

The Sentinel



Vol. 9, No. 5 – The Newsletter of the 6th Arkansas Infantry, Company A, C.S.A. – May, 2005
Living Historians
http://www.geocities.com/capital_guards

36th Iowa Sweeps Marks' Mill '05

The Capitol Guards' long anticipated return to Marks' Mill was very different from our first trip down there in 2003. The first iteration has long been a fond memory for both the 6th Arkansas and the 37th Illinois, and we were eager to see if we could recreate that old magic. The registration numbers were promising, and despite a very busy schedule leading up to the event, it was finally time to sling the knapsacks and head to Fordyce.

I had a late start and a bit of entanglement with rush hour traffic getting out of Little Rock, but was still in high spirits when I pulled into the park near sundown. Surprisingly, there was little going on, and the overall turnout was very light for the Confederates. Both sutlers had suddenly cancelled out, and it was starting to look a lot different than the 2003 event.

As the Federal "army," we had been moved into the main park area this time, and found ourselves camped adjacent to the small city set up by the Ricebird Artillery. First Sergeant Shore had arrived early, and had a neat row of dog tents started as we settled in for the evening. I had a bit of an unpleasant moment maneuvering the wagon out of our area and thru the edge of Artillery City, but that's just what I get for violating a cardinal rule and bringing the truck into camp in the first place, I guess.

Camaraderie around the campfire was joyous, as usual, as we told the old stories time and again, and even sang a few songs. As the evening got chilly, most of us drifted off and sought our blankets. And chilly it was, dipping down into the low forties before reveille shook us out.

Roll call showed that we still had everybody we started with the night before, with several more late arrivals expected; and then it was time to get the coffee going and start working on breakfast. After a hearty meal, and at least one kettle of coffee, the Captain went to officers' call while the sergeants saw that weapons were cleaned and ready for inspection.

Gunfire sounded off in the distant woods. We had been told that a large band of bushwhackers were operating in the area, and apparently they had run into some of the Secessionists' outposts. Shortly afterward the shooting grew closer and we stood to arms, but

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"Company B, 36th Iowa Volunteers" reprises its role at the 2nd biennial reenactment at Marks' Mill. Front row: Steve Shore, W.J. Monagle, Jim DeCann, Richard Stewart, Harvey Moore, Mark Backus, and Jeffrey Stewart. Standing: Tom Ezell, Ken Nations, Marcus Dailey, Bob Black, Corey Platt, Mike Loum, Edgar Colvin, and Sheldon Gately.

Capitol Guards Quit TMVI Battalion

During our Company business meeting at Marks' Mill on April 24, the Capitol Guards voted to withdraw their membership in the Trans-Mississippi Volunteer Infantry Battalion, and to seek to continue affiliation under the umbrella of the Mississippi Valley Brigade and the First Confederate Division. Counting both those members who were present at the event, plus a number who submitted their preferences in absentia, the vote to leave the Battalion was unanimous.

At the Pleasant Hill event on April 10, the companies of the TMVI met and discussed their differences and dissatisfaction with the imposition and enforcement of impression standards by the Brigade, as well as other issues with which the battalion staff and companies

were not happy. In short order and without further ado, the member companies then voted to withdraw from the MVB. The 6th Arkansas was not present at Pleasant Hill, and the company leadership was neither consulted nor informed about this decision until the following week, when General Griffin contacted Capt. Ezell to ascertain whether the absent Arkansas companies agreed with the Battalion's decision. The battalion's move did take us by surprise, since the last communication we had received from the battalion on or about Valentine's Day indicated that the brigade/battalion issues had been amicably resolved.

The TMVI Battalion was organized at Prairie Grove, Arkansas in 1996, with the 6th Arkansas as a charter member. The 6th has been a pretty faithful member of the TMVI

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Marks' Mill (Continued from Page 1...)



Ken Nations and Steve Shore at Marks' Mill

the fuss faded away, and we returned to our routine duties.

The last of the stragglers came into camp, and we were then at full strength for the weekend. Standing up for Uncle Sam were Steve Shore, Mark Backus, Bob Black, Marcus Dailey, Jim DeCann, Sheldon Gately, Mike Loum, W.J. Monagle, Harvey Moore, Ken Nations, Corey Platt, Jeffrey Stewart, and Richard Stewart. David Sesser joined us early Sunday morning, but this would be all that we would have to work with for the weekend.

We had an hour or two of time to kill before the parade was scheduled, so we held a formal weapons inspection and went through an hour's refresher on drill – the manual of arms, the firings, deploying as skirmishers, stacking arms, and then a short session of bayonet drill, which was well received by our rank and file, and put a deep impression on the Johnnies across the way.

At the close of drill, it was time for a short break, and we gathered our traps to go hitch a ride into Fordyce for the Cotton Belt Parade. Since the local folks had cheered us back in 2003, we now unfurled "Ol' Glory," our regulation-sized U.S. national color to the breeze for the first time, and an impressive sight she was! The colors were a good attention-getter throughout the weekend, so we probably are getting our money's worth on this investment.

The parade took the same route as before, to about the same sized crowd. Numbers wise we were pretty equal to the Rebs... The Confederates led out on the march, stopping every so often to shoot off their muskets. They were followed by a pickup truck and trailer hauling the Ricebird Artillery, with us Yankees bringing up the rear. We held our fire, keeping our guns clean and our cartridge boxes full for more serious work later in the day. It seemed a lot shorter this year, and before we really realized it, we were back at the buses and on the way back to camp.

On arrival at camp, we found that the bushwhackers had come calling in our absence,

raided our commissary supplies, and left a calling card. We took time to scrounge a noon meal from friendly local citizens, then set out to return the visit as required by military etiquette. A sizable patrol of Rebels had passed by "off to hunt the bushwhackers," so we decided to help their efforts a bit and moved out to cover a blocking position several hundred yards west, thinking that the Rebs would push the bushwhackers toward us. As we settled into position, the fighting increased and moved directly in front of

us, so we cautiously crossed the road and formed a heavy skirmish line, then quietly moved forward. The first thing we caught were a couple of Reb pickets who were focused on the fighting to their front, and never realized the Yanks were in the game until we had gobbled them up from their rear. Easing forward, we ran into the Rebs, who excitedly pointed out that the bushwhackers were "down this way, down that way, and there's some more of 'em down there, too."

They had gotten into sort of a Mexican stand-off, where a couple bushwhackers were holding a local woman as hostage. We split our group into two parts, with Steve, Ken, Bob, and I moving down a trail to the left while W.J., Jim, Corey, Mark, and Marcus went to the right. Flanking the hostage-takers, we blew them out of their position with firepower, then worked forward to take the pair who were covering their rear as well. Cleaning out this little nest, we left their carcasses for the hogs to eat and went in search of our companions. They were nowhere to be found, so we eased back into camp, figuring they had gone there ahead of us. A quarter of an hour later, the Lost Patrol turned up, leading three prisoners, including the infamous outlaws "Red Fred" Baker and "Uncle Tom" Yearby, along with a local free lancer. The three were disarmed and placed under guard, but shortly afterward agreed to take the oath of allegiance to the United States. In reward, they were dosed with some spring tonic, and released on their parole to never again bear arms against the Union.

By now it was time to head out for the afternoon's scripted battle in an open field about a mile away. Since the last time we were down there, the field had been divided in half by a substantial fence, so there was a lot less room to play in.

Neither of the battle scenarios for the weekend resembled the actual 1864 battle in the least, what we had was at most a tactical demonstration. Saturday's objective had the

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Quitting the TMVI (Continued from Page 1...)

since that time, so it was a difficult decision to part ways. However, while the 6th Arkansas has been striving to improve its impression over the past five years, the majority of the rest of the battalion has not. Other issues arose during the same time, including a perceived favoritism toward the Texas companies and a strong unwillingness to participate in events outside a small circuit, with the only differing events being Prairie Grove every other year, and wherever the First Confederate Division held its annual maximum effort event. And with the strengthening of uniform standards by the First Confederate Division, the TMVI became a magnet for a number of less-than-authentic companies from Texas and Louisiana, making it a tougher job to bring about an overall improvement in the battalion.

The following letter was forwarded to Colonel Hunt and the battalion staff following our return from Marks' Mill:

*In Camp Near Ashley's Mills, Arks.
April 24, 2005*

*Colonel Ricky Hunt, Commanding
Trans-Mississippi Volunteer Infantry (TMVI)
Battalion*

Dear Colonel Hunt:

It is my sad duty to inform you that in a regularly-scheduled meeting of Company A, 6th Arkansas Infantry, on April 24, 2005, the Company decided to resign its membership in and affiliation with the Trans-Mississippi Volunteer Infantry Battalion. This decision, including the vote by members present and those voting absentee, was unanimous.

