

CONFEDERATE CALVARY - 53rd Alabama – Pickett's Mill

Welcome to the Pickett's Mill 150th Anniversary Living History, hosted by the Armory Guards and held on the historic ground in Georgia's Paulding County May 30 – June 1, 2014.

Joe Blunt will command the Federal forces and Brian Hicks is in command of the Confederate forces. Tommy Helton will command the Confederate Cavalry. This is a campaign style semi-immersive battle recreation. We strive for historical accuracy. This is **NOT** a mainstream event. Participants will be moving throughout the park following the footsteps of the Federal and Confederate commands as closely as possible throughout the day, and into the evening on Saturday. There is an Atlanta Campaign style picket post for "early birds" beginning Friday morning. Sunday's scenario will consist of the post battle Confederate probes that occurred in the area. There will be some limited spectator attendance, but they will **NOT** be in the camps, roaming the battlefield, etc.

Mike Ventura is the Cavalry Event Coordinator on the event staff. He will be responsible for all on-site logistics as well as cavalry registrations and participation and will serve as the Acting Inspector General for all troopers prior to entering the event site. Direct any cavalry questions to Mike at mike.ventura@comcast.net

OUR GOAL is to portray and honor the men of the 53rd Alabama Cavalry by representing them as historically accurate as possible. NOTE that each cavalry trooper will be inspected prior taking the field for adherence to impression standards, *This is NOT an event where you grab your regular kit that you take to every other event and jump in your truck. At the end of this document you'll find some specific suggestions regarding what is desired in portraying a trooper in the 53rd Alabama.*

Some Background - Hannon's Brigade / 53rd Alabama Cavalry

In November 1862 this ad appeared in the Selma Morning Reporter, "I need a few good men over the age of 35 years to complete my company of Partisan Rangers for Col. Hannon's regiment..." so the fact that we are an older company will be right in line with the men Capt. Felder recruited

On May 24 (3 days before Pickett's Mill) Hannon's Brigade (consisting only of the 53rd Alabama and the 24th Alabama Cav. Batn.) captured 70 wagons, 182 prisoners, 300 horses and saddles, and mules, and large amounts of stores. *In other words they had plenty of access to Federal gear.*

Hannon's Brigade lost nearly 1/3 of the men engaged at PM. *They fought the whole battle dismounted and in fact the day before the battle had been ordered to rest their mounts.*

A member of the regiment mentioned that while Hannon was fighting at Pickett's Mill, Wheeler had gotten into the Federal supply lines and brought out eighty wagons. He wrote, "Never was a lot of commissary stores more gratefully received. We had been several days on short rations of hard tack and bacon, besides almost exhausted from incessant fighting. The sight of such a goodly pile of cheese, crackers, pickles, and all things nice, made the boys wild with delight." *In other words we can a bunch of cheese eaters on Saturday night.*

The majority of the men seem to have been armed with Springfields (captured from Streight's raiders), Enfields and Mississippi and/or Austrians. In Sept. 1863 they received 3000 rounds of Enfield cartridges and 900 rounds of .54 caliber. A few Sharps carbines were issued to Companies F and K early in the war. If they were still around in the spring of 1864 is unknown. ***We want to see plenty of 3-banded long arms. Springfields and Enfields. No more than 1 in 3 troopers will be allowed to carry a pistol.***

A side note to the incessant fighting previously mentioned, these men were engaged in some form of fighting 19 of the 23 days leading up to PM. We can only imagine how worn out they were. Worn and dirty is what we are looking for.

Impressions Standards

A. Jackets

1. Columbus Depot: gray woolen jean with blue collar and cuffs, with or without outside pockets. Six piece body, one-piece sleeve; six-button front is the most common. One of the eight known was worn by John F. Jenkins of the Breckinridge Guards, a company attached to Nathan Bedford Forrest.
2. Atlanta Depot: Made from various wool or jeans. Six piece body, one-piece sleeve and a collar that meets in the middle when jacket is buttoned. Five or six-button front, no outside pocket or trim. One of the four known was worn by Joseph Israel Daniel of the 5th Georgia Cavalry during the Atlanta Campaign.
3. Department of Alabama: gray woolen jeans with blue jean collar. Six piece body two-piece sleeve. All have outside pocket with 5-button front. One of the five known was worn by Silas Calmes Buck, Co. D., 12th Mississippi Cavalry.
4. Civilian Jackets or coats. **Civilian jackets are much preferred.**

B. Trousers

1. Army Issue gray woolen jeans with side seam or mule ear pockets. These must be of correct pattern.
2. Civilian trousers jeans, wool, satinet, cotton, etc. Most common colors are black, brown, blue or gray. **Civilian trousers much preferred.**

C. Shirts

1. Civilian shirts seem to be the most common. Cotton in checks, stripes, plaids or solids. Printed calicoes were popular but be careful to choose period patterns. Pockets were common in work shirts. Split or placket front. Be sure to choose from one of the many period styles. This is one area where the soldier could use some self-expression. **Civilian shirts much preferred**
2. Army Issue plain off-white cotton with three-button placket front, underarm gussets, fold down collar, fold back cuffs, no pockets.

