

Messenger

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Co A 5TH MO INFY

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The Winter Campaigner Civil War Soldiering in Cold Weather

As a student of history, you'll note that some of the major campaigns in Arkansas took place in the dead of winter. Pea Ridge was fought in an intermittent snow storm, and while it didn't snow at Prairie Grove, the ground froze two inches deep at night on both days of the battle. Weather for reenactments of this latter event has ranged from freezing rain and snow, to breezy, sunny days in the 60s with brisk but frosty mornings.

Reenactors usually compensate for cold weather by coming out in what we often call "winter camp," with full A-frame tents, rope beds, quilts, blankets, kerosene heaters, and enough fire grates to re-arm the U.S.S. Cairo. But Van Dorn's and Hindman's armies marched to these battlefields in "light marching order" with only knapsacks or blanket rolls. The wagon trains with what tents and gear they had were left far in the rear, and were completely unavailable to them. So, how did the Rebel soldier survive on winter campaign? Anyone who does this hobby is going to suffer a little from time to time because of lack of sleep, weather, shortages of water at events, sore feet, etc. It's nothing compared to what the real soldiers endured, but it does give us just a bit of identification with them.

Reenactors who blindly put comfort before authenticity in all cases miss out on this. It's unfortunate, because learning by doing is one of the most fun and educational aspects of this hobby. Few things are more thrilling than to read an incident in a period memoir that's similar to something we, ourselves, have experienced in the field. This is where reenacting can provide something that a study of written records never will — fill in the blanks where the documentation is sketchy or nonexistent. Academic historians have trouble understanding this about our hobby — until they try it themselves.

Camping with only period items requires that you plan ahead and make a commitment to do it. Once you get the hang of it, it's fun!? and gives a you sense of accomplishment.

Fires

Unless the event rules specifically state firepits will be dug, a fire pit in the campaign camp actually hampers efforts to cook. On the other hand, a firepit does work better for those with grates, fire sets, etc. in the civilian camp. If you must dig one, it doesn't take long to break up the ground with the bayonet and scoop out the soil with the tin plate or canteen half. Why carry a shovel if you don't need one? If you wrap your bacon, sidemeat, jowls, or salt pork with newspaper, that greasy paper is excellent for starting a fire. Except for wet events, Mother Nature usually provides great fire starter on the forest floor.

The old "Boy Scout's Handbook" says that the best way to start a fire is to make a "teepee" of little twigs and light it. Place your "fines" or starter material in the center of the tiny teepee to ignite the twigs. For a wind break, your knapsack turned on edge will suffice. Work the fire just like a forge. Use a little breeze from your mouth to force the fire to grow larger and larger with the addition of heavier and heavier materials. Push that air into the fire slowly and at a very low angle. (Ask Pvt. Lewinski for pointers).

One additional trick when the day is windy or the kindling a little damp! Carry a little stub of a candle in your knapsack and light that with your first match. It holds up to the wind a bit better and burns much longer.

Shelter

Shelter halves, or dog tents, are actually a Yankee innovation beginning from early 1863. But canvas or other material for a small tent or "shebang" could be readily scrounged. With about 6 feet of rope, a gum blanket, wool blanket and/or shelter half, there are about a dozen ways to whip up suitable shelter with what's on your back. Give it a try.

Sleeping Warmly

The book "Confederates in the Attic" published earlier this year and advertised through many of the recent news features on the Raymond and Gettysburg reenactments makes much of an incident the author had while camping with the Southern Guard one winter night in Virginia. Seems they spent the night spooning, with one blanket on top, one beneath and the men shivering in between. The men on each outside part got cold behinds or cold stomachs, depending on which way the spoon line turned. If you're into spooning, the simplest way is to have a fire at either end of the spooning line, so the last man doesn't get his hiney or his belly cold. Windbreaks, roaring fires (with guards on fire watches as a

safety precaution) and other techniques were used by these country boys, who were not interested in suffering to show their dedication, but were interesting in living through the war with as little inconvenience as possible. Sleeping between the fire and a tree trunk, log or large rock radiates the heat back to the sleeper, which can be rather toasty. Hip and shoulder trenches are nice, too. Any chance the men got to stay in the same spot for two or more days running, they put up lean-tos, soddies or other contrivances. Most accounts of camps say that the men went through wood like salt pork through a goose, and that extraordinary efforts went to keep the men supplied with firewood or construction wood as needed. When the original vets went back sightseeing twenty years afterwards in Tennessee and Virginia, the marks of the camps were still visible, and the trees were still young and thin. The rotting stumps of firewood trees up-ended more than one older visitor to the early days of Chancellorsville or Chickamauga visits.