I assure you that this decision bears no ill will, disrespect, nor disparagement toward the TMVI Battalion, its member units, nor individual officers and members of the TMVI. We look back at many fond memories of our relationship and experiences with the Battalion and our friends therein. However we also believe that the growth of our Company and that of the Battalion is diverging, and that this decision will be beneficial to restoring harmony within both units.

We wish you and the Battalion success in your future endeavors, and God speed.

Very respectfully yours,

*T.E. Ezell
Captain, Comdg. Company A,
6th Arkansas Volunteers
"The Capitol Guards"*

We parted amicably with the TMVI, and bear them no ill will in their efforts to maintain their status with the First Confederate Division as we in turn seek to maintain our own. It's going to be an interesting summer, it seems...

141st Anniversary Re-Enactment, Marks' Mills – April 24-25th, 2005



Sheldon Gately shows off "Ol' Glory," our new U.S. National color, which was unfurled for the first time at Marks' Mill.



Uncle Sam's representatives at Marks' Mill: the Capitol Guards and the 37th Illinois. Front row: Steve Shore, W.J. Monagle, Jim DeCann, Richard Stewart, Harvey Moore, Mark Backus, and Jeffrey Stewart. Standing: Tom Ezell, Ken Nations, Marcus Dailey, Bob Black, Corey Platt, Mike Loum, Edgar Colvin, and Sheldon Gately.



Saturday morning in camp.



A little "manly ballet" with the bayonets at the end of Saturday morning drill gets the blood pumping...



A little welcome downtime on Saturday afternoon around the fire. L to R: W.J. Monagle, Sheldon Gately, Marcus Dailey, Harvey Moore, Jeffrey Stewart, Bob Black, and Richard Stewart.



Home, sweet home away from home... Ken Nations tries to quiet his barking dogs...

Blasting Away at Berryville...

On May 13-14, the Capitol Guards ventured to Berryville, Arkansas to enter the State Muzzleloading Championships at the invitation of the Arkansas Muzzle Loading Asso-

ciation. Steve and Aaron Shore, Bob Black, Tom Ezell, W.J. Monagle, and Todd Clampitt made the long march to north Arkansas to burn some serious powder (with lead in it!) All

agreed it was an eye-opening experience, and a fantastic education. Steve has probably created a bunch of shooting fanatics with this one...



"LOAD!" The Capitol Guards toe the line at the beginning of the match Saturday afternoon.



"COMMENCE FIRING!" The lead begins to fly as the match commences. The name of the game was to put as many hits on the target as possible during a five-minute time period, using Hardee's drill for loading and firing. Unlike the other matches, which emphasize deliberate shooting, the rapid-fire match was a big hit with the public, not to mention that they could actually see the big minies blowing holes through the targets!



Steve Shore cuts loose with his M1842 .69 caliber smoothbored "pumpkin slinger." When he hit the target, it was very obvious.



Team 1 (Todd Clampitt, W.J. Minagle, Bob Black, and Tom Ezell) took the match with 25 hits in the black.



Team 2 (Ethan ____, Aaron Shore, and Steve Shore) were handicapped with only three shooters, but still put 13 hits on the Yankees, though they let one get away.



The weekend's real winner was Aaron Shore, who won the Junior Marksman's Aggregate, taking the gold medal, and took silver and bronze in two other matches. Here he shows his medals, trophy, and some of the swag he won.

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.

"The Little Rock Guards" Living History at the Old State House Museum, June 18, 2005

June's max effort event for the Capitol Guards will take us back in time a little bit, to the Company's first formation and service in the War with Mexico! In support of the Old State House exhibit opening on June 18th, the Museum wishes to sponsor 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 the 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." 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. Some of the thing we will be doing is learning Scott's drill, as it was used in America from the War of 1812 up to the Civil War, and the fine art of handling a flintlock musket.

In the evening, we will have a dance on the front lawn of the State House. There will be a period band with a dance caller. This will be open to the general public and again this will give reenactors an opportunity to mix with the general public, as well as providing an opportunity for the ladies to dress up and have a good time .

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

Uniforms: For the June 18 event, we are looking at the following for the "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 trowsers; 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! No .58 caliber muskets;

these would not have come along for another 10 years.

The Company loaner box will have three or four blue jackets that will pass, so don't let the absence of the right jacket deter you from coming out. Get in touch with Tom, and we can get you lined up...

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!

As far as future events, the Museum plans at least three other weekend events centered around the Little Rock Guards: one or two programs focused on the unit's experiences in Texas and Mexico, as well as a final "welcome home" reception as the Guards mustered out of Federal service and returned home to Little Rock. So at least locally there's room to use this impression in the future, as well as a number of other events at the frontier forts over in Oklahoma.

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-sequel 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.

Mississippi Valley Brigade to Host Reorganizational Meeting in Vicksburg

Location:

Battlefield Inn
Jefferson Davis Meeting Room
4137 I-20 N. Frontage Road
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3498
800-359-9363
www.battlefieldinn.org

Members of the Progressive Reenactor Community:

The staff and commander of the Mississippi Valley Brigade invites you to attend a very important and significant organizational conference this July in Vicksburg, MS. The purpose of the conference is to share ideas, goals and visions for forming a Brigade made up entirely of progressive reenactors. All members of authentic living history messes and companies, are welcome and strongly encouraged to attend. Certainly, if you lead such a unit, your presence is greatly encouraged. Just as much as we desire to share our ideas, it is especially important to hear yours!

The Mississippi Valley Brigade is a standing brigade of the First Confederate Division. Our current two member battalions are the Red River Battalion and the Elk River Battalion. Both of these units are progressive in their impressions. We also enjoy a strong relationship with the WIG and the Buttermilk Rangers. We do not currently have, nor desire to recruit, mainstream reenacting units. In fact, our vision is to build up a Brigade of men dedicated to an authentic impression in every way. It is this exciting proposition and other important details that we desire to discuss in Vicksburg.

The battlefield Inn has blocked off 15 rooms at a discounted rate of \$62 for one person and \$66 for two people. This includes a complete breakfast buffet and two tokens redeemable for drinks from the bar. All you need to do is call the 800# above and reference the Mississippi Valley Brigade meeting. This is a nice hotel and it sits next door to the Vicksburg national battlefield. Of course

Vicksburg is a haven for Civil War enthusiasts. There are several antebellum homes to visit, museums to tour and a historical downtown full of antique shops www.vicksburg.org. There is much to do for the whole family and a great way to spend a weekend. However the brigade is not responsible for funds that may be lost at the casino boats.

I look forward to seeing you in Vicksburg!

YOS,

Mark Griffin
Mississippi Valley Brigade
www.MVBrigade.org

Living History Pea Ridge National Military Park, Arkansas Event Guidelines July 9-10, 2005

On the weekend of July 9-10, 2005 a Civil War living history program will be held at Pea Ridge National Park. This event is being sponsored by The Union Rifles. Its purpose is to portray a typical company of Union infantry during the Battle of Pea Ridge, March 7-8, 1862.

Participation : Participation is by invitation only and is limited to members and guests of The Union Rifles, the Hairy Nation Boys, the Nefewes Mess, the Barley Corn Boys, The Holmes Brigade and the Olathe Union Guard.

Individuals or units other than the above who wish to participate must apply through one of these groups. All participants must be pre-registered in advance using the attached form. There is a \$10.00 ration fee for the event. It will be used mainly to provide for the ration issue, which will be provided by the Hairy Nation Boys.

Guiding Impression: The guiding impression will be Company "G", 9th Regiment Iowa Volunteer Infantry. Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Francis Herron, the Ninth was heavily engaged in the first day's action on the "shelf" on the side of Big Mountain, and in the fighting around Elkhorn Tavern. Colonel Herron, though wounded and captured near the end of the day, was later awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his part in the battle. He was later exchanged for Confederate Brigadier General Louis Hebert, who was also captured during the battle. Herron would later go on to become

a general, and would play important roles in the Battle of Prairie Grove and the Siege of Vicksburg.

Uniform and Equipment: The preferred uniform is a plain forage cap (without brass insignia of any kind), a frock coat or fatigue blouse (sack coat), and sky-blue trousers. For those without a forage cap, a plain dress (Hardee) or black civilian slouch hat is acceptable. Hats must have ribbons and a functional sweat band. Infantry booties (brogans) are preferred, although boots are acceptable.

