



The Union Defender



The Newsletter of Phelps Camp No. 66,
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

October 2017

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE SEPTEMBER MEETING?

Members discussed several upcoming events, including November 11, the annual holiday dinner, and a potential fund-raising activity.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday, December 5 at 6 p.m. This will also be our annual holiday dinner meeting. This year we will meet in the meeting room at Big Whiskey's at 1550 East Battlefield Road. More details TBA.

PEA RIDGE STAFF RIDE

Camp member Todd Wilkinson conducted an excellent staff ride of Pea Ridge National Military Park for members of Phelps Camp and some Arkansas SUV brothers on September 17.

Camp members watched the film and had a look at the museum exhibits at the Visitor Center before trekking to the Little Sugar Creek fortifications, Leetown and Elkhorn Tavern.

Todd shared interesting information about the battle and discussed the good and bad decisions of the various Federal and Confederate commanders. He also led discussions about the principles of war, and posed several "what would you have done" scenarios. We finished just as a huge storm blew across the battlefield!

We also discussed possibly doing a staff ride of Wilson's Creek and Prairie Grove in 2018.

Are you interested?



WILSON'S CREEK TIMELINE OF THE AMERICAN SOLDIER ON NO- VEMBER 11

Members of Phelps Camp will present the "Timeline of the American Soldier" program on the front lawn of the Wilson's Creek Visitor Center from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. on Saturday, November 11, in observance of Veterans Day.

Here is the lineup for the event:

Revolutionary War—Mike Patrick and Carlos Valdez
War of 1812—Jeff Patrick
Mexican War—Larry Toll
Civil War—Gary Riley and Dave Coffman
Spanish-American War—Steve Weldon
World War I—Kip Lindberg
World War II—Todd Wilkinson
Korean War—Michael Price
Vietnam War—Herb Jackson
Gulf War/Global War on Terror—Kirk Singleton

Please spread the word and come out to learn more about the daily life of the average soldier during each of America's wars. You will be amazed by the impressive research done by our camp members into their respective time periods and their collections of original and reproduction items.

HISTORICAL NOTES

The 19th Iowa Infantry was stationed in Brownsville, Texas, in 1864.

"While we lay at Brownsville we would at times, officers and men, visit the city of Matamoros, Mexico. It was quite a novelty to see the difference between the two nationalities. . . . We visited gambling dens, and it was a sight to behold the piles of gold and silver on their tables. Some would lose and some would win. They had no paper money. The boys did quite a large business buying in Matamoros and selling in camp. Their greatest trade was in tobacco, pipes and matches; they would strip off and wade the river, carrying their merchandise on their heads.

We had no rain while there; had to use the water from the Rio Grande River, and it contained about as much sand as water. The quickest way to settle or separate the water from the sand was to take a barrel full of the stuff, then take a large cactus leaf, slit it with a knife and put the leaf into the barrel, and in a few hours we would have nice, clear and cool water as man ever drank.

The country was overstocked with fleas, lizards, snakes, cactus and sensitive plants. We had sand flies by the bag full, and when we laid down in our bunks the lizards would crawl over us all night. But we had the grandest atmosphere, all out of doors."



Todd Wilkinson briefs camp members outside the Pea Ridge Visitor Center.

Camp members at the site of the Little Sugar Creek fortifications built by the army of General Samuel Curtis before the Battle of Pea Ridge.

