

Twin Rivers Campaign Successful

During the second week of November 2010, twelve hundred military and civilian reenactors descended on Michigan City, Mississippi to take part in the long awaited Twin Rivers Campaign.

This event was the culmination of countless hours of lost sleep and personal commitment and seeing it finally take place was a bittersweet moment for the command staff of Cleburne's Division and First Federal Division. The event had been moved twice due to unforeseen issues with the properties acquired for the event early on. Diligence, patience and persistence paid off in November as reenactors began arriving for the four day event.

The Twin Rivers Campaign was designed and executed on a slightly different model than a usual event. The main goal and focus of the four day event was to provide the participating reenactor with the feel of a working military camp. Normal schedules were abandoned, with written orders at the spur of the moment taking their place.

On Thursday, November 11, 2010 at precisely noon the event got underway with a Federal advance into the re-created Town of Dover. Numerous period civilians had chosen to inhabit the recreated town under the leadership of Mayor Robert Orrand. The Northern aggressors were an unwelcome site and many of the townsfolk chose to make an escape rather than subvert themselves to Unionist rule.

While in the Town of Dover, the Federal forces accepted into their possession several contraband slaves which they promptly returned to Federal headquarters and freed. Special thanks are to be extended to Angela de Silva, who is African American and takes pride that she is a seventh descendant of Missouri slaves. Ms. De Silva is also a professor at the School of American Studies at Linwood University where she teaches and specializes in the re-enactment of Slavery and African American Studies. Ms. De Silva stated in a press release dated November 6, 2010, "I have been attending re-enactments around the country, and never see any people of color as civilians, either slave or free. We were certainly there during the conflict, but never present at the restaging. It's as if history was once again being edited. So, I decided that was going to change, whereas much as I can, I created a troupe of like minded passionate actors who are equally committed to telling our story." In short

time the Federals began their withdrawal and Confederate forces invested the town and harassed the rear guard of the retreating Federal army.

From this first engagement, each army committed itself to the field for action. At various places, over the expansive two thousand acres, skirmishes raged and battles ensued. Participants were able to participate in over seven battles over the course of the weekend. The event site provided for a period experience for all participants due to the lack of modern improvements and intrusions. Everyone who participated was thoroughly exhausted and enjoyed the various battles over the event weekend.

On Sunday morning a special memorial service was conducted by a group of the event participants. On the Northern edge of the event site sits a cemetery that was in existence during the War Between the States. On the outer fringe of this cemetery was a mass grave of soldiers interred after the Battle of Davis Mills, a battle which occurred in the immediate vicinity of the cemetery. A memorial stone was placed on behalf of Cleburne's Division, First Federal Division, the Blue Gray Alliance and Burton's Sugar Farm which is located in Michigan City, Mississippi. The stone was dedicated to the men who made the ultimate sacrifice by contingencies of infantry, cavalry and artillery from both sides. Ms. Angela de Silva and her African American civilian portrayers also made a tremendous contribution to the dedication ceremony with a touching rendition of Glory, Glory, Halleluiah.

All in all there has been nothing but good reports of the overall success of the event. The Blue Gray Alliance wishes to thank all of the participants who attended and would like to formally invite all reenactors to other Blue Gray Alliance events. Cleburne's Division and First Federal Division will be the overall command structure for Wilson's Creek 2011, Vicksburg-Raymond 2012 and Chickamauga in 2013. In addition, Cleburne's Division and First Federal Division will host the Shiloh event in 2012. Stay tuned to the websites of both organizations for subsequent information.

Assistant Inspector General's Department

Camp on Platte River
November 29, 2010

Sir: You will find appended to this letter an after action report by Captain Mergel, Topgl Engrs; an addendum to that report by Major Erickson, Topgl Engrs; comments on the Twin Rivers event by Captain Chappell, Topgl Engrs; and additional comments by Major Erickson, Topgl Engrs. Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
Captain Michael Maurier
AIG
First Federal Division

First Federal Division, USA
Brigadier General T. Crowder, Commanding
U.S. Corps of Topographical Engineers
Major P. D. Erickson, Chief Topographer, USCTE

Date: November 28, 2010

To: Major P. D. Erickson, Chief Topographer, USCTE
From: Captain R. J. Mergel, USCTE
Subject: Twin Rivers Campaign - Fort Donelson , After Action Report

Capt. Mergel arrived at headquarters at 8:00 am; reported to Maj. Erickson; pitched tent and stowed gear. Met with Maj. Erickson and Captain Chappell, received a revised area map and was briefed on the day's action. Maj. Erickson orders for the day included a warning that all officers were required to carry a loaded sidearm at all times. Complied with the order.

