

THE MESSENGER

The Newsletter of the Fifth Missouri Infantry (CSA), Inc.

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EVENT REPORT: COLUMBIA JUNE 14 & 15

The fifth annual Maplewood Mansion living history & skirmish at Nifong Park was a success. This fun little event seems to improve each year. Not that it doesn't have its drawbacks. I'd like to see a better site to accommodate the growing turnout. Indeed, organizers are considering limiting numbers in the future. Someplace with fewer modern intrusions would be nice. And more Yanks. This year did draw eight or ten real Federal infantry, who characteristically chose to operate independently of our galvanized troops.

The obligatory skirmish on Saturday went as expected. Sunday's did not. The 2nd Missouri broke the scenario at the beginning, by firing during the "prisoner exchange", and things were a jumble from there. It ended with near fisticuffs as their flag bearer (not a member of their unit, I'm told) refused to be captured when they were overrun.

As I'm noticing more of late, the fun stuff seems to come away from the sham battles -- during the "living history" portion of the event. This year, Private T.J. Bruegger and Musician Steven Fink stood Court Martial for charges brought after an incident at Indian Creek. (See the May issue of The Messenger)

The proceeding was conducted as closely to regulations as possible, with five officers sitting on the court. I acted as Judge Advocate to prosecute the case. Dave Bears represented the accused. My case was simple: The youths did desert their post, and did fire on their commanding officer, violating a number of the Articles of War in the process. I asked for the maximum penalty. Their counsel, amazingly, did not deny their actions.

Apparently having indulged too freely in brandied peaches, he tried only to show mitigating circumstances. The Court bought some of this -- calling for a Court of Inquiry to investigate certain allegations -- but still condemned the accused to the firing squad.

Men in the ranks being at a premium these days, we opted not to shoot the poor lads, and instead doused them with a surprise bucket of water at the command "Fire".

It was good to see Doug Frank back in the ranks again, enjoying his short summer hiatus from "The Point". Unfortunately for Captain Lee, Cadet Frank has apparently had enough time on his hands to plan harassing shenanigans of all sorts. The Captain awoke Saturday morning to find his tent fly stacked with straw bales and firewood, and candles and beer cans dangling from strings. Then, he awoke Sunday morning to find his entire fly -- and all contents thereof -- relocated to the REAR of his tent. Both stealthy operations of pure military precision were accomplished while the Captain slept, by Frank and other co-conspirators who shall remain nameless. It is said that Mrs. Lee now sleeps lightly, and jumps at shadows.

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EVENT REPORT: JEFFERSON BARRACKS, JUNE 21-22

The 4th Battalion, 1st Confederate Division, suffered a good old-fashioned ass-whuppin' on the banks of the mighty Mississippi this weekend. There are both a good side and a bad side to this sad fact.

It's good that we've finally found some Federals with aggressive leadership. I have become quite bored, thank you, with passive Yanks who timidly engage, then cry "foul" when tactically bested. (Read "Prairie Grove").

On the other hand -- well, a good old-fashioned ass-whuppin' ain't necessarily a pleasant thing, you know.

In the period context of a lowly web foot complaining about poor generalship: What in the H--L were they thinking!?

Saturday's battle was scheduled for 4 p.m. When we formed and marched out at 2:45 on the stifling heat, we should have known something was afoot. As the column entered a shady, hilly area of the park, Col. Beck deployed the first company (4th Missouri) as skirmishers to our front. "My, what a nice place for a battle", says I. "But isn't it a bit early? And why are these spectators walking along with the troops in the middle of the battlefield?" "It's Bull Run all over again" says someone in ranks behind me.

