

# The Eagle Eye

Volume III, Issue VI

SNAP-SHOT EDITION!

NOVEMBER 1863 {2006}

## THE HARD WON VICTORY AT FRESNO

Correspondence from the Battlefield of Kearny Park

by Pvt. Tim Pedersen



Dearest friends, let me take this chance to relate to you the events that happened at Kearney Park near the town of Fresno. Those of us in the field had a feeling that there would be a big battle here before our forces, and those of Johnny Reb, headed off to Winter Quarters.

As usual, Fresno had an opportunity for those of us in uniform to meet with the locals to educate them about the life and times of the era and the weapons and

uniforms of the War to Stop the Southern Rebellion. I had the honor of assisting Lt. Rogers and Pvt. Lemke in discussing the uniforms of the Union army and took great joy in answering questions pertaining to the unique green uniforms of the Berdan's Sharpshooters. The youngsters left quite enlightened that the uniforms were not all blue in the Federal army. The session was interrupted by a sham battle between a few Union soldiers and some Rebs for the benefit of our guests, with the outcome going against poor Johnnie who put up a loud cackle in a charge and went down in a blaze of glory to some "well placed" Union gunfire. This made for a good day for us and we were able to take it easy for the rest of the day while the



Always game for a fight, the Sharpshooters form up for battle.

rest of the Union army arrived in camp.

It was good to see old friends such as Sgt Onslager and his fellows who had been deployed to Fresno. I noticed that the 114<sup>th</sup> Penn. Zouaves were our neighbors, but were sedate in camp even with their garish garb. However it was a troubling sign to see the 71<sup>st</sup> NY put their tents up next to us, as I shall later relate why.

We were a bit amused to see their

lack of mastery in the art of starting a fire for their meal. It appeared that they gave up and visited a fellow named Sanders, who once held the rank of colonel. This fellow must of felt pity as he sent them quite the chicken dinner. We didn't need such assistance as we quite successfully cooked our chicken with the help of some lager, which was used to cook the chicken and not consumed by the cook. The day ended with no threat of the camp catching on fire from our neighbors so it was safe to turn in.

The morning had us filling up on a splendid breakfast with Pvt. Collins doing the honors making the pancakes, but we new it would be a long day ahead. With so many people to field this day, Lt. Rogers and 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Hanson



## VICTORY AT FRESNO {CONTINUES}

drilled us in the art of the skirmish. This was easy compared to what would follow, as we had to next participate in battalion drill. Somebody felt it necessary to drill us in the same thing, over and over. It seemed an eternity and there was a lot of grumbling in the ranks. Finally drill was completed and we went back to camp, relieved and exhausted. However, the rest did not last for long and the call went out for us to fall in and prepare to go off to battle. It seemed not fair after a grueling session of drill, but the Rebs don't give a darn about such things.

We were sent in to relieve a line of cavalry fellows who were in a skirmish line on the Union left. Things got hot in a hurry and Johnny wasn't interested in leaving any time soon. There was this one Reb who did try to skedaddle to the rear but his officer did not take it too kindly and shot him for cowardliness. I was taken aback at seeing such a sight, but thought it was the right thing, even though it was one less Johnnie to shoot at.

Our line did a fine job pushing the enemy back but somewhere along the way I received a wound to my arm and had to go to the rear. The battle was stopped by a flag of truce and I was able to make it to what was described as a hospital, though it was more like a preview of hell itself. They had to lay me on the ground with other soldiers and I saw many a poor soul die due to too little attention. One man died while he was receiving last rites. The surgeons seemed overwhelmed and confused as one said I needed an amputation and another said I just need laudanum and I'd be fine. Thankfully, it was the latter that was correct and I was bandaged up and sent back to camp to recuperate.

Being back in camp was good for my spirits until there was a loud noise from our neighbors. It so happens that the regiment next to us has a group of Irishmen and Scotsmen who do not seem too fond of each other and got into a bit of a tussle. Names and fists were flying until they were broken up and set straight. I sure hope these boys fight the Rebs as well as they do amongst themselves.



**Lars, daring the Rebs to have another go.**

With the truce over, the ball started up again in earnest and our company took the field with disastrous results that would soon follow. Somehow the skirmishers we were pushing up against had some help from a large number of Reb infantry. The musketry got too hot and many of our company fell before help arrived to relieve us and eventually drive the graybacks off the field.

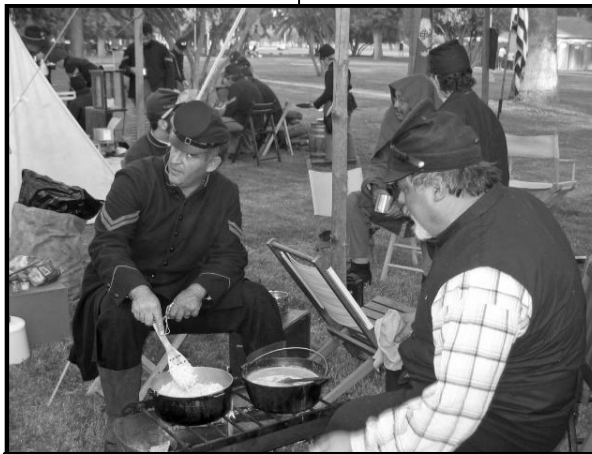
Saturday evening was pretty nice with a nice chili dinner and then some entertainment over at the mansion house. That was followed up by fairly a decent fireworks exhibition.

After our fill of coffee and pancakes Sunday morning, the company went out to visit a traveling photographer and had an image made. The boys were quite the sight for the photographer with our green uniforms and Sharps rifles. Pity the uniform color can't be seen on the photograph to do them justice.

