



Hurt's Battery

Alabama Light Artillery, ANV^a.
Re-enactors of the American Civil War



30. September 2010

Cannoneers,

I have the honor to report on the recent engagements with the enemy at Colusa, Calif. On the 24th through the 26th inst.



Sophia's placement on the field

Present for duty were the following:

Capt. Ken Janson

Sgt. Tom Phinney

Pvt. Jeff Holtzclaw

Pvt. Jeff Kuhn

Seaman Chris Johnson (seconded to the Battery from the James River Squadron)

[with a special guest appearance by Maj. Don LaPorta – more on that later.]



Hurt's Crew rests in the shade while the Captain & the Colonel converse



The crew was right glad of the Battery's awning.

Capt. Janson along with Miss Carrie Rarden arrived at the residence of Sgt. Phinney on the evening of Thursday, Sept. 23^d where they were treated to a delicious meal and a night's lodging. The three of them left the Phinney home early on the 24th for the event site, the county fair grounds in Colusa.



Zouaves in action

This venue is far from being “in the country”. It is surrounded by either houses, churches or parking lots. Additionally, there were unmovable park benches in the middle of the battlefield (There was talk of covering them with hay bales for next year). Nonetheless, it proved a useable field. The biggest negative of the weekend was the heat. It was very hot with humidity engendered by the large scale irrigation all around the place. Despite the down side of things, it turned out to be a extremely successful event both in the level of fun had by nearly everybody and, it is believed, in financial terms for the RACW, something that is unusual for a first time event.



Friday, Sept 24th was a school day with, it is reported, some 800 school children of varying ages attending. It was universally felt that these were among the best behaved students the club has ever dealt with. Capt. Janson and Miss Carrie presented a program which included both music and a history of the flags of the Confederacy. Sgt. Phinney and Pvt. Kuhn assisted both in holding out the flags for inspection and in helping the captain remember where he was in the presentation. It was agreed by all four that trying to do both music and flag history in a single station was too much, doing justice to neither. In future we will do one or the other, but not both. (It may be noted that in dressing for the school day presentation Capt. Janson discovered that he had neglected to bring his shoes to the event, and was forced to present in sandals. Later that day one of the local organizers took him to the local thrift store where after much searching he did find a pair of very good shoes that both fit and look very appropriate. All's well the ends well.)

The locals involved in helping to bring the RACW to Colusa were indeed very happy with the results of the School Day and were lavish in their praise.



Some of our Confederate infantry



Preparing the Union guns

The four battles that took place over Saturday and Sunday ran the gambit as far as quality is concerned. At officers' call Capt. Janson repeatedly reminded all present to instruct their men that the troops must react to being fired upon whether by small arms or the guns. All promised to do so. Nonetheless, during one of the battles almost no Yankees took hits nor did they react to being fired upon at all, despite the fact that they lost the battle. It was so obvious that even some spectators made comment upon it. However, the last battle of the event proved an excellent one – many hits, well timed and executed by both sides. All troops, to be sure, want to present a good scenario, but sometimes while in line they are so engrossed in maneuvers and listening for orders, that they fail to pay attention to being shot at. When they were made to notice it, they took excellent hits and reacted well to what was going on around them. From the perspective of hits and reacting to the battle this last battle of the event was one of the best ever.



Maj. Don LaPorta

At one of the officers' calls Maj. LaPorta, commanding the Union artillery, took Capt. Janson aside to ask if he would not be interested in changing places – the major commanding the Confederate artillery and the captain commanding the Union guns. The major's purpose was to encourage all members of the RACW to remember that we are one club – whichever uniform we wear – and for all of us to get to know each other better. After obtaining agreement from the Hurt's Battery crew members Capt. Janson heartily agreed to the proposal. Both “commanders” did more observing than commanding, but the exchange proved very useful and fruitful.

While we greatly missed our regular commissary department, Pvt. Hotzclaw saw to our breakfast needs with some delicious burritos and salsa that he made at home. Sgt. Phinney took care of the evening meals with excellent results. Luckily, the captain did not cook, but made use of the taco stand set up on the fair grounds to supply lunch.

Hurt's Battery is happy to welcome Pvt. Jeff Kuhn as a full fledged member of the unit. Pvt. Kuhn will



Pvt. Jeff Kuhn

add greatly to the quality of our impression as well as contributing to the friendliness of our camps. That friendliness is becoming well known throughout the Club. Whether it's corrupting newbies with a tempting game of Farkle, receiving Yankee gunners with cheerfulness or offering starving Zouaves the benefits of Sgt. Phinney's stew pot, it is becoming known that Hurt's Battery, in addition to representing the highest standard of gunnery, also offers a most open and welcoming corner in the Confederate

Brigade's camps.

Our visiting cannoneer, Chris Johnson of the James River Squadron, performed exceedingly well while servicing our beloved Sophia Antoinette. We were all very happy that he chose to join us for the event and invited him to come back to work with Hurt's Battery whenever circumstances permit.



*Seaman Chris Johnson, James
River Squadron*

Saturday night we gathered around the Brigade campfire, whose heat we most definitely did not need, but whose warmth of hospitality was most inviting. Miss Carrie joined us with here fiddle, the captain with his guitar, and after passing out our Confederate Songsters, we enjoyed an evening of music, talk and laughter.

If you missed this event, you missed a good one. Our next event is *Tuscan Ridge* between Chico and Paradise, Calif. Check out either the Battery website or the RACW website for details, and contact me if there are any questions. It's looking like we will have an excellent turn-out for Hurt's Battery for this last battle event of the season.

Yours in Service,

Capt. Ken Janson
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