banner* cited *Banner*.

16) "Autobiography" *New Age Magazine*, XXXVIII, 142.

17) Borland to Field, September 28, 1846, in *Banner*, November 11, 1846.

18) Augustus Frederick Ehinger, Manuscript Diary of his travels from Illinois to Mexico... as a member of Comp. H., Second Regiment Illinois Volunteers, during the Mexican War, [June 15, 1846 - June 28, 1847], Dec. 16th, [1846]. Translated from the German script owned by Colonel Charles F. Ward, Roswell, New Mexico. Hereafter cited Ehinger Diary. Also in Fulton, ed., *Diary & Letters of Gregg*, I, 261, quoting the unpublished diary of Ehinger.

19) [Albert Pike] to "L.," Patos, Mexico, December 31, 1846, in *Gazette*, February 6, 1847.

20) An extract from a letter of a member of Pike's company written on September 3, 1846, states that "we have been drilling on the road while other companies have been doing nothing." *Gazette*, October 14, 1846.

21) Borland to Major Fields, September 28, 1846, in *Banner*, November 11, 1846.

22) This division of the Arkansas horse was perhaps a result of a quarrel between Major Borland

and Colonel Yell. See Fulton, ed., *Diary & Letters of Gregg*, I, 218-219.

23) *Sen. Ex. Doc. 32*, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., Serial No. 558, p. 18.

24) "Letter From Presidio," October 12, 1846, in *Banner*, November, 25, 1846.

25) John Preston, "To a Friend," Camp near Presidio, Mexico, October 14, 1846 in *Gazette*, December 5, 1846; *Sen. Ex. Doc. 32*, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., Serial No. 558, pp. 18-21; "Autobiography," *New Age Magazine*, XXXVIII, 142.

26) *Sen. Ex. Doc. 32*, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., Serial No. 558, p. 22; "Autobiography," *New Age Magazine*, XXXVIII, 142.

27) *Sen. Ex. Doc. 32*, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., Serial No. 558, p. 28.

28) [Pike] to "L.," December 31, 1846, in *Gazette*, February 6, 1847.

29) Albert Pike, "To a Friend in Little Rock," Las Palomas, Mexico, February 14, 1847, in *Banner*, March 31, 1847.

30) *H. R. Ex. Doc. 60*, 30th Cong., 1st Sess., Serial No. 520, pp. 1106-1109, 1112-1113, 1183-1184. "It is reported," said General Wool, "they were surprised early in the morning, while asleep, with no pickets or sentinels to guard against surprise." *Ibid.*, 1107.

31) Danley himself had been captured with Borland on January 22.

32) Fulton, ed., *Diary & Letters of Gregg*, II, 36-37, 39-40.

33) Ehinger Diary, February 11, 13, 1847; *ibid.*, II, 40; *H. R. Ex. Doc. 60*, 30th Cong., 1st Sess., Serial No. 520, p. 1138; W. S. Henry, *Campaign Sketches of the War With Mexico* (New York, 1847), 308-309; for a quarrel that developed between Pike and Edward Hunter over this affair see *Banner*, March 31, 1847, and *Gazette*, July 22, 27, 1847.

34) [Pike], "Buena Vista Letter," March 8, 1847, in *Gazette*, April 24, 1847-

35) James Henry Carleton, *Battle of Buena Vista* (New York, 1848), 36-37, 43-45; Henry, *Campaign Sketches*, 313; [Pike], "Buena Vista Letter," March 8, 1847, in *Gazette*, April 24, 1847.

36) Carleton, *The Battle of Buena Vista*, 66-67.

37) Ehinger Diary, February 11, 13, 1847.

38) *Ibid.*, March 7, 1847. Ehinger wrote on April 7, 1847, that "Companies B and G, Arkansas Volunteers who behaved so shamefully at Agua Nueva, and who were so cowardly during the Battle of Buena Vista, were today sent to the mouth of the Rio Grande for punishment." *Ibid.*

39) Fulton, ed., *Diary & Letters of Gregg*, II, 48.

40) [Pike], "Buena Vista Letter," March 8, 1847, in *Gazette*, April 24, 1847.

41) Henry, *Campaign Sketches*, 393; Fulton, ed., *Diary & Letters of Gregg*, II, 48-49; Carleton, *Battle of Buena Vista*, 70-72.