At 10:00 am participated in a reconnaissance in force on the Town of Dover with orders to confiscate all relevant maps and documents. Searched buildings and seized maps from the Town Hall. No maps were recovered from private residences. Searched civilian wagons for maps and contraband; none found.

Local residents were uncooperative.

Rebel forces rallied and the Union Army made an orderly withdrawal from the town.

Shortly after lunch Rebel Cavalry attempted a raid on the Union Headquarters. Capt. Mergel shouted a warning and took up position near the Provost's Tent. He was immediately supported by Maj. Erickson and Capt. Chappell across the road near the Topog Tent - thus providing an overlapping field fire. The Topogs held off the raid with sidearms until support from other staff officers and the infantry arrived.

At the request of the Commanding General; the topographical engineers scouted roads and trails southeast of the Union Encampment and immediately north of the "Bloody Pond" area. It was discovered that the area maps needed revision. Upon return to Headquarters Maj. Erickson updated

the maps and reported to Gen. Crowder. Capts. Mergel and Chappell made a quick trip to the Sutler's to acquire some needed items.

Friday, November 12, 2010

At 10:00 am the FFD proceeded to the recently scouted area near Bloody Pond where it encountered a large Rebel force. The FFD was successful in pushing the Rebel force thus occupying the area near Bloody Pond Road. Maj. Erickson and Capt. Mergel detached themselves from the main body to scout roads and trails that heretofore were not accessible. Upon their return the two Topogs discovered that the FFD had routed the Rebel force and captured a large number of prisoners and materiel. After a quick lunch, General Crowder dispatched the three Topogs with orders to scout the area northwest of the Union Encampment along Swamp Road. Several unmapped trails were discovered and Maj. Erickson reported back to General Crowder while Capts. Mergel and Chappell remained in the field. At approximately 2:00 pm the FFD arrived at the entrance to the Swamp Road area and immediately began pursuing a retreating Rebel Force. The Topogs accompanied the main Union force. Heavy woods and undergrowth provided the inferior Rebel Force excellent opportunities to hinder the advance of the FFD. The retreating Rebel Force was able to lure the FFD into their massed artillery. Maj. Erickson and Capt. Mergel detached themselves to accompany the cavalry along a flanking road. The two Topogs arrived at the rear of the Rebel force upon cessation of hostilities. The Topogs returned to camp.

After supper the Rebels attempted another raid on the FFD Headquarters. The action was preceded by artillery fire; then a push on the northern flank of the encampment. As the sound of gunfire drew closer, the order was given for the staff to deploy into defensive positions. The Topogs deployed to the south flank of the encampment near the site of the previous day's attempted raid. The Rebels attempted a push on this flank and Capt. Mergel was ordered to lay fire with his Henry repeating rifle in the direction of the approaching gunflashes. Maj. Erickson followed quickly with fire from his sidearm. Maj. Erickson encountered a Union sentry and was informed that the Rebels had retired from that flank. While distant gunshots were heard, there was no further action on the south flank the remainder of Friday evening.

Saturday, November 13, 2010

The Topogs were ordered by Genl. Crowder to meet with him and members of the General Staff at 10:00 a.m. near the approaches to Fort Donelson to scout artillery placements. Upon the conclusion of the meeting, the FFD made a second reconnaissance in force to free contraband slaves in the Town of Dover. Capts. Mergel and Chappell accompanied the occupying force to ascertain if any maps or documents might be discovered. The local residents were more aggressive than during the previous raid and two local women accosted Capt. Mergel with a rolling pin and a scrotum (hollowed out gourd). Finding no documents, the Topogs retreated quickly as once again Rebel forces rallied to drive out the Union forces.

