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# The UNION STANDARD

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April 2005

Vol. 13, no 4

## *The Newsletter of the 1<sup>st</sup> United States Infantry, The Regulars*

The elections have ushered in a new leadership team which will lead the First U.S. until 2007. Each officer & NCO brings a special skill set to the foray as our hobby continues to change. Capt. John Bowen is a detail oriented leader who will uphold the 1<sup>st</sup> tradition by providing excellent guidance using Casey's either on



the drill or battle fields. Lt. Alan Prendergast, aka McFuddy, will undergo transmogrification into the 'gentlemanly' Officer realm. Alan's keen eye for "the right way" will help steer our Ship of State on its proper course. 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Don Gates will ensure those in the ranks will toe the line with his no nonsense approach. Sgt. Ron Myers acts as our website coordinator and dispenses semi-monthly electronic HQ communiqués. Sgt. Aaron Smith brings 10 years experience to his first NCO rank. Sgt. Blair Rudy's contagious, unbridled enthusiasm is coupled with healthy efforts to promote the 1<sup>st</sup> within the metroplex. Cpl. Beck Martin will serve as our Mentor Coordinator as he again dons two stripes. Cpl. Kevin Doughtie has performed every NCO position and has long served as a Board member. The At-Large members are myself and the irrepressible Don Gross, who now heads the Brigade's 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion. "Pvt or Major Gross," take your pick.

So, some Board members are serving first-time roles as well others with prior experience. They are to be

thanked for stepping up and devoting their free time to ensure the Unit is well run. Trust me, there are lots of doings behind the scenes which most of you do not realize. Whether it's Don Gross making skirmish charts for the muster, or Don Gates cleaning mess pots & pans and purchasing foodstuffs, or me coordinating recruiting events as well as calling prospects, or Kip Bassett & Ted Cross casting bullets and coordinating the live fires, or some serving as mentors by helping new recruits, or the officers help organizing local and regional events, or Board members updating or creating new bylaws, equipment guidelines, standards & procedures, etc.

The above is a scant activity list and you are encouraged to get involved with those operations that keep our organization running smoothly. Items which immediately come to mind: a new Recruiting Coordinator, mentors to assist new recruits, a commissary "Sgt" to relieve 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt Don Gates of those duties, help to call recruit prospects, and articles for the newsletter. There are many other responsibilities and see me if you wish to help as the need is real.

The Jefferson reenactment is April 29-30 & May 1 and the scenarios look to be special. I encourage you attend and if you haven't already given notice then immediately contact me if you plan to attend. Note the enclosed Texas Forts Muster article and plan now for the June 11-12 Tribby, OK, reenactment. There is much to do before we "shut down" for the summer so let's get the wool on and don those leathers.

God Bless the Regulars,

George Hansen  
NTRS President

# 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Calendar

2005

## APRIL

23<sup>rd</sup> 10am – 4pm Living History opportunity at Farmers Branch Historical Park.

30<sup>th</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> of May Jefferson, Tx

## MAY

13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Texas Forts - Fort Worth Stockyards

## JUNE

10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Tribbey Oklahoma

## JULY-

## AUGUST

August 20<sup>th</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Social ,  
Joe T. Garcia's, Fort Worth

## SEPTEMBER

16<sup>th</sup> –18<sup>th</sup> Drill & live fire at Fort Chadbourne

## OCTOBER

2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Corinth Ms.

## NOVEMBER

TBA

## DECEMBER

(tbd) Drill & Candlelight – OCP  
(annual McFuddy lay-about feast)

*Note: **Bold** are scheduled maximum effort events.  
Italicized dates are available events or recruiting activities.*

## Farmers Branch Historical Park –

There's still plenty of room for recruits and old hands interested in attending the Farmers Branch Historical Park gathering on Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Several members have elected to participate but you know how it is, the more the merrier. The park is near the intersection of I-35 and 635 – at 2540 Farms Branch Lane, Farmers Branch.

### Directions:

**Coming North or South on I-35 towards 635**

**Take I35E to exit #440A/Forest Lane onto Forest Lane go about half a mile and take a Left onto Harry Hines Blvd.**

**Follow Harry Hines for nearly a mile and turn Right onto Farmers Branch Lane. The park will be on your right.**

Lunch will be furnished by the Park, firing is permitted with the consent of the park people – simply a scheduling issue so we don't interrupt some other display or demonstration. Also, I plan on getting a fire going and cooking a little something just to pass the time and keep the kids (and adults) interested. If you're interested in going, give me a heads up at [d1stus@gte.net](mailto:d1stus@gte.net)

YMOS

Alan P.