42) Henry, *Campaign Sketches*, 316-317; Carleton, *Battle of Buena Vista*, 89-94; Fulton, ed., *Diary & Letters of Gregg*, II, 49-51.

43) [Pike], "Buena Vista Letter," March 8, 1847, in *Gazette*, April 24, 1847; Fulton, ed., *Diary & Letters of Gregg*, II, 49.

44) *Ibid.*; Henry, *Campaign Sketches*, 316-317; Carleton, *Battle of Buena Vista*, 89-94. Cf. Fulton, ed., *Diary & Letters of Gregg*, II, 49, for a view hostile to that of Pike and others.

45) Carleton, *Battle of Buena Vista*, 94-126; Henry, *Campaign Sketches*, 315-316, 319-321; Senate Executive Document I, 30th Cong., 1st Sess., Serial No. 503, pp. 97.210, containing General

Taylor's report of the battle, with the subreports from his officers; Pike, "Buena Vista Letter," March 8, 1847, in *Gazette*, April 24, 1847.

46) J. T. S. [James T. Stevenson] to his father, Arispi's Mills, Mexico, April 17, 1847, in *Gazette*, May 15, 1847; *H. R. Ex. Doc. 60*, 30th Cong., 1st Sess., Serial No. 520, pp. 1127-1129, 1136; Fulton, ed., *Diary & Letters of Gregg*, II, 79, 89, 95-96, 98-100; Robert Seph Henry, *The Story of the Mexican War* (New York, 1950), 236,237.

47) *H. R. Ex. Doc. 60*, 30th Cong., 1st Sess., Serial No. 520, p. 1175. The Arkansas regiment was discharged at Carmago, Mexico, a few days later. *Ibid.*

48) William F. Pope, *Early Days in Arkansas* (Little Rock, 1895), 276; in *Banner*, July 12, 1847.

49) [Pike], Buena Vista Letter," March 8, 1847, in *Gazette*, April 24, 1847.

50) Albert Pike to Brigadier Wool, Camp at Arispi's Mills, May 23, 1847, in *Gazette*, July 22, 1847.

51) See *Gazette*, July 22, 1847, for the record of this court inquiry; the opinion of the court was that the difficulty "grew out of a misunderstanding, and that neither party are [sic] at all to blame in the matter." *Ibid.*

52) See extracts from a letter from Roane, Camp Taylor, Mexico, February 27, 1847, in *Banner*, April 21, 1847; Edward Hunter, "To the People of Arkansas," in *Banner*, July 19 1847, also in *Clarksville Texas Northern Standard*, July 17, 1847.

53) John Gould Fletcher, Jr., *Arkansas* (Chapel Hill, 1947), 121,122; Pope, *Early Days in Arkansas*, 281, asserts that Roane challenged Pike after Pike had severely criticized the conduct of the Arkansas regiment in the columns of the *Gazette*. For evidence that Pike was the challenger see "The Recent Duel," in *Banner*, August 5, 1847. Fred W. Allsopp, *Albert Pike* (Little Rock, 1928), leans toward the Pope version, and is puzzled upon discovering that Doctor James Dibrell, Pike's surgeon at the affair, said Pike was the challenger.

54) Pike was accompanied by Luther Chase and John Drennen of Van Buren, as seconds, Doctor James A. Dibrell of Van Buren, acting as surgeon, and William H. Causins, Pat Farraley, and Doctor R. Thurston, present as friends. Henry M. Rector and Robert W. Johnson of Little Rock acted as seconds for Roane, while Doctor Phillip Burton of Little Rock, served as his surgeon.

55) John Hallum, *Biographical and Pictorial History of Arkansas* (1 vol., NY, 1887), I, 229-230.

56) See Doctor Dibrell's account in the *Gazette*, April 2, 1893, quoted in Pope, *Early Days in Arkansas*, 282.283. For additional evidence that Burton and Dibrell were responsible for the settlement, see "The Recent Duel," in *Banner*, August 9, 1847.

57) "The Recent Duel," in *Banner*, August 9, 1847; "Affair of Honor," in *Gazette*, August 5, 1847, quoting Van Buren, *Arkansas Intelligencer*, n.d.; see also *Northern Standard*, August 21, 1847.

58) H. M. Rector to John Hallum, Little Rock, Arkansas, April 16, 1887, in Hallum, *History of Arkansas*, I, 230.