Capt. Mergel was detached at that point to travel to a rear area to attend a military ball with his wife who made the arduous journey to join him for the occasion. Prior to his departure Capt. Mergel instructed Capt. Chappell in the operation of the Henry Rifle in the event the Rebels attempted another raid that evening. Capt. Mergel spent the evening with Mrs. Mergel at a local hotel and returned to camp greatly refreshed the following morning.

Sunday, November 14, 2010

Capt. Mergel returned to camp at 9:00 am to discover that the FFD had marched out of camp to attend a memorial ceremony. The army returned around 11:00 a.m. and made preparations for a final assault on Fort Donelson. At 1:30 p.m. the FFD marched out of camp and deployed for the assault. The engagement was preceded by an artillery duel. After scouting the left flank the Topogs accompanied the main force in a push toward the fort's center. Capt. Mergel received a minor wound in the right arm; but, along with Maj. Erickson and Capt. Chappell continued to assist the infantry by laying down suppressing fire with his Henry Rifle until all ammunition was expended. The action concluded with the unconditional surrender of Fort Donelson.

At 5:00 pm camp was struck and the Topogs were dispatched to their next postings.

Respectfully submitted
R. J. Mergel
Captain, USCTE

Addendum to Capt Mergel's report by Major Erickson:

Capt Chappell and I arrived in camp at 5 AM Wednesday morning and began setting up the topog camp at 6. Once the camp was set up, we began field-checking the map that had been prepared for the event. The first area to be checked was to be occupied by the Confederate forces. Lies and foolish grins elicited their help in locating and correcting the roads within their camp. The early afternoon was spent checking the roads north of the CSA camps and those south and west of the Federal camps. The road corrections as well as name changes were then made to the master map at HQ and corrected copies were produced for the use of the Brigade commanders. That evening, informed that it was "Be Kind to R J Samp Day", we took the bugler and his friend into town for dinner.

YOS,
Don Erickson, Major USA
Chief Engineer, First Federal Division

Additional thoughts on the Battle of Twin Rivers.

Captain Chappell:

Well, I don't really have much in the way of comments in either direction. It was the best event I've been to. Corinth was excellent, because we got to do the real 'engineering' part of our function and the battles were entertaining, but Twin Rivers was more fully developed and varied.

Major positive: interaction w/ the civilian town. This gave us Topogs the chance to do some 'intel' work, for which I thank Terry or whom ever planned that vignette. Other civilian scenarios, such as the contraband event, really enriched the experience. I feel we should have more of that.

I observed that arrangements for water and wood delivery and port-o-potty servicing were excellent and the shuttle service seemed to work well, although i didn't take advantage of it.

The food service for the officers' mess was superlative. Meals were proper for the period, on time, plentiful and satisfying.

The tacticals were intense and worked well, do a reasonable job of reflecting real outcomes, although we all have a problem with 'dying' - i.e., understanding that the cannon that just fired at us riddled us and all around us with canister and we should just lay down.

The only negative I have concerns a problem which probably can't be easily remedied: the earthworks were an improvement of Franklin, but were a poor representation of Ft. Donelson, or any other period earthwork (although the layout was excellent, reflecting the angles of a properly planned earthen fortification of the period). However, I understand that to do it right would require an expenditure of specie, time and labor out of proportion to other considerations in planning an event, so it's something we have to live with.

In all, this event seemed to reflect more detailed planning and preparation than others that I have attended. I hope that the good vibes from this will bring even more participation next time around.

Major Erickson:

I agree with Capt Chappell that the event had much more depth than previous events. I was not pleased with the earthworks, but I understand the constraints the landowner placed on its construction.

Raid on Dover. I should have told the civilians that the maps that the topogs confiscated from the town were going to be used in a further scenario. Perhaps they could have told me before the raid that they had decided not to use all of them. Better communication is needed here.

I didn't see that much of the contrabands, much less getting a proper servant after all these years. They seemed to appear and disappear as a group. I have no idea what they did in camp.

As usual, the meals were wonderful. Best French toast I've had and the blackberries were wonderful even if they did have Mr. Kornrumpf's cooties on them.

We did not get to do any of the bridge burning or tree toppling mentioned in the run-up to the event and it would appear that the vast majority of the roads had been scoped out long before our arrival. On the other hand, I should have mowed down much of the woods south and west of HQ to prevent access by the CSA. We will be prepared with dirty tricks next time.