The Ninth was armed with .69 caliber smoothbore muskets, probably a mix of 1816 conversions and 1842 percussion types. For those who do not have these, .58 caliber Enfield or Springfield rifles are acceptable. The standard accouterments - .69 or .58-cal. cartridge box with sling, waist belt, cap pouch and bayonet scabbard - are required.

Field equipments should include the standard haversack and canteen, mess gear and blankets. Shelter tents had not yet been issued to the Army of the Southwest at this point in the war. They may be carried and used as either coverings or ground cloths, but should not be pitched. If desired, shelter should be composed of a "shebang" (half-tent) made by pitching a rubber (gum) blanket along one of the rail fences. The Ninth's camp was located near Pratt's Store. The regiment marched to the area of the Tavern without their tents. Larger tents - A-frames, walls or Sibleys - will not be needed.

Organization & Rank Structure: The participants will be organized into a single company of infantry. Rank positions will be appointed, and will consist of a captain, 1-2 lieutenants, a first sergeant, 2-3 sergeants, and four corporals. These will be assigned, regardless of unit affiliation, from among those who apply. Please indicate your desire to hold such a position on the registration form.

Camping: The camp will be located in the area around Elkhorn Tavern. We will do our best to find shady spots, and the various unit/messes will not be required to all camp in the same place as long as they are close enough to fall in for drills, etc. when required.

Bivouac style camping will be done, with the troops either bedding down in the open or building "shebangs" using gum blankets or brush gathered in the nearby woods. Please note that no cutting of live trees is allowed. Don't forget to bring rope or twine with which to construct shelter.

Rations and Cooking: There will be one issue of field rations on Saturday morning. It will consist of ten hardtack crackers, approximately 1/4 pound of coffee and 1 pound of bacon. The cost of these items will be covered by the event registration fee. Any

funds left over will be donated to the Friends of Pea Ridge organization.

The members of each unit shall be responsible for their own mess and should bring whatever cooking gear and additional rations are required. Each mess may decide for itself whether to do individual or small group cooking. A separate fire should be built for each of these unit messes.

Weapons and Ammunition: All muskets and rifles must be clean and in good working condition. An inspection will be held Saturday morning. We do plan to do some firings during the drill demonstrations. A minimum of forty rounds of blank ammunition, along with 48 percussion caps, is required.

Activities: The activities will include standard drill and camp life demonstrations of an army on campaign. Throughout the day Saturday, we shall have programs for the public about every 1-2 hours. Included in the drills will be instruction in company maneuvers and firings, skirmish tactics and bayonet drill.

A knapsack inspection will be held at some point. Those who do not have knapsacks should present themselves with a blanket roll for this activity.

Please bring newspapers, playing cards, stationery, and other items needed to do soldier life activities in camp.

Amenities: The park will provide firewood, water and restroom facilities. A NPS qualified black powder supervisor will be on hand to inspect weapons and oversee the safety of the firing demonstrations.

Registration: Registration is due by June 20th, and should be sent to Cal Kinzer, 11420 E. 270th Street, Beggs, OK 74421. Please make checks payable to Bryan Brooks, who is the treasurer of The Union Rifles. For more information, please contact Cal Kinzer at ckinzer@juno.com or (913) 267-7067 (home) or (913) 293-4880 (work).

Capitol Guards set Summer Drill for July 16

The Capitol Guards will be holding their winter drill and Camp of Instruction on Saturday, July 16, at Reed's Bridge Battlefield Park.

We will be getting started around 9:00 or so, and with a bit of organization should be ready to dismiss around 4:00 p.m.

The agenda is to cover the School of the Soldier and the fundamentals from School of the Company, from Hardee's 1861 Tactics manual.

Wear: Uniform if you have it; otherwise street clothes are okay if you don't have your

uniform yet. I would rather have you out learning the ropes with us than sitting at home worrying about 1860s fashion or whatever. What you will learn here is a lot more important than what you wear; plus we will have loaner gear on site.

Bring: Musket, cartridge box and at least 10 cartridges; cap box (with caps); waist belt, bayonet and scabbard. canteen, haversack, and personal mess gear (plate, cup, utensils). Gum blanket or poncho will be a good idea.

We will have spare/loaner gear on site if you don't have your stuff yet; give me a holler if you need a loaner so that I can try to have enough available.

The company will furnish a period lunch, so don't worry about going hungry. Potable water will be available on site, and we'll have coffee available.

As an alternative idea, First Sergeant Shore has suggested that we hold a weekend event in the field at the Arkansas Muzzle Loading Association range in Hattieville, about 10 miles east of Morrilton. What we would do at this event is much the same, but with a much stronger emphasis on weapons handling and safety, with everyone getting to fire his musket for score to determine who the "master blaster" of the Company will be for 2005. The company kitchen would be deployed to manage our meals for the weekend. If you're interested in the alternative event, please let Steve or Tom know before June 18, and we'll get the coordination going for an alternative site.

What is Light Marching Order?

By Cal Kinzer
The Union Rifles

At the typical reenactment, the usual rule of thumb is that "light marching order" consists of the cartridge box, waist belt with bayonet scabbard and cap pouch, haversack and canteen. However, a closer examination of period sources indicates that it usually included a blanket roll as well:

[Peninsula Campaign, March 20, 1862] - "We were in light marching order, that is, we were allowed to take our rubber blanket and overcoat, but no more. Our knapsacks, and the remainder of our clothes such as could not absolutely be dispensed with, were afterwards sent to us. Most of our little valuables were left behind, with all our surplus stock of clothing, &c." - Private Wilbur Fisk, 2nd Vermont Infantry

[Battle of Seven Pines, May 31, 1862] - "At about noon of the 31st, heavy cannonading was heard in the direction of Richmond, and

about 3 o'clock we were ordered out in light marching order. Tents and knapsacks to be left behind. Nothing to be carried but ammunition, grub in the haversack, water in the canteen, and our blankets rolled and slung over the shoulder." – Private Alfred Bellard, 5th New Jersey Infantry

[Alexandria, Virginia, September 6, 1862] – "It was beginning to rain, and there was a chilly east wind, and we were without any woolen blankets [i.e. rubber blankets only], having come in light marching order, but we made the best we could of our situation." – Private Wilbur Fisk, 2nd Vermont Infantry

[Burnside's "Mud March" – January 30, 1863] – "Next morning we left camp at about 7 o'clock in light marching order (that is overcoats on your back and blankets slung over the shoulder) 3 day's rations in your haversacks, and the usual dose of leadon pills in [the] cartridge box (40 ounce balls)." – Private Alfred Bellard, 5th New Jersey Infantry
[Siege of Atlanta, July 27, 1864] – "Co. D detailed on picket and to report at the 5th Ind. Battery. Ordered to leave our knapsacks and shelter tents [i.e. they took their rubber and woolen blankets]. Lightmarching order." Lieutenant Chesley Mosman, 59th Illinois Infantry.

When the order came to drop knapsacks, it took only a matter of minutes to take the rubber and/or woolen blanket, roll it into a blanket roll, and sling it over the shoulder. Soldiers who did not do so risked facing severe hardship the night after a hard march or battle when the temperatures can drop, even in summer, and the exertions from the previous day have left the body sweaty and chilled.

Thus, a strong case can be made that the reenactor practice of going into battles without wearing at least a blanket roll is not historically correct.

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Marks' Mill (Continued from Page 2...)

Federals on the offensive, with an exposed artillery battery on a low ridge to the front, and Rebel infantry hidden in the woods to the rear. Our job was to send a skirmish line forward, encounter the hidden infantry, and be driven back toward the spectator line. As things always happen, this changed on the fly. The Rebs put their artillery out in the open unsupported, so I made a decision to take those guns, and then continue on. Waiting for the startign signal, I heard a great deal of gunfire break out in the woods, and (correctly) guessed that the Confederates had been ambushed by the bushwhackers. Shortly afterward, a Confederate company came pelting out of the woods and took a position in the open field on the far left of the artillery.

We advanced our line, and the artillery took us under fire, firing in battery volleys. We took advantage of their reloading time to close in by short rushes and then taking cover, until we were close enough that when the guns volleyed again, we rose up and charged them before they could reload. The cannoneers fled into the woods, leaving behind a small child sitting in a chair behind one of the guns. As we swept by to clear the objective, I remember this little fellow staring at us, his eyes as wide as dinner plates. "Look, boys, we have caught the Big He Rebel!" Yeah, and it was a hell of a git we got, too...