Checklist for putting the winter campaigner to bed:

Bayonet & Pocketknife - Grub any roots, stems and rocks from your pallet footprint. Use the bayonet to loosen the soil, and level it if need be. Clear away pine cones, sticks, gum balls, galls, and other debris. The ground is your insulation, so you want to form a good weld between your ground cloth and the soil.

Canteen - In the winter, make sure it is only a little more than half full. A full canteen will split when it freezes solid. Place the canteen to the left of your head, so you may find it in the dark. (Right side if you are a lefty.) Remember to develop a placement pattern for your uniform and equipment items as you go to bed. This will serve you well in the future.

Shoes - Take your shoes off, and put your hat over them. The hat keeps out light rain and dew. They will ventilate normally with the hat covering.

Massage your feet thoroughly. Use your jacket as a foot wrapper on cold nights.

Socks - If you have a dry pair of socks (and you'd better) put them on just before retiring for the night. Take the old pair of socks and turn 'em inside out. Place these socks over your nice dry socks. They will wick away the sweat, and become your dry pair for the next night. Your feet will also have two layers of socks plus the jacket as protection.

Suspenders - Loosen the suspenders, so you won't pop a button in the night. You can do the "toilet tuck", if you wish.

Knapsack - This is your pillow. Fluff it up a little, and enjoy. If no knapsack, then use the handy cartridge box.

Ground cloth - Use this as the first layer in the foldover sandwich. If a shelter half is available, it's handy for a dewcloth.

Blanket - Your blanket should be long enough to cover your head and feet. If you are tall, curl up a bit. If you are short, be happy to have such an advantage. If you can sandwich into the blanket/ground cloth arrangement, then fine. If not, don't worry about it. Don't sleep in your wet cotton shirt, but put it under the blanket with you. Even if it doesn't dry out, it won't be cold in the morning. Sleep in your wool jacket... Even if it's wet, it will provide warmth.

Headwear - Those funny little smoking hats or nightcaps have a purpose -- in the days before electric blankets and central heating, they kept you from losing body heat through your noggin. Keep some kind of headwear handy, and use it. You'll lose a lot of heat from that old bald head, if you don't keep it covered.

Find a place to sleep that is out of the wind. If you have to choose between a windbreak and a fire, go with the windbreak. A good cedar or other ground-hugging tree works well for this in the woodland environment. If you are in a built-up area, determine the wind direction, and bed accordingly. Avoid bedding down near lone trees on the outskirts of camp, as these are frequently used as urinals.

Fire - Spoking ("Sibley-style") works well. Use your judgement as to whether you want toasty feet or toasty skull. It's a good idea to keep three or four pieces of firewood by your side to toss on the fire. This keeps you from making the trek to the woodpile, and you can just flip a log or two on the fire late at night.

Wood - Put dense wood on the fire before retiring. The fire should still be warm in the morning.

Musket - Put it in the fold of your blanket. This discourages thieves, and keeps your piece frost-free and warm.

Great Coat - If you happen to have one, you almost have a sleeping bag. Use it as a second blanket.

Optional Sweet Potato - Stick a sweet potato about 4 inches under the coals, so your breakfast is cooked and ready to eat when you open your peepers at the first tap of the drum.

Sweet dreams!

[Excerpted/reprinted with permission from "The Capitol Guards SENTINEL", the newsletter of the 6th Arkansas Infantry.]

THE ORIGINAL CO. A, 5TH MISSOURI INFANTRY

In an effort to expand our knowledge about the unit we portray, the board of directors earlier this fall voted to purchase a microfilm copy of the Compiled Service Records of the 5th Missouri Infantry (CS) from the National Archives. Those rolls are available for members' research (you'll need access to a microfilm reader); contact the secretary.