For more information on the role of the Little Rock Guards in the Mexican War and a company roster, see the Company web site at <http://www.geocities.com/capitalguards/mexico.html>.

# THE ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA BATTLE FLAG: THEN AND NOW

by Craig L. Barry

As chance would have it, I recently found myself driving next to a truck whose driver was using a crude image of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia (ANV) battle flag as a design for the grille of his semi-tractor trailer. It got me thinking (which I wish more people would do when they drive), but in this case my intellectual curiosity was limited to what the image of the ANV battle flag was doing placed where it was. I doubted that the truck driver actually intended to affiliate himself with the historical Army of Northern Virginia. Did he even know the history of this flag?

What was the history of this famous flag, and what was it intended to represent? More words have probably been written about the ANV battle flag than any flag in the United States, except for the "Stars and Stripes." This is especially true if you include the various misnomers applied to this standard such as the "Stars and Bars," the "rebel" flag and the "Confederate" flag; none of which are the ANV battle flag. Well, what is it, then? And how should we refer to it? First and foremost, what it is would best be described as a battle flag designed for an army that officially surrendered in April 1865. What the ANV battle flag is not is a representation of any government, state, commonwealth or otherwise, that ever existed. The ANV battle flag was never intended to represent the Confederate government, in any of its locations, nor the people who lived in the eleven states that seceded from the Union. There are other flags that flew for those purposes. There were three National Flags of the Confederacy, two of which contained a version of the battle flag in the canton or upper left hand corner, but the battle flag itself was never intended to be such a symbol.

Was the flag there an official or even unofficial symbol of rebellion? Actually, there was a flag that represented secession, but that was the "Bonnie Blue" flag, not the ANV battle flag. The "Bonnie Blue" flag flew over the Mississippi capitol building in Jackson after the adoption of the Ordinance of Secession in January 1861. A variation of this flag led the Texas Revolution in 1836. After secession the Republic of Mississippi (as it was first called) used a flag called "The Magnolia," which contained a variation of the "Bonnie Blue" flag's single star in the canton corner, not the familiar blue St. Andrews cross on a red background with thirteen stars. The ANV battle flag would not be designed



until later that year. If the ANV battle flag is not a flag of rebellion, and it does not represent secession, then what was its purpose, who designed it and why?

According to military historians, a member of General P.G.T. Beauregard's staff named William Porcher Miles first suggested the design. Beauregard and several others met in 1861 with the express mission of designing a battle flag for his command. Beauregard originally suggested a red cross on a blue background, but he was reminded that this was contrary to the laws of heraldry. Miles suggested a flag based on what he originally proposed for a CS national flag in February 1861. That flag was a red rectangle with blue diagonally crossed bars and seven stars, one for each of the first states to secede from the Union. The flag did not look right, and it was shelved. He brought it back out in September 1861. The twelve stars representing the twelve seceding states on a blue cross of St. Andrew with a red background looked much better. It is sometimes said that this design, due to the cross of St. Andrew, is of Celtic/Scottish origin, or has some tie to the martyrdom of St. Andrew. *Au contraire*. Historians point out that Miles was of French-Huguenot descent, Beauregard was French-Creole and Joe Johnston (the other main proponent of the ANV flag) was Episcopalian and of English descent. Miles himself stated at the time that there was nothing "ecclesiastical" about the design. The flags of the St. George's cross were resisted by both Southern fundamentalist Christian and Jewish groups. Miles, aware of this, simply tilted the cross diagonally to avoid controversy. There is no proof of any Scottish connection with the ANV flag, and

most Southerners were of English descent originally. If nothing else, we can finally debunk that myth.

Beauregard proposed using this design as the standard battle flag of the Confederate Army, however his influence and authority was limited to what was then called the Confederate "The Army of the Potomac." One of the virtues of this design was that this flag was harder to confuse with the Federal flag. Shooting at the opposing army and not your own is an important priority on a battlefield, so a different and distinct flag made sense. According to flag expert Howard Madaus, this was a problem early in the Civil War. The First National flag, which is the one correctly called the "Stars and Bars," was used by many military units on both a company and regimental level as a battle flag. With the haze of black powder smoke hanging in the air, it was easily confused with the somewhat similar Federal "Stars and Stripes."