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## STREET FIRING

From "The 1863 U.S. Infantry Tactics", May 1, 1861

Street firing is the method of firing adapted to defend or clear a street, lane, or narrow pass, in the execution of which the company or platoon must be formed according to the width of the place, leaving sufficient space on the flanks for the platoons to file successively to the rear.

When the column has arrived at the place where the firing is to commence, the commanding officer will give the word, Column, halt-Prepare for street firing. At this command, all the captains will pass by the right flank to the rear of their companies, covering the center. The colonel next commands-

## Recruiting Coordinator

The 1<sup>st</sup> US needs a new Recruiting Coordinator to take over those reins. The associated responsibilities are: plan recruiting events, maintain marketing materials, oversee the contacting of interested prospects, and attend Board meetings for quarterly updates. Be advised that George Hansen will be on hand to assist the new coordinator. Contact George if you are interested or if you want more information.

Commence firing. The captain of the first company will promptly command: First company-ready-aim-fire-recover arms-outward face-quick march.

The first platoon face to the right, the second to the left: the first platoon conducted by the captain, the second by the 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant, will file right and left around the flanks toward the rear, halt on the flanks opposite the centre of the column, reload, and as soon as the rear of the column has passed the platoons, the captain will command: Platoons-right and left face-march. At which command, the first platoon faces to the left, and file left, and the second to the right, and files right, and unite in the rear of the column. At the instant the men of the first company recover their arms after firing, the captain of the second will order such company: Ready-and wait in that position until the front is cleared by the first company, when the captain will cause it to advance twice its front (followed by all the companies in rear), and fire, file down the ranks in the same order prescribed for the first company.

Firing in retreat is conducted on the same principle as on the advance, except that the companies fire without advancing, on the front being cleared by the former company; and, instead of halting on the flanks, the platoons will pass immediately to the rear of the column, countermarch, form, and re-load. The same principle will be observed in column of platoons as column of company.

Readers should pay strict attention to the above as it is expected we WILL use this tactic during the Jefferson campaign.

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### **Battle of Port Jefferson**

Jefferson, Texas  
April 29/30, May 1  
Maximum Effort

1<sup>st</sup> US members in January voted to attend the regional Jefferson, Texas, reenactment on April 29-30 & May 1. Of particular note is Saturday's battle which is a running engagement in a portion of historic downtown Jefferson. Confederates, while on an extensive march, are attacked by arriving Federal troops. Nearby cannon fire and a

cavalry engagement will add to the ambience. The street battle will most likely be the largest one of its type ever in Texas. Federal forces are earmarked to occupy the whole downtown for several hours on Saturday. Three battles are planned for the weekend. Tentative plans are underway for a Union amphibious landing if the event organizers can locate an appropriate barge.

General Mark Dolive of First Federal Division fame and commanding General Mark Griffin of the Mississippi Valley Battalion are the overall commanders. The scenarios are similar to the 1864 Red River Campaign as Union forces are assigned to capture the Port of Jefferson. Full medical operations will be employed including post-action medical scenarios like those performed at Franklin, TN.

This is a great site to bring your wife or "significant other" as Jefferson is regarded as the "Bed & Breakfast Capitol of East Texas" - <http://www.jefferson-texas.com/>. Shopping is abundant along with museums, restaurants, antebellum homes and interesting tours. Plan now to make this reenactment a memorable get-away weekend. Oh yes, McFuddy reports this B&B was most pleasant when he & the Mrs. frequented it last year - [www.maisonbayou.com](http://www.maisonbayou.com).

Please note that reenactor registration will be done at the unit level, so contact George Hansen immediately if you haven't already done so, 972-529-5349, or [ghansen@jackhenry.com](mailto:ghansen@jackhenry.com).

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### **Jefferson info**

**-or-**

### **“Overheard while standing in the Soup Line...”**

“I just spent the day with Griffith, walking the battlefield and town and developing scenarios. “

Main Federal camp is 2.8 miles from town (I measured).

Main camping area is mix of field and woods. Areas were being bush hogged when I left. We are out of sight of modern distractions.

New tentative town camp (pending approval from Chamber) is on east side of town along river. Again out of sight of everything – maybe 5-700 yards from old downtown. There are restrooms in town but guys can %\$# in the woods.