A complete roster of Company A, based on the muster roll cards contained in the records, is now posted on our Web site at <http://members.aol.com/fifthmoca/index.html> (see related story this issue).

The microfilm records are sometimes confusing, illegible or contradictory -- but the following facts should give you a fairly accurate picture of the unit we portray:

The company was formed mostly from members of Co. E, 3rd Infantry, 8th Division, Missouri State Guard (also known as "The

Johnson Guards"). A handful of members came from Col. James McCown's 2nd Cavalry, 8th Division.

Almost all of them were Johnson County residents, and more than half of them were farmers. There were also seven merchants, five carpenters, four printers, three students, two lawyers, two stage drivers, two masons, two saddlers, a painter, bookkeeper, blacksmith, laborer, and engineer. They ranged in age from 15 to 45 (the 45-year-old was discharged for old age in August of '62) but mostly they were in their late teens to early 20s.

Corinth was Company A's bloodiest ordeal. Six men died, seven were wounded and four captured outright, out of probably fewer than 35 officers and men present. At Port Gibson the company lost four killed and two wounded. Baker's Creek and Big Black left three more dead, two wounded and three captured. Four died and two were wounded at Vicksburg. Nine died of disease during the period. Four were discharged for disease or disability.

Almost half of the survivors made their way back to the Trans Mississippi department after Vicksburg. The rest were combined with survivors of three other 5th Missouri companies at Demopolis to form Company G of the 3rd-5th Missouri.

Later in the war, another original Company A member was wounded at New Hope Church, three more were killed at Allatoona, where two were wounded and two captured, and at Franklin, one was killed and three more wounded and captured.

There were fewer than 10 original Company A members left to surrender at Ft. Blakely and Citronelle, Ala., at the end of the war.

FIFTH MISSOURI ONLINE

The 5th Missouri Infantry (CSA) Inc. Web page has been moved and expanded. Now under the direction of webmaster Steven Fink, the page has been upgraded to feature graphics, a wider assortment of links, and interactive capabilities.

Among the new features:

- The full roster of the original Co. A, 5th Missouri Infantry
- A brief history of the 5th Missouri, along with hyperlinks to capsule histories of each of the regiment's engagements
- A forum to post messages, questions and answers of interest to the unit
- A chat area for real-time conversations with other online reenactors
- A "voting" page, where visitors can register their opinions on a number of questions
- Links to various other organizations and Civil War sites related to the Missouri Brigade
- A guest book
- A Free Classified Ads section
- E-mail contacts of members around the state, for those interested in joining
- Photos of events, along with graphics of 5th Missouri flags and commanders.

Your photos are needed for this page. If you have any good images of members of the unit from past events, please forward them via snail mail or e-mail to Steven Fink.

Many of the features of Bill Wayne's previous page have also been retained, including:

- The full text of the William A. Ruyle diary
- Monthly drill and impression articles also printed in The Messenger -- now including graphics and illustrations
- A bibliography
- Dispatches from Headquarters -- 1st Confederate Division, Missouri Battalion and MISSOURI Brigade
- Recruitment materials, including our basic recruiting brochure.

Steven has several ideas for further upgrades. If you have access to the Internet and the World Wide Web through a computer at home or work, check out the site and let us know what you think. The page is located at <http://members.aol.com/fifthmoca/index.html>

PROUD PARENTS OF A "SOUTHERN BELLE"

Denise and I are proud to announce our new member to our family. Her name is Elyssa Ann Hamilton she was born Nov. 4th. She was 22" long and weighted 9lbs 10.5 ounces. Hope to see everyone next year, hopfully a little more

Sincerly Yours,

Mike & Denise Hamilton & Elyssa

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Michael & Debbie Kupsch #173
11131 Georgia Ave.
Kansas City, KS 66109
(913) 721-5413
e-mail: MA_KAPSCH@email.msn.com
First Platoon Sponsor: Fink

UPCOMING EVENT

Dec. 5-6: Prairie Grove, Arkansas. Semi-annual re-enactment of the 1862 Battle of Prairie Grove. Inaugural event of the "Missouri Battalion." Will consolidate with 6th Mo. for event. Battalion and Brigade-level drill. Impression is Trans-Mississippi Confederate. No food provided. Weather can be mild or icy. Motels are nearby in Fayetteville in the case of the latter. [Hampton Inn at Hwy 71 & 62 offers \$49 special for 1-4 people] 1,000 reenactors expected.

