

The Long Roll

The Monthly Publication of the Union Army Veterans

April 2003 Issue

Greetings

This is our second newsletter and boy did the last month go by fast. Our unit has held it's first organizational meeting and attended our first two reenactments, Mexia and Beaumont Ranch. Reports for these events are below. I wish to thank all those who have helped get our unit off the ground and contributed to it's success. A great deal was settled at the March 9th organizational meeting. My eternal gratitude goes to those who could attend. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to the assembly and eating supper with you. There was much discussion of various subjects and many decisions were made to direct our unit's future. First, our tentative name, the Union Army Veterans, was retained. We determined that although our name may be confusing to some who think that we are a heritage organization (i.e.. SUV, SCV) we ARE veteran reenactors. The two actual service veterans in attendance did not see any disrespect for us to use the term and it was agreed that having a "generic" name does not tie us into any one portrayal. There was discussion that we needed a leader, someone to set our direction. Glen Hargis politely declined command so since I founded the unit, I decided to step up to bat. For the time being, I will wear the stripes of a 1st Sgt. and as our unit continues to grow and I "become an officer", I will promote to NCO status those who have dedicated themselves the most to supporting the UAV. We also decided to pursue incorporation as a non-profit historical educational organization, and member, Mike Meehan, will work on this. We will also pursue Frontier Brigade membership over the objection of one member.

The decision was made by weighing the pros and cons of Brigade membership. The benefits far outweighed the negatives. We are awaiting the Brigade commander, Col. Phil Samples', decision whether to accept us. Reenactor insurance was discussed but this was tabled for future discussion when we have more members.

Also tabled was the consensus that we must charge dues to our members. I have decided that dues will be waived for this year while we grow. That way, no one can cite the cost of two unit memberships as a prohibition for joining us. Bill Hathcoat has designed us a nifty membership application and these will be mailed out soon to all members and must be completed and mailed back to continue UAV membership.

One thing that has crossed my mind is, instead of paying dues, rather, our members must be Civil War Preservation Trust members (supporting battlefield preservation).

However, no decision on this idea has been reached. Let me know your feelings on any topic.

After Action Reports

The "Battle for the Navasota River" was held March 15-16 at the Confederate Reunion Grounds State Historic Site near Mexia, Texas. This event is a small local event and has been going on for a few years as a fund raiser for the state site. The park is beautiful, next to the river and offers a relaxed event. Five UAV members made our first reenactment a success. Parker Brown and I remember the event as

the one where we determined to attend all Texas events, regardless of the "farbyness", in order to teach the reenactors how to properly portray the typical Federal infantry soldier. More than a few safety violations were observed by Bill Hathcoat and me, to Bill's never-ending consternation. These local, low-key reenactments desperately need us.

The Beaumont Ranch Reenactment was held on March 28-30 on the private ranch owned by an ex-Worldcom executive. It is an impressive place and Kevin Keim and his unit have much to be proud of for this first effort at this site. UAV member, Gene Fogerty, has written his recollections of this event (his words are in italics):

My family and I arrived mid-day Friday and thoroughly enjoyed, and were impressed with, the site of the little town on the ranch, scaled down and very much like an overblown barbie toy. The church was a real curiosity so I went in and preached for a moment to a giggly nine year old. About one thousand six hundred school kids were bused in from the local schools and I found myself surrounded soon enough by curious kiddos asking questions and taking pictures. Nighttime was cold, but my greatcoat and blanket were sufficient to keep me plenty warm. Food was not an issue since various cooks had brought good sized menus, and my haversack was full already. Saturday started cold and windy and my hat seemed airborne as much as it was resting on my head. By mid-day the winds were calming, getting warm, and smiles could be seen on many faces. The Yankees gathered in front of the town and marched into the field, into the face of determined fire. The battle lasted about an hour and a half and from my perspective was an impressive demonstration of weapons. Cannons fired regularly, filling the air with loud roars and large puffs of smoke, and Confederates marched across the field, over the bridge and up the hill, while Yankees took position on the hill crest, in the trees over a ditch to one side, and a gattling gun rattled in the center of it all. The Saturday night meal (not free as is customary at reenactments) reminded me of a scene from Glory with so many men in fancy dress uniforms and the ladies in their wide variety of dresses. Late at night, as if out of a novel, came the sound of cannons outside again and three of us took our gear and headed for the hill to see what was going on. It was the first time I'd seen the long flames of fire spit from the mouth of canon, and as my friends and I moved toward our camp, we exchanged musket fire and pistol shots with the attacking Rebels, silhouetted like ghosts in the dark. There was excitement late into the night, but I found the need for sleep overwhelming and caught another dose of rest in the cold, under the always handy greatcoat. A medical situation kept me from getting into the next day's activities, but I must say the action was very enjoyable, nonetheless. My compliments and salutes go out to all of the participants. As always, much better to be in the show than watching from the sidelines.

I would like to add to Gene's report. I had quite an exciting weekend. I arrived on site early Friday morning to find the ranch hands manning the gates confused and unhelpful. But, things improved quickly once our host, Kevin Keim of the 12th Texas Cavalry, arrived mid-morning. I was shocked at the distance the federal campsite was from the ranch where all the living history was going to be staged. Here is the process: First, go to one gate, sign in and then get driving instructions to the south end of the property. We had to go back to the Interstate, drive down to the next exit and follow the signs to a gate. Once inside the property, we had to drive around the periphery of a wheat field in order to protect the crop. The total trip was over ten miles. Each way. You had to unload and then drive back to the first gate and drive into the ranch to reenactor parking. Then you had to walk about 1/2 mile, crossing two fences, one creek, and up "Federal Hill", to get to where you put your tent.

