



The Texas Union Herald



Colonel E. E. Ellsworth Camp #18

Department of Texas

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

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Rattling Sabres

by

Glen E. Zook

My pleas for input from Camp #18 members, with a very few notable exceptions, keeps falling on deaf ears! Well, since this is a written media, blind eyes! As I keep harping, the newsletter is for the camp members and the major purpose of a newsletter is to keep camp members informed of what is happening and what is planned. I do include things like General Orders from the Department of Texas and from the National SUVCW officials when those are received. However, those are few, and far between, and only serve a minor fraction of what is happening in the local organization.

Other camps, that have newsletters, do not seem to be having problems getting information, articles, photographs, and so forth, from their members. Therefore, I just do not understand why Camp #18 members are so reluctant to contribute.

Not to harp on history, however, when I was publishing the newsletter for the old Lone Star Camp #1 (which was the only SUVCW Camp in north Texas), and for the old Department of the Southwest, virtually every month I had more input than I could include considering the constraints of a written newsletter. With the PDF format, using the Internet as the transmission medium, I do not really have such constraints and, as such, I can publish, basically, everything received. Unfortunately, usually, there is nothing received and I have to rely on my cache of historical articles to fill this newsletter.

I keep emphasizing the fact that one does not have to be an accomplished writer to submit material for publication. Just get the idea into writing and I can certainly edit, rewrite, and so forth, the material for publication. I also need photographs of all sorts of things including events in which Camp Members participate, historical sites (like when one is on vacation), etc. Photographs definitely add to the usefulness of the newsletter.

I implore every camp member to seriously consider submitting things to be included in the newsletter. As for the Camp Officers, I really believe that they should submit at least a brief report, to be included in the newsletter, on a monthly basis.

On a personal note, my youngest daughter is moving from her present house that is literally right next to a historical Civil War site in Powder Springs, Georgia, to another house about 20-miles northeast in northeast Marietta, Georgia (much larger lot, closer to where she goes on an almost daily basis, etc.). I will have to see if there are any Civil War historical sites very close to her new home.

My wife, and I, haven't been to Georgia for a couple of years so we really need to go sometime this summer. My wife's sisters and a whole lot of their children, grand children, and even great grand children live in the Atlanta area. While we are there, I really need to go up to Chattanooga, Tennessee, to visit the National Cemetery located near downtown. That is where my great great grandfather, Private William James Stump, Company I, 128th Indiana Voluntary Infantry is buried.

I really need to see if his headstone has been replaced. The last time I was there, almost 15-years ago, the headstone was in very sad condition. Also, his name is misspelled! The stone reads "Stamp" instead of "Stump". In the records that are held at the main office, the "Stamp" spelling is therein. However, on the Internet site for the cemetery, his name is correctly spelled. I did call this to the attention of the cemetery director and she said that if I provided proof that the name was misspelled, she would make sure a new headstone was installed. When I got back to Richardson, I sent copies of the various documents that I have including the record of his death at General Hospital Chattanooga. After that, I heard nothing!

There also was some concern about his actual date of death. The cemetery records show 3 July 1864 when it was actually 13 July 1864. I actually have copies of the forms where the mistake happened! There was a progression of forms where the date started out correct. Then, there was a form on which the "1" was very lightly written and then the "1" was omitted thereafter. Since the original documents were written in pencil, not in ink, it is no wonder that such mistakes were made!

The hospital records, as well as my great great grandmother's application for a pension, have the correct date of death.

Private Stump was wounded at the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain and was sent to General Hospital Chattanooga to recover. Unfortunately, he caught Typhoid fever while in the hospital and died! Had he remained in the field, he probably would have survived the war.

An interesting thing is that the State of Indiana supplied the 2nd highest percentage of men between the ages of 16 and 50 to serve as soldiers during the Civil War.

I am in the process of signing up my youngest grandson for Junior membership in the SUVCW. His father is not eligible for membership since his ancestors did not come to this country until shortly before World War II. This is unlike my older grandson who's father is eligible. In fact, Mike was a member of the Lone Star Camp #1 back in the mid 1990s before he, and my middle daughter, moved first to California and eventually ending up in the Phoenix, Arizona, area.

Until next month

The Texas Union Herald

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Articles, news items, features, and the like are welcomed for publication in **The Texas Union Herald**. Deadline is normally the 1st of the month of the cover date of publication. Submissions may be handwritten, typewritten, or submitted in any of the popular computer formats (Microsoft Word, Open Office, Word Perfect, and ASCII). Please contact the editor for details.

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Articles Needed!

If the members of the **Colonel E.E. Ellsworth Camp #18** do not want to be inundated with articles that were chosen by the editor (what he wants to see in the newsletter) then they need to start inputting items for inclusion in **The Texas Union Herald**. Tidbits about the Civil War, stories, articles, current news items, photographs, even commentaries are most welcome.

Don't worry if you are not an accomplished author. Get the idea onto paper (computer, etc.) and get it to the editor. He really can edit (rewrite, etc.) and you'll be surprised at just how well you can write!

If you have E-Mail capabilities, you can either include the information in the body of the message or put it in either Word format or ACSII ("txt") format. If, for some reason, you cannot do either, contact the editor to see if your particular word processor format can be handled.

If "hard" copy, make sure the copy is legible (can be read by someone else!). Typewritten, computer printed, even in Crayon on "Big Chief" tablet is acceptable. Just get the information in!

Even small (1 or 2 paragraphs) material, or photographs, can be used. That makes editing and publishing the newsletter easier since "fill" material is available for those little areas that seem to happen whenever an article is included in the publication.

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The following is from a book entitled **Hill's Manual of Social and Business Forms** copyright 1886 and published in 1890. Although the title of the book does not suggest any connection what-so-ever with the Civil War, it contains much information about the battles of the Civil War, summarized by the persons who fought during the war. The volume is virtually a 4 year college course in one book, including all sorts of things like Government, proper writing forms, how to make public speeches, correct use of the English language, and many other topics. It covers all major battles of the Civil War and many of the minor skirmishes. All spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc. are directly quoted from the original ("sic") and are not those necessarily used today.