D. Vests

1. Vests were all civilian made with either a lay down civilian style collar or a military stand up collar. Double or single breasted in wool, jeans, sattinet, etc. Colors tend to be black, brown, blue or gray - the same as trousers. In fact, in civilian wear it was common to match the vest and trousers even if the coat was of a different color.

E. Drawers

1. Issue drawers are the most documented. Cotton onasburg or heavy muslin sheeting of period pattern.
2. Civilian drawers of same materials as above or homespun cotton. Wool or woolen mixture is also common.

F. Braces/Suspenders

1. No suspenders were issued, thus patterns would be various civilian styles; made of woven cotton tape, leather, ticking, woven patterned material, crochet, etc. with period buckles of brass or tin plated brass (no nickel plated buckles).

G. Socks

1. Civilian socks knitted of wool or cotton in any of many period patterns and colors (mostly muted natural tones).
2. Issue socks unbleached cotton or wool.

H. Foot Wear

1. Issue brogans documented to Army of Tennessee
2. Civilian brogans smooth or rough side out.
3. Federal Jefferson Bootees (recent capture).
4. Boots correct period pattern-square toes, one-piece fronts.

I. Head Wear

1. Civilian hats are the most common, in any of several period styles, i.e. flat or round crown, low or high crown, beehive, etc. Black, brown, or gray. Most have edge trim and grosgrain hatband. Pay proper attention to lining and sweatband. **No hillbilly slouch hats without brim edging and hatband ribbon.**

J. **Neck Wear**

1. Period-style silk cravat or necktie, printed or solid, tied in period fashion.
2. Many period photographs show men without neck wear of any sort, but the top button is always buttoned.
3. No modern kerchiefs.

Accoutrements

A. **Cartridge Box**

1. William Brands and Company Tarred Canvas, Columbus, GA
2. Atlanta Arsenal
3. G. N. Wyman Augusta, GA
4. Federal Issue

B. **Cap Pouch**

1. Williams Brands and Company Columbus, GA
2. Atlanta Arsenal
3. G. N. Wyman Augusta, GA
4. Federal Issue

C. **Waist Belt**

1. Leather or painted canvas (with leather ends) with C. S. A. rectangle, clipped corner, roller buckle, Georgia Frame or wish bone frame.
2. Federal Issue

D. **Haversack**

1. Confederate Issue.
2. Federal Issue.
3. Period Civilian Style.

E. **Canteen**

1. Gardner Pattern is the most common.
2. Knuckles Pattern.
3. Any documented Army of Tennessee.
4. Federal Issue.

F. **Blankets**

1. Documented Army of Tennessee
2. Civilian Blankets
3. N. C. Issue Limited use.
4. Federal Issue.

G. **Tentage**

1. Shelter half Confederate or Federal Issue.
2. Many soldiers were completely without tents. Shebangs made of ground cloths, gum blankets, scraps of canvas and brush arbors are fine. A-frame or wall tents are not allowed.

Horse Tack

A. **Saddles**

1. Confederate Issue McClellan Columbus or Augusta Arsenals.
2. Hope pattern saddles.
3. Jennifer saddle documented to Army of Tennessee.
4. Federal issue McClellan, see below re: recent Federal capture

B. **Blankets**

1. Period civilian styles.
2. Confederate issue.
3. Federal Infantry or Cavalry.

- C. **Halters**
 - 1. Confederate issue Single Ring-Augusta Arsenal.
 - 2. Atlanta Arsenal (halters and bridles).
 - 3. Columbus Depot.
 - 4. Federal Issue.
 - 5. Period Civilian styles.
- D. **Bridles**
 - 1. Augusta Arsenal.
 - 2. Atlanta Arsenal halters and bridles.
 - 3. M 1841 Dragoon double rein bridle and bit.
 - 4. Columbus Depot.
 - 5. Federal Issue
 - 6. Period civilian styles.
- E. **Bits**
 - 1. Civilian twist bit.
 - 2. Confederate issue bit.
 - 3. M 1841 Dragoon bit.
 - 4. Federal Issue
- F. **Breast Collar (Optional)**
 - 1. Civilian period styles.
- G. **Surcingle (Optional)**
 - 1. Confederate or Federal issue.
- H. **Knapsacks (Optional)**
 - 1. M 1853 English pattern.
 - 2. M 1823 (Mexican War) pattern.
 - 3. French Pattern.
 - 4. M 1851 Federal Double Bag limited use.
- I. **Saddle Bags (Optional)**
 - 1. Confederate Issue documented Army of Tennessee.
 - 2. Federal Issue
 - 3. Period civilian styles.
- J. **Valise (Optional)**
 - 1. M 1841 Dragoon valise.
 - 2. Civilian style.