Next, our company was deployed forward as a reserve for the skirmishers. As we stood idly in the shade, scattered shooting erupted to our right rear. First we saw blue horsemen. Lots of 'em. Then federal infantry appeared, and started advancing on the exposed column to our rear. The Colonel seemed to have deployed his skirmish line in the wrong direction. Capt. Lee asked for, and was given, permission to wheel the company about and strike the federal right flank. "Just stay close enough to support the skirmishers" says Major Prater. And strike them, we did, delivering a company volley from 60 yards into their flank. Oddly enough, they ignored it. Now the Yank cavalry was thicker'n flies on molasses, and threatening our left. We refused our flank, but we were only 13 muskets. We couldn't muster much of a front.

As the firing intensified, the main body of our troops disappeared over the hill -- AWAY from us. I looked behind us for the 4th Mo. skirmish line, but they had disappeared, too. About a half-dozen of our mounted cavalry were sitting there scratchin' themselves. Some dismounted troopers were on our right, but in no position to protect our flank from the blue horsemen. To put it simply, we were left kind of danglin'. When the Yanks rolled a mountain howitzer into line, we started looking for a way out of this mess. Major Prater appeared and ordered us to rejoin the battalion, which was now being pushed up a hill about 100 yards distant. To get there we had to cross in front of the advancing federal line.

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Attention -- COMPANY

By the 1st Sergeant

Right (or left) oblique. MARCH.

One of the most difficult things for reenactors to do is march at the oblique in a line of battle. The inevitable tendency is to turn this maneuver into a messy half-wheel. It should be nothing of the sort. The object of the oblique (pronounced either "oh-bleek" or "oh-blyke" during the period) is to move a battle line diagonally across a field without turning it to expose a flank to the enemy. The line, in effect, slides sideways, while maintaining forward motion. A study of the route of Pickett's Virginians during Longstreet's assault at Gettysburg is a well-known example.

Here is how "U.S. Infantry and Rifle Tactics" (1861) describes the maneuver:

1. Right (or left) oblique. 2. MARCH.

331. At the second command, each man will make a half face to the right (or left), and will then march straight forward in the new direction. As the men no longer touch elbows, they will glance along the shoulders of the nearest files, towards the side to which they are obliquing, and will regulate their steps so that the shoulders shall always be behind that of their next neighbor on that side, and that his head shall conceal the heads of the other men in the rank. Besides this, the men should preserve the same length of pace, and same degree of obliquity.



Par #331. The Oblique March to the Left.



Par #331. The Oblique March to the Right.

Note that a "half face" is an eighth of a turn (45 degrees). The trick here is to do as instructed, and always keep your shoulder behind that of your neighbor. Resist the temptation to come up abreast of him. If you do, it will throw off the alignment of the rest of your line, and create the tendency to wheel instead of oblique. Guide and dress are to the side of the oblique (i.e. right oblique, guide right).

The responsibility for maintaining alignment rests primarily on the front rank. The rear rank man has simply to follow in the footsteps of the man leading him. Worth noting, however, that the man you follow is no longer your file mate, but rather the man next to him toward the side of the oblique. For example, if you're a rear rank #1, in a left oblique you are following in the footsteps of the front rank #2 to your filemate's left. Maintain your interval and preserve your rear rank alignment in the same manner as described above.

The oblique continues until commanded to "Forward --- MARCH." At that time, everyone half-faces (1/8th turn) back to the front, regains elbow contact with their neighbors, and resumes marching straight to the front. Guide reverts to where it was prior to the oblique -- i.e., center (toward the colors) or to the left (or right, depending upon the circumstances).

Principals to remember: 1.) Stay behind the outside shoulder of your neighbor toward the side of the oblique. 2.) Don't get in a hurry. The pace does not change. 3.) When the oblique ends, immediately regain elbow contact with your neighbors toward the guide. See you on the drill field.

YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK

February 20, 1997

Dear Mr. Faught:

On behalf of the staff at Vicksburg National Military Park, please accept our heartfelt thanks for the continuing generous support for monument preservation/maintenance provided by the 5th Missouri Infantry (CSA) Inc. Your donation will be used later this spring to wash and wax the bust of Maj. Gen. John S. Bowen.