Battles of the 4TH Year

Battle of Nashville, Tenn. - Fought December 15 and 16, 1864, between General Thomas, with four corps of Union infantry and Wilson's cavalry dismounted, aided by a division of Rear Admiral Lee's Mississippi naval squadron, and Hood's concentrated army of Confederates. The first day's fight resulted in driving the Confederates from their intrenchments with a loss of about 600 killed and wounded, 1,000 prisoners and 16 great guns. The Union loss that day was about 500 killed and wounded. The attack was renewed by the Unionists next morning on Hood's new position, and resulted, soon after noon in the complete rout of the Confederates, suffering severe losses. All their dead and wounded were left on the field of battle. The Confederate losses in the two day's contests footed up about 2,000 killed and wounded, 4,462 prisoners captured including 287 officers, 53 cannon and thousands of small arms. The Confederates were pursued.

Stoneman's Raid in Virginia - December 15, 1864, Generals Stoneman and Burbridge of the Union army in Tennessee, sallied out to Glade's Spring, W. Va., destroying a railroad track east of Abingdon, and mining the principal salt works in that region. This movement severed the Confederate communication between Richmond and East Tennessee, and deprived the Confederates of important public property.

The Flash at Fort Fisher, N. C. - In December, 1864, an expedition was fitted out under the Union Generals Butler and Weitzel and the North Atlantic naval squadron, under Admiral Porter, to break up the Confederate blockade runner's depot at Wilmington, N.C. A preliminary explosion, December 23, 1864, having failed to reduce the fort to splinters, the fleet attacked it next day. Five hours' cannonading, resisted by the Confederate garrison, resulted in blowing up two magazines within the inclosure and setting it on fire in several places. December 25 the assault was renewed on sea and shore by the Union forces, but General Weitzel reporting, after a reconnaissance, that it would be inexpedient to carry the fort by assault, the attempt was abandoned, leaving the fort substantially uninjured, and the expedition retired.

Battles of the 5th Year

Evacuation of Charleston, S. C. - February 18, 1865, the city of Charleston was evacuated by the Confederates, and occupied by the Union General Gilmore.

A large amount of valuable property was destroyed, including 6,000 bales of cotton. Ammunition stored in the railroad depot exploded, and many lives were lost. General Gilmore displayed the American flag over the ruins of Fort Sumter.

Sheridan's March Through the Shenandoah Valley, Va. - General Sheridan, with a strong Union force, left Winchester, Va., February 24, 1865. This expedition was principally distinguished by

Sheridan's Capture of Early's Army, - March 2, 1865, near Waynesboro, Va., Sheridan's Union force encountered the Confederates under Early. The latter fired one volley, when General Custer's division advanced upon them. The Confederate line suddenly broke, and Custer's force surrounded them, capturing 87 Confederate officers, 1,165 enlisted men, 13 flags, 5 cannon, more than 100 horses and mules and about 100 wagons and ambulances. Custer's brigades immediately pursued the fleeing Confederates, destroying the depot at Greenwood station, with their artillery and other captured war material. Next day the prisoners were sent to Winchester. An attempt to rescue them by the Confederate General Rosser only succeeded in his being beaten off, with the loss of 27 more prisoners. March 26, 1865, Sheridan arrived at City Point, Va., having made a most successful raid. His total losses were 2 officers and about 50 men in killed, wounded and prisoners.

Battle of Averysboro, N. C. - Fought March 16, 1865, between four divisions of Sherman's Union army, under General Slocum, and about 20,000 Confederates under Hardee. After a severe action the latter retreated, leaving 108 of his dead on the field. The Union loss was 77 killed, 477 wounded and no prisoners.

Battles near Bentonville, N.C. - Fought March 18 - 21, 1865 between General Sherman's Union army and Johnston's Confederate army. The latter were defeated, with heavy losses, including 267 killed and 1,625 prisoners. The Union loss in killed, wounded and missing was 1,643. Sherman now had possession of Goldsboro, N.C., and concentrated his army there.

Skirmish on the Quaker Road, Va. - Fought March 29, 1865, between one division of Meade's Union 5th corps, with 3 batteries and a detachment of Lee's Confederate army. After a short and sharp conflict, the Confederates withdrew to their original position, they having made the attack. The Union loss was 459 killed, wounded and missing. That night, under a heavy Confederate cannonade, the Union 9th corps lost 51 men.

Skirmish on the Boydton Road, Va. - Fought March 30, 1865, between Merritt's corps of Meade's Union army and Confederate infantry and cavalry. Another smart skirmish occurred between detachments of the same armies on the same day, and the total Union losses were something less than 200 men.

A Federal Repulse - Proceeding along the Boydton (Va.) road toward Five Forks, March 31, 1865, Meade's Union advance and Sheridan's Union cavalry encountered a strong force of Confederates, who stubbornly resisted the Federal advance and brought on a conflict, which resisted the Federal advance and brought on a conflict, which resulted in the repulse of the Unionists, with a loss of from 2,500 to 3,000 men. Between 300 and 400 Confederate prisoners were captured. Subsequently, under the fire of the Union batteries, the Confederates withdrew.

Battle of Five Forks, Va. - Fought April 1, 1865, between a part of Lee's Confederate army and three divisions of Union infantry and four of Union cavalry, commanded by Sheridan, while Meade's army threatened the Confederate line from Dinwiddie to Petersburg. After a preliminary contest, Sheridan broke through the Confederate lines, inclosing the Five Forks fortification and its Confederate garrison and capturing it. The battle for two hours was one of the most terrific of the war, and resulted in the utter defeat of the Confederates. They lost nearly 3,000 killed and wounded and 5,000 prisoners. The Union loss was about 1,000 men, including General Winthrop who was killed.

Evacuation of Petersburg, Va. - Saturday night and Sunday morning, April 1 and 2, 1865, Grant's Union army, under Meade and Sheridan, invested Petersburg with such vigor that on the afternoon of the second day Lee evacuated the place, his communications with Richmond being severed. The losses were very heavy on both sides.

Evacuation of Richmond, Va. - Petersburg having been lost, President Davis, of the Southern Confederacy, retired from its capital on Sunday, April 2, 1865, and on the following morning General Weitzel with his force entered Richmond, capturing about 500 cannon, 5,000 stand of arms, and 6,000 prisoners. Thirty locomotives and 300 cars were abandoned by the Confederates. The Confederate fleet was destroyed, and as the rear-guard of Lee's army moved out of the city they fired it, burning considerable property and stores.

Surrender of General Lee - Lee's army was followed by Grant's Union forces after the evacuation of Richmond, and on the 9th of April, 1865, Lee surrendered to General Grant, at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, and his officers and men were paroled as prisoners of war. They numbered over 27,000. Lee's losses in killed and wounded, from March 25 to April 3, 1865, were something more than 10,000. There were released 350 wagons, 10,000 small arms, and 30 great guns.