Needless to say, all my walking back and forth on Friday and Saturday wore me out to the extent that I finally refused to walk it any more. I did on Sunday morning

what all the others did all weekend, I parked my car near my camp. Whoever selected the federal camp.....so far from the sutlers and the frontier town where all the living history (and our recruiting table was set up), must hate federal reenactors.

I have never before been to a local or regional reenactment where the parking was further away. 135th Gettysburg, I understood, since there were a reported 23,000 reenactors. With this complaint over, I wish to turn to the happier aspects. With me arriving so early on Friday, I got us a prime camping spot. The vanguard of the remainder of the federal infantry had to take the "hind teat". We were set up in the prettiest grove of trees. The members of the 17th Arkansas Infantry, galvanized as the 77th Penn., asked to join us and we made a cozy camp, complete with fire pit.

Since we were the smallest unit, with only five members, we fell in with them, rather than another unit that will not be named. This "unnamed other unit" was camped nearby and was gracious in offering leftover food to our members. Since UAV member, Mark Reis, donated so much food on Saturday, we politely declined.

We eventually pooled our food with the quartermaster of the 77th Penn. We actually pooled more than that. Now, here is the story: The fellas of the 77th were quite some characters, the type to drink beer around the campfire on Saturday night. During this drinking, it was discussed by two guys that "we" should "steal" one of the Confederate flags. With the Confederate camp about a half mile away, we waited until about 12:30am to sneak over and do the dirty deed. I must stop, here, and tell the reader that I admonished these characters that capturing any flags was strictly against the event rules and was JUST NOT DONE unless scripted in advance. There was just no way to talk these Oklahoma fellas out of this so I went along with them. Two of us waited at the cannon line near the Rebel camp, "spiking the two cannons" (no harm was really done) while waiting for another to sneak into the Rebel camp. I must tell you that I went into great detail with this guy about protecting the borrowed flag, making absolutely sure that it was not damaged or soiled, or disrespected in any way. We waited in the cold for what seemed an eternity (20 minutes?) before walking back in the frosty grass to camp, looking for the third guy. We could not find him so we went to bed. When I awoke in the dawn, I asked this person what happened to him. He showed me the flag and I about had a brain hemorrhage. I told him that he needed to go to our federal commander for instructions on the best way to return it. He did this, was admonished, and learned that he should never do this again. The last I heard, the Rebel unit had their flag back, undamaged, undirtied, and, thank God, in the same condition it was found the night before. The other UAV members slept through the whole thing, the sleep of the innocents.

Recruiting was done at this event and caused me to miss all the drills and the battles. Only two of our members joined the 77th boys in line. From what I heard, there was quite a bit of maneuvering on the field of battle. After Sunday's battle, I was surprised to see the 77th boys and our member, Parker Brown, march into the frontier town, with a prisoner. Poor Chris, the guy who said only two words the entire weekend (see me for those two words) was carrying a ball and chain and was soon shot for desertion. Those 77th Penn fellas are serious about their members stayin' with 'em. But, by then, most of the "25 or so" paying spectators on Sunday had gone home. Never was there a more unique event with a bigger need for good publicity. I hope that this event is continued and improved for next year. In conclusion, we got a few potential recruits from our recruiting efforts and they will get a copy of this e-newsletter. To wrap this all up, let's see, I fell climbing a ravine on Friday morning, bruising my ribs, recruited all weekend, missing all the battles, loaned my greatcoat to a 77th fella who burned a hole in it, (the same guy who broke the glass in my lantern), went three days without a bath or a shave, got

sunburned, got little sleep, came home with everything dirty, and was exhausted.
When can we do it again?

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 26-27

Spring Tactical (non-scripted, non-spectator 24 hour immersion reenactment) near Decatur, Texas in the JFK National Grasslands

May 2-3

Texas Forts Muster at the Fort Worth Stockyards in North Fort Worth, Texas Encampment/Living History/Recruiting Event (there will be injuns to shoot at!)

May 10 (Saturday Only)

Circle 10 Council (Dallas) Annual Scout Show at Market Hall on Central Expwy. Living History Display/Recruiting Event. (Inside this time)

May (unknown date)

Granbury Civil War Reenactment (tentative) South of Granbury, Texas Living History Encampment/Recruiting Event

June 7-8

Texas Scottish Festival Held at UTA's Maverick Stadium in Arlington, Texas Living History Display/Recruiting Event

July 4th (Morning Only)

Independence Day Parade in downtown Arlington, Texas Ceremonial Event

September 19-21

Kaufman Civil War Reenactment near Kaufman, Texas Encampment Living History/Recruiting Event

October 3-5

Granbury Civil War Reenactment near Granbury, Texas Encampment Living History/Recruiting Event

October 24-26

Heritage Days Festival in Crockett, Texas Reenactment/Living History Encampment

November 14-16

Plantation Liendo Civil War Reenactment near Hempstead, Texas on historic civil war Texas cotton plantation. Encampment Living History/Recruiting Event

Contact me if you are interested in any more information about upcoming events.

Swap Meet

Member, Tim Gould, wrote to me the middle of March telling me that he was forced to leave the reenacting hobby for health reasons.

He had all his gear on sale for only \$500. Two infantry uniforms, complete with hats, and his rifle-musket. The list was extensive.

Well, it all sold within a few days of posting the sale to UAV members.

Member, Parker Brown, jumped on the stuff. Early bird gets the worm, so to speak. Contact Parker if you wish to make the new owner an offer. Parker tells me that it was Tim's wife who has health problems and Tim needed the money to help her. Please send your prayers to the Gould family. I, for one, will miss Tim. Kudos to Parker for giving Tim an extra \$100. That is the kind of reenactor the UAV has.