Yet, there was not even a single uniform ANV battle flag. It took three years for this style of battle flag, in all its variations, to permeate all the Confederate armies, and some units still never fought under it. There were originally battle flags in use that did not look anything like it. In April 1862 a design by General John Bankhead Magruder was already in use with his "Army of the Peninsula." His flag looked more like a CS Navy signal flag than a battle flag. It was half red and half white divided diagonally and in a rectangle shape. In the West, the Polk flag with its St. George's Cross was a completely different design, as was the Hardee flag, which was blue with a white moon in the center. They solved the problem of confusion as they looked nothing like the ANV or any other battle flag. Throughout the Confederacy, different versions emerged which varied from rectangular to square, and in several different sizes. The first specimens were silk, and the dress silk of the time was a light rose (some would say pink) in color. The vermilion or crimson silk was primarily used for trim, and hence the bolts of cloth were not wide enough to use for flags. The first CS "Army of the Potomac" (later ANV) silk battle flags had three distinct designs. Some had twelve gold stars painted on the blue cross, and gold or white fringe. Some had stars that were sewn on the blue cross. These flags were primarily made by ladies' sewing circles.

By May of 1862; the newly formed Richmond Quartermaster Depot replaced

ladies sewing circles and began producing wool-bunting flags for the now renamed "Army of Northern Virginia." This durable material, and similar cloth imported from Great Britain would serve for the ANV battle flags until the end of the war. According to Madaus, there would be seven distinct "bunting" issues during the course of the war, all featuring the now familiar thirteen stars on a blue cross with a red background. The first two bunting issues had orange trim. The first had a blue cross eight inches wide and white cotton stars three inches across. The width of the cross was changed to five inches wide on the second issue, with enlarged 3.5 inch stars. These first two issues are exceedingly rare, as production records indicate the making of only one hundred.

The most commonly found ANV battle flag is the third bunting issue. In July 1862 the Richmond depot starting producing battle flags with a white border, and most surviving specimens are of the infantry dimensions (forty-eight inch square), including the border. Charleston, South Carolina depot flags were forty-eight inches square without the border. The dimensions are the same as the second issue. By 1863 the supply of battle flags on hand in the Richmond Depot was sufficient to begin reequipping entire divisions. Most of the divisions, except General Pickett's (whose were white for some reason), had their battle honors in dark blue lettering in chronological order on the red quadrants. A unit designation in yellow paint was added to the blue cross surrounding the center star.

The fourth bunting issue began in 1864. The reason for the change is unknown, but it is suspected to have to do with the shipment of wool from England that arrived about that same time. This flag is notably larger in dimension, fifty-one inches square, with the blue cross between 6.5 and 7.5 inches wide. The larger 5.0 to 5.5-inch across stars are set at eight-inch intervals and a  $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch strip of white cotton tape surrounds the cross. Like the third bunting issue, this flag has a white wool-bunting border 1.75 inch wide and folded over.

In September or October 1864 another change was made to the pattern that would affect most of the remaining flags produced until the end of the war. The fifth bunting issue was slightly rectangular (forty-eight by fifty-one inches) and the width of the cross was reduced to between 5.0 and 5.5 inches, and the star diameter to between 4.0 and 4.5 inches. The stars were not set at nine-inch intervals. The remaining issues were sub-variants and mainly issued as replacements for flags worn out or to units without flags. The earliest example of a seventh bunting issue was captured at Waynesboro, Virginia on 2 March 1865. Therefore, the revised pattern

is thought to have originated in January or February 1865. These last flags came devoid of decoration such as battlefield honors or unit abbreviations.

The ANV battle flag belongs only on a battlefield. This is not only an individual point of view, but rather Beauregard himself indicated this flag design was to be used "only in battle." How did we get from there to truck grilles and bumper stickers? Those interested in finding out more about the historical misuse of this particular flag should consider reading *Embattled Banner: A Reasonable Defense of The Confederate Battle Flag* by Don Hinkle, but only if you want the long answer and some of the unsubstantiated Celtic/Scottish theorizing. A fine book which debunks the Celtic myth and shows connections to the flags of Confederate Civil War troops is *Colors and Blood: Flag Passions of the Confederate South*, by Dr. Robert Bonner of Michigan State University. The later is very well researched from period sources.