Capture of Southern Cities - April 12, 1865, Mobile was captured by the Union army under General Canby, who captured 1,000 Confederate prisoners, 150 cannon, and 3,000 bales of cotton. On the same day the Unionists captured Salisbury, N.C., and Columbus, Ga. On the following day they captured Raleigh, N.C., taking Governor Vance prisoner.

The End of the War - General Johnston, of the Confederate army, surrendered to the Unionists, April 26, 1865, at Durham's station, near Greensboro, N.C. This closed the war of the Rebellion.

Distinguished Officers in the Union Service During the Civil War.

Robert Anderson. Maj.Gen; b. near Louisville, Ky; died in France in 1871.

Edward D. Baker. Colonel; U.S. Sen. from Or; b. in London, Eng., in 1811; killed at Ball's Bluff, Va., in 1861.

Don Carlos Buell. * Maj.Gen; b. at Marietta, O., in 1818. Served in the Mexican War.

Ambrose E. Burnside.* Maj.Gen; b. at Liberty, Ind., 1824; Gov. R.I., and M.C.; d. in 1880.

Benjamin F. Butler. Maj.Gen; b. at Deerfield, N.H., in 1818, has been M.C. from Mass.

Edward R. S. Canby. * Brig.Gen.; b. in Ky., in 1819; shot by Modoc Indian chief, in Cal. in 1873.

John C. Fremont. Maj.Gen.; b. at Savannah, Ga., in 1813; Repub. can. for Pres. in 1856; has been U.S. Sen. from Cal. and later Gov. of Ariz.

Ulysses S. Grant.* Gen.-in-chief of the U.S.A. during the latter part of the war; was b. at Pt. Pleasant, O., in 1822. Eight years Pres. d. in 1886.

Henry W. Halleck.* Gen.-in-Chief of the U.S. Army for a time; b. at Waterville, N.Y., in 1815; d. at Louisville, Ky., in 1872.

Winfield S. Hancock.* Maj.Gen; b. in Montg.Co., Pa., in 1824; d. in 1886.

Joseph Hooker.* Brevet Maj.Gen.; b. at Hadley, Mass., in 1815; d. in 1879.

Oliver O. Howard.* Brevet Maj.Gen;b. at Leeds, Me.

Philip Kearney. Maj.Gen.; b. in N.Y.City, in 1815; wounded at Second Bull Run, where he d. in 1862.

John A. Logan. Maj.Gen.; b. in Jefferson Co., Ill., in 1826; U.S. Sen. from Ill. d. in 1886.

Nathaniel Lyon.* Brig.Gen.; b. at Ashford, Conn., in 1819; slain at Wilson's Creek, Mo., in 1861.

GEO. B. McClellan.* Gen-in-Chief of the U.S. Army, for a time; b. at Phila., Pa., in 1826; was Den. can. for Pres. in 1864; elected Gov. of N.J. in 1878. d. 1885

Ervin McDowell.* Maj.Gen.; b. at Franklinton, O., in 1818. d. 1885.

James B. McPherson.* Maj.Gen. of vols. B. at Clyde, O., in 1828; k. at Atlanta, in 1864.

GEO. G. Meade.* Maj.Gen.; b. at Cadiz Spain, in 1815; d. at Phila. in 1872.

T. F. Meagher. Brig.Gen.; b. at Waterford, Ireland, in 1823; accidentally drowned by falling from a steamer near Ft. Benton, Montana, in 1867.

John A. McClernand. Maj.Gen., b. in Breckenridge Co., Ky.; has been M.C.

Ormsby M. Mitchel.* Maj.Gen., b. in Union Co., Ky., in 1810; d. of yellow fever at Beaufort, S.C. in 1862.

Richard J. Oglesby. Maj.Gen.; b. in Oldham Co., Ky., in 1824; has been Gov. of Ill., and U.S. Sen. from that State.

Alfred Pleasonton. Maj.Gen.; b. at Washington, D.C., in 1824; author of treatise on healing effect of sunlight passing through blue glass.

John Pope.* Maj.Gen.; b. at Kaskaskia, Ill., in 1823.

Fitz John Porter.* Maj.Gen.; b. at Portsmouth, N.H. in 1823.

Thomas E. G. Ransom. Brig.Gen.; b. in 1834; d. in Chicago in 1864.

Wm. S. Rosecrans.* Maj.Gen.; b. at Kingston, O., in 1819.

Franz Sigel. Maj.Gen.; b. at Zinsheim, Baden, Germany.

John M. Schofield.* Maj.Gen.; b. in Chautauqua Co., N.Y., in 1831; U.S. Secretary of War in 1868.

John Sedgwick.* Maj.Gen.; b. at Cornwall, Conn., in 1813; k. at Spottsylvania, Va., in 1864.

Philip H. Sheridan.* Maj.Gen.; b. at Somerset, O., in 1831; present General U.S.A.

Wm. T. Sherman.* Maj.Gen. in the war; present Gen. U.S.A.; b. at Lancaster, O., in 1820.

Alfred H. Terry. Brig.Gen.; b. at Hartford, Conn., in 1827.

Geo. H. Thomas.* Maj.Gen.; b. in Southham Co., Va., in 1816; d. at San Fran., Cal., in 1870

Leading Officers in the Confederate Service

Peter G. T. Beauregard.* b. at New Orleans, La., in 1818.

Braxton Bragg.* Maj.Gen.; born in N.C. about 1815; d. at Galveston, Tex., in 1875.

Jefferson Davis.; b. in Christian Co., Ky., in 1808; was President of the Southern Confederacy; formerly U.S. Senator from Miss., and was Sec. of War under Pres. Pierce.

J. A. Early.* Maj.Gen.; b. in Va. about 1815.

Richard S. Ewell. Leut.Gen.; born in D.C., in 1820; d. at Springhill, Tenn., in 1872.

Wade Hampton, Jr. Lieut.Gen.; b. at Columbia, S.C. in 1818; has been Gov. of S.C. and member of the U.S. Senate. d. in 1879.

Wm. J. Hardee.* Brig.Gen.; b. at Savannah, Ga., in 1818; d. at Wytheville, Va., in 1873.

Ambrose P. Hill.* Maj.Gen.; b. in Culpeper Co., Va., about 1825; k. at Petersburg, Va., in 1865.

Dan'l H. Hill.* Gen.; b. in S.C. about 1822.