*****Note: all stitching on horse tack should be done by hand, with the correct pattern saddletree. M 1904 McClellan trees or saddles are not allowed. Halter, breast collars, bridles, should all be either harness or bridle weight leather. All tack should have correct period buckles and hardware. Absolutely no brass heart breast straps.**

Weapons

A. Small Arms

1. M 1853 Enfield, three band rifle-musket
2. M1861 Springfield Rifle (US issue)
3. Austrian Rifle.
4. Mississippi rifle.
5. Carbines – limited usage

B. Revolvers

1. M 1860 Colt Army.
2. M 1851 Colt Navy.
3. Any documented Army of Tennessee Confederate made Colts.
4. Kerr English revolvers.

Leave it home. Only 1/3 of all troopers will be allowed a pistol.

C. Sabers - None except for officers

Horses and Mules

- A. Saddlebred
- B. Plantation Walkers / Tennessee Walkers / Missouri Foxtrotters
- C. Thoroughbred.
- D. Arabian.
- E. Quarter Horse.
- F. No Western Breeds: Paints, Appaloosas, Palominos, Buckskins, etc.

ALL horses will be inspected for current Coggins test and horses from outside of Georgia must have current health certificate. All horses will have a front hoof marked at inspection.

It is CRITICAL that your horse is fully shod and in great shape. The ground is hilly with deep ravines. The surface ranges from hard clay, rocky creek beds and heavily wooded hills. The ground is rocky.

VET/FARRIER: There will be an on-call vet and farrier. Should you require them, you will pay for your services at the time.

Watering – due to the event and camp scenarios, all horses are expected to water from the nearby creeks, which are free flowing.

Hay – Due to site restrictions, you will not be able to drive into or even near the cavalry campsite. It is a long walk to try to carry hay to the camp. We are planning to pre-stage hay at the site. Since cavalry participants did NOT pay an entry fee, you will be able to pre-order hay (fescue, square bales) prior to the event. You will receive a notice about this in a few weeks.

If you can't come: There is a cap number on the number of cavalry troopers allowed to participate. We have more who want to attend than can attend. If your plans change and you can't come, please contact Mike Ventura at mike.ventura@comcast.net so that someone else can take your place.

Tweaking Your Impression for Pickett's Mill 150th

Ideal elements for a trooper in 53rd Alabama:

1. Civilian clothes. While historically accurate uniforms of the period are welcome, we'd like to see a lot of civilian clothing. This unit started as Partisan Rangers and they are fairly close to home. We also know of the logistics difficulty that the CS supply system had in supplying western cavalry. Wheeler's Corps went over a year-and-a-half without receiving uniforms because by the time the supply system got them to where they thought they were, they had gone elsewhere.

2. Federal uniform parts and gear. As stated above, on May 24 (3 days before Pickett's Mill) Hannon's Brigade (consisting only of the 53rd Alabama and the 24th Alabama Cav. Battn.) captured 70 wagons, 182 prisoners, 300 horses and saddles, and mules, and large amounts of stores. They no-doubt helped themselves to large amounts of Federal uniforms and gear.

3. Long guns. The predominant weapons were 3-banded Springfields and Enfields. **Leave the shotguns and cavalry carbines home.**

4. Accouterments. Long guns mean infantry style accouterments. Should include captured Federal Cartridge boxes and cap pouches or of Atlanta, Columbus or Augusta Arsenal origin.

4. Pistols. We are limiting the number of pistols to one-third of the troopers. Just plan on not bringing a pistol. If we must, we'll arbitrarily allow one in three troopers to carry a pistol. **Absolutely no extra cylinders, cylinder pouches or pommel holsters!**

5. Sabers. None. Officers only.

6. Horse Tack. A mixture to include Federal McClellan's, Federal cavalry blankets and Federal tack because of the recent capture (above).

7. Food. A member of the regiment mentioned that while Hannon was fighting at Pickett's Mill, Wheeler had gotten into the Federal supply lines and brought out eighty wagons. He wrote, "Never was a lot of commissary stores more gratefully received. We had been several days on short rations of hard tack and bacon, besides almost exhausted from incessant fighting. The sight of such a goodly pile of cheese, crackers, pickles, and all things nice, made the boys wild with delight." You can include the above and "all things nice" that would have been liberated from the Federal supply train.

NOTE:

No anachronisms-this includes modern eyeglasses, modern jewelry, wristwatches, etc. Smoking and tobacco use should be in period fashion only, such as plug tobacco and pipes (cigars are o.k. for officers). Cigarettes are not allowed. Correct period boots (one piece fronts) are desirable.

We will inspect each trooper prior to entrance into the event for adherence to these standards NO modern anachronisms including modern eyeglasses will be allowed. We mean this, so it is imperative that you "self inspect" yourself before you request admittance to the event grounds. You may be kindly asked to leave some things in your truck. If so, please accept this in the spirit of making this event as accurate as we can for all the participants.

NO CAMERAS, smart phone cameras or any 21st century intrusion will be permitted. No picture taking will be permitted while participating.