Directions: U.S. 71 to Fayetteville, Arkansas. U.S. 62 West to Prairie Grove.

History: On December 7, 1862, Major General Thomas Hindman's Confederate army attacked the Union Army of the Frontier, under the command of Brigadier Generals James Blunt and Francis Herron.

There were about 11,000 men from Arkansas, Missouri, and Texas in the Confederate ranks, while the Federals had about 10,000 men. The battle took place about 12 miles southwest of Fayetteville, Arkansas, near the Prairie Grove Church. At stake was control of northwestern Arkansas and southern Missouri.

After routing Herron's Union cavalry, the Confederates repulsed several Union counterattacks from the high ground overlooking the Illinois River Valley. Gen. Hindman counterattacked, and was close to destroying Herron's exhausted troops, when Blunt's forces arrived and forced the Southern troops to withdraw to the high ground once again. Nightfall ended the savage fighting, with neither side regaining an advantage. Because of a shortage of food and ammunition, Hindman decided to retreat southward toward Van Buren during the night, leaving northwest Arkansas to the Federals.

General Information: Individual registration starts at Noon, Friday, December 4, and goes through midnight at the Latta Barn. Late arrivals can register Saturday morning at the Latta Barn between 7 and 8 a.m. Everyone who wants to participate must register. Straw will be issued at 1/3 of a bale per person. Firewood will be conveniently located near each camp. Please take just what you need and do not hoard it. Water will also be readily available. All camps will remain authentic throughout the event, including after dark. No radios, telephones, televisions, tape or CD players will be allowed in camp. Everyone will completely hide any modern items from the view of the public and their fellow campers. Thus, all vehicles should be unpacked and parked in the reenactor parking area by 8 a.m. Saturday morning. No vehicles are allowed in the camps until after the battle demonstration unday afternoon without permission from the park staff.

Safety: Officers will be responsible for inspecting all weapons and cartridges before each battle demonstration. Any material with the chance of becoming a projectile will not be used. Any weapon or cartridge not passing inspection will not be allowed on the field. Bayonets and ramrods will be carried, but not drawn during the battle demonstrations. Safe distances between the lines of fire will be maintained at all times, with a minimum of 100 yards from artillery and 50 yards from small arms.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Saturday, December 5, 1998

8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. Officers meeting in the Latta Barn
9 a.m. until Noon Civil War camps open to the public
9 a.m. until 11 a.m. Print and book signings in Hindman Hall
1 p.m. Battle demonstration near the Borden House
2 p.m. until 5 p.m. Civil War camps open to the public
2:30 p.m. until 5 p.m. Print and book signings in Hindman Hall
5:30 p.m. Until the cows come home... Social at the Latta Barn

Sunday, December 6, 1998

8:30 a.m. Dedication of the new flagpoles at the Visitors Center
9 a.m. until 9:30 a.m. Officers meeting in the Latta Barn
9 a.m. until Noon Civil War camps open to the Public
9 a.m. until 11 a.m. Book signings in Hindman Hall
10 a.m. Church service in the log church
1 p.m. Battle demonstration near the Borden House
5th Mo. has 10 Committed (8 Military)

TRADING POST

As you know the company has for sale 5th Missouri Tee Shirts. These shirts are medium gray in color. On the left front of the shirt is the french infantry bugle with company A 5th Missouri CSA lettered on and around it. On the back of the shirt is the late war combined 3rd & 5th Missouri Infantry battle flag. The flag has the 5th's battle honors lettered on it.

Thses shirts are available in large and extra large sizes only. The price is ten dollars each. In the future I will try to bring some of these shirts to events, or you can contact me at 573-442-9489, e-mail Acbcsa@aol.com.