In summary, it was one of the better events we have participated in. I should hope that future events will be even better.

YOS

Don Erickson, Major USA
Chief Engineer, First Federal Division

AFTER ACTION REPORT

SUBJECT: Twin Rivers Reenactment

FROM: T. Michael Cheaves, Lt. Col., Division Cavalry Brigade

TO: Colonel Ron Orange, Commanding, Division Cavalry Brigade

PURPOSE:

This report briefly describes the Civil War Reenactment held November 11-14, 2010 near Michigan City, Mississippi. This event was the first large scale enterprise between the First Federal Division and Cleburne's Division known as the Blue Gray Alliance. This was the first large scale attempt to pull men from all corners of this Country to come fight with the FFD. The DCB fielded just over 138 mounted cavalry plus a number of dismounted cavalry who served alongside of each other.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Division Cavalry Brigade was able to put 52 horses and 67 soldiers on the field on Thursday, November 11th; 76 horses and 92 soldiers on the field on Friday, November 12th; 92 horses and 89 soldiers on the field on Saturday, November 13th and 56 horses with 69 soldiers on the field on Sunday, November 14th. These men came from Illinois, Ohio, Virginia, Indiana, Missouri, Tennessee, Michigan, and others I am not sure of. Some of them traveling with their horses for two days. This was a great accomplishment for the First Federal Division and the Division Cavalry Brigade.

The actions in the field were conducted in the best form with the men performing their duties without excuses and with clarity. There were several incidents on both sides where safety was ignored and these were addressed to all Federal participants as well as addressed to the Confederate Cavalry Commander.

LESSONS LEARNED:

This event showed that men from all over the United States can come together and work together in a cohesive form and perform their tasks as set before them.

This event showed that the days of the Confederate Cavalry having the upper hand and ruling the field are over. And, if a scenario can be broken, they will break it. There was an impression the Confederate Cavalry felt they were the only ones that could break safety rules and it was ok, but constantly bemoaned any actions done by the Union Cavalry.

It was shown and proven that the Commanding General needs his own group of couriers to dispatch his orders. I am proud that there was never any discussion among the ranks of the cavalry when couriers were called for and every unit shared in the tasks. It was pointed out and directed that the Cavalry Brigade commander needed to stay back in order to see the overall picture and allow his sub-commanders direct the actual fighting.

COMMENTS:

It is unfortunate that we did not perform all the scheduled fighting that had been outlined by General Way and General Crowder. The Saturday morning fight was by far, the best in this writers opinion. All in all, this was an excellent event. The General Staff went out of their way to see to the needs of the men and they are to be commended. There was excellent communication, both verbal and musical. The location and lay of the land was fantastic.

ACTION ITEMS:

There needs to be a descriptive code of action and conduct regarding the Division Cavalry Brigade. A Rules and Regulations regarding combat. There needs to be a descriptive code of combat between the Confederate Cavalry and the Division Cavalry Brigade.

All of the men who rode with the Division Cavalry Brigade are to be commended for the excellent work they performed on the field as well as camp guards in the evenings. There were several small incidents however these were addressed at the time and it is felt they were handled accordingly.

The Cavalry Brigade commander should have 1-2 couriers ride with him as well, possibly flag/guidon bearers which would make him more readily visible on the field.

Subject: After Action Report -- Twin Rivers campaign -- 16 November 2010

This past weekend, artillery units of the first federal division were deployed for use to support combined federal forces attacking the confederate Fort Donelson. Federal units deployed included the 2nd Illinois Light, the Chicago Light, Taylor's battery-Illinois, Battery I - Minnesota Light, the Muddy River battery, the 1st Missouri Light, and the 3rd Kansas Light. Guns included Parrott rifles, 6# and 12# Napoleons, Ordinance rifle, and mountain howitzers -- the howitzers being mobile units.

Most of the units were in camp and ready for action for Friday's battles -- (2) tactical battles were planned. Unfortunately, the use of static artillery in tactical battles is very hard to pull off and the battles quickly moved away from the artillery line established earlier Friday morning. Units were only able to fire (3) rounds at distant targets and the Rebel guns/infantry were never seen. The use of artillery in static battles in future events will have to be reviewed and planned more carefully -- or just not include them in the highly mobile tactical battles.....