Our charge had brought the Reb infantry to action, and they attacked our left flank as we tried to bring our line around to the left to face them. A sharp firefight was engaged, and then we were taken in our right flank and in the rear by the returning artillerymen, now armed with muskets, and the surviving bushwhackers. In short order, we were pretty well annihilated and overrun.

Our sharp charge on the guns, and the Reb counterattacks had happened very quickly, and far away from the spectators, and so we had to get up and do it again a little closer to the crowd. "So nice, we did it twice." All in all, the veterans of the "36th Iowa" did an outstanding job of maneuvering in the face of the enemy, and were as aggressive as all get-out. Outside where the entire Southern confederacy ganged up on us over on the artillery hill, we put quite a whuppin' on Johnny Reb in each fair fight.

Following the battle, we held a brief review down by the spectator line, and headed back for camp. Weapons cleaning and supper were first on the agenda, followed by a Company business meeting.

Saturday evening was even colder than Friday, and we turned in a little earlier than the night before.

Sunday morning was just downright cold, and a few Guardsmen were up early to stole the fire and get the coffee going. Steve and W.J. handled the breakfast duties, and then we

piled into the wagon to go visit the actual battlefield site about two miles away.

It was otherwise a quiet morning in camp. We had lost four men from the usual Sunday attrition, but Dave Sesser straggled in just as we got back from the battlefield tour, so we would take the field with 10 rifles.

The Rebs had taken even heavier losses, as the entire 9th Arkansas pulled out to go to a Confederate Memorial Day engagement in Hot Springs, and the bushwhackers, roughly handled in the previous day's action, faded away into the woods as well. We broke camp and made ready for the march, and soon it was time to take the field again.

For the Sunday afternoon fight, we swapped sides of the field with the Rebels, this time we would come out of the woods on the far side of the field and go after the Rebel guns lined up along the fence in front of the spectators. The same tricks that worked on Saturday worked again today... We closed to close quarters with the Rebs using short rushes, and then when they were unloaded, jumped up and charged them. The Confederate infantry posted themselves a hair too far away, and were quickly put to flight by the fleet-footed Yankees. In less than maybe 10 to 15 minutes, we had wrapped up the fight, and the artillery still had more than 2/3rds of their planned ammunition still to fire.

So we packed up and went back to our side of the field, and started over. We lay down to avoid the artillery fire, and once the Reb gunners were low on ammo and unloaded, we jumped up and did it to them again, in pretty short and violent order.

A brief formation and thanks to all involved, and Marks' Mill was one for the history books.

All in all, the event was a little bit of a let-down from the first try in 2003, mostly because of the greatly reduced turnout, and the loss of much of the maneuver space. It was a good opportunity to work with our pards in the 1st and the 7th Arkansas, who are always a class act. Being in the main camp next to the artillery city was a bit of a distraction from the last time, as we always had cars in or near the camp, and the distractions in turn led us to let our guard down a little. If we do this one again, we'll probably go back to our little camp way out in the piney woods.

But the biggest congratulations, and sincere thanks, goes to the boys of the "36th Iowa," the Capitol Guards and our friends the Greyhounds of the 37th Illinois. Without a doubt this is the finest bunch of Yankees in Arkansas, even if (or maybe because) nearly half of us are Rebels in the first place. As before, we came, we saw, and we kicked some tails...

On to Corinth!!!

A MANLY BALLET...

Call it a manly ballet. Some of the movements may seem goofy, and the lion's share of reenactors consider it a pointless waste of time.

Au contraire, mon ami!

Translated from the French system by George McClellan, *The Manual of Bayonet Exercise* had a purpose that was three-fold: "It proved to be an excellent gymnastic exercise, a useful amusement, and gave the men great additional confidence in themselves and their weapons," the future general wrote in the preface to his 1852 manual.

Exercise (there were no calisthenics or formal PT in the 1860s armies) and diversion from the boredom of other drill and camp life were valuable, indeed, but I think the real benefit of bayonet drill comes from the familiarity and confidence that it instills in weapons-handling.

McClellan acknowledged that the movements were not practical in packed ranks, and better suited to open formations such as a skirmish line, but he argued that even in ranks "the men will surely be more steady and composed, from the consciousness of the fact that they can make good use of their bayonets, and easily protect their persons against anything but balls."

There are 30 distinct movements in the exercise, divided into 12 lessons. This article, for the sake of brevity, is condensed to cover only the highlights. The drill is intended to be taught by NCOs, so every corporal and sergeant should become familiar with the commands and movements.

The men are to be placed about eight feet apart. If two ranks are used, the rear rank is offset so each man has a clear interval in front.

Point of Departure

GUARD!

This position, called *middle guard*, is the basis for all movement.

From the position of shouldered arms, the soldier forms a "T" with his feet (as in "Ready") then moves the right foot back about 2 feet and slightly to the right. The knees are slightly bent; weight equally distributed. The musket is lowered, the left hand seizing below the lower band; the bayonet point about chin-high; the lock half-turned up; and the right hand slightly in front of the body.

[The GUARD command, much like "Shoulder—ARMS" in the Manual of Arms, comes between each of the following actions.]



Co. B, 36th Iowa conducts bayonet drill on Saturday morning at Marks' Mill. It proved to be decisive, and quite intimidating to the Secesh later in the day...

Means of Attack

THRUST!

Stab quickly forward the full length of the left arm, while simultaneously rotating the musket so that the lock is square to the right. Hands maintain their positions on the musket; bayonet is chest-high. The feet and body do not move.

LUNGE!

Stab quickly forward the full length of the RIGHT arm while rotating the musket as above. The left hand slides back to the trigger guard; bayonet is chest-high. Straighten the right knee and square the shoulders.

Means of Locomotion

ADVANCE!

Step forward with the left foot 1 foot, following an equal distance with the right.



WHAT SI EXPECTED TO DO WITH HIS BAYONET.

RETREAT!

Step back with the right foot 1 foot, following an equal distance with the left.

Right—VOLT!, Left—VOLT!, Right rear—VOLT!, Left rear—VOLT!

These are facing changes. Right & Left like right and left faces; right & left Rear are different ways of facing to your rear. In all cases, maintain the middle guard position, and turn in the direction indicated on the left toes. Your right foot always swings in an arc, essentially following your butt.

DEVELOP!

Move the left foot forward 2 feet, straightening the right leg.

PASSADE!

Move the right foot 2 feet in front of the left, keeping its perpendicular position. Follow immediately by moving the left foot 2 feet in front of the right. The position you end in is identical to DEVELOP, the difference being that you step first with the right foot.

Leap to the—REAR!

Place your weight on the left foot, and spring backwards as far as possible, landing on the left foot and keeping the position of middle guard.

Means of Directing the Attack

There are four directions to learn in this adapted French system. Think of them as the four corners of a rectangle that goes from your thighs to your shoulders: *In Prime* (PREE-may) — to your lower right; *In Secunde* (suh-CUN-day) — to your lower left; *In Tierce* (TEER-say) — to your upper left; and *In Quarte* (QUAR-tay) — to your upper right.

When these directions precede a command such as THRUST, LUNGE or PARRY, you are being told where to direct that movement. So, "*In prime—THRUST!*" means you would stab in a lower-right direction (as if going for your opponent's left thigh).

Means of Defense

Similarly, "*In prime—PARRY!*" means you would parry in the lower right area (as if blocking a thrust toward your right thigh). Note that the lower parries are not merely moving the point of your bayonet to that area, but rather ascribing an arc in that direction. For example, to parry *in secunde*, you move the point of your bayonet down and to the left (as if to bat or deflect the offending weapon away from you.)

The upper parries are slightly

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A Manly Ballet... (Continued from Page 5)

different. *In Tierce*, you actually move the whole musket to your left side to block a blow directed at your left shoulder, and *In Quarte* you move only the point of the bayonet to block a blow toward your right shoulder.

For parries, there are two additional directions — *High Tierce* and *High Quarte*, blocking blows from above left and right, respectively (as if being attacked by a saber-wielding cavalryman). In these cases the musket is raised perpendicularly in the directed area on either side of the head.

Means of Using the Butt of the Musket

While the point of the bayonet is plenty fearsome, the butt of the musket provides a dandy weapon, as well.

Blow to the front: At the preparatory, “Lower the—STOCK,” the musket is brought perpendicular by lowering the right hand and raising the left. At the command, “STRIKE”, the butt of the stock is thrust forward with the right hand until the barrel rests on the right shoulder, the butt striking for your opponent’s crotch or gut. (If you’re receiving this blow in close quarters, I hope you wore a jockey cup!)