John B. Hood.* Lieut.Gen.; b. in Bath Co., Ky., about 1830; d. in 1879.

Benj. Huger.* Maj.Gen.; b. at Charleston, S.C., in 1896; d. in 1877.

Thos. J. Jackson (Stonewall).* Lieut.Gen.; b. at Clarksburg, Va., in 1824; d. from wounds received at battle of Chancellorsville.

Albert S. Johnston.* Gen.; b. in Mason Co., Ky., in 1803; k. at Shiloh in 1862.

Joseph E. Johnston.* Maj.Gen.; b. in Pr. Edward Co., Va. in 1807.

George W. C. Lee.* Gen.; B. in Va. about 1833.

Robert E. Lee.* Gen.-in-Chief of the Confederate army; b. at Stafford, Va. in 1807; d. at Lexington, Va., in 1870.

Fitz Hugh Lee.* Gen.; b. in Va. about 1835.

James Longstreet.* Lieut.Gen.; b. in S.C. about 1820.

Benj. McCulloch. Maj.Gen.; b. in Rutherford Co., Tenn., in 1814; k. at Pear Ridge, Ark., Mar. y, 1862.

Leonidas Polk.* Maj.Gen.; b. at Raleigh, N.C., in 1806; K. at Pine Mountain, near Marietta, Ga., in 1864.

Sterling Price. Maj.Gen.; b. in Pr. Edward Co., Va., 1809; MC. from Mo., and was Gov. of that State; d. at St. Louis in 1867.

Kirby E. Smith.* Maj.Gen.; b. at St. Augustine, Fla., about 1825.

Jas. E. B. Stuart. Maj.Gen.; Maj.Gen.; b. in Patrick Co., Va., in 1832; k. in battle near Richmond in 1864.

Earl Van Dorn. Maj.Gen.; b. in Miss. in 1821; d. in 1863.

* Graduate of West Point
M.C. Member of Congress

Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain And the 20th Maine

by
Dr. Ralph Widener

Vincent hurried his regiments to Little Round Top, crossed Plum Run on a crude wooden bridge, and turned onto a farm road that led to the base of the hill. "here, as we could," said Chamberlain, "we took the double-quick," and the 20th Maine ascended Little Round Top.

Chamberlain moved his men into position by what he acknowledged was a slow and uncommon maneuver on the order, "On the right by file into line." But it had the advantage of enabling the regiment as a whole to be facing the enemy as it came to a front and the individual soldier to start firing as soon as he reached his post.

Chamberlain was troubled by the realization that though he was "anchor man" on the Union Army's left flank, his own regimental left flank was exposed. Hence he withdrew Captain Walter G. Morrill with "B" Company, and ordered him up the valley to the left between the regiment and the eastern base of Round Top. He was to remain within supporting distance and to act as the situation might warrant. This left Chamberlain with 308 men on the line.

The great contest for possession of Little Round Top was about to begin; as the leading war correspondent of the New York Times wrote, "One of those mortal struggles rare in war, when the hostile forces, clenching in close contest, illustrate whatever there is of savage and terrible in battle."

Now the crash of artillery ceased as the Confederate gunners held off for fear of hitting their own men, but the musketry opened up as Vincent's right engaged the men in gray swarming up the slopes. Soon the action extended to the left, and the 20th Maine clashed hotly with the 4th Alabama, which was soon joined by seven companies of the 47th Alabama. Chamberlain moved here and there as his attention demanded it.

Suddenly, Lieutenant James Nichols of "K" Company, "a bright officer near our center, ran up to tell me something queer was going on in his front, behind those engaging us." Chamberlain sprang up on a rock in Nichols' company line where he saw "thick group in gray" moving between the Round Tops toward his left flank. This force was Oates and his 15th Alabama, five to six hundred men eager to sweep away the thin line of blue that was the 20th Maine. Chamberlain realized that if the enemy gained the regiment's rear, the entire brigade would be caught and crushed. He knew the front had to be maintained, but he could not let the rear go uncovered.

Chamberlain became a great infantry officer, and among his valuable qualities were a kind of intuitive grasp of where an attack would come (a grasp based in good part on a knowledge of terrain, weapons, and men) and a gift for improvisation in meeting emergencies. He summoned the officers commanding his companies and told them of his plan. The regiment was to maintain a hot fire in the front "without special regard to its need or immediate effect." While the right kept contact with the 83rd Pennsylvania, the men were to side-step to the left, gradually coming into one

rank. At the extreme left of the front line stood a great boulder. Chamberlain placed the colors and the color guard there, then bent his line back to the left at a right angle, thereby covering twice the original front. The weakness was that the men were widely spaced and there were no supports. But at least neither the regiment nor the brigade could be surprised by a flank attack. He now awaited Oates' attack in the following formation by Companies:

F D K I E
A
H
C
G

Though his arrangements were completed, the crescendo of musketry and wild shouting on the west slope of Little Round Top made Chamberlain wonder if Vincent could withstand the heavy Confederate assault there. In fact, the onrush of the Texas regiments cracked the stout 16th Michigan defense, and had it not been for Colonel Patrick O'Rorke commanding the 140th New York, Little Round Top might have been lost. O'Rorke, first in the Class of 1861 at West Point, took his regiment up the hill at the double. There was no time to load muskets, no time to fix bayonets. O'Rorke and the New Yorkers swept down the hill in a headlong rush and halted the Texans by the sheer weight of their bodies. Though O'Rorke and many of his men were killed, they saved the hill for the moment.

In the end, the control of Little Round Top was to be decided by Chamberlain and his Maine regiment of the east side of Little Round Top. Oates' Alabamians assaulted not only Chamberlain's front, but came tearing up on what they presumed was his exposed flank with the rush and energy of men who had just rested instead of troops who had been on their feet since three o'clock in the morning. Then, where there has been nothing except rocks and trees, a blast of fire leaped out at them. Staggered, they stormed up again on what was now the right and left fronts.

"Again and again," said Captain Howard Prince of the 20th Maine, "was this mad rush repeated, each time to be beaten off by the ever-thinning line that desperately clung to its ledge of rocks."

"The two lines met and broke and mingled in the shock," Chamberlain said. "The crash of musketry gave way to cuts and thrusts, grapplings and wrestlings. The edge of conflict swayed to and fro, with whirlpools and eddies. At times, I saw around me more of the enemy than of my own men; gaps opening, swallowing, closing again with sharp, convulsive energy; squads of stalwart men who had cut their way through us, disappearing as if translated. All around, strange, mingled roar - shouts of defiance, rally, and desperation."

