

# THE MESSENGER

5th MISSOURI INFANTRY, COMPANY A

Rt 3, Box 130  
Warrensburg, MO 64093  
816-747-5728

**VOL 1, Number 9 \*\*\*\*\* NOVEMBER 1990**

**CONTENTS:** Meeting & election & dues notice, information on officer positions, updated membership roster, and an excerpt from America's Civil War about the Missouri Brigade.

**BATTLE OF WINDSOR:** Our battle of Windsor was a success! We had a few glitches with signs, timely delivery of food, and some irritated yanks (from allegedly short rations and the free drawing), only the last of which was our fault but we still get the credit/blame. It appears that Windsor did well financially, but it was expensive to the company as well as to some of our members.

**NEXT MEETING:** (and annual banquet & elections) at the Whiteman AFB Officers Club, Saturday, November 17th, 6:00 PM. See the info sheet in this newsletter and get in your reservations ASAP. We'll have an entry list at the West gate. To get there, take US 50 to Knob Noster, then MO 132 South to the base gate. A quorum for elections is 50% of Veterans - we currently have 15 with 2 more eligible by Nov 17th. NOTE: This is also the day of the annual MCWRA membership meeting in Jeff City. MCWRA encourages maximum attendance. It'll be over in plenty of time to get to our banquet.

**ELECTION OF FIELD OFFICERS:** We'll have our annual election of field officers after dinner. Veterans only can vote, but any member can participate in discussion of qualifications. Consider your nominations for the positions & ranks; remember that the field staff are expected to perform other functions in addition to looking good during drill. For position descriptions, review your By-laws.

**REMAINING EVENTS:** We'll register nine for Prairie Grove, AR, on Dec 1-2. This is traditionally a good event, & if anyone who didn't sign up wants to, please contact me. We also have the opportunity to participate in a benefit for the Rice House in Raytown on Nov 3; See details within.

**NEW MEMBERS:** Welcome to Greg Ballman, Paul McClintock, & Loren & Martha Roush. Greg came all the way to Windsor to do a very convincing corpse impression. Paul intends to be a non-combatant. Loren was first recruited by the 9th Tx, who didn't respond to his inquiries. Sponsors will be George for Greg, Steve Yoakum for Paul, & Catfish for Loren.

**CONGRATULATIONS:** To John Viessman, who has a prior engagement on November 17th. Seems he's getting married that day.

**1991:** A new year is fast approaching, which means that we have dues coming due & we'll have to decide what events to support. Cole Camp is shooting for May, Lexington will be coming up in rotation for September, Roscoe is asking for a fall event, I've heard rumors about Tipton, Weston seems solid for April, plus there's the big one (maybe) at Oak Hills (Wilson's Creek to the reconstructed). Many of these are 130th's, and if all come off as scheduled we'll have lots to do without leaving the area.

## EXCERPT FROM THE BY-LAWS

### V - OFFICERS

There shall be two sets of officers, the Organizational Staff and the Field Staff. Individuals may serve on both staffs.

B. Field Staff: The Field Staff shall consist of such persons at such ranks as the membership shall decide. However, there shall be no more than one commissioned officer position for the first ten and each twenty additional Veterans. All members of the Field Staff will be Veterans. They shall be elected by secret ballot for terms of one year at the November meeting. The following functional positions, which may be combined with the consent of the individual elected, will be filled by the field staff:

1. The Commander will be a Commissioned or non-commissioned officer. He has overall responsibility for the conduct of the Unit at events and will represent the unit in Commanders' meetings. When the Unit serves alone, he will act as on-field commander. When the unit serves with other units, he will fill such positions as may be designated by the overall commander based on rank and experience.

2. The Personnel Officer will normally hold the rank of First Sergeant if such position is authorized. The personnel officer is responsible for recruiting, overseeing the upgrade of Recruits, and assuring that event reporting requirements are met.

3. The Quartermaster will normally be a non-commissioned officer. He is responsible for all Unit-owned gear and for ensuring it is transported to and from events. He will ensure that unit-owned personal equipment is properly controlled when issued to unit members.

4. The Safety Officer is responsible for enforcing all safety rules required by the event sponsors or by the Unit. He will hold such rank as may be decided by the members.

5. The Authenticity Officer is responsible for providing guidance to the Staff and members on proper equipment and impressions. The rank associated with this position will be decided by the members.