Sat battle: shuttles start running at 8:30. Main camp guys will want to be on first go. Town battle starts at 1000. We will swing around to north of “old” town to start. Cannon from across the river to start bombardment. We garrison town till about 1:30. Medical scenarios (if possible) prisoners and harass the period civilians (except for the pro union ones who are glad to see us). Shuttles are available to transport those who cannot make the march.

Begin out march after the retreating rebels. A little more than ½ way is a plantation. There will be a small detachment of cornfeds there that we will have to drive off. We “occupy” the plantation for a good rest stop.

Main battle: starts around 4:00.

Dinner Sat will have a Mexican flavor. Organizers understood how hungry reenactors would be after a long day.

Sun battle. The action starts with reenactor only action about 45 min before the public battle starts. Similar gameplan as previous day as the federals after pushing back the rebels, renew the attack. We end up retreating after this one.

There is no cut off for registration – you can even just show up and get in – if you’re federal.

Info derived from a certain Pvt “who knows”

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## **"Us"ing Your Blanket**

**(instructions written to the lowest common denominator because I am both low and common) by Hargis, G. 5 A-1**

In the 21st century here-and-now, many of our serious brethren (those most often derided as "stitch counters" by the less passionate devotees of authenticity) bemoan the use of shoddy, ill made foreign imports in our craft. For the proper period "U S" monogram on our blankets (originals were for the most part, imports) shoddy work and poorly executed stitching will match original examples to a "T" - but then so will fine, even, well done ones, too. Some historical pieces are prime examples of the embroiderer's art, perfect in every way. Others clearly are the work of stitchers fried to the gills, poking at the blanket in some "blind pig (or perhaps by a blind pig or in some sweatshop cum opium den), well you get the picture.

The lesson to be learned here is this: **YOU CANNOT GO WRONG** no matter how your work comes out.

### Needful Things:

To do the deed, you will need a blanket (stripes near the ends will help orient the lettering)

You will need black or brown WOOL yarn (you must buy much more than you need but the excess can be used to mend your socks) Match the yarn color to the stripe color (or close thereunto) You will need a largish needle with a GREAT BIG EYE.

You will need scissors, a sharp knife OR a keen-knaped piece of hardtack. You will need a piece of cardboard, pasteboard, or stiff paper cut in a rectangle the same height and breadth of your US. (4 1/2 tall, 7 1/4" width)

You will need a chalk stick (either school type or tailor's)

### STEP 1: Find and mark the Blanket's Center

To find the blanket's center you fold it. First along the long axis then the short. The center of the blanket is the corner where all the folds meet. Place the cut out rectangle over this "center" corner with one quarter of the rectangle on the blanket. With chalk, mark the corner of the rectangle on the cloth.

Unfold the blanket on a table top. Take care to have nothing under the blanket that could accidentally get sewn to it. Fit corner of the rectangle into the chalked corner. Outline the entire rectangle on the blanket with chalk. (The long sides of the rectangle should run the same way the stripes do)

Divide the chalk rectangle into the width of the letters and the space in between. (2 3/4 = U, 1 1/2" between, 2 7/8 = S,)

In the left box, draw a U that touches all the sides of the box.

Then, starting inside the first U, draw a second one parallel to the first, 3/4" apart. At the tops of the letter draw short lines closing the open arms. You now have a "hollow" U. In the right box, draw a line inside and

parallel to and 3/4" from the left hand vertical side. Draw another line inside and parallel to and 3/4" away from the bottom side of the box. Inside the inner box, draw an S that touches all sides of that box. Starting on the left side of the larger right hand box, draw a second S just as you did the U. The "ends" of the S should extend 1/2" up the left side of the box and down 1/2" down the right hand side. As you did with the U, close off the open ends of the S.

Step Two: Preparing to Sew.

Take eight (8) feet of yarn and thread it through the eye of the needle. (Now you see why you got one with a GREAT BIG EYE.)

With equal lengths on either side of the needle, Tie the loose ends together in a tight knot. Now grasp knot and needle, pull in opposite directions to center needle on yarn loop.

Step Three: Sewing "US"

You will be using a Quilt Stitch. This will look like a line of dashes: - - - - -

Carry the threaded needle to the underside of the blanket while looking at the top side. Stick the needle point up through the fabric so the emerges through the outline of the letter. Pull needle and yarn through the blanket until it stops at the knot at the end.