There seemed to be no end to the furious battle. Oates thought his Alabamians had penetrated the Maine defense five times, but somehow the Northerners found strength enough to hurl his men back. Finally, a lull occurred as the Confederates drew back to regroup, and Chamberlain took advantage of it to gather his dead and wounded. The sights he saw were dreadful, dead men contorted into grotesque postures, wounded men writhing,

blood trickling down the rocks and gathering in little pools. For that matter, Chamberlain had barely missed death himself.

A soldier of the 15th Alabama saw him standing behind the center of his line and recognized, by Chamberlain's uniform and actions, that here was a great prize to be put out of the way. As the soldier wrote him, years afterwards, "I rested my gun on a rock and took steady aim. I started to pull the trigger, but some queer notion stopped me. Then I got ashamed of my weakness and went through the same motions again. I had you perfectly certain, But that same queer something shut right down on me. I couldn't pull the trigger, and gave it up, - that is, your life. I am glad of it now, and hope your are."

Yet Chamberlain had not escaped unscathed: blood dripped from his right instep where a rock splinter, or piece of shell, had penetrated, and he had a contusion on his left leg where his sword scabbard was smashed against it by a Minie ball.

But, if Chamberlain's command had lost heavily, so had Oates'. "My dead and wounded were then nearly as great in number as those still on duty," Oates said. And one of those killed was his brother. Losses, however, did not deter those tough Alabamians, whom Chamberlain came greatly to admire. The 15th and 47th reformed, and this time it was now or never.

Chamberlain ordered his men to make every shot count, for his command was now paper-thin. Every man was in the line who could carry a gun, even the walking wounded, including "one fine young fellow, who had been cut down early in the fight with a ghastly wound across his forehead" but who returned with a bloody bandage around his head.

The fighting continued. The Confederates came up the hill, and then were repulsed. Then Chamberlain heard a frightening demand from his own men. "Ammunition!" they shouted. With sixty rounds to a man, they had expended more than twenty-thousand bullets. They reached frantically for the cartridge boxes of wounded comrades but found little left. Anxiously they turned to Chamberlain.

What to do now? As Chamberlain phrased it, "My thought was running deep." Despite Vincent's last order, to hold his ground was to invite disaster: in his present condition - one-third of his men out of action, and the remainder out of ammunition - the enemy would have hit us with a force "which we could not probably have withstood or survived." Desperate though the chance, he decided to counterattack. Calling Captain Ellis Spear to him, he told him that he wanted Spear to take the bent-back left wing and sweep down the hill to the right. Then, as he limped over to instruct Captain A. W. Clark of Company "E" to hold that extreme right flank company tightly against the 83rd Pennsylvania and thus prevent the enemy from breaking through, he then said to his men: "I am about to order a 'right wheel forward' of the whole regiment."

He moved to the colors, all eyes upon him.

"Bayonet!"

The men rose with a shout, and the steel shanks of the bayonets clashed on the musket barrels. Sergeant Tozier raised the colors; the line quivered like sprinters on the mark. The, with the enemy only thirty yards away, young Lieutenant Holman S. Melcher of Company "F", of the color company, leaped out in front, his sword glittering in

the slanting sunlight. "Come on! Come on! Come on, boys!" he shouted. Tozier dashed toward him, and with a wild yell, the regiment flung itself down the hill, Ellis Spear's left wing whirling the enemy out of the rocks and soon fighting its way abreast of the right.

The Confederates recoiled, so bewildered they did not know whether to fight or surrender. At the onset, one Confederate officer fired a Navy Colt pistol at Chamberlain's face, missed, then handed over his sword in submission as Chamberlain's own sword poked his throat. Many in the first Confederate line tossed their weapons on the ground and held their hands up. Others were taken in fierce combat.

The 20th Maine swept forward like a reaper. A second line, composed of men from both the 15th and 47th Alabama, tried to make a stand near a stone wall. For a moment, it looked as if they might succeed. Then a line of blue infantrymen rose from behind the wall and more than sixty rifles cracked in a volley. This was Walter Morrill's "B" Company that Chamberlain had detached to guard his flank, and a number of U.S. Sharpshooters whom Oates had earlier driven off Round Top.

Attacked in front and rear, Oates gave the order to retreat, but he scarcely anticipated the panic that swept over his men. ". . . We ran like a herd of wild cattle," he admitted.

Chamberlain and the 20th Maine had clearly saved the hill at what Colonel Rice of the 44th New York, succeeding the mortally wounded Vincent as brigade commander, called "the most critical time of the action."

It was a magnificent feat of arms on Chamberlain's part, rarely if ever surpassed in the importance of its accomplishment by any regiment in American history. Colonel Oates, of the 15th Alabama, said later, "There never were harder fighters than the 20th Maine and their gallant Colonel."

Later, for his day's work, would come the Congressional Medal of Honor for Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain.

But, as hard as they had fought, Chamberlain and his men had one more astonishing feat to perform. He and Colonel Rice conferred in the early evening about the possibility of securing Round Top, both fearing that the Confederates might still do what Oates earlier wanted to do: emplace artillery on the summit of Round Top and enfilade the entire Federal defense. At dusk, Chamberlain was directed to seize it.

Although fresh ammunition still had not been received, Chamberlain took his two-hundred men again in extended order, and in one rank, with bayonets fixed. It was nine o'clock, and practically dark under the trees with their summer foliage. Slowly climbing Round Top, at first they rushed the crest capturing two Confederate officers, and a half-dozen enlisted men. Realizing that his troops were vulnerable in the event the enemy should attempt to take Round Top, Chamberlain detailed a picket line, and then hurried a messenger to Rice with the request that the 83rd Pennsylvania come up in support. Rice sent him not only the 83rd, and supplies of ammunition, but, shortly afterward, the 44th New York as well. Though the 20th Maine lost an officer during the night, the Round Top was secured for good. By nine the next morning, Chamberlain received orders to withdraw and to go into reserve with the rest of Rice's brigade in support of the left center of Meade's main line of resistance on Cemetery Ridge. This position

placed them to the left of Lee's great effort of the afternoon, when General George Pickett, with the cream of the Virginians and North Carolinians, made his gallant, futile effort to crack the center of the Union line. The Battle of Gettysburg was over. The Union had prevailed.

The 20th Maine, in keeping with a compelling tradition, looked after its own dead. Before leaving Gettysburg, they went back to the Little Round Top area, gathered the bodies of their men and buried them on the southern side of the crest behind their former line of battle. They marked the graves with crude headboards made of ammunition boxes, carving names and home towns into the boards.