If you want the short answer, it is simple ignorance of history. I once chaperoned a school field trip to that famous Pennsylvania battlefield. We had a guide who told us that he was tired of hearing from Southern-revisionist history "nuts" that the battle of Gettysburg could have been won by the Confederates if only "Stonewall" Jackson had been there. He was hired by the school to correct that kind of misconception and present an educated point of view. He also told us at great length about the book he wrote, which was for sale in the museum gift shop, where our tour would conveniently end. Shortly after that, we took a break. We were within throwing distance of the equestrian statue of Robert E. Lee mounted on Traveler. If real life were more like the movies, a reincarnated Robert E. Lee would have climbed down from his favorite mount and politely, but firmly, set the record straight. Since that did not seem likely to happen, I pointed to the huge statue of General Lee with a gesture over my shoulder. With my usual gentle touch, we privately discussed the fact that Lee was the one originally quoted as making that statement about Jackson after the war. Further, since neither of us was there, and Lee was present in person, we ought to defer to the General's judgment on the matter. The tour guide expressed that he was not aware of that, but he would certainly check on it. Hopefully, he did. Let me hasten to add that the tour guides there, and at other NPS battlefields have always been very knowledgeable and patient. And after all, the best part about an active interest in the Civil War is that there is always something new to learn, even for them, and especially for me.

It seems we have come to our current state of understanding of the Civil War honestly, however, since we get most of our

information not through time consuming research, but from self-proclaimed "experts" like the one every unit has around the campfire. Keep in mind that these "experts" can only exist if we are lazy enough to accept their erroneous statements without challenge. We have never had more research material available than we have now, so we should be able to reach more informed, not less informed, conclusions. A recent book by Brent Nosworthy, *The Bloody Crucible of Courage*, is representative of the kind of sensible and logical conclusions that can be reached through extensive research of existing evidence and liberal use of common sense. Nosworthy, however, weighs in on weapons and battlefield tactics, and leaves the issue of the ANV battle flag alone. However, there is a wealth of information available on-line, and you should start with the excellent "Flags of the Confederacy" web site [www.confederateflags.org](http://www.confederateflags.org).

If you want to show your "Southern heritage," how about flying the state flag of the time period, since "state's rights" had some part in the decision to secede in the first place? Or fly the wonderful "Bonnie Blue" flag? You can make a more authentic point about Southern heritage while looking well informed about the historically correct place for the ANV battle flag in the process.

Mr. Barry, with invaluable assistance from CS flag expert, Greg Biggs

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March 26th, 2005 is Confederate Flag Day in Arkansas.



## The Captain's Tent

by Tom Ezell

We're getting closer and closer to kicking off the new campaign season, with the first field event of the year coming up next weekend (April 1-3) at Port Hudson, Louisiana. This is also going to be the first "Brigade" event of the year, but I expect the turnout will be kind of low, since only the Red River Battalion and the Brigade staff will be coming in any force. I've been hearing good things about this event for several years now, and have wanted to try it out, but this has been the first real chance to make it down there.

It looks like turnout will be kind of light on our part, too, with only 4-5 folks who have let me know that they're definitely coming. While it's awful disappointing, (and frustrating in that it's hard to plan a party when you don't know how many guests you're going to have) it's something that I'm learning to live with. I'll be packing my private's gear along on the probability that we're not going to be able to field a company on our own, and we'll just make ourselves a bucket of sweet lemonade down there in Louisiana. If you miss Port Hudson, then it's just your loss.

The following week (April 8-10) we'll be taking a break while the rest of the TMVI Battalion heads down to the perennial event at Pleasant Hill, LA. I haven't received any particular information on what's going to be going on down there from the Battalion yet, but it looks to be the same old, same old. Depending on how things turn out, like getting the Battalion commander's sword back in time and getting it engraved, they may try to have a change of command ceremony down there between Colonel Blanco and Colonel Hunt, and they may also try to have their election for the new lieutenant colonel as well. Otherwise, and most probably, these will be put off until the event at Jefferson, TX the first weekend in May. As soon as I find out for sure, I'll get the word out.

Some of us will be taking the April 9-10 weekend to go over and scope out next year's spring Brigade event, at Shiloh National Battlefield Park. This year it's a Federal living history, but in 2006 they'll be hosting the whole Mississippi Valley Brigade in a Confederate program on the anniversary of the battle. Shiloh '05 looks to be a good opportunity to spend a little time at Shiloh, which I haven't really gotten to do yet, as well as catch up with a few old friends from around

the MidSouth. It's another one that I'm really looking forward to.