Do all of the rest of the stitches except for the last one only from the top. (Keep the blanket spread out so you don't sew through two layers accidentally.) Next, stick the point of the needle INTO the blanket on the outline at the distance you want the stitches to be (say, around 1/8 to 1/4 of an inch). Poke the point of the needle OUT of the blanket going through the outline at about the same distance of the first stitch. Pull out the needle and all the yarn as far as it will go (DO NOT PULL VERY TIGHT OR THE BLANKET WILL PUCKER. Many originals ARE puckered.) Repeat this process until the letter is outline in a dotted line. Pass the needle through to the back on the LAST STITCH. Turn Blanket OVER.

Pull the yarn out the back of the blanket. Leave enough yarn sticking out of the blanket for knotting off. Cut yarn. Tie a good knot in the yarn sticking out of blanket.

Next, tie a knot in the two ends of yarn hanging from the needle and stitch the next letter in the same manner as the first.. When finished, trim knot tails. Admire.

P.S. some fellows sew their names &/or numbers on their blankets. This can be handy for ID-ing your very own in a sea of similar blankets. And, if stolen, this will allow the thief to remember you fondly as his own personal Quartermaster.

G.E.H.

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## JEFFERSON DIRECTIONS –

I-20 east to Marshall; north on US 59 for 17.5 miles; go east on FM 2208, turn right (east) at the fork (2 miles) on FM 134, follow signs. Registration is about 2 miles on right. Drop your gear in camp and park across street (out of sight).

It is 3 hrs from Fort Worth.

*NO CARS IN CAMP  
0700 SAT TO 2:30 SUN!!!*

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## Port Jefferson Communiqué,

I realize that some of you have received this information and several have committed to this event. Being that I stress good communication, I have included the Jefferson event info once again in case someone was previously missed.

First let me invite you, or perhaps implore you, to join us at Jefferson, Texas. I am very excited about this event because I think that it offers great potential. I can promise you that this will **NOT** be yet another SCV small town yahoo-hick show! As you will read, I have made sure that the event follows a realistic story line and that it has the trappings of a true living history reenactment. Much emphasis is being placed upon the scenario downtown as well as the "epic" battles at the event site. Fighting will take place along historic brick streets, some open ground, wooded areas and a pecan grove during the course of the weekend. The point is we will not simple stand in the middle of an open field and blast away at each other. We are going to have battles with character and realism.

We will be making use of our medical impressions and other auxiliary elements to add that added touch of realism through out the weekend.

The Federal army will be able (and is encouraged) to occupy, by marshal law, the historic downtown Jefferson. This city was a Southern port during the war and, in the area we will be working, many of the original buildings exists. There will be many civilian reenactors on hand doing 1<sup>st</sup> person

impressions of researched citizens for you all to do what ever is proper...

Camps: There are two Federal camps sites. One is in town at an Old historic park. Troops may stay there, campaign style, Friday night to avoid having to be shuttled into town Saturday morning (if they want to). The Federal camp at the event site is a nice piece of real estate. It is a large cove of grass meadow surrounded by pine woods. Plenty of space for garrison camps. We are clearing out some of the under brush for those who would rather set up camp under the trees. The soil is sandy with out rocks.

There will be a three mile march from downtown to the site Saturday afternoon. Shuttles provided for those who can not make that march. The event is providing a dinner Saturday and some type of breakfast Sunday as well. Event parking is just at the perfect distance away and well concealed by tall pine trees. Keeping cars out of camp is also a top priority for us.

Gen. Dolive and I will be working out the details of the campaign later. I simply want all of you to know what has been planned thus far. Jefferson, Texas is located North of Marshall and I-20 just across the border from Shreveport. **I realize that this is a drive for some of my brothers in blue.** Let me just say that I will do everything in my power to make it well worth your trip! By God's grace you won't regret investing your time into the Campaign at Port Jefferson.

So, I encourage you all to attend. Please take the time to register at the link provided in the information ASAP. Having a strong army of Federals is what will make this event a success!

YOS,

Mark Griffin  
Mississippi Valley Brigade  
1<sup>st</sup> Confederate Division / NSA

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**Texas Frontier Forts Muster**  
Ft. Worth Stockyards

May 13-14

The annual gathering of the Texas Forts Muster will again be held at the Ft. Worth Stockyards. The 1<sup>st</sup> is committed to a Friday and Saturday appearance as we'll present firing demonstrations to the crowds, perform living history and do much needed recruiting. Your help is needed Friday even if only for a half-day. This is typically a busy day as school kids are bused to view the forts' presentations. I need assistance with the firing demos as well as you leading such activity.

Brian Glass with the Boy Scouts Explorer group is bringing three mountain howitzers and the First will help man these weapons when fired. We will setup next to Brian's howitzers which are crowd pleasers.