To be Continued

March Birthdays



Horatio G. Wright
6 March 1820



Adm. John L. Worden
12 March 1818



Isaac I. Stevens
25 March 1818



Samuel K. Zook
27 March 1821

April Birthdays



Lewis "Lew" Wallace
10 April 1827



David McMurtrie Gregg
10 April 1833



Henry W. Benham
17 April 1813



John Gibbon
20 April 1827



Alexander M. McCook
22 April 1822



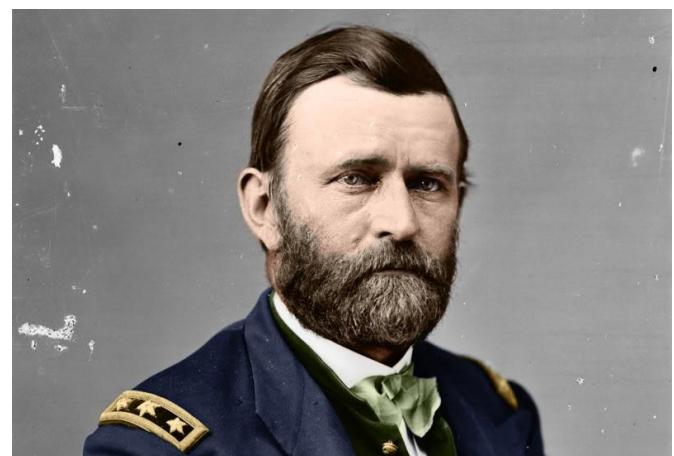
Erastus B. Tyler
24 April 1822



Andrew J. Smith
28 April 1815



Colonel Elmer Ephraim Ellsworth
11 April 1837



Lieutenant General Hiram Ulysses Grant
(Ulysses Simpson Grant)
27 April 1822

Death In Disguise

by
Harry Dolbier

The blue-clad cavalrymen plodded warily through the thick Virginia mud towards the fortifications of Yorktown, freshly abandoned by the Confederate army. It looked safe -- no signs of life, no rebels in sight. Suddenly the ground erupted under the horses' hooves, hurling wounded men and screaming animals in all directions. The Confederates were gone all right, but they had left behind the first primitive ancestors of a fearsome twentieth-century weapon, the land-mine.

On May 4, 1862, General Joseph E. Johnston pulled his rebel troops out of Yorktown, just as Major-General George B. McClellan prepared to bombard the fortifications. McClellan had spent a month getting his Army of the Potomac ready to besiege Yorktown, the first

obstacle in his Peninsular campaign against Richmond. Now, as the Yankees approached the town in the wake of Johnston's withdrawal, they encountered the deadly surprise.

Brigadier-General William P. Barry, the Army of the Potomac's chief of artillery, investigated the explosions at Yorktown. "Before reaching the glacis of the main work, and at the distance of more than 100 yards from it," he reported, "several of our men were injured by the explosion of what was ascertained to be loaded shells buried in the ground. These shells were the ordinary 8 or 10 inch mortar or columbiad shells, filled with powder, buried a few inches below the surface of the ground, and so arranged with some fulminate, or with the ordinary artillery friction primer, that they exploded by being trod upon or otherwise disturbed."

As they cautiously entered Yorktown, Northern soldiers found more lethal souvenirs left behind by the rebels. "Many of these shells," declared Major-General Fitz John Porter, who commanded the occupation force, "were concealed in the streets and houses of the town, and arranged to explode by treading on the caps or pulling a wire attached to the doors." Also, reported General Barry, "Articles of common use, and which would be most likely to be picked up, such as engineers' wheelbarrows, or pickaxes, or shovels, were laid upon the spot with apparent carelessness. Concealed strings or wires leading from the friction primer of the shell to the superincumbent articles were so arranged that the slightest disturbance would occasion the explosion. These shells were not thus placed on the glacis at the bottom of the ditch, &c., which, in view of an anticipated assault, might possibly be considered a legitimate use of them, but they were basely planted by an enemy who was secretly abandoning his post on common roads, at springs of water, in the shade of trees, at the foot of telegraph poles, and, lastly, quite within the defenses of the place--in the very streets of the town."

Fred T. Locke, Porter's assistant adjutant-general, recalled after the war the horrible fate of a telegraph operator who stepped on a buried shell in Yorktown and had his legs "terribly mangled." The young man "died soon after in great agony."

Yorktown was soon cleared of "infernal machines" by captured rebels, who were ordered by General McClellan to search for and destroy the buried shells.

General Barry placed the blame for the outrage on Confederate Brigadier-General Gabriel Rains, who commanded the post at Yorktown. "The belief of the complicity of General Gabriel Rains in this dastardly business is confirmed by the knowledge possessed by many officers of our Army of a similar mode of warfare inaugurated by him while disgracing the uniform of the American Army during the Seminole war in Florida."

Gabriel Rains of North Carolina graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1827 and served with distinction, reaching the rank of lieutenant-colonel in 1860. Always interested in mechanics and chemistry, perhaps more of a scientist than a soldier, Rains did a great deal of experimenting with explosives. He applied his knowledge at Yorktown. "At a salient angle," Rains explained, "an accessible point of our works, as part of the defenses thereof, I had the land mined with the weapons alluded to, to destroy assailants and prevent escalade. Subsequently, with a similar view, they were placed at spots I never saw...some 6 or 7 miles this side of Williamsburg." Reporting to Major-General D. H. Hill, his division

commander, Rains wrote, "some 4 small shells, found abandoned by our artillery, were hastily prepared by my efforts, and put in the road near a tree felled across, mainly to have a moral effect in checking the advance of the enemy (for they were too small to do more)."

When Jefferson Davis quoted Rains on this same incident in *The Rise And Fall Of The Confederate Government*, the story ended differently: "A body of the enemy's cavalry came upon these sub-terra shells, and they exploded with terrific effect."

Confederate Major-General James Longstreet, commanding the right wing of Johnston's retreating army, disapproved of Rains' tactics. "It is the desire of the major-general commanding," he wrote to Rains in the third person, "that you put no shells or torpedoes behind you, as he does not recognize it as a proper or effective method of war."

Rains, however, remained enthusiastic about the devices: "No soldier will march over mined land," he proclaimed, "and a corps of sappers, each having two ten-inch shells, two primers, and a mule to carry them, could stop an army." Rains had the matter forwarded up the chain of command until it came to the desk of Confederate Secretary of War George W. Randolph.