On Saturday, the guns were deployed in the Federal center and the guns were able to support combined forces' attacks on both the right flank and left flanks as numerous assaults were made on the fort. During the scripted battle, reb forces left the planned scenario and came out of the fort and enveloped the federal left flank at which time my position with the guns was open and the guns were overrun by reb infantry and cavalry. Very close cooperation between the federal and reb commanders made the overrun events safe and the spectators -- a mere 10--20 yards away -- got quite a show as the union and confederate forces went at it from both flanks. Before being overrun, the federal static guns put out a withering fire supporting union troops and most guns fired about 25-30+ rounds during the battle. The (2) mobile guns support the Frontier Brigade troops on the left flank throughout the battle -- staying with the infantry assaults on the fort.....

On Sunday, the guns were deployed to support the final assault and ultimate capture of the fort. The (2) guns of the Frontier Brigade -- the 1st Missouri and the 3rd Kansas, were deployed to directly support the Frontier Brigade infantry and to thwart the upcoming confederate breakout from the fort. Although not directly in the line of fire as Saturday, the federal guns were able to once again get off their shots -- again averaging 20-25 rounds during the hour-long battle.....

Many thanks to Terry Crowder and his staff who worked very hard to make this a good event and overall it was a good event to have been part of. My thanks also to all the men and ladies of the artillery units who did all they were asked to do and I feel did a very good job doing what artillery is supposed to do in supporting the infantry and cav units on the field. Though outnumbered 3-to-1 overall, our artillery units held their own against the Confederate artillery units. I would take our folks to any battle on any field and not be outdone by anyone!!!!!!

Overall a good event and one well worth the 600 mile trek that my Kansas/Missouri guys did. Good practice with combined forces (feds and rebs) on the field which will pay dividends for future 150-yr events coming up over the next couple of years!!!!!! Big Huzzah !!! to Terry and all the organizers of the Twin Rivers event this past weekend!!!!

Humbly submitted.....

Peter Stoddard
Major, Chief of Artillery
Army of the Frontier, and 3rd Kansas Light Artillery.....

Lt. Col Zimmer,

Dear Sir,

I know you are a good friend of Major Matt Tucker USAF (Captain of the 1st Nebraska Vol. US Muddy River Brigade). That is my home unit and Matt is a good friend of mine also. You and I met down at Twin Rivers. I was the Sgt. Major of the US Muddy River Brigade. I decided to write you for two reasons. The first was to congratulate you, Colonel Crowder, and all the 1st Division staff on a wonderful event. I really appreciate the effort you, and all

of the staff put into it. I cannot say I understand completely how much work goes into such an event as that but I will say it was very enjoyable for myself and everyone I have spoken to of the Muddy River Brigade. Please send my personal thanks to all those involved.

Something I particularly enjoyed was the constant nature of the fighting and the unpredictable nature of the event. With the exception of a few mishaps in the scripted battles everything was very exciting and I personally loved every minute of it. I enjoyed the structure of the staff - in particular the AIG (provost marshal). Please send him my personal thanks and congratulations or simply forward the email to him.

The second reason I was contacting you was I am a musician. In my 21 years of reenacting I have spent the first 3 as a drummer but gave that up to work a howitzer: I was in artillery for 10 years. I am a very accomplished musician. I have played percussion in bands since the age of 13. I am a very well known boogie woogie pianist in my area. If there are any Division level meetings/balls/parties over the winter please do not hesitate to call me as I would be more than honored to play at them. Provided we can make the necessary arrangements for a piano to be brought in. If not a piano, then I would be happy to play percussion along with the other Battalion musicians.

In closing it was a real pleasure meeting you and Colonel Crowder, as well as Captain Maurier - I believe is his name. He and I have a lot in common. I graduated from Notre Dame with a degree in Medieval Philosophy and am working on my PhD in Scholastic Theology. Please send him my regards, and I thank you graciously for your time.