This event is our primary 2005 recruiting effort and if you can't come Friday, then please attend Saturday. The Mrs. and I plan to spend Friday night at The Stockyards Hotel. With plenty of unique shopping, interesting restaurants, rides on the Tarantula Train, we plan to make it a fun weekend. See [www.fortworthstockyards.org](http://www.fortworthstockyards.org) for more info and contact me regarding more details regarding this recruiting and Living History event.

George Hansen  
(972) 529-5349  
[ghansen@jackhenry.com](mailto:ghansen@jackhenry.com)

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## **JEFFERSON**

### **Scenario and Press Release**

It's May 1864.

The struggle for Southern independence has been raging for three years yet Texas has remained relatively untouched by the ravages of war that have destroyed so many Confederate homes and cities back east. Untouched until now.

Lincoln wants to thrust the dagger of defeat into the heart of the Confederacy and thus end the bloody affair once and for all. To accomplish this he has ordered an operation, known as the Red River Campaign, to capture Shreveport setting up an advance into the Lone Star State.

The fertile soils of East Texas continue to create excellent cash crops of cotton that are shipped through the Union's blockade. This allows the South to purchase much needed goods from European companies eager to capitalize on the American war of brother against brother. Jefferson Texas is a major player in that process with her inland port giving access to the gulf. Additionally, she offers major powder works and production warehouses that serve the Southern war effort.

The Union forces of Gen. Nathaniel Banks have fought a vigorous two month campaign up the Red River beating the Confederates at Mansfield and then later taking Shreveport by Assault. The Confederate Trans-Mississippi Commander Gen. Kirby Smith has retreated into East Texas to rally his forces. Perhaps they can turn the tide before all is lost!

Gen. Banks wants to crush his foe but first he wishes to take away his fighting resources so he has launched a campaign to capture Port Jefferson. From there he will press the attack to Marshall and Tyler.

The worn, battle hardened Confederate's of Gen. Gray's Louisiana Brigade realize they are no match for the overwhelming numbers of advancing federals. Thus they are compelled to evacuate the City and leave it to Union hands. Yet another bitter loss in a series of humiliating defeats for these hardened veterans.

The South's only hope is to lure the Federals into the open field and strike a blow that might cause the collapse of their advanced column. In doing so they just might keep the young Confederacy alive!

You will have an opportunity to witness this epic confrontation.

Our event opens with the chaos of a City about to be overtaken by the enemy. Watch the Southern army march through the streets of Jefferson as they make for the retreat. Watch as the Forward Federal units enter the city and engage the rear guard of the Confederate forces. Witness the Southerners as they try desperately to defend Jefferson's streets, her citizens and the important

warehouses holding food, ammunition and other vitals supplies. Experience the sound of distant artillery and the rush of men frantically loading wagons to avoid capture. Observe the skillful attack by Union Veterans bent on ending the hope of independence for the Southern nation.

Most of the people of Jefferson are deeply saddened by the loss. Others are openly glad to be brought back to the United States. Either way, you will know what it feels like to be occupied. You will witness the actions before, the battles between and the grime after math of this grand event.

### **Battles**

There will be at least three battles that will follow the chronological time line of this hypothetical scenario. One of these battles will occur in the Historic downtown area of Jefferson along their original bricked streets. Efforts are being made to de-farb that section of town as much as practical.

The other actions will take place on the outskirts of the city. Full details on the battles will be withheld so that the "surprise of action" is not lost. Let me just say that these will be unique, realistic and memorable.

### **Authenticity**

**\*\*Note:** These are the recommended "Guidelines" in order to exhibit the best impression for this event. However, variances are tolerable so long as they are not items listed in the "Not Acceptable List".

This is a late war Trans-Mississippi Scenario based upon alternative history assuming that the Red River Campaign has been successful.

Generally speaking, the Confederate troops should be physically worn from several weeks of marching, fighting and retreating. Their appearance should be tattered looking and drab or dirty from the elements. The overall morale should be low. The men still have fight in them but they are not exactly optimistic about the future.

### **Camping**

Consider this a semi-campaign style event. There will be accommodations for both those who like to

use tents and those who do not. For Confederate troops, flys and shelter-halves will be strongly encouraged.

The first half of the event scenarios take place in downtown Historic Jefferson. Friday night, there will be a Confederate and Federal camp set up in Downtown Jefferson to avoid having to move troops into town early Saturday morning. Both of these camps are located in historic settings and well separated from one another. A shuttle system will be set up for moving troops from the main event area to Jefferson Friday evening and Saturday morning. It is very highly recommended that troops plan to spend Friday night in town. However, this is optional for all units. These areas will be campaign style as there are no arrangements set up for tents in these areas.