Blows to the right and rear: At the preparatory: “Stock to the—RIGHT (or REAR)” the musket is brought up horizontally at shoulder height with the butt facing in the indicated direction. At the command “STRIKE”, the butt is thrust in that direction. The command “GUARD” returns you to your original facing.

Instruction in the bayonet drill generally begin with the means of locomotion. Then muskets would be added to practice the means of attack and defense. A creative NCO can combine the various movements to keep it interesting (e.g. ADVANCE, THRUST, DEVELOP, GUARD, In secunde—PARRY, GUARD, Leap to the—REAR!).

Though the structure of this drill may seem pointless, remember that the idea is to drill it so extensively that the motions become second nature. When actually using this against an opponent, there are obviously no commands given in a knife fight! Thorough bayonet drill gave the 19th-century soldier the weapons-handling accumen and confidence that he needed to defend himself on the battlefield.

An added benefit from a reenacting standpoint is that bayonet drill is rather spectacular, and tends to draw a crowd of ‘tators, hence, a nice recruiting opportunity.

See you on the drill field!

“GIVE ‘EM THE COLD STEEL”

Some Observations on the Use of the Bayonet

After having decided to write this article upon the subject that McClellan fittingly described as “*the brave man’s weapon*” it was mentioned to me that perhaps the article should be entitled ‘*the brave man’s subject!*’ To my dismay, I soon discovered this to be true, for it is indeed a very ambiguous and contentious aspect of Civil War combat. Nevertheless, somewhat enthused by the subject’s historical elusiveness, I continued. I propose this article not to be definitive nor conclusive, rather, it serves to make some observations about, and perhaps to stimulate some discussion upon, the subject of the use of the bayonet.

“An intimate weapon”

Developments in black powder weaponry from its first invention, it has been argued, progressively “made virtually all previous forms of weapon obsolete. This applied especially to edged weapons.”¹ Despite this fact however the use, and indeed the need for edged weapons was not completely eclipsed, the development of the bayonet from sword, to plug-bayonet and finally to socket-bayonet and the fact that the bayonet is still employed today pays testament to this point. It is however often pointed out that as the “distance” of warfare increased, there was less and less need for the employment of the cold steel. Equally so, it seemed more and more that combat was loosing its “human aspect,” that is, it was becoming impersonal – “all you do is move that finger imperceptibly.”² But was the impersonality of war absolute?

In a word, no, it was not. As Joanna Bourke correctly comments in her excellent book ‘An intimate history of killing peoples’ imagination of war is often of grand charges and bayonet wielding soldiers, heroic and personal. Indeed, in terms of the American Civil War, the recruiting posters of 1861 portray this psychology well, and often echo a somewhat romantic image in which the “cold steel” draws parallels with medieval gallantry and chivalry, combat between good and evil and the enemy as the “ultimate other.” It was the dawning of reality, the realisation that war was not wholly made up of grand bloodless charges, and the overstatement of the myth that edged weapons had become ineffective against the modernization of the battlefield,

that went to a great extent in perpetuating the belief that the blade was an archaic and somewhat anachronistic throwback of earlier centuries.

On the contrary however, the bayonet offered the personal touch that soldiers often believed the battlefield was losing. Bourke uses the example of the First World War, in which troops in the trenches were “keen .for intimate struggle... They were willing to go over the top with a penknife.”³ Relatively recent first hand accounts from WWI reveal the true feelings of working with the bayonet. Bourke quotes the words of a British soldier the first time he stuck a German with his bayonet, he described it as being “gorgeously satisfying... Exultant satisfaction.” Another found that bayoneting Prussians was “beautiful work,” whilst a New Zealand sapper reported bayonet work as “sickening yet exhilarating butchery [that was] joy unspeakable.” In reality, the bayonet proved to be too personal in some cases. One soldier who was open about killing prisoners “delicately distanced himself from the narrative when mentioning the bayonet – ‘one’ killed with the bayonet as opposed to ‘I’ or ‘we’”⁴

Such descriptions of bayonet work in Civil War memoirs are however far and few between – most Civil War historians never coming across such openly shocking descriptions and admissions. This however does not mean that the “joy” felt by combatants in the Civil War was any different from that felt by WWI combatants. Although veterans when asked about war “hated it so much, it was so terrible that they would prefer it to remain buried,” often, it has been proved, it is the fact that “somewhere inside themselves, they loved it too,” that was behind their reasoning in wanting to bury their memory of it.⁵



A versatile instrument indeed: The bayonet was a necessity in stacking arms regardless of which drill manual was used.

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Therefore this is a phenomenon that is not confined just to WW1, but rather a pattern that is present in any conflict from the beginning of time, to which the Civil War is no exception. It is the social context and conditioning of the period that has led to such comments on close combat to remain hidden in the memory of those that participated, as indeed is the case with most wars, even today. For a veteran to admit to the joy of killing would have been frowned upon then the same, if not more, as it would be today. More importantly however, this highlights that the bayonet was in no way eclipsed during the Civil War.

“A useless archaic anachronism?”

One of the most commonly quoted facts about the use of the bayonet in the Civil War is that according to casualty returns, only 0.4% of all casualties were inflicted by edged weapons.⁶ However, this figure requires the historian to raise certain questions. Is this percentage a total of all casualties, including those that died of fever and those that died in prison camps? – if so, it is hardly a fair reflection upon the number of men that died in close combat on the actual field. Also, how can this figure be comprehensive when nobody counted the cause of death of all those lying on the battlefield and interred in the mass graves?

Therefore, one must be wary of such a figure, which has ultimately been plucked from some official returns and used to emphasize the deadliness of modern weapons such as rifled muskets and rifled field pieces.

This argument is supported further when one examines the nature of hand-to-hand combat in the Civil War. Almost every action in the Civil War had some detail of hand-to-hand fighting. To take just a few obvious examples; the charge of the Black Horse Cavalry at First Manassas, the railroad cut at Second Manassas, the “Angle” at Gettysburg – the list is endless. When almost every action saw hand-to-hand fighting of some sort, then why is the number of casualties officially recorded to have been inflicted by edged weapons so low? Apart from the reasons already stated above, ultimately, when in close quarters, the blade was not the only weapon. The combatant could also call upon his musket as a club, his bare fists and also his loaded musket as means by which to defeat his foe, none of which would leave an injury that could be described as having been inflicted by an edged weapon. Therefore, although the combat was initiated by one side executing a bayonet charge – the casualties were not necessarily caused by the bayonet itself.

On the other hand however, if the figure was taken from wounds tended in the field hospitals, then not only is the figure unreliable



This image by J.D. Edwards shows Gaston Coppens' Louisiana Zouaves on parade at Pensacola, FL in the spring of 1861. Both ranks are at 'Charge - BAYONET' and the Officers extend their swords at arms length.



“A sloping forest of flashing steel.” This image of a Union regiment portrays well the visual impact of massed bayonets - terrifying indeed!

in terms its restricted “pool,” but also at a more basic level. It would presuppose that casualties from hand to hand combat were as likely to be carried to the rear as those who received their casualties during say, a fire-fight. In reality this would not be so. The area in which close combat would have taken place would generally have been one which was of high importance strategically (thus justifying the need for a bayonet charge) and therefore in the front line in the “hot” action – too “hot” for non-combatants to carry the wounded to the field hospital. Also, the ferocity and sheer deadliness of hand to hand fighting that eyewitnesses describe would probably not have left many wounded – most would be left dead on the field. These reasons also help show that perhaps generally accepted figures in relation to close quarter fighting are somewhat dubious.

Another reason that helps explain low casualties for edged weapons or hand to hand fighting other than the fact that the figures themselves are probably misleading – just who would go around the field examining how every soldier died anyway? – is the fact that combats were often very brief and violent. True melees were rare, most close quarter action only lasting perhaps a matter of minutes. Far more commonly, one side would break before a true bloodbath could begin. Sam Watkins in describing the attack upon a Union battery in the action around Atlanta comments on how the presence of heavy support would often sway a charge one way or the other, ensuring that close combat was over quickly:

“But being heavily supported.. The Federal lines waver, and break and fly leaving us in possession of their breast works, and the battlefield.”⁷

Equally so, the very force of seeing a charge coming on would sometimes be enough for one side to break, the threat of impending combat being too much for one side to bear. James O. Bradfield of the 1st Texas pays testament to this in his description of the fighting on 2nd July at Gettysburg: *“The enemy stood their ground bravely, until we were close on them, but did not await the bayonet.”⁸*

Here, it can be seen that figures regarding casualties inflicted by edged weapons should be treated with a certain degree of suspicion. In a very real sense the belief that the bayonet charge was an obsolete reminder of Napoleonic warfare upon the “modern” battlefields of the Civil War could well be regarded an “urban legend.” The unreliability of casualty figures, the intimate nature of hand-to-hand fighting and the fact that a bayonet charge would not always result in close combat all go some way in disproving the myth that personal struggle, or even the threat of it, was rare in the Civil War.