Respectfully,
Sgt. Major Frank
Acting Adjutant
U.S. Muddy River Battalion)

Ladies and Gentlemen of First Battalion,

I wanted to thank each of you that made the Twin Rivers Campaign, we had a great time. It is one of the best if not the best event I have done in my ten years of reenacting. The commander and staff of our division along with the First Federal Division did an outstanding job to ensure that we would have a

good experience. We did a total of 7 battles plus and little bit in the night, we marched 6 miles more or less, I believe it was more but I'm not sure. The rations we received was a big plus as well. I guess my favorite battle was the one on Thursday evening on the North South Road and the one on Friday evening down in the woods, but they were all good.

The cavalry and artillery did a fine job and I enjoyed working with the dismounted cav under the command of Kenny Walthers. The one thing I like about our division is the way we try to work together. This was the key to making the event such a success.

For those of you that did not make the event you were missed by us and you missed a great event, maybe I should not say anything more on that. If you had a good time please let the staff of our Division know, it will encourage them.

Thank you for all you do for our hobby, battalion and division,

Col. Duane Hamby
1st Battalion
1st Brigade
Cleburne's Division

FROM THE RANKS:

This young man spent his 'leave at home' with us at TR. He is stationed in Afgh.. Please keep him in your prayers until he comes home again to join us!
(TC)

James Burnett: finally made it to the reenactment. already did one skirmish, its AWESOME!

James Burnett November 23 at 6:48am Report

Mr. Crowder, I wanted to say thank you again for your support and appreciation. I fly back today, well technically just ATL, and then from there back over to the 'Stan. I hope you have wonderful holidays soon to come, and look forward to seeing you again on the field.

James

Generals Way and Crowder,

Gentlemen, I want to take this opportunity to send my heartfelt appreciation for all the both of you did to make the Twin Rivers Campaign a resounding success. Having been involved in hosting an event myself, I know what kind of effort is required in putting on a reenactment event. All too often those who work are not thanked. Personally, I believe Twin Rivers was one of the best if not the best event that I have ever done. All of the men of the 31st Tenn. Infantry that attended agreed that it was top notch. Again thank you and please forward my thanks to all that were involved.

Lt. Col. Rick Ragle

Subject: RE: Mayor's experience

Thank you for both replies. The folks of Dover are eager for our next event. We will be a prescence at Wilson Creek. Many of the folks this past weekend want to attend, and I firmly believe the numbers will expand. I will be glad to assist you anyway I can. And again, great looking forces this weekend.

By the way, Nathan Stark and I had a moment of fun. We thought seriously about having Nathan take your Contraband as his property and into the woods. I do believe that if that had happened, the Federal might would have actually pulled down my town, not just virtually. My b@#s are not as big as I thought.

Mayor Robt. Orrand

From: Donna Taylor

Just a few personal notes on the Twin Rivers Campaign.

For me it was an excellent adventure, fighting almost constantly, day and night Thursday through Sunday..

The 8th distinguished themselves under the leadership of Captain Wood. When on the field the dismounted cav, 8th and 10th Ill and 2nd US placed under the command of Capt. Linewebers sharp shooters, worked together well. To the pride of the entire Union Army, one night Capt Lineweber and sharpshooters captured the entire Confederate Command. That really put a bee in their bonnet... On the last 2 days I was placed in command of dismounted. On Sunday the dismounted cav force along with sharpshooters made a final assault on Fort Donelson. From our cover in the woods, the sharpshooters took out gun crews. After 2 attempts at taking the hill we prevailed and "took the dirt". The 8th was the 1st into the trenches (The Schwartz) with 2 -16 year olds, Ian of the 10 Il. and Prvt. Roby. Looking back the rest of the command was dead or wounded on that hill. We 3 held the trenches in our sector and denied the enemy their use. At the end 3 guns were taken and many prisoners. For the entire campaign we took 6 guns many prisoners and many accolades and respect for the 8th Ill Cav. A highly regarded view of the 8th Il Cav. is a great thing to hear from other units, friend and foe alike.

On Sunday morning the memorial was held for the known and unknown soldiers buried under a large tree. Both armies were present and a group of slaves we had freed, while under fire, from Dover just 2 days prior were grouped near the officers and officials at the tree. One of former slave girls sang the Battle Hymn of the Republic. It was the finest rendition and understanding of that song I have ever heard. She sang like an angel, there were tears of pride among many strong men that day. It gave me a new perspective on what we do and why we were there. It will stay with me forever. I would like to thank Rob for making us and the Horses comfortable. Although our numbers were small we were mighty.