After considering the ethical and practical aspects of the question, Secretary Randolph issued the rebel government's official policy: "It is not admissible in civilized warfare to take life with no other object than the destruction of life....It is admissible to plant shells in a parapet to repel an assault, or in a wood to check pursuit, because the object is to save the work in one case and the army in the other. Civilized warfare does not allow one", Randolph added, "to plant shells merely to destroy life and without other design than that of depriving the enemy of a few men."

During the rest of the war the Confederates made considerable use of "subterranean shells" and "infernal devices," as land-mines were then called. Presumably employed in accordance with Randolph's policy, most of the weapons came from the workshops of the Confederate Torpedo Bureau, headed by Gabriel Rains.

Rains estimated that by 1864 there were 1,300 shells planted in the defenses of Richmond, most of them rigged to explode by pulling a string. The rebels also planted extensive mine fields to protect their works at Fort Fisher, Fort McAllister, and Battery Wagner, all of which fell to Union forces despite their defenses.

Unlike its modern counterpart, the Civil War land-mine presented no danger to innocent civilians long after hostilities had ceased. The technology of those days produced devices that could remain in the ground only a short time before being rendered harmless by seepage.

The nature of land-mines makes them useful only for defending fortifications, hindering a pursuit, or spreading terror. In the Civil War, the Union army seldom found itself in a defensive position or in retreat, and the Federal government refrained from terrorist acts. Consequently, the development and use of these weapons remained almost exclusively with the Confederacy.

Dewey Of The Mississippi

by
Harry Dolbier

"That was the most anxious moment of my career," declared Admiral of the Navy George Dewey. The hero of Manila Bay spoke not of battling the Spanish fleet in 1898, but of an incident that occurred thirty-five years earlier on the Mississippi River at Port Hudson, Louisiana. That night, he said, "I lived about five years in one hour."

At midnight of March 14, 1863, Rear Admiral David G. Farragut stood poised to run the gauntlet of the powerful Confederate defenses at Port Hudson, where twenty-one large guns dominated three miles of river front atop 100-foot high bluffs and at water level.

Just above Port Hudson, the Mississippi flowed east, then bent sharply more than ninety degrees to the south. Shoals built out from the inside corner of the bend narrowed the channel, and the river's five-knot current formed strong eddies to further complicate navigation. The U.S. Navy had to rely on experienced civilian pilots to guide its ships up the river past Port Hudson, an exacting job in peaceful daylight, an even more difficult task at night under enemy fire.

Shortly after one o'clock in the morning, Farragut gave the order to proceed, and his flagship, the Hartford, moved upriver followed by two other steam sloops, the **Richmond** and the **Monongahela**. Each of these three ships had a smaller gunboat lashed to her port side. Completing the seven-ship squadron, steaming alone, was the old side-wheel frigate **Mississippi**.

The Hartford passed the batteries safely, but the **Richmond** and the **Monongahela**, pounded by rebel fire, lost power and drifted back downstream. The **Richmond's** gunners, unaware that their ship had reversed direction, fired at flashes that they thought were Confederate artillery but which in fact came from the guns of the **Mississippi** as she struggled upriver past her disabled comrades.

On the **Mississippi's** quarter-deck stood her executive officer, Lieutenant George Dewey. The Vermont native had graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1858, and when he joined the **Mississippi** some officers murmured that at twenty-five he was too young to be second in command of a large warship. Such comments didn't matter, for Dewey had the full confidence of his captain, Melancthon Smith.

The **Mississippi's** civilian pilot, the only irreplaceable man in the ship, was stationed in the safest spot that could be devised: he stood in a boat lowered halfway down the **Mississippi's** unengaged port side, just below the guns. "It was a new experience for him," remarked Dewey, "guiding a heavy-draught ocean-going ship in the midst of battle smoke, with the shots shrieking in his ears."

When the pilot judged they had passed the shoal, he called for a turn to the left and full speed ahead, but the darkness and the clamor of battle had confused him, and the **Mississippi** ran hard aground on the shoal.

After thirty-five minutes of straining the engine in reverse with no effect, Captain Smith reluctantly observed to Dewey, "Well, it doesn't look as if we could get her off." "No, it does not," the executive officer replied. Then a ball, heated red hot in a shot furnace, came crashing through the

fore-deck into the ship's store room and set fire to the combustibles -- paint, tar, oil -- stowed there.

With his vessel hard aground, on fire, and still taking enemy hits, Captain Smith gave the order to abandon ship.

The **Mississippi** carried six boats, but by this time the three on the starboard side had been destroyed. The three port side boats would have to carry nearly 300 surviving crewmen to safety -- no one could hope to live in the river's current, and there was no possibility of help from the other Union vessels. Lieutenant Dewey supervised the evacuation, and when discipline broke down as crewmen rushed to the boats, he restored order by flattening one panicked seaman with a punch. A little later the same man plunged into the water to save a drowning crew mate, and Dewey praised him loudly before the crew. As the boats pulled away, he ordered the first one, carrying the seriously wounded, to pull for the **Richmond**, and shouted to the other two to discharge their passengers on the shore and return quickly to the **Mississippi** to load more survivors.

Dewey waited impatiently for the boats to come back. When at last they did, he surmised that the delay was caused by "a disinclination on the part of the oarsmen who had reached safety to make the trip back."

The two boats were quickly reloaded, but Dewey wanted to make sure that this time they would return promptly. On the spur of the moment, he grabbed a boat-fall and swung himself down into a boat as it shoved off.

Having followed his impulse, Dewey then reflected, "I had left my ship in distress, when it is the rule that the last man to leave her should be the captain, and I as executive officer should be the next to last." As his boat pulled through the darkness with cannon balls and musket shots kicking up the water all about, Dewey had even grimmer thoughts. "What if a shot should sink the boat? What if a rifle bullet should get me? All the world would say that I had been guilty of about as craven an act as can be placed at the door of any officer." Then an even worse idea struck him: "If the ship should blow up while I was away and I should appear on the reports as saved, probably people would smile over my explanation."

As soon as his boat grounded on the bank Dewey shouted, "Now, all of you except four get to cover behind the levee. Those four will stay with me to go off to the ship." One man - the ship's cook - stood by him. All the others, Dewey observed, "thought that the order was not personal." He then harangued the men, urging them to show as much grit as had the cook, and soon he had a crew to row the boat back to the **Mississippi**. He saw that the men from the other boat were equally reluctant to give up the safety of the shore, and he ordered the acting master in charge to use his pistol on any sailor who refused his duty. Soon both boats were back at the side of the stricken vessel.