“Re-enactorisms”

Other myths, or rather “re-enactorisms” that occur in relation to the bayonet is the position of the musket during a charge, and hence, how a charge should be executed. Perhaps the most common re-enactorism present in today's Civil War re-enactment community

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A.R. Waud depicts the "Bayonet charge of the second Excelsior Regiment, Colonel Hall, at the battle of Fair Oaks, June 1862"

is the practice of the rear rank assuming the position of Right Shoulder Shift when the unit is ordered to "Charge bayonet." In no drill manual is this practice specified. Dom dal Bello, in his article on 'Charge Bayonet' offers a potential source for this common mistake. In his description of the Battle of Antietam, Confederate Colonel John B. Gordon described a federal attack on the Sunken Road in which he stated that the front line came to Charge Bayonet, and the rear lines came to Right Shoulder Shift. This has probably sometime been taken as endorsement for the mistake which is sometimes strangely justified as a safety measure. However the point that has been missed is that Gordon is describing a brigade attack column – the front "line" (a two-ranked regiment) at Charge Bayonet, and the rear lines (supporting regiments, each of two ranks) at Right Shoulder Shift.

Dal Bello in his article, also points out that none of the drill manuals point out how a bayonet charge should be carried out in the field, or as one pard put it using a driving analogy, "they teach you how to use the steering wheel, how to change gear and what to do with the accelerator, but they don't teach you how to conduct yourself on the road." Using Scott's tactics and manuals, dal Bello comes to the conclusion that a charge should be conducted thus;

1. The line moves forward at Arms-Port, and...
2. Only when the line reaches the enemy does the front rank, and only the front rank, come to Charge Bayonet... The rear rank should be ready to assist the front with their bayonets, and this is best done from the position Arms-Port.
3. The command "Charge Bayonet" does not even have to be given in an actual charge - the front rank coming to charge bayonet when they reach close quarters, or the "measure" of their bayonets with the enemy (not necessarily all at the same time). In practice, could the

men hear the command anyway?

This argument can however be rejected on a number of points. Firstly, it would be unlikely that troops drilled in either Casey's or Hardee's tactics would execute a charge at Arms-Port as both Casey and Hardee removed Arms-Port from school of the soldier, both however prescribe the position of Charge Bayonet - why would troops execute a maneuver that they had not been drilled in whilst neglecting one that they did know? Secondly, by its very

definition, troops executing a 'bayonet charge' would naturally feel inclined to lead with the intended weapon – the bayonet. Whilst Charge Bayonet is a very aggressive position, Arms-Port in comparison is rather passive, and would hardly help to intimidate the enemy. Also if the troops had loaded weapons which they were intending to discharge on impact, then Charge Bayonet would be a much more suitable position for the musket than Arms-Port. Thirdly, charges would often break up before hitting home as Bradfield of the 1st Texas describes: "without awaiting orders, every man became his own commander and so sprang forward toward the top of the hill at full speed." ⁹

Again, leading with the bayonet would be natural when the troops intend to 'give 'em the cold steel', especially if not formed in ranks. Fourthly, a point that should be made is that although Hardee instructs the soldiers in one rank, when considering firing he makes clear the differences between the positions of the front and second rank. Why then, would he not specify such a big difference as Arms-Port when instructing the troops in charging their bayonets? The absence of any other instruction can only lead one to the conclusion that both ranks come to the position of Charge Bayonet. Lastly, most images and descriptions of using the bayonet fail to reflect or mention anything about Arms-Port, rather, they all describe both ranks coming to Charge Bayonet. Alexander Hunter of the 17th Virginia remembered some of the action at Frazier's Farm that illustrates this point well: "At last, a little after 4 o'clock, the whole brigade, in line of battle swept forward... The men advanced at a run, one straight unbroken line, with the guns before them at a charge, the bayonets like lances projecting forward and fencing off the rays of the sun, the colours waving proudly, while thousands of feet beat the

earth in rhythmical time, the officers well in front with their unsheathed swords in hand."

Another example of both ranks using the charge bayonet is depicted in the August 16, 1862 issue of *Harpers Weekly*. Regarding this illustration Mr Waud writes: "I send this under the direction of General Sickles and Colonel Hall (his was the only Regiment of the Excelsior Brigade that charged). The locality is correct. The line of the men is correct, and the enemy skirmishers as Hall found them. No hand-to-hand desperate work by demonic individuals in Zouave dress and caps - the Excelsior Brigade wears the infantry uniform, with felt hats. I could not send this at the time as I was flat on my back"

It could therefore be argued that instructing re-enactors to adopt Arms-Port in a charge is merely replacing one anachronism with another – the latter being just slightly more plausible. Ultimately though, the weight of evidence does point towards the fact that when carrying out a bayonet charge, both ranks should charge with their muskets at Charge Bayonet. This is not really any more dangerous than any of the other positions if everyone takes care, and even to a certain degree, if the attacking troops are taking casualties as they advance, then dropping the musket from the Charge Bayonet position is a lot safer than either Right Shoulder Shift or Arms-Port.

"An instrument of fear"

The importance of the bayonet in Civil War combat, as in any other war, was not simply limited to its ability to inflict casualties, but also, and perhaps more importantly, as a psychological weapon.

One of the high points of the movie *Gettysburg* is the scene where the 20th Maine is out of ammunition and about to be overrun on Little Round Top, and Colonel Chamberlain orders the men, "Bayonets! Fix Bayonet!" The subsequent charge is successful in not only holding their position, but in finally overcoming and driving away the Confederates. In a similar manner, the author remembers a



Images such as this of Petersburg and Appomattox only go to prove that bayonets would rarely be discarded as an impediment. Its uses were not limited to fighting, and so it would be kept as a valuable tool.

Cold Steel... (Continued from Page 12)

similar moment at the Outpost 2000 event when we were about to be overrun, and the same cry went out, "fix bayonet!" That, along with the crisp "snick-snick-snack" of the metal spikes being locked onto musket barrels was enough to halt the Yankee attack, and send them fleeing through an icy creek.

The threat of the "cold steel" as has already been demonstrated, was such that often the defending force would usually break before impact came about. Thus, although the bayonet charge was far from certain to inflict casualties, especially when one considers the fact that if contact is reached then one would probably receive just as heavy casualties from one's foe. The psychological effect of the bayonet was not entirely one sided either. As well as being detrimental to the enemy's morale, the use of the bayonet would also prove to be positive in boosting the attacking forces morale. Troops even today pay testament to the fact that they feel more inclined to advance against the enemy with the reassurance of 18 inches of steel on the end of their weapons. Indeed, the fact that the bayonet was used to carry and defend vitally important positions, often as a last resort, then the order to fix bayonets would doubtless have instilled in the men the gravity of the situation.

The procedures that surround the bayonet often reflect its standing as a psychological weapon. When bayonets are fixed, the soldiers keep their muskets in the position with the butt upon the ground rather than shouldering arms as a when each man has done so. This ensures that when the order *Shoulder-Arms* is given, then the whole unit does so as one man. It could be argued that this is done for effect upon the field of battle, and not just through the needs of military precision. For the enemy watching a line of battle preparing to charge, what they would see would be a line of hundreds of men suddenly as one man come up to the shoulder in a flash of bare metal with the entire line topped with glinting steel, as if to say "we're coming after your ass!"—enough to send a shiver down even the bravest man's spine.

Frank Haskell, a federal soldier on Cemetery Ridge on July 3rd wrote this description of the Confederates as they formed for the assault, it gives a good idea of the effect that massed bayonets could have;

"None on that ridge now need be told that the enemy is approaching... More than half a mile their line extends,... man touching man, rank pressing rank, and line supporting line. The red flags wave, their horsemen gallop up and down, the arms of 15,000 men, barrel and bayonet gleam in the sun, a sloping forest of flashing steel... Magnificent, grim,



A Federal company poses at charge bayonet on Lookout Mountain, with Moccasin Bend of the Tennessee River visible in the background. Note that both ranks have the bayonets forward; the file closers are at "arms port" to discourage any stragglers. Quite a dramatic company portrait!

irresistible."