The above excerpt from the By-Laws states that we must have certain officers. It does not limit us from having other people to perform other functions. One such suggestion would be Commissary officer, who takes care of the cook gear & does the cooking. In addition, nothing prevents a private from volunteering to assist one of these persons.

A FEW THOUGHTS about our organization for the coming year. As of today, we have 28 soldiers, 1 musician, 1 male civilian, & 7 ladies. We started with 7 men, 1 musician & 2 ladies. We can expect to lose a few people who drop out or find other units to their liking, but we can expect to continue to gain people, especially in the central part of the state. We are limited to one commissioned position for the first 10 and each additional 20 VETERANS, but such limits do not apply to NCO slots. However, we must consider our average field strength, not just our total membership when determining rank structure. As far as rank is concerned, we should have no more than 1 officer or sergeant plus one corporal out of each 10 men (i.e., 8 of each 10 should be privates to agree with authentic ratios). Personally, I'd suggest not more than one officer, two sergeants & three corporals.

A further organizational suggestion is to set up administrative platoons on a geographical basis, with a convenient dividing line such as US 65 or Mo 127, with a corporal/sergeant (not necessarily from that area initially) responsible for those people at events. This would provide a structure for those who live too far to attend meetings regularly to get together for drill, local presentations, etc. We can talk about this at the meeting!

### EVENT INFORMATION:

Nov 3, Rice-Tremonti House, Raytown. This is a historic preservation threat. The 1836 home, owned by a foundation which can't make the interest payments, & if default on their loan, the house is in a prime commercial development area. Cindy Burnose of Crowley's is rarridding event, which calls for hourly demonstrations of 1860's life from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Military & civilian impressions welcome, free lunch & supper. Lots of other things going on but reenactors are to be key attraction. There will be a fashion show. The house is on east 66th St just off Blue Ridge (WALMART). There is no westbound exit off Mo 350, but you can cut off through Grandy's parking lot, go a block or so north to 66th & park on 66th or at the Subaru lot. This is a worthwhile public function & so what if you miss the American Royal parade.

Dec 1-2: Battle of Prairie Grove, Ark. Original battle site about 20 miles west of Fayetteville on US 62. Includes 2 skirmishes Saturday & reenactment of battle Sunday. It appears that we'll get basic amenities only, but the event was enjoyable in 1988. I've sent in 8 names & indicated we're willing to serve with Crowley's, 4th Mo or TMR. Historical setting: TC Hindman attacked a force under Blunt to run him out of Arkansas; however, another small Fed army under Herron marched from Springfield at foot cav speed, so we ended up fighting 2 armies. Confed troops held the day, but retired overnight with Shelby serving as rear guard. Dec 7 1862 was battle date.

## The hard-fighting 1st Missouri was one of the western Confederacy's most valiant brigades.

By Phillip Thomas Tucker

Long before Gettysburg and Vicksburg had virtually decided the nation's course by the Civil War's midpoint, one Confederate unit had already acquired an almost legendary reputation in the west—the 1st Missouri Confederate Brigade. One Southern general placed the Missouri Brigade's role in perspective by writing, "I mean no disparagement to any troops of the Southern Confederacy when I say the Missouri troops of the Army of the West were not surpassed by any troops in the world."

Indeed, this tough unit of frontier exiles from the western border would earn much acclaim across the South during the war as "The Fighting Missouri Brigade." The reputation was well-deserved. Few units, North or South, saw as much action. The 1st Missouri, in fact, may have been the Southland's finest combat brigade for the longest period, from late 1861 to 1865.

No unit better reflected the high quality of its leadership than the Missouri Brigade. The brigade's birth in late 1861 and its evolution into one of the Confederacy's elite commands was most influenced by Colonel Henry Little, an exiled Marylander and ex-West Pointer. He would hone his farm boys into crack regulars with his example and iron discipline. Little was destined for a battlefield death at Iuka, Miss., in September 1862, but not before he had played an instrumental role in the brigade's development.

Little had excellent raw material with which to work—former Missouri State Guardsmen, who had seen action at Boonville, Carthage, Wilson's Creek, Dry Wood Creek and Lexington. Even before the firing on Fort Sumter, many brigade members had served in militia companies and fought in the Indian,



The Missouri Brigade won its first laurels, fittingly enough, fighting under Missouri General Sterling Price at the Battle of Pea Ridge in 1862. The brigade lost hundreds in the battle.