No women/civilians will be allowed to camp in the military camping areas. Units wishing to camp with their wives and families must do so in the civilian camping area only. *(Just so's you'll know our Laundress is a women, but is NOT a civilian and IS as fightin a fightin woman as there is so SHE is exempt from this business, and I have the General himself's word on it...the Laundry must go through!!!!.....McF)*

### **Other Information**

There will be a 3 mile march from town to the event site in preparation for the afternoon action. In addition to the fact that it is logistically necessary and part of the scenario, we will be promoting this march as a salute to our soldiers past and present who have given their lives in combat.

We will make shuttle preparations for those who physically can not make that march, however.

There will be sutlers on site and will be set up convenient to both camps.

### **Civilian Activities**

Since this is a city scenario civilians will play a very prominent role. There will be much interaction between them and both armies. Our goal is to get the authentic civilians right into the heart of the scenario.

The dance will be held in downtown Jefferson directly in front of the historic Excelsior hotel. This is a very charming setting that should give the gala a unique feel.

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## **After Action Report:**

7 April

To: Capt J Chamberlin, 24<sup>th</sup> Maine

From: 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Hillman Graham, Co.A

After Action Report, Port Hudson Louisiana – 2nd April, morning attack.

The following men were considered fit for siege duty at Port Hudson. Normally I understand the requirements for report are to list those unfit for duty, but owing to disease and casualties, and not a few desertions, it is simpler to list those present for duty, contrary to normal procedure.

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. H. Graham,

1<sup>st</sup> Sgt D. Gates,

2<sup>rd</sup> Sgt. A. Smith (Brevet)

Cpl. J.K. Doughtie,

Cpl. B. Martin,

Privates – Burrage, R.

Graham, P.

Harris, S

Mattoon, P.

Nelson, D.

Nelson, S.

Stickler, H.

Stickler, T.

Surgeon's Steward Costello

After combining with companies from the 8<sup>th</sup> Missouri, 13<sup>th</sup> U.S. Regulars and 6<sup>th</sup> Arkansas we were able to field a small company for the morning assault on the Confederate positions. I might pause to point out the dire effects living in the swamps has had on the strength of our force when it is necessary to combine 4 companies in order to constitute 1 company for an assault.

Acting as the 1<sup>st</sup> company, second battalion, led by Major Gross we moved off into the swamps as the hammer for a pincer assault with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 165<sup>th</sup> NYSVI as the anvil.



The original plan was to fix the attention of the enemy forces with the Zouaves, as befits their dashing uniforms, and for the 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion to hit them from the flank. We deployed as the left wing of the brigade, into the woods with a series of small ridges and washes to our front. I was instructed by Major Gross to take out a platoon from the 1<sup>st</sup> company to act as a picket line forward of our position until the enemy could be engaged. We were able to advance approximately 150 yards forward, north of our main line, and held good ground in the woods fronted by washes to our front and left, while the 165<sup>th</sup> NYSVI advanced on our right up a wooded ridge. The Confederates had placed a solitary artillery piece and dispatch rider in a cleared area which the 165<sup>th</sup> soon overran and destroyed. This was, it seems, intended as a signal ruse by the rebel forces, as shortly thereafter they began to appear as skirmish troops on a ridge to our direct left where we had no forces present. Major Gross dispatched 2<sup>nd</sup> company in that direction to see if they could determine their strength, and shortly thereafter, though we could not see due to the undergrowth, it became obvious a company level action was occurring to our left. The skirmish platoon swung left to cover the dry stream in that direction, while the 65<sup>th</sup> NYSVI came up on the right and changed their front to the left, extending our skirmish line to, what I believe was, the north, facing west. The 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon of the 1<sup>st</sup> company, which had been held in reserve under 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt Gates, was advanced to the center of the skirmish line and owing to the fact that Major Gross was presumably attending to the action on the left flank with 2<sup>nd</sup> company, I had them advance en masse across the streambed with my