Equally so, the process of Charge Bayonet is a psychological one. To see two advancing ranks bring their muskets down to the charge would have as much impact as seeing them go up to the shoulder before the attack began, and it is likely that this was done when the line was close enough to the enemy for this to have a good impact - perhaps 50 yards. Dal Bello on the other hand, argues that only the front rank should come to the charge when only two or three yards from the enemy. Doing this however would somewhat diminish the psychological impact of a bayonet charge, for when within two or three yards of each other, the defending force by that time would have made the conscious or unconscious decision whether or not to break and run.

Also, in terms of the attacking force, if only the front rank came to the charge, it would mean that the psychological buffering of having the physical support of the rear rank's bayonets protruding to your sides would be lost. Sam Watkins in his memoirs of the action around Jonesboro in 1864 shows how Charge Bayonet was used to spur on the troops as they were expecting to go into action: *"We expected to be ordered into action every moment and kept seesawing backward and forward, until I did not know which way the Yankees were or which way the Rebels. We would form line of battle, charge bayonets, and would raise a whoop and yell, expecting to be dashed against the Yankee lines."*¹¹

All re-enactors and living historians when carrying out Charge Bayonet make a loud 'hurrah' or cheer. Whilst the drill manuals does not specify that this should be done, in reality it is very plausible that this would be carried out as it would aid the psychological impact, and it also allows the troops to express the pent-up emotion of wanting to close with the enemy. In fact Sam Watkins mentions in passing the 'hurrah' of Charge bayonets when describing a charge: *"We gave one long, loud cheer, and commenced the charge. As we*

*approached their lines... Confederate and Federal meet. Officers with drawn swords meet officers with drawn swords, and man to man meets man to man with bayonets and loaded guns."*¹² However, trainees in the modern Army and Marine Corps undergoing training with the bayonet are taught to yell in the same manner, and this habit may indeed derive from this modern practice.

Therefore when considering the impact of the bayonet upon the battlefield the historian must remember that its importance was in no way proportional to the number of casualties that it inflicted. Indeed, its psychological impact must not be underestimated.

The employment of the bayonet in defense and attack

Another minor mistake that is often made with bayonet drill is the difference between *Charge bayonet* and *Guard against infantry*. Apart from the obvious, that Charge bayonet is an offensive employment of the bayonet whereas Guard against infantry is a defensive one the main difference that is not always recognized is the position of the feet and arms. Hardee illustrates this with plates and text in the 'School of the soldier'. In Charge bayonet, the feet should make a half right face with only three inches between the feet and with the legs straight, whereas in Guard against infantry the feet, whilst making a half right face, should have twenty inches between them, with the knees slightly bent. Also, in the former, the musket should first be brought up slightly with the right hand from the Shoulder arms position until the lock is at the point of the cap pouch, and then using that point as the pivot, the musket should be brought down with the left hand so that the point of the bayonet is at the height of the eye. In the latter however, although the musket is brought up slightly, when it is brought down, the arms should fall naturally at their full length, with the point slightly elevated at the height of the waist.

The same differences are true of the defensive position of *Guard against cavalry* except for the point being at the height of the eye, or rather the height of the horse's chest. Both defensive positions require the feet to be placed far apart with slightly more weight resting upon the back foot in order that the line could absorb the impact of the enemy line coming in at the run.

"Trust to the bayonet"

Despite all the controversy over the use of the bayonet in the Civil War, one thing is certain – the commanders of the day were of the opinion that the bayonet was a highly valuable weapon. It was a weapon that despite its



The Captain's Tent

by Tom Ezell

Well, as spring slowly shifts into summer, the campaign season is winding down just a wee bit. It's been a very busy couple of months, if you took advantage of each event offered, and it will be nice to have some peace and quiet for at least a couple of weekends.

The summer schedule is busier than it has been in past years, with the Mexican War program at the Old State House on June 18... we will try to field a small group at this one, within our limitations, to represent the Capitol Guards of the Mexican War. We have loaner gear available and a great program, so I strongly urge you to come out to this one. Even if you don't have (or don't think you have) the gear for this one, I urge you to come out anyway in street clothes just to see the program, and hopefully get a better understanding of the history of our namesakes, and their contributions to Arkansas outside the narrow scope of the Civil War. This will be a good experience, not to mention the FREE BARBECUE DINNER. Saturday evening will also feature a period dance, so it's a good opportunity to get Sweet Thing to put on her party stuff and come and play.

A PARTING OF WAYS...

As we voted at Marks' Mill, the 6th Arkansas has withdrawn its membership in the Trans-Mississippi Volunteer Infantry (TMVI) Battalion. The interests of each group were pulling in opposite directions, with the TMVI becoming more and more fixated on the Texas/Louisiana frontier and strongly resisting any improvement in its impression. We parted amicably, with a minimum of name-calling, eye-gouging, and backstabbing.

At this point in time, while we are not formally affiliated with a particular battalion, we have remained under the umbrella of the Mississippi Valley Brigade. There isn't a rush to find a new battalion, but for purposes of compliance with the First Confederate Division by-laws we will likely align ourselves with our old friends (from Lebanon and Perryville) in the Elk River Battalion for Corinth and other Division events. The MVB will be holding a reorganizational meeting at Vicksburg on the 4th of July weekend, and we will look to solidify our relationships at that time.

There hasn't been a great deal of fallout on our part. For one, the support and gratitude

for our stance from the Brigade staff has been very favorable.

The way forward at this time looks for us to keep our independent status for awhile, and look at forming a larger group of our own from other unaffiliated groups in our area. We will make the first test of that this fall at Old Washington, as we will look to organize an ad hoc group with our folks, the Confederate Guard, and possibly some of the Wretched Mess folks in their regular Confederate appearance.

Other than Old Washington, the rest of our year's schedule is pretty much unaffected. We have a lot of liberty as to the type of events we select and participate in now, and will look to try and support our neighbors more in the smaller, local living histories and reenactments. We still plan to attend Corinth as Confederates, under the MVB. The MVB will be fielding the Red River Battalion, the Elk River Battalion (including, presumably, us), and an independent skirmish battalion made up of the Western Independent Grays. This is beginning to look like one of the finest gatherings of serious Confederates in a long, long while, so get your schedule cleared for the first of October!

In turn, the TMVI has taken a fair amount of gouging and catcalls as a result of its position, but in turn they are getting a lot of support from the mainstream community in Texas and west Louisiana – adding three new 'streamer companies since their decision, and fielding more than 150 rifles at both Pleasant Hill and Jefferson. On the other hand, they have elected to dodge the issue of meeting the First Division authenticity standards by not going to Corinth, and will be looking to join the Trans-Mississippi Brigade under Willie Huckabee. Rumor Control says, at least that they have applied there and been accepted for membership. It will be interesting to see how things have settled out over the summer.

SERIOUS SHOOTING

Our devoted First Sergeant, Steve Shore, has been putting a lot of time and effort into marksmanship training over the past three months, as he made his dream of a Civil War shooting event come true. Since early March, Steve has been coting bullets, developing loads, and burning a lot of powder and midnight oil getting us into the live fire mode. It paid off this past month as we fielded two shooting teams at the Arkansas State Muzzle Loading Championships in Berryville. Sure, we've had a couple of live fire exercises in the distant past where we tried to let our members get the feel of what it was like to actually load and fire one of these muskets with minie balls, but for the first time, Steve put together a training program that brought together the elements of live fire, followin the

drill, shooting safety, and at the same time shooting for accuracy and a score. For the handful of Guardsmen who have taken part (W.J. Monagle, Ken Nations, Bob Black, Todd Clampitt, and others) it's been a tremendously educational experience, and has put the lie to a lot of things we take for granted as blank-shooting re-enactors.

The first thing we found was that it's not far by at all for a battle line to blaze away, and for nobody on the other side to get hit. First, Civil War soldiers weren't taught basic marksmanship, just to safely load and fire. Next, these muskets simply don't hit exactly where you aim them. We found that even at the close quarters of fifty to a hundred yards, the rounds strike anywhere from 1 to 2 feet *above* the point of aim. Hence the high miss rate, and the old admonition, "Aim low, boys!!" If you have not spent a significant amount of time on the target range with your Enfield or your Springfield and learning just how much "Kentucky windage" and "Arkansas elevation" to apply at a given distance, you aren't likely to get a hit on your target.