Mormon, Mexican and Kansas wars. Such experience helped them to become the Confederacy's shock troops in the west.

The Missouri Brigade first won laurels at the Battle of Pea Ridge, in early March 1862. Here, in northwestern Arkansas, the brigade's soldiers served as the reliable "Old Guard" for Brig. Gen. Sterling Price's army, spearheading the attack on the Federal's position around Elk Horn Tavern. For most of two days, Little's troops bore the brunt of the battle in the fields and tangled woodlands surrounding Jesse Cox's tavern. The brigade nearly carried the day on March 7, charging forward, capturing prisoners, artillery and supplies, before darkness closed the struggle.

But the defeat of the Southern army's other wing, under Brig. Gen. Benjamin McCulloch, negated the Missourians' success the following day. Concentrated Union artillery and reserves forced the

Missourians to retire under a fierce onslaught. The brigade lost hundreds of men during the savage engagement, but still managed to protect the withdrawing army's rear.

The decisive "Gettysburg of the West" resulted in Missouri's abandonment and the transfer of Little's command east of the Mississippi River. Regardless of Confederate fortunes, however, a legend had begun at Pea Ridge. Major General Earl Van Dorn described the Missouri Brigade's performance at Pea Ridge by swearing, "The Old Guard of Napoleon was not composed of braver men: I have never in battle seen their equals."

The spring and summer of 1862 passed quickly for the Missourians in northeast Mississippi. After a brief encounter at Iuka, the brigade was not presented with another challenge until early October—Van Dorn's gamble

to capture the strategic railroad center at Corinth, Miss. The ensuing debacle followed the Pea Ridge pattern of initial success, then crushing defeat.

Butternut-clad Missourians charged and captured the strongest network of defenses protecting the enemy's right-center at Battery Powell. Never in the war would so few Rebs take so many guns—at least 40 cannon. But Union forces rallied to drive the outnumbered Missourians from their hard-won position. Nearly 500 brigade members became casualties in the ill-fated assault.

1863 brought greater trials for the brigade's regiments—1st and 4th (Consolidated), 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th Missouri. Also included were the 1st Missouri Cavalry (Dismounted), and Captains William Wade's, Samuel Churchill Clark's, John C. Landis' and Henry Guibor's Missouri batteries as well. That spring, Colonel Francis Marion Cockrell

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## COMMANDS

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became brigade commander. The former lawyer's character—supremely dedicated, moral and determined—would have a significant influence on the brigade's performance in upcoming days.

Duty at Grand Gulf, Miss., during the spring of 1863 found the Missouri Brigade in perhaps its best fighting shape. Ranks had been bolstered to around 2,500 men, who were resolved to defend Vicksburg at all costs. After enduring several Union naval bombardments at the Mississippi River defenses just below Vicksburg, the Missourians hurried southward to repel Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's amphibious landing and invasion of Mississippi on May 1. Under the leadership of Brig. Gen. John Stevens Bowen, Cockrell's followers recklessly attacked vastly superior numbers to temporarily stem the blue tide. But nothing could stop the might of Grant's juggernaut. More than 200 of the brigade's soldiers were sacrificed in the futile bid to halt Grant in the forests of western Mississippi.

The final, and best, chance for Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton's army to defeat Grant came on May 16 at Champion's Hill. The two armies clashed blindly into one another on the Sid Champion Plantation to determine Vicksburg's destiny. The left flank of Pemberton's battle line, facing eastward, was destroyed by an assault from the north. A full third of the largest Confederate army in the west was wiped out, and Grant appeared to have won his most impressive success to date. To save the day, the Missouri Brigade was chosen for the seemingly impossible chore of turning disaster into victory. After double-quicking through a mob of panic-stricken comrades, Cockrell's regiments aligned before the enemy's charging masses.

A mounted Cockrell dashed down the long, gray lines with a saber in one hand and a magnolia flower in the other, shouting encouragement above the battle's din. Under hot fire, Bowen's entire division—including the Missouri Brigade and another brigade—stood as the only force between Grant and a decisive Northern victory. Suddenly Cockrell roared, "Charge!" The onrushing Johnnies tore viciously into the bluecoats, pushing them back through the fields and forests, retaking lost batteries, hundreds of yards of ground and the initiative. But with victory so near, the opportunity vanished as Federal reinforcements arrived at the last moment to plug the gap in Grant's line. Not only did Pemberton suffer defeat, he also lost 600 of his finest troops—Cockrell's Missourians.