We'll take another weekend off, and then we'll have our maximum effort event for April (23-25), with the second attempt at recreating the Battle of Marks' Mills down near Fordyce. Of all the events we've done over the past couple of years, I keep hearing the most about Marks' Mills, so this will be a little special. The bushwhackers will be back with reinforcements, and have already placed a bounty on me. I plan to have a few surprises for the bushwhackers myself... and this is shaping up to be one of the best events of the year. If you don't come out to another event with the Company this year, you need to mark your calendars for April 24-25, and come to Marks Mills with us. Bring lots of ammo, and be ready for lots of action. This will definitely not be a SOYA event (e.g., *Sit around On Your Ass*), as we will be deep in hostile territory down there.

May will be wrapped around a different kind of event, as we try to field a team for the Arkansas State Muzzleloading championships the weekend of May 13-14. See Steve's article on Page 4 of this issue to see some of the hard work and effort that he's put into this so far. The past two range days I've attended up there have been real eye-openers. I used to shoot competitively back in another life, and figured that doing the same thing with an Enfield, especially at 50 to 100 yards, would be no different. Boy, was I surprised! The first time we went up there, I took my M1842 smoothbore with service ammunition, and felt pretty good about it. One of the regular shooters remarked, "You boys are pretty deadly with them things." On the second trip, I took my Enfield, only to be sharply shocked at the difficulty in even keeping the strike of the round somewhere on the paper instead of bounding over the horizon somewhere. A change in ammunition probably had a great deal to do with it, but I've got a lot of work to do before I start feeling cocky about it again... Get in touch with Steve, and he'll get you set up...

### SO FAR FROM GOD...

Maybe it was some sort of premonition, or sign, but the cute little senioritas from the Mexican club that we ran into at the St. Patrick's Day parade were a harbinger of yet another twist. On the morning following the parade, I received a note from the Old State House asking if we were interested in helping with a living history event for a new year-and-a-half long exhibit that they will be opening on June 18, focused on Arkansas's role in the 1846-1848 Mexican War. To sweeten the deal somewhat, the exhibit will focus on and the opening will feature the Little Rock Guards, the antebellum name for the city's

Capital Guards of the Secession crisis and the Civil War.

Earlier in this issue of the Sentinel I covered some of the ongoing efforts to organize a local unit to do living history programs and some reenactments focused on the Mexican War. I plan to join up with this, and am fortunate to have most of the ordnance stuff already in the closet somewhere from my old hardcore days, so about all I need to come up with is a jacket, trowsers, and cap. We're working hard to make it simpler for other folks, and for once we may have an official sponsor for at least some of this stuff.

So what does the Mexican War have to do with our Civil War hobby?

To me, at least, it's two things. First, the whole impression is seeking to be focused on the forerunners of our own Capital Guards - Albert Pike's local militia company who were, by all accounts, Arkansas's only contribution to the War that was really worth a flip. Second, I believe that you can't really understand the American Civil War until you also have a deep appreciation for the War with Mexico some 14 years prior. The seeds of the Civil War were sown in Mexico with the acquisition of the southwestern territories and California and the subsequent political wrangling over whether Southern citizens should be allowed to take or hold slaves in the new territories, as well as concerns over the balance of political power between the slave and free states in the U.S. Senate. "Manifest Destiny" reached its fruition there, as the United States truly extended its reach from sea to shining sea.

It's also a direct parallel to the wars of this century in the Middle East, as the Mexican War was widely unpopular at home here in the U.S. and saw the first organized anti-war protests... a stigma that it still carries today. Please read thru the propaganda in this month's submittals, and think about giving it a try. It's different from what we usually do, and a wholly new impression, but it can actually be done pretty easily.

And besides, you really want to be able to master Scott's drill manual as well as Hardee's and Casey's don't you? (Hint: there is no doubling, and no double-quick (or even quick time) in Scott's manual.)