platoon still in skirmish line as the 65<sup>th</sup> NYSVI advanced on our right. The Confederate forces occupied a sturdy position on a steep knoll to our front, and a heavy defile on our right prevented any advance in that direction as it ended in a steep draw. We exchanged close range fire with the rebels until it became obvious that the 65<sup>th</sup> NYSVI was pushing forward, and it appeared the rebels were withdrawing up the knoll for fear they were being flanked. At that point we rose up and charged up the hill, 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon under 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt Gates (to be commended for his coolness under fire) and 1<sup>st</sup> platoon still strung out as skirmish. We were able to achieve the top of the ridge at this point where a small path ran back to our right. 2<sup>nd</sup> company was somewhere in the woods to our left, though I do not believe we were in contact with them. At that point Major Gross arrived and seeing the 65<sup>th</sup> NYSVI pressing the rebels on the right ordered us to form and charge along the path. We did as instructed but were repulsed by a consolidated force of Confederates in line, and forced back with substantial losses to the top of the knoll. Rebel forces proceeded to filter between the body of 2<sup>nd</sup> company and remnants of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> companies atop the knoll to attempt to encircle the position.

The action on either flank was unclear at this point, presumably the 65<sup>th</sup> NYSVI was engaging the enemy to the right, but the enemy appeared to be concentrating the bulk of their force against the 1<sup>st</sup> company and elements of 2<sup>nd</sup> on the knoll at the start of the trail with the obvious intention of destroying the force in detail. Only a retreat under galling fire was able to save the command from destruction or capture.

The Confederates remained in possession of the ridge line and our forces withdrew shortly before noon.

I remain, YMOS,  
H. Graham  
1st Lt., Co.A

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## Sam Grant's Early Life

By Ron Myers

Most Civil War buffs know many of General Ulysses Grant's exploits, but not as many have knowledge of the early years of this great general's life. He had an

unusual first 40 years, full of hard work, great courage, and big disappointment.

He was born on April 27, 1822 to Hannah and Jesse Grant. There was much debate as to what to name the couple's first born. After an extended-family meeting a vote was taken but before the results were known father Jesse decided the boy's name would be Hiram Ulysses to gratify both maternal grandparents. All agreed however to call him Ulysses and that name stuck.

Jesse Grant was a prosperous man who owned a tannery and horse and buggy business that made him prominent in his community of Georgetown, Ohio. Little Ulysses at ten years old could trick-ride horses and handle the buggy like an expert. Jesse gave the boy much responsibility and soon Ulysses was driving clients as far as 150 miles to destinations around Ohio. When the circus came to town Ulysses would often earn \$5 (a rather large sum in those days) to ride a pony trained to throw riders. He could ride standing on the horses' back or Indian-style on the side of the animal. Horse owners in Georgetown knew if they needed to break a horse they could take it to Ulysses and he would do the job.

Ulysses was a good, not great student as a boy. He was excellent in Mathematics but average at best in writing and spelling. Many of his Mexican War and Civil War correspondence show spelling and grammar errors so he struggled with this as an adult also.

Grant was ambivalent about his father's wishes he attend West Point. Ulysses figured he would put in the required eight years of service then resign and move on. His appointment came through in the spring of 1839. Upon arriving at West Point on May 29, 1839, it was found his application listed his name as Ulysses S. Grant of Ohio. Instead of rocking the boat Ulysses surrendered without much struggle and thereafter was known by this name in the army. Among the student body it was understood that he made his protest, then told the Adjutant, "The change of an initial makes no particular difference to me; my object is to enter the Academy as a cadet." The other boys learned of the incident quickly, since the authorities, in posting the names of newcomers on the bulletin board in North Barracks, had abbreviated "Ulysses S." into "U.S." Gleeefully the crowd around the board began inventing witticisms: "United States Grant!" "Uncle Sam Grant!" . . . "Uncle Sam!"

It was funnier when ever when they found the new boy, so small, so round-faced, almost a caricature of the opposite Uncle Sam. Thus Ulysses earned his

nickname "Sam" that stuck to him the rest of his life with his early army acquaintances.

Sam fell right in the middle of his academy class, graduating 21<sup>st</sup> out of 39. He did well in Mathematics but not so good in other subjects. He was well known for his horse skills and most thought him the best horseman of the Academy. However, there was only one regiment of dragoons and no openings available to him when he graduated. Instead he was assigned to the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry as a brevet 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and sent to Jefferson Barracks near St. Louis, Missouri.

His classmate Fred Dent's hometown was 5 miles from the Jefferson Barracks and made Sam promise to call on his family. The Dent's were a prominent family with hundreds of acres of prime farmland, three houses, (two on the plantation, one in St. Louis) and eighteen slaves. George and Ellen Dent took a liking to Lieutenant Sam Grant and soon Sam met their daughter Julia. They slowly fell in love and although George Dent had misgivings about having a soldier for a son-in-law he reluctantly consented to the engagement. The engagement would turn into a long one as one month later the 4<sup>th</sup> was ordered to New Orleans in the summer of 1845 as the United States and Mexico drew towards war.