Union troops strengthen Battery Hickenlooper during the lengthy and dangerous siege of Vicksburg.

Defeat at Champion's Hill guaranteed Vicksburg's investment. The Mississippi River port had become the most strategic point in all the Confederacy during the summer of 1863. As a compliment to their superior combat qualities, Pemberton assigned the Missouri Brigade and the division's other brigade to reserve duty—behind the lines to be rushed forward to any threatened sector. On both May 19 and 22, the Missourians played critical roles in helping repulse the foe's attacking waves. The worst crisis during the 47-day siege came on June 25, when the enemy exploded a mine under the 3rd Louisiana Redan. With the huge blast, Union regiments charged forward to race through the breach in the Southern line. Cheering Missourians in gray met the attackers at the crater with bayonets and musket butts.

Another mine exploded near the same spot on July 1. A handful of 6th Missouri boys were blown skyward and buried alive in the tremendous blast. Once more Cockrell's soldiers dashed to the scene with red battle flags waving and bayonets flashing in the sunlight. Again the westerners solidified the all-important position. Despite a stubborn defense for over a month and a half, the end for the garrison was near. Pemberton surrendered on the Fourth of July, after Cockrell had unsuccessfully begged to be allowed to lead an attack to bust through Grant's ring with his brigade.

While other captured units of Vicksburg's garrison would fade away after the citadel's demise, the Missouri Brigade would be exchanged and again be ready for service by September 1863—no small accomplishment after losing over half its

strength during the Vicksburg campaign. Indeed 1,389 of the 1st Missouri Brigade infantrymen had died since May 1, 1863—just over a two-month period.

Duty called once more in January 1864. Cockrell's hardened veterans traveled by rail to Mobile, Ala., to quell an expected mutiny. But with no disturbances at Mobile, the brigade headed northward to join Lt. Gen. Leonidas Polk's forces opposing Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman's drive on Meridian, Miss. But no serious encounters developed during the brief winter campaign. The Atlanta campaign's onset soon brought the brigade into the forefront of bitter fighting again.

By May 1864, the Missourians were enduring the dangers of trench warfare on the New Hope Church line. The struggle for Atlanta continued throughout the summer with increasing casualty lists for the brigade, while Sherman and General Joseph Johnston played a chess game for the Gate City's possession.

On June 27, Sherman struck a hammerlike blow, assaulting the Kenesaw Mountain line with everything he had. Here, holding the Pigeon Hill sector, the Missouri Brigade faced a concentrated attack. Situated in earthworks following the hill's contours, Cockrell's grayclads held out against the might of Sherman's charging legions and "mowed them down like hay" in the blistering Georgia heat. In throwing back the main attacks on the north, the cost of defense for the Missouri Brigade was more than 100 men—the highest loss of any Confederate brigade at Kenesaw Mountain.

The Missourians experienced the rigors of Atlanta's siege throughout July and August 1864. Atlanta at last fell. Cockrell's troops were some of the last Confederates to march through the burning city. The loss of the South's great arsenal only propelled the western Confederates to greater efforts to redeem their dying nation. The first chance to gain revenge for Atlanta's loss came on September 6, when a task force from the Missouri Brigade captured Jonesboro, Ga., after a nasty and daylong skirmish.

October 5 and the rich Federal depot at Allatoona, Ga., presented a better opportunity, however. After swinging northward to draw Sherman out of Atlanta, the Confederate army, including the Missouri Brigade, attacked the powerful fortifications crowning Allatoona's heights. In a wild charge amid the northern Georgia wilderness, the Missourians overran two fortified lines in bitter hand-to-hand fighting and surrounded the Union garrison in the last remaining fort. Capitulation seemed inevitable. Cockrell's veterans, along with a Mississippi brigade and a Texas and North Carolina brigade, had apparently achieved a brilliant success. But a mis-

**5th MISSOURI INFANTRY, Co A (CSA)**  
**1990-91 ANNOTATED SCHEDULE**  
as of 10/24/90

Symbols: \* means battle, bold face in Missouri, all caps 5th Mo Max effort.  
? means for info only

November 3, Raytown MO. Benefit appearance with Crowley's for the Rice Tremonti House. See comments on page 2 of newsletter.

November 17, Jefferson City. MCWRA annual membership meeting, Jeff City library. See the Campaigner for details.