The bust of General Bowen was executed by the renowned sculptor Anton Schaaf and erected in 1916. Funding for the monument was provided by the park. Thanks to your generosity, routine washing and waxing of the bronze will be performed that will maintain the beauty of the monument for the benefit of future generations.

In addition to our thanks, please accept the enclosed Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of your support.

Sincerely,

Terrance J. Winschel
Historian



May 5, 1997

Dear Mr. Faught:

Thank you very much for your letter. As the Fort Benton property is privately owned, the WCHS has an option to buy for \$46,000, payable Dec. 31, 1997. At the present time the WCHS has \$13,000 in a special bank account.

Fort Benton was built in 1863 and companion Fort Davidson was built the same year.

Fort Davidson is the only fort in Missouri that is controlled by the DNR and they have expressed an interest in Fort Benton, but the WCHS would like to see additional acquisitions of adjacent properties to make a complex as large as Fort Davidson. The area around Patterson has a wealth of historic value that should not be ignored.

Two battles were fought as Confederates drove the Union garrison to flee to Stoney Battery and Fort Davidson with ambushes and skirmishes along the way. From 1861 to the finish of the war, there was always a strong garrison at Fort Benton.

The property has substantially fulfilled one or more of the National Register criteria, and we are going to prepare a nomination packet immediately. The area could easily become part of an established historical district once we get the Fort Benton project completed.

We thank you for your foresight in recognizing the importance of the Fort Benton Project and your generous contribution. In the event the WCHS is unable to purchase the Fort Benton property as planned, your donation will be returned to you in full.

Sincerely,

Petit J. Croy, Chairman

Ft. Benton Project, Wayne County Historical Society.



May 14, 1997

Dear Friends,

Thank you for enlisting in the APCWS mission. As veteran soldiers you know the strength of the army lies in her numbers.

In the engagements we face today, every member is critical to our success. Your help has been a vital part of that success. APCWS has helped save 44 sites in 12 states. This exciting record was made possible entirely through the support of members like you. We welcome your commitment to our efforts to save the battlefields so that present and future generations can pause and reflect on the meaning of our country and the sacrifices of our ancestors.

With your enlistment, you will receive our quarterly newsletter Hallowed Ground, invitations to participate in special APCWS sponsored educational tours and programs, open access to all Association properties, and discounts at selected businesses and inns that participate in our Historic Inns Network.

On behalf of the APCWS board and staff, thank you for your contribution. We sincerely appreciate your help protecting our past for our future.

Sincerely,

Tamira A. Martel

Director of Membership

Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites, Inc.



June 9, 1997

Dear Mr. Faught:

Thank you so much for the very generous contribution from the 5th Missouri Infantry (CSA) Inc. We all appreciate your special interest and help.

We will use your gift toward another interpretive exhibit. At the present time we've deposited it in our savings for that purpose. We have a state historical marker near the site of Battery Powell, but would like to eventually have one of our newer interpretive exhibits. We would like to have a copy of a photo (period photo or sketch) of Col. McCown and any information you may have on the efforts at Battery Powell. Perhaps your contribution could be used on this exhibit in the future.

You will receive our newsletter and we hope you will share it with the others. Please let all concerned know of our gratitude.

Sincerely,

Rosemary T. Williams

Chair, Siege & Battle of Corinth Commission



EVENT REPORT: COLUMBIA CONT.

From the event organizers: "On behalf of the Columbia Parks and Recreation Department, I sincerely thank the 5th Missouri Infantry and the Civilian Unit for your participation in the Civil War Reenactment event held June 14th and 15th at Nifong Park. I appreciate your support of this event, that you strive for authenticity and your knowledge of the Civil War shared with the public. This event gets better every year. I look forward to next year. It is a privilege to work with you and the 5th. Thanks again."