"It is my firm belief," Dewey remarked in his autobiography, "that neither one of the boats would have ever returned to the ship if I had not gone ashore in one of them."

As soon as Dewey stepped back aboard the **Mississippi**, he reported to Captain Smith and the two of them began to search the ship to make sure none of the crew remained unaccounted for. The effort paid off when they found a ship's boy, wounded but alive, buried under a grisly pile of dead men. When he was sure no living soul remained, Smith ordered Dewey to scuttle the ship.

Aided by Ensign O. A. Batcheller, Dewey cut the boiler delivery pipes so the ship would flood, then piled up

mattresses in the officers' quarters, doused them with oil, and set them alight.

Assured that everything possible had been done for the crew and that the ship would not fall into enemy hands, Captain Smith ordered the few remaining men into the last boat. They boarded with strict regard for seniority. When four crewmen and an engineer were aboard, Batcheller stepped into the boat, followed by Dewey and then Captain Smith, whose foot was the last to ever touch the **Mississippi's** decks.

Lit by the burning **Mississippi**, the boat, with Dewey at the tiller, became a prime target for enemy fire. Not at all sure they were going to reach safety, Captain Smith took off his sword and pistols and threw them into the river, muttering, "I'm not going to surrender them to any rebel." Lieutenant Dewey declined to follow the captain's example, and the boat plunged through the heavy rebel artillery and musketry fire towards the **Richmond**.

They reached the **Richmond** safely, and as they climbed aboard, Dewey looked back at the **Mississippi** and watched the fire he had started in the wardroom break though the skylight in a great burst of flame. As water poured into the hull from the severed delivery pipes, the ship began to settle at the stern. This motion finally freed the old frigate from the shoal and she drifted free, caught by the river's current. As she floated past the rebel batteries, her unused but still loaded portside guns came to bear in the direction of the enemy. Just then the fire grew hot enough to ignite the charges in the guns and the **Mississippi**, unmanned, fired her last broadside. She drifted on, the flames reaching higher and higher into her rigging, illuminating her final agony. The old ship soon ran gently aground, the fire reached her magazine, and a spectacular blast lit up the Louisiana sky, reverberating for miles around.

In the days that followed, Captain Smith was understandably bitter over the loss of his ship, though the government attached no blame to him. Assistant navy secretary Gustavus Fox tried to console the captain. "The noble ship has gone," he wrote, "but the navy and the country have gained an example."

Forty years later, at the pinnacle of his profession, George Dewey looked back on the **Mississippi's** last battle and observed, "I myself had gained experience in the midst of danger and confusion when I was young enough to profit by the lesson."

April Meeting

The April 2017 meeting of the
Colonel E. E. Ellsworth Camp #18
SUVCW
Will be held on
Tuesday 18 April 2017
At the
Heritage Farmstead Museum, Plano, TX.

Field Cooking

by
Donald Gates

Spring is here and it's almost goodbye to that winter nip in the air. But Mother Nature can play tricks on us and hit us with one more Blue Norther before settling in to Spring and Summer. Should that occur Captain Sanderson has something to warm our gizzards on in the event of a cold snap. The utensils required to prepare this recipe include a medium Dutch oven (5-6 qts) and a large (12" minimum) cast iron skillet, a medium mixing bowl (2 cups). As always a large wood spoon is a handy utensil for these recipes. Also needed are tongs or a cooking fork and a small whisk. The recipe is taken from our favorite "A Taste for War", Stackpole Books, 2003, author William C. Davis.

CAPTAIN SANDERSON'S BEEF STEW

Ingredients

2 lbs. beef stew meat, cut into 2-inch chunks
2 tbsp pork fat or lard (vegetable oil can be substituted)
3½ quarts of water (13 Cups)
4 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into large chunks
3 large carrots, peeled and cut into large chunks
2 onions, peeled and cut into large chunks
2 parsnips, peeled and sliced
1 leek, trimmed, sliced, and rinsed clean
¼ cup flour
Salt and pepper
1 tbsp vinegar
Salt and pepper

Sprinkle the stew meat with salt and pepper. Heat the fat in a skillet over medium high heat. Add the meat and sear for a few minutes, stirring frequently, till well browned, but not fully cooked. Transfer the browned meat to a large pot and cover with 3 quarts (12 cups) of water. Bring to a boil. Skim the fat that rises to the surface. Add the potatoes, carrots, onions, parsnips and sliced leek to the pot. In a small bowl, whisk together the flour with ½ cup cold water till a thick, smooth liquid forms. Slowly stir the flour water into the stew pot. Season the pot with salt and pepper (I used 1¼ tsp of salt and ½ tsp black pepper; use more or less to taste if you prefer). Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat a low simmer. Let the stew simmer for 3½ hours, stirring periodically and skimming any fat that rises to the top. If the stew becomes too thick over time, you can add additional liquid to thin it out as needed. At the end of cooking, the meat should be very tender and the sauce rich and thick. Remove from heat and stir in the vinegar. Season with additional salt and pepper to taste, if desired. Serve hot.

Medal of Honor Parade Directions

If you are planning to attend the Gainesville Medal of Honor Parade (<http://www.medalofhonorhostcity.com/>) on Saturday, April 8th, attached are detailed instructions for Saturday. Be sure to leave enough time to arrive all geared up by 9:55 AM. We are scheduled to start marching at 10AM. The uniform of the day is Hardy Hats and Frock Coats, if you have them, with coots and canteens. If not, sack coats and forage caps will do, no Knapsacks or bed rolls. Haversacks optional. If you need equipment, we have uniforms and equipment for 3 men available. Please make every effort to attend it is a great event.

If you are traveling to Gainesville on North I35 you will take Exit 497 to California Street and go straight on the service road across California St.

Once you have crossed California St., you will turn right onto West Broadway at the next corner (look for MOH Event Staff) Travel straight until you reach North Dixon St. You will check in and at the intersection of Dixon and Broadway streets. You can also get directions to the parking areas. Your entry number is "44B".

The end of the parade is at the intersection of Weaver and Broadway streets. At this point ALL entries, except NON-road worthy vehicles will turn left onto Broadway and immediately turn right onto N. Weaver street. Continue to Scott Street and then onto Denton street. This will buy us organizers time to help ease a traffic jam backup on Broadway street.