November 17, Whiteman AFB (Knob Noster). First annual 5th Mo banquet, Officers' Club. See details in the newsletter.

\* December 1-2, Prairie Grove, AR. Traditionally a good event, several actions. See EVENT DETAILS on page 2.

December ?, location ?, Christmas party & meeting (hope someone starts working on this soon)!

January ?, location ?, Meeting & election of President & Vice-President for 2-year terms. Jan 29 OK?

February 16, Jeff City: Annual ball. Also suspect the annual MCWRA scheduling meeting will be that day.

April 20-21, Weston. 1st Battle of the year!

taken report of approaching enemy reinforcements caused the Confederates to call off the attack. Another near success and 270 more casualties had been wasted by the hard-luck Missouri Brigade.

The bloody fighting of 1864 had only begun, however. In one last bid to reverse the war's fortunes, the Army of Tennessee embarked on an ill-advised movement in the Confederacy's final autumn. Missourians trudged northward into the fertile agricultural lands of middle Tennessee with visions of a decisive victory and perhaps a thrust westward to liberate the state—groaning under Federal occupied rule since 1861. A chance to achieve such a decisive success seemed to present itself at Franklin, Tenn. Here, on November 30, 1864, Union Maj. Gen. John Schofield's retreating army had been cornered with its back to the Harpeth River.

Some 620 Missourians stood in formation with banners flapping and rows of bayonets sparkling in the late afternoon sunshine. Around 4 o'clock, the Army of Tennessee advanced in one of the war's grandest charges, surging deeper into the "valley of no return" toward the strong earthworks encircling the small town. Cockrell's men swept over the fortifications with other troops when the Union center broke. But blue reserves charged forward and plugged the gap, driving the butternut attackers back over the defenses with staggering casualties. Darkness closed upon one of the war's worst slaughters. In one short afternoon in middle Tennessee, 419 brigade members were killed, wounded or captured on Franklin's cotton fields—a 68 percent loss. The brigade, nevertheless, somehow regrouped and remained intact.

The ever-dwindling number of Missourians reunited with General John B. Hood's battered army in northern Alabama by 1864's conclusion. Both sides now rested before the final flurry of fighting in the conflict's last months. While other units dissolved and vanished, the Missouri Brigade gathered strength and regained morale for the last, inconsequential engagements of the war.

As during the previous year, Cockrell's unit was transferred to Mobile for the upcoming spring campaign. The remaining few hundred Missourians took up positions inside Fort Blakeley to face an onslaught of thousands of Federals on April 9, 1865. On the day that General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox, Missouri troops went down in a final encounter with the boys in blue. The brigade not only was shattered by the attack, but was almost captured intact. Dreary Ship Island Prison Camp in the Gulf of Mexico was the final destination for perhaps the Confederacy's finest soldiers—the never-say-die veterans of the 1st Missouri Confederate Brigade. □

**5th MISSOURI INFANTRY, COMPANY A**

Rt 3, Box 130  
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**FIRST ANNUAL BANQUET**

Where: OFFICER'S CLUB, WHITEMAN AIR FORCE BASE  
When: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1990, 6:00 PM  
Dress: BEST CONFEDERATE UNIFORMS &/or CIVILIAN GARB

MENU 1: (\$ 9.15) Chicken Champagne w/ wild rice  
Sweet Potatoes  
Green Beans Almondine  
Green Salad, Rolls, Butter, Sherbet, Coffee or Tea

MENU 2: (\$12.60) KC Strip Steak w/ mushroom sauce  
Twice Baked potato  
Green Beans Almondine  
Green Salad, Rolls, butter, sherbet, coffee or tea.

Your advance reservations, including menu selection & payment, must be received by **NOVEMBER 6TH**.

SCHEDULE: 6:00 PM Cocktails  
7:00 PM Dinner  
8:00 PM Meeting & Election of Field Officers

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, YOU MAY INCLUDE YOUR CHECK FOR DINNER WITH YOUR 1991 DUES PAYMENT, WHICH WE'D LIKE RIGHT AWAY TO BEGIN BUDGETING FOR NEXT YEAR.

**DUES NOTICE**

Your 1991 Company and MCWRA dues are now due. Remember, MCWRA membership is required of all our members. If any member of your family plans to dress out for events, you must obtain a family membership for them to be covered by MCWRA insurance.

(tear off & mail before November 6th)