Sam Grant showed great courage during the Mexican War. He was promoted to regimental quartermaster and was commended by his superiors for his ability to improvise and equip his unit. And he always seemed to be in the thick of the battles he participated in! While a quartermaster was supposed to be behind the front lines doing his work, Grant would get his work finished and then join infantry charges! He later explained "I didn't have the moral courage to not join the charge."

Grant fought at the first battle, Palo Alto, and in all but one major battle of the war, ending with the Battle of Chapultepec. He earned two brevets for his bravery, most notably his actions at Chapultepec where he and his squad carried a small howitzer into a church belfry, put it together, and began to shell the flank of the Mexican Army. He came out of the war without a scratch and with a brevet Captaincy. He also learned valuable lessons about how to equip and feed an army and how dangerous diseases could decimate army camps.

Hurrying back to St. Louis on leave after the war he married Julia and they were soon posted to Detroit in late 1850. There the Grant's enjoyed army post life for two good years but this was to change for the worse in

the summer of 1852. The 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry was ordered to the Pacific Coast to protect new settlers and miners in booming California. With one young son (Frederick Dent Grant born May 30, 1850) to care for and another child on the way, there was no practical way his family could come with him to his new post. He hoped to send for them later.

The trip from New York to San Francisco via the Isthmus of Panama was a terrible ordeal. Many died from a cholera outbreak and the three month ordeal was so disastrous that the remainder of the 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment went around Cape Horn to avoid Panama. Grant performed admirably during this journey; improvising again as quartermaster and making a bad situation go as well as possible. Sam's troubles began when the Regiment reached San Francisco on September 15, 1852.

This month was the pinnacle of the Gold Rush of California. Prices were sky-high for every good and service. The low army pay barely paid Grant's expenses. William T. Sherman, who Grant had known at West Point, had resigned from the army in California to start a bank in San Francisco. The strange banking laws, high interest rates, wild speculation, and panic of February, 1855 finally put Sherman's bank out of business. Most army men had to moonlight just to make ends meet. Grant tried four different business ventures to supplement his income but all failed. While some Californians made fortunes, most others failed.

Captain Sam Grant became depressed from his loneliness and lack of success supplementing his income. He would often drink after his duties, but so did many army men during this time period. Here he was labeled a drunk. There is much evidence that while he did drink, he never did on the job and it never affected his work. The same day he received his promotion to regular captain he resigned from the army. His commanding officer accepted the resignation and forwarded on. Some evidence suggests Colonel Buchanan, his commanding officer, caught him drinking and gave him the option of court-marshal or resignation. Regardless, Grant was ready to start a new life and be with Julia, Fred, and Ulysses Jr. who was born while he was away and who he had never seen.

This period of his life was his worst professionally, possibly his happiest personally as Sam was the epitome of the family man. He doted on his kids and wife, stopped drinking, and built a house on his father-in-law's plantation. However, every profession he tried failed.

First farming on the Dent family lands failed because of a flood. Selling chopped wood put food on the table for the family but provided little more. A real-estate venture proved he was horrible at selling real-estate. Friends from his army days would see him in his shabby clothes (he often wore his old army overcoat, now faded and worn) and decide he was still hitting the bottle. They didn't know the truth, that he was sober and desperately trying to find his niche.

Finally Ulysses appealed to his father for help and Jesse set his son up in Galena, Illinois alongside his ailing brother Simpson in the family tannery shop. Grant did not have to work in the tannery (which he hated) but could do the books in the shop. This move would shape the world as we know it as the Civil War was about to erupt and Galena was home to Congressman Eli Washburne. Washburne was a powerful Republican who came to know Grant and saw his potential as a military leader. When the war began Congressman Washburne gave Sam Grant his chance and pulled strings to get Grant the Colonelcy of the 21<sup>st</sup> Illinois Infantry and later a brigadier generalship.

Ulysses S. Grant overcame the incorrect stigma that he was a drunk and proved his detractors wrong. Leading Union forces he *captured three different Rebel armies whole*.

His war-time accomplishments propelled him to the Presidency of the United States of America. Not bad for a tanner's son who couldn't spell!

Sources:

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"Grant Moves South" by Bruce Catton

"Personal Memoirs of W.T. Sherman" by W.T.

Sherman

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