### CLEBURNE MEMORIAL 2005

Saturday, March 19 was one of those blue-bird days we all dream about as several of us set off on the annual spring pilgrimage to Helena's Confederate Cemetery in honor of General Patrick Cleburne's birthday. On behalf of the Capitol Guards we had George Davis, Tom Ezell, Mike Loum, Harvey Moore, and Ken Nations kitted out on top of the hill. Attendance was way down from the past couple years, with only 10 muskets in the ranks - 3 from the Capitol Guards, 4 from

*Continued on Page 17...*

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

the 1st Arkansas, and three strays. I sort of helped with that shortfall, I guess, as I had finally gotten my musket squeaky clean the night before and wasn't really wild about getting it dirty again, so I decided to sham... and only brought my toad-stabber and a new frock coat to stand in the back of the crowd and spectate. Dr. Mike Dougan's speech was rousing, and as I anticipated, was well worth the hundred mile ride to hear it. After the service we sought out one of the local barbecue joints for dinner, and toured the Cleburne historical sites before heading into the setting sun and back to Little Rock. All in all, this was one of the better-organized memorials in recent history, and if you weren't there, you missed a good one.

**OLD GLORY UPDATE**

The new Union battleflag arrived in the mail on St. Patrick's Day, and after several evening's labor, is now decorated with 34 hand-painted 3-inch gold stars on each side of the union. It's a beauty. We had it in its unpainted form at the Cleburne service, and will unfurl and fling it to the breeze at Marks' Mills this coming month. You don't realize just how big "6 feet square" is until you handle this thing... each stripe is nearly six inches wide.

**JEFFREY'S HOME!**

As the Sentinel was going to press this evening, I received word that the 37th Illinois' Jeffrey Stewart had finally arrived safely at home in Little Rock yesterday afternoon (March 26). We can all breathe a little easier, and offer up a fervent prayer of thanksgiving for his safe return. At Jeffrey's convenience, we'll be holding a welcome home dinner party for him at a local dining establishment. Details to follow as soon as they're set up.

**COLONEL DAVIS**

Our own George Davis of the Capitol Guards has finally caught up in rank with his distant cousin, Jefferson F., yesterday at the Confederate Flag Day ceremony, when he was appointed as an honorary Colonel in the Arkansas SCV's Cleburne Corps. Nobody that I could find in the SCV knew just what "Cleburne's Corps" really is, but it is a high honor in the group, and George got a really neat medal and certificate to prove his new rank. Congratulations, Colonel George!! Capitol Guards in attendance at Flag Day were George Davis, Tom Ezell, Mike Loum, and Chuck Durnette.

Until we meet again...

*Cave ne ante ullas catapultas ambules.*

Tom Ezell

**Coming Events**

**April 1-3, 2005 — Siege of Port Hudson Re-enactment**, Port Hudson State Historic Site, Zachary, LA (MVB Brigade max effort event, Brigade Federal impression)

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

**April 23-24, 2005 – Battle of Marks' Mills Re-Enactment**, Fordyce, Ark. Sponsored by the 1st Arkansas. Federal impression (36th Iowa)

**May 13-15, 2005— State Muzzleloading Championship Shoot**, Berryville, AR. Confederate impression.

May 20, 2005 — Cabot Middle School (S) living history, Cabot, AR

May 30, 2005 — Memorial Day observance, Minnesota Monument, Little Rock National Cemetery, Little Rock, AR.

June 18, 2005 – Old State House Living History, "Try Us: Arkansas in the War with Mexico" exhibit opening. Old State House Museum, Little Rock, AR. Mexican War volunteers impression.

June 25-26, 2005 – Vicksburg Siege Living History, Vicksburg National Military Park, Vicksburg, MS.

**July 16, 2005 – Company Drill**, Reed's Bridge Battlefield Park, Jacksonville, AR

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

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

**August 20, 2005 – Company Drill**, Reed's Bridge Battlefield Park, Jacksonville, AR

**September 10-11, 2005 – Bloomfield, MO Picket Post.** Confederate impression.

September 17-18, 2005 – Arkansas Post National Memorial living history. Federal impressions

**October 2-4, 2005 – Battle of Corinth Re-enactment**, Corinth, MS. Sponsored by the North/South Alliance, N/SA, MVB, and TMVI maximum effort event. Confederate impression (Johnson's 15th Arkansas).

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

October 31, 2005 – Big Boo-Zeum Bash, MacArthur Museum, Little Rock, AR

**November 5-7, 2005 – Civil War Weekend at Old Washington**, Washington, AR. Confederate impression. MVB, TMVI Maximum effort event. Confederate impression.

*Events marked in bold type are maximum effort events as voted upon by the Company, and your attendance is expected. If for some reason you will be unable to attend a max effort event, please contact Steve Shore or Tom Ezell (6th Arkansas) or W.J. Monagle (37th Illinois) beforehand.*

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

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

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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.