Alan Bowling

DUES NOTICE

ANNUAL DUES ARE DUE JANUARY 1, 1999. COMPLETE AND RETURN TO:

**5th Missouri Infantry (CSA) Inc.
PO Box 1265
Jefferson City, MO 65102-1265**

Check one:

Individual: \$22 (\$12 5th Mo. + \$10 MCWRA) _____
(plus \$10 for each additional adult family member desiring MCWRA vote)

Associate: \$9 (non-voting) _____

Make checks payable to "5th Missouri Infantry (CSA), Inc"

If you paid your MCWRA dues through another unit, please indicate the unit:

CLEANING OF THE MUSKET

Your musket **MUST** be cleaned after each event. Failure to do so puts your rank pard in danger. A musket that is not cleaned will produce "blowback" through the cone and shatter the cap. The fragments of which can strike the eye of the person to your right. This happened at Jefferson Barracks. The person involved lost some sight! It is **NOT COOL** to not properly clean your musket!! The best way to clean your musket after you get home is to remove the barrel from the stock. Then unscrew the cone from the barrel lug. You should have a brass cleaning jag of the proper caliber for your gun. The slotted tip on the rod of an Enfield is not adequate for a proper cleaning. For cleaning patches I buy a yard of unbleached muslin from Wal-Mart. This is very inexpensive and will make a lot of patches. I cut them as needed with scissors. A little trial and error will show you the rough size to cut them. Next pour a cup of hot water down the muzzle and let it run out the barrel lug. This will loosen the fouling. Hint, it's best not to do this in the living room! Your spouse may not understand. Then fill a bucket with enough hot water so that when the barrel is stood in it breech down it will cover the barrel lug. Place a patch over the muzzle and push it down the bore carefully. You want to scrub the fouling from the bore until you can reach the breech of the barrel. In a badly fouled barrel this may take some care and several changes of patches and you dont want to pull the patch off the jag. This does happen. I heartily recommend you also have a patch worm so you can easily pull the patch from the bore in the event this occurs. Patch worms and jags are readily available and inexpensive, see your 1st LT for more info. You can pump hot water up the bore to the muzzle with a good jag and patch and then when you push the rod to the breech, expell the water with force out the flash channel. After flushing the bore, remove the barrel from the bucket, let the water drain out, and run patches down the bore until they come out dry. Follow this with a patch that has been soaked in a good gun oil. Run this up and down the bore several times. Let the gun set for 24 hours then run a clean patch down the bore followed by another oily patch. You will see some dirt on the first patch, dont worry its OK. Next clean the dirt and fouling from the stock. Spray it all over with WD40 and wipe off with a clean rag. When you spray the stock also spray the lock especially the nose of the hammer, wipe this off and take a small screwdriver to clean out the carbon buildup from the recess in the nose of the hammer and then wipe clean. Next take 0000 steel wool and WD40 to clean the dirt from the cone. Use WD40 to spray the barrel lug and 0000 steel wool to remove carbon buildup from the barrel lug around the cone seat. Next spray the outside of the barrel with WD40 and wipe off with a clean rag. Run a pipe cleaner through the flash channel in the barrel lug into the bore. You will feel it enter the bore. Put your musket together and set it in a cool dry place. I have been shooting blackpowder arms for 29 years and using this method. My guns fire consistently and the bores are as bright as when they were new. My Enfield has had over 1500 rounds put through it at reenactments with out a misfire! Cleaning your musket ensures safety and is also historically correct!!! A. Bowling

PLANNING AHEAD

Next year's major national event (for those of us 'out west') is Chickamauga, Sept. 17-19. While the 5th Missouri won't officially decide whether to support it until January, it's a good idea to start planning ahead.

The early (reduced-fee) registration deadline will be Feb. 28, 1999; \$7 per person, any age. Assuming the 5th votes to support the event, the treasurer will start accepting fees at the January meeting. The regular registration fee will go up to \$10 March 1 through Sept. 1. The event will be held near the original battlefield (20 minutes away), about a half-hour from downtown Chattanooga and two miles off of Interstate 75 in North Georgia. Sponsors are preparing for a turnout of 10,000. Camping will be campaign-style, as the actual soldiers did it. However, those who cannot part with their impedimenta will be accommodated in a tent city near the sutlers. More details will follow in future issues and at the January scheduling meeting.