The second lesson driven home was the importance of weapons cleanliness. After firing 6 or 7 rounds, powder fouling builds up in the bore, causing you to have to sledgehammer the rounds down to fully seat them in the bore. Watching the experienced hobby shooters on the ranges at Hattieville and Berryville, we saw that they were fastidious about cleaning their weapons – wiping out the bore after every few shots to make it easier to load as well as to maintain accuracy. We tried the same, and our scores went up dramatically. In reenacting, where all we do is charge powder and cap, it's not uncommon to fire off a cartridge box full of rounds in fifteen to twenty minutes or so, and think we're really something. With minie balls (or even buck & ball), it's a whole different story. GOing back and reading some period accounts by Sam Watkins, Rice Bull, and other veterans, as well as the musketry and marksmanship manual developed for Cleburne's Division, it was readily apparent that the Boys of '61-'65 were serious about keeping their bores clean, wiping the bore with a lightly greased patch each morning, as well as wiping the bore every few shots when possible, when shooting for accuracy. The pace of firepower was also regulated by relieving battalions in the firing line with reserve battalions, letting them get water, clean their weapons, and replenish ammo, before rotating them back up to the firing line. These accounts make a lot more sense now!

Lastly, is the sheer confidence, or elan, that one achieves by being proficient in the use of his weapons, in knowing that this very likely gives him a distinct, but undefinable advantage over his opponent. We saw a little

Continued on Page 15...

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

of this at Marks' Mill, where our veterans in blue (our most rookie rifleman had at least six month's drill and fighting under his belt when he walked onto the field there) and the Rebs, who were mostly "fresh fish." Add to this our little demonstration with the bayonets on Saturday and aggressive tactics, and we always had a little edge over ol' Johnny out there.

In addition to the excellent traing the merry few of us have gotten this spring, has been a renewed interest in marksmanship and related skills. Several of us entered the regular matches at Berryville, and have taken up membership with the Arkansas Muzzle Loading Association (AMLA), and added a regular muzzleloader to our arms rooms... one of those Hawken target or hunting rifles is a lot gentler on the body than standing up there and blazing away with one of those .69 smoothbores or Enfields with the full service charge!

We're looking at holding one of our summer drill events up at Hattieville to let folks have a whack at trying their hand with their Enfield, as well as maybe bringing back one of the old Army traditions of the 1850s and 1860s, in competing and awarding a member of the Company as the Best Marksman of the year. It's another chance to do something a little different, as well as to get a unique experience and confidence with your trusty old Enfield. Think about it, and let Steve or me know... We may move the location for our July drill to accomodate this idea.

Also on the calendar for July is a living history event up at Pea Ridge National Battlefield, hosted by the Union Rifles (formerly known as the Hardcracker Mess). This will be a Federal event in the area of the Elkhorn Tavern. I had planned to attend an event with these folks at Tribbey, OK later this comingmonth, but it looks like family plans have scotched that idea. If you've ever wanted to try some of the serious campaigner events (like the Shiloh event in April) this is a good one to try. I'll be going; if anyone is interested in tagging along for a detailed tour of Pea Ridge, I've got room for riders...

In August, we'll go out to Reed's Bridge for a Company drill on the 27th... this is a change in date from previous announcements, as the Reed's Bridge Preservation Society has asked us to do something in support of the anniversary date of the battle. So, we'll do out drill on the 27th, working on some of the basics, and fine-tuning the drill maneuvers and other skills that we will need for Corinth. We will be providing authentic rations, as well as having a class on how to prepare them. Possibly, even, a competition for the title of Iron Chef-Confederate... It will be a fun event, and a chance to show off a bit, as well.

The big event for the year will be the Division & Brigade gathering at Corinth, MS

Coming Events

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

June 11-12, 2005 – "Battlefire" Re-enactment and Civil War Weekend. Tribbey, OK

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 2, 2005 – Mississippi Valley Brigade Reorganizational Conference. Battlefield Inn, Vicksburg, MS. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

July 9-10, 2005 – Pea Ridge National Military Park Living History, Pea Ridge, AR. Sponsored by the Union Rifles.

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

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

August 27, 2005 – Company Drill & Living History, Reed's Bridge Battlefield Park, Jacksonville, AR. (Anniversary date of the original battle)

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 maximum effort event. Confederate impression

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.

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.

on October 1-2. The deadline for pre-registration will be coming up in July, and it's way different for this event. You will all need to send your registration forms to me, and then I will need to route them through our battalion headquarters and so on to the brigade headquarters. Personally I think it's a bureaucratic move to recruit more Yankees

for the event, but the Division insists that this method is needed to keep the numbers even on each side and keep non-Division members from sneaking in as Confederates at Corinth. We'll see...

We will be assembling our company registration at the July drill event, so that will most likely be the deadline to get your name

The 6th Regiment, Arkansas Volunteer Infantry, Co. A, the "Capitol Guards" is dedicated to the faithful and historically accurate portrayal of a unit of Confederate infantry in the War Between the States in 1861-1865.

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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.

The Captain's Tent (Continued from Page 15)

in the hat for Corinth; they are being really anal about late registrations, and as at all Division events since somebody shot that feller at the "bad" Raymond in 2001, they will not be allowing anyone to register on site and walk on to the field.

CONCLUSION

It's probably a good guess as to how busy a month has been by looking at how late the *Sentinel* comes out... here's yet another one squeaking in under the wire. But it's still May for several more hours (May 31), and I'll do my best to be a little more timely with the next one. And if you should want to run an article in the *Sentinel* any time, it sure helps to fill up the blank pages in here! So we'll cast our bread back out onto the waters, and hope that we've put something in here that might be of interest, or of use to you...

See you in the field...

your pard,

Tom Ezell

Cold Steel... (Continued from Page 13)

archaic nature was considered to be the weapon that could make that decisive blow and could win or lose the battle. Indeed, perhaps it was the rustic appeal of the cold steel that echoed something of the chivalry of centuries passed that ensured the bayonet's position of reliability and highly personal nature.

General A. Sidney Johnston's speech to the 9th Arkansas at Shiloh in preparing them to charge the 'Hornet's Nest' reveal something of the emotions that the bayonet could evoke in both the commanders and the men and the trust that was put in its effectiveness to shift an enemy: "*Men of Arkansas! They say you boast of your prowess with the Bowie knife. Today you wield a nobler weapon – the bayonet. Employ it well.*" ¹³

Minutes later he rode further along the lines until he came to the 45th Tennessee, the regiment that he would lead into the action, and at the bead of which he would receive his mortal wound, here, he reiterated his belief in the need to employ the bayonet to win the day: "*Men, they are stubborn; we must use the bayonet. I will lead you!*" ¹⁴

Johnston is only one example of many. Stonewall Jackson is another who realized what a powerful weapon the bayonet could be. Minutes before he won his immortal title, he was reported to have uttered these words to a fellow officer: "*Sir, we will give them the bayonet... Trust to the Bayonet.*" ¹⁵

Conclusion

As was stated at the beginning, this article is not intended to be either definitive or conclusive, however it has sought to highlight certain aspects about the bayonet that are often forgotten or dismissed. Specifically, its status as a weapon that could provide the intimacy that combatants would crave, its archaic aspirations and smacks of chivalric combat, and the dubious nature of casualty figures that may well underestimate the ability of the bayonet to inflict injury. Also attention is drawn to "re-enactorisms" and myths concerning the bayonet, and has hopefully gone some way in exploring these. Indeed one of the most valuable conclusions that could be drawn is that the bayonet's importance as a psychological weapon is in no way proportional to the number of casualties that it could inflict. Thus, the trust that commanders placed in its ability to implore a higher sense of duty was well-founded.

However, if only one conclusion was to be drawn from all of this, it is that when one couples its fighting capabilities with the secondary uses for which the bayonet was employed, such as for stacking arms, as a roasting spit, as a candlestick or as a tool to dig a hole, then the bayonet was an invaluable item of the soldier's accoutrements, and so the common belief that soldiers would throw away their bayonets at the first opportunity is completely without foundation and is merely another "Civil War myth." As with all things however, the Civil War soldier found humor in the bayonet too. The closing quotes illustrate this. The first is a description of bayonet drill by a federal private, and the latter should serve as a warning to drill instructors when carrying out Charge Bayonet – always do it when facing away from camp!

"[Bayonet drill was like watching]... a line of beings made up about equally of the frog, the sandhill crane, the sentinel crab, and the grasshopper: all of them swinging, stirring, jerking every which way, and all gone mad." ¹⁶

"Even such a wearisome proceeding as drilling was not without its humorous side. Sometimes in making the soldiers charge bayonet in line, they would increase their speed and keep on, and never stop until they reached their camp, when the whole force would disappear!" ¹⁷

Footnotes:

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7. Watkins, Samuel, *Company 'Aytch,' New York 1997* p183
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