**Port Hudson** (Continued from Page 2)

- 8:45 Battalion morning formation in front of the museum.
- 9:00 Park opens with Flag Raising Ceremony
- 9:30 Visitors are invited to visit the Soldier's Camps, Demonstration Row and the Sutlers
- 10:00 Church Service - 1860's style
- 11:00 Artillery Demonstration
- 11:30 Lunch
- Sunday Afternoon, April 3, 2005
- 12:30 Formation
- 1:00 Spectator battle.
- 3:00 Civil War Doctor Demonstration
- 3:30 Civil War Baseball Game. Children can learn to play Townball like the soldiers used to play.
- 4:00 Civil War era Children's Games will be demonstrated
- 5:00 Park Closes for visitors.

This year identification badges will be issued. Reenactors, military and civilian, are expected to have their ID on them at all times.

Failure to identify oneself with the proper event identification is grounds for removal from the event. Anyone violating this rule will be removed by the State Park's enforcement officers.

**CAMPING & AMENITIES**

There will be only two types of camping: primitive military camp and a semi-permanent winter quarters type camping. Civilian reenactors will be allowed to camp with their military unit or in a designated area near the museum. There will be no modern civilian campsites. The primitive camps are in the woods, one only a few yards from the regular Federal camp and one near the regular Confederate camp. Both of the primitive camps are remote enough that you will feel the serenity of being to yourselves. The regular Federal campsite will be situated around the pond, while the Confederate campsite will be along the woodline, between the Visitor's Center and the Fort Desperate trail. Running water and restrooms will be available at the Visitor's Center 24 hours a day. There will be hay and firewood available. Those in the primitive camp will have access to all the amenities but will have to walk a bit further to access them. In addition, there will be a Saturday evening meal provided to all period-dressed reenactors.

The Mississippi Valley Brigade has chosen to serve rations/meals at the Port Hudson event (April 2-3, 2005). At this event we will be portraying the 165th NY in garrison. During this event, the Brigade is offering to serve two breakfasts, one Saturday and one Sunday morning. The breakfasts will be hot cereal and fruit one morning; eggs, sausage or bacon, and bread the other morning. They are also planning to serve a meal Saturday evening. This meal will consist of beef chunks (1/4-1/2 pound of meat per man) with gravy, rice, beans, and cookies. In addition, they are also planning on serving a very light mid-day meal Saturday and Sunday. No beverages will be provided, (i.e., bring your own coffee...) For those who wish to participate, the price per person will be \$7.50. Those wishing to participate should pay their money directly to the Brigade staff. Lt. Chuck Toney, the Brigade Commissary Officer, will be at the spring muster in March. Those wishing to participate in this ration/meal will be able to pay him directly at muster. Questions concerning this issue should be directed to the MVB staff.

**OTHER INFORMATION**

There will be sutlers on site and will be set up convenient to both camps. There is included a tentative schedule and map for directions to the event. There are no motels within at least ten miles of the Historic Site area and if you have dependents that need lodging, there are

a number of motels off of I-10 and I-12 in Baton Rouge. Out of town visitors should consider motels on the east and south sides of Baton Rouge. There are some smaller grocery-type stores nearby but you may wish to consider shopping in Baton Rouge for necessary supplies before attending.

This year at Port Hudson, the OCR (Order of the Confederate Rose, a sort of non-hereditary, female auxiliary for the Sons of Confederate Veterans) will be holding a lunch basket auction to raise money for a memorial to be placed at Morganza.

We are inviting all ladies (15 and older) to prepare a lunch basket with food enough for two. We would prefer homemade, however, if not possible, please have the ladies take the food out of the store container. The lady will get her basket and any dishes back.

The basket may be dressed up as the lady wishes, but not to let on as to who made it. She should make a list of the food items and attach it to the outside. This will be used as a temptation to get the gents to place their bids. The gents who will be bidding on them should not know who made the basket. The winner will then eat their lunch with the lady who made it.

The terrain is heavily wooded and very hilly with large ravines and gulches. You will get a true appreciation for what the Federal soldiers went through in the two large assaults on the works. Come on out and get into the trenches, the ravines and the hollows of Port Hudson. See why Nathaniel Banks never took it by assault. It will become very clear to you. It is not often that we, as reenactors, are given the opportunity of doing our thing on actual battlefields.

For additional information or questions;  
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