We few, We happy few. Everyone in the 8th take pride in those who represented you for you were represented well, very well.

Schwartz

P.S. Fortunately no wolverines were encountered.

Subject: Many Thanks to You, Sir

General Crowder:

My hat is off to you and your staff for a fine experience at Twin Rivers this past weekend. We cannot thank you enough for the hard work you put in to make the event fly, especially after the site change was necessitated. Having been impressed with the Collierville site last year, I find it hard to believe that the alternate site was actually head and shoulders above the original site in many, many ways.

Thank you for taking good care of my little battalion. Our needs were met, and we very much enjoyed supporting all the "real" Yankees. My only regret is that we weren't there in the numbers I originally expected.

Though it was really unnecessary, you proved once again that you are a solid commander and a man of your word. It was an honor to support your efforts.

I want you to know that our little band had a fine time. My thanks and compliments to you and your devoted staff.

Y.O.S.,
Dave Neel

Bill Neikirk

Just a quick up date. This was one of the BEST event I have been to in a long time. We never lacked for anything and have never fought as many battles in one weekend as this. My hats off to the event people, Col Neal, and our pards in the battalion. For those of you that didn't go, You missed the best. You wont want

to miss any of the other big event in 2011. CH

PS. It was worth the trip just to see James Tittle, Moon the Confederates during the battle

From: Ginger Ryals
Subject: Twin Rivers - Dayton Daily News - Ohio

Hi, Terry and Mike,

I'm sending this email to both of you because I need information on the battle asap for a story that will be printed in the Thanksgiving Day edition of the Dayton Daily News (DDN) here in Dayton, Ohio.

I got some good photos from the battles, and when I called the DDN they sent me to a local editor, as the paper runs special stories about local people in their parts/suburbs of Dayton. Today I got a call, they really like the photos and want to move the story to the holiday paper, but will need to know particulars about the battle. Our son being so young and a local boy, it's a heartwarming story and they're going to celebrate it by doing a feature story.

The editor wanted to know the meaning of the banner that Sam carried for the General and what the General's name was. I don't know how many photos they will use. The editor wants to print more than one, to show the larger picture, so I'm attaching for you the photos that they have chosen. Please can you let me know the names of the men in the photo and who they played, if there were civil war persons depicted?

Sam may be asked to give a presentation to his boy scout troop and to younger classroom students in our area and so he'll need anything else you might think important, such as how many soldiers died in that battle, etc.

I took somewhere between 200-300 photos over the three days and can mail you a cd if you'd like.

Thank you for letting Sam be part of the Twin Rivers reenactment. The last thing he said before he fell asleep in his own bed when we got home was

"Thanks for taking me, mom. It was as great as you said it was going to be, and even better."

Ginger Ryals

From: Tom Thompson
Subject: Col Crofutt

Terry, great event!! I will be sending some pictures later. The one I'm enclosing is one of Col. Crofutt and I can't remember the buglars name. They come and sat with us around our campfire for a while saturday night. Anyway I can't find his e-mail. Thanks again for a wonderful weekend.

Tom

From: Jeff Finn
Subject: Twin Rivers Event

Terry,

This is Jeff Finn who was with Captain Cal Kinzers 24th Missouri (Union) under command of Colonel Don Gross of the Frontier Brigade. I just wanted to say I thought the Twin Rivers Event was excellent. I appreciate all the hard work you and your staff did to make it all happen. I thought the battles were great, camping sites were excellent and the weather was pretty good. I also would like to tell you that my Great Great Great Grandpa Private Sylvester Pea was in the 41st Illinois Infantry (McClerlands Division) and fought at Fort Donelson on the far right flank. Of course they were the ones who were first hit by the Confederates early on the morning of February 15th 1862. So the Twin Rivers Event was also more sentimental for me. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Pvt. Jeff Finn

8th Kansas Vol. Inf
US Frontier Brigade

Hi Col. Crowder,

Just wanted to say how much we appreciated working with you at the Twin Rivers Campaign two weeks ago. I personally appreciate the kind words and actions extended to me in camp and on the battlefield.