Sincerely, Karen L. Ramey
Civil War Reenactment Coordinator

Submitted by 1st Serg't Faught

EVENT REPORT: JEFFERSON BARRACKS,

We did this at the double-quick, lest we find ourselves sitting out the war in Alton. Exhausted, we reached the safety of our depleted lines only to be pressed even further up the hill. We were getting a drubbing reminiscent of "Big Rock Hill" at the Kentucky tactical. Federals were on our flanks and in our front. At this point, the thrashing was brought to a merciful conclusion.

We learned later that this was intended only to be a minor skirmish -- just a small affair in advance of the planned scenerio at the battlefield a quarter mile away. It got a bit out of hand. To borrow a line from "Gettysburg": "The boys got their dander up. What was I to do?"

It was a humiliating defeat, and we in the rank and file are quick to point the finger of blame. For example, where in the heck were our cavalry, anyway? But that's all completely within the spirit of walking in the footsteps of the men who did this for real. While it would have been nicer to win the scenerio, this little drubbing was the best part of the weekend for me.

As far as the rest of the event goes, I have a number of obligatory complaints. Sleep came at a premium, as Friday night was excessively boisterous into the wee hours, and Saturday night brought heavy rain and frequent lightening. Most of our company got lost on the way to the site thanks to bad directions and poor signage. Wood, straw and water were plentiful, but crowds were sparse, I thought, for an event in a major metropolitan area. Did they promote this thing as much as they did the loud concerts in the amphitheater next to camp?

Battalion organization has become an oxi-moron. Saturday morning Parade was re-scheduled, as is becoming the norm. Information dissemination from staff to company level short-circuited, as usual -- causing me to scramble to gather the men together for formations. Why can't we just stick to the printed schedule for a change? The scripted battles were generally good.

However, on both days the action moved progressively away from the crowd, until, unable to see anything, spectators drifted away before the conclusion. Sunday's scenerio was marked by some more good, aggressive action by the Federal cavalry. At one point they nearly overwhelmed our left flank. That catastrophe had panic-stricken men streaming for the rear in confusion. Nicetouch, skulkers.

The heat was dangerously oppressive. Saturday's action was repeatedly stopped for injuries -- heat and otherwise. Nearly two hours of marching and fighting in 90 degree, high-humidity weather will take it's toll on TBG's and youngsters alike. On the bright side, the military camp was shady and breezy.

In the end, what might have been a pretty bad event was saved by a few really great moments that make me glad I didn't miss it.

-Submitted by 1st Serg't Faught

NEWS FROM THE FRONT!

Battle of

Newtonia



Dear Sirs,

I take pen in hand to inform you that the 4th Missouri Infantry, CSA, under the gallant command of Captain T. Prater will be taking the field against Lincoln's mercenaries at Newtonia, Missouri on the instant of September 5 & 6th. Those who can avail themselves by detaching from camp duties and joining ranks against the invaders may contact the Captain at his field headquarters in Joplin.

Your ob't & humble servant,
Cpl. L.B. Sparkman
Wiggins' Battery,
3rd Detachment, CSA

Enlist with 1stSerg't Faught if you would wish to help drive the Linconites from our state on this campagne in Sept!

**THE SUTTLERS
TENT**

FOR SALE: Brogans 8 1/2 like new-\$40.00, Boys frock coat,Medium-\$30.00, Pistol cartridge box-new-\$12.00, Yankee sack coat, Large- \$35.00, Boys dark gray pants Mediun-\$20.00, Boys sky blue pants-\$15.00, Various shirts New-, Officers Sash new - \$15.00, Suspenders, Canteens, Felt hat, Yankee kepi, Ladys shawl, Carpet bags, etc. Call Charley or Judy Riggs 1-814-438-8614

FOR SALE Wall Tent 8'x11', With Fly , untreated-\$200.00, 3-wide brimmed straw hats, trimmed-\$20.00 ea., Silver forks, spoons, knives-\$8.00, Chamber pot \$10.00, Many other Items too numerous to list here so call Martha Roush at (913) 887-6008 The Messenger will have a copy of this list for viewing at the Columbia event.