We all know of much of the work that you put into that event to make it work but I am certain that no one will ever know all of it. We had plenty of all that we needed in camp and there was certainly no shortage of action and fighting!

Again, thank you for everything and the respect that you showed to us and all reenactors.

Mark Choate
7th TN. Cav. Co. D

Terry.

You stepped up, filled a very messy vacuum, redefined a new direction for the FFD and western theater reenacting, organized and led an exciting, well supplied and run event despite, ah... site setbacks.

You gave the officers the latitude and support to use their skills and such tools as were at hand to solve their own problems.

And not only that, simultaneously managed to get a schedule for the 150th defined and, to large measure, implemented.

I dunno how many guys realize what an accomplishment that last one really is.

I clearly remember Mark Dolive telling me, and repeating it over and over in different ways in his departing communiques, "Its all about schedule,

schedule, schedule."

I didn't quite understand that at the time...but it is sure as hell getting clearer and clearer to me as we go along.

My sincere compliments to you.

-M. Maurier

I had a great time. Even the rain, sprained ankle and knee and broken foot did not ruin it for me.

I agree that the tacticals were the highlight. It was nice to have cavalry used correctly. We acted as scouts, flankers and rear guard for the infantry. We sought out the enemy and worked to lure them in. We worked on the flanks to protect the artillery and infantry. We plugged the holes and pursued the enemy.

The rations were great. Yes, we did get our apples! We made some great stew over the fire. We just had to add meat.

It was nice to have an event where we did not just drill, sit in camp and wait for the one battle a day. I hope this new format continues.

My hat's off to the whole team that put this together. I appreciate all the hard work they put into making it a good event. I could not even complain about the provost, he was too nice a guy and the rules were reasonable.

Regards,
Barry Smithson

Ok, My spin. This was my first "National" event. I traveled there with 3 other members of our unit. We were all very impressed with the numbers and activities at the event. There were more than plentiful rations, and the setting was just great along with the tacticals that were done. I only had one regret, I

did not bring my mount Gracie, Her and Jack will make the rest of the national events.

It was also really great to hook up with the main unit of the 3rd Tn Cavalry. We re kindled some old friend ships and made some new ones too. We are looking to Wilson's Creek next summer. It was a great event.

Kevin Wright

I would like to give a hearty thanks to all the personnel who made this event a success, expecially the volunteers who were instrumental in making sure all of us "out of towners" were settled in and when we were ready to leave got us out with little trouble. We are already looking forward to the next time we can come to another event here.

The plentiful stockpiles of cabbage, taters, onions, carrots, apples and oranges made for some tasty camp stews that kept us warm during the rainy nights.

Much appreciated by all.

Perhaps a night battle during a future event would be a option to cosider for public attention/draw, specifically in defense of the Fort.

Would have been nice to have gotten a powder ration for the amount of rounds that were expended, but not a show stopper just means I shall plan ahead.....

All in all, it was a major success from my limited point of view. Thanks again/

Roby Evans

46th Mississippi Infantry

12th Louisiana Infantry

From our somewhat limited field of vision from behind the cavalry line between us and the town, the only infantry we saw were Confederates forming, unmolested, outside the treeline opposite the town. Granted, we did see some Federals enter the town on foot on the right, but they appeared to be dismounted cavalry, as they had yellow rank stripes on their NCO's. That ain't infantry.

What has puzzled the bejesus out of a number of us infantry pukers is that, with the Reb infantry obviously assembling a fully functional line of battle on the other side of the town, why did the cavalry continue to sit, motionless,

between us and them, until they poured through the town, instead of moving off to the flanks of the infantry line, as we have been led to believe is proper for such a situation, so that we could contend with them.

Not only did the delay in movement of the cavalry prevent us from occupying the town and denying it to the enemy, but when they finally did move, it was not until the Confederate line was nearly reformed on the near side of the town, preventing the Federal infantry from taking advantage of their disorganized state to safely put fire on them before they could return fire en-masse.

We won't even begin to discuss the utter silliness of the following order for the entire Federal infantry line to do a march by the right flank off the field with an organized Confederate line of battle pouring volley after volley into our exposed left flank from less than 30 yards away.

I may have been only a lowly private in the ranks, but I was not a stupid one.

Bernard Biederman