Once that business was done, the time came to do what we were trained for and went back out to look for Johnny Reb. The plan this time for the Berdans was to split into two platoons, one on each flank. If trouble would come, one platoon would come to the aid of the other. Well so much for plans. I was on the left flank in my platoon, led by Sgt. Onslager, engaging some skirmishers and we heard there was trouble on the right but the firing was too hot to leave it.

By the time anybody could make it to the Union right, it was too little, too late. I was the only one to make it over as my platoon was wiped out and I arrived in time to see the rest of the company in no better shape. The only thing left to do was to fall in with the rest of the infantry and hope for the best. It was apparent that this was a losing battle and I decided it best to retire before being captured as I did not wish to confirm the rumor that these Rebs hang sharpshooters.

We were able to regroup for one more push on the enemy that afternoon and fared much better. After some



**How you really earned rank in this outfit!**



## NOT YOUR TYPICAL CIVIL WAR SHARPS!



**The Sharp's Pistol**



**The Sharp's -Pistol Rifle**

*As found online at Slage Antiques, here are a couple of curious Civil War Sharps variants as described by C. W. Slage. Note the pistol's exposed spring. At least you would know right away when the thing breaks!*

Utilizing the familiar hammer and dropping block the action of these pistols look like the later Civil War carbines and rifles. Some 500 small frames, caliber .31 were made in Philadelphia between 1855 and 1856.

A larger frame pistol, in caliber .36, was then made between 1857 and 1858. Approximately 350 of these were manufactured.

This interesting weapon was an attempt to use the pistol actions that were on hand at the Philadelphia factory.

First produced in 1857 about 500 were manufactured until 1860. This was a time when different self-contained cartridges were being experimented with and this unusual rifle can be found in paper (usually .36 caliber), wire ejector (calibers .34 - .44), and mule-ear cartridges (also .34 - .44).

C. W. Slage may be contacted at  
[www.cwslagleantiques.com](http://www.cwslagleantiques.com)

### FRESNO {CONCLUDES}

brisk work on the Union right, we rolled up their skirmishers and out ahead of us laid a tantalizing prize of a row of Reb artillery. The call was given to go after them and we poured lead at them with our trusty Sharps rifles. We then charged at them with a raucous Union yell and the Rebs had no choice but to throw their hands up and surrender. With the prized pieces in hand, we had hoped to be able to use them against the infantry of their former owners but the Union infantry was too close for such a game of turnabout. All we could do was watch until there was spotted a grayback doing what a grayback does best, run to the rear, with one of our cavalry adding

a bit of fire to his tail. It was at this moment that Pvt. Monroe decided to end the embarrassment for the poor boy by leveling his rifle at the Reb and thus delivering a violent end to the gray coated rabbit. That was soon followed by the retirement of the rest of the Confederates, and so finally the battle was over and the day was carried by the Union.

Fresno was a great event to meet up with people we hadn't seen for a while and to meet folks from other clubs. The crowd was great and a good time was had by all. It's off to winter quarters for this one, so you all take care.



# The Eagle Eye

THE NEWSLETTER OF WEST  
COAST BERDAN  
SHARPSHOOTERS



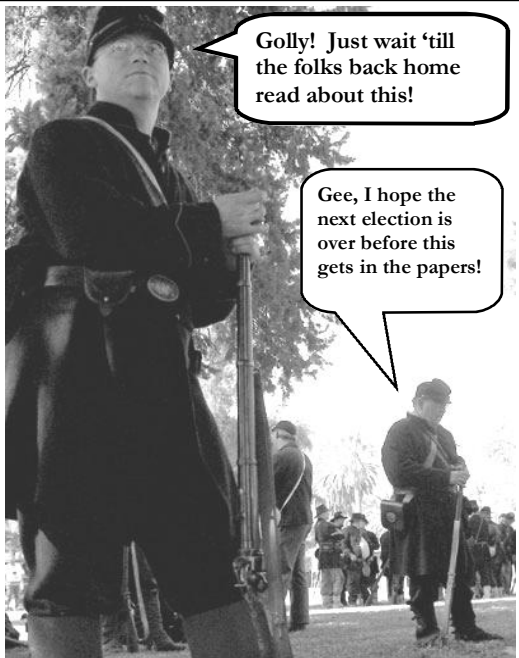
Proudly serving the Berdan  
Sharpshooters of the the NCWA,  
ACWA, RACW, and NCWC

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**All Articles & Photos in this news-  
letter are submitted by our mem-  
bers and their families. Please  
consider contributing to our next  
issue!**

## NOTICE TO ALL MEN OF AMBITION!

Do you seek rank? Now is the time to step forward! Statements of Intent to stand for election must be submitted to the editor:

**No Later Than December 15th**

All positions are open. Statements, and ballots for the vote, will be included with the Winter Quarters issue of the Eagle Eye.



**LOOK!  
LOOK!  
LOOK!  
LOOK!  
LOOK!**



Sharpshooter Lemke completely confused by an officer actually doing something useful.

## FIRST LOOK AT THE 2007 CAMPAIGN SEASON

January 2007			
January 6	Grand Ball	Sacramento Memorial Auditorium	NCWA
January 13	Annual General Meeting	Benicia	NCWA
February 2007			
February 9 -11	Winter Quarters	Benicia	NCWA
March 2007			
March 3 & 4	Moony Grove	Visalia	CWRS
April 2007			
April 27 - 29	Mariposa	Mariposa	NCWA
May 2007			
May 18 - 20	Gibson Ranch	<a href="#">Sacramento</a>	NCWA
June 2007			
June 16	Summer Social	<a href="#">Tres Pinos</a>	NCWA
July 2007			
July 14 & 15	Casini Campgrounds	<a href="#">Duncans Mills</a>	CHAS
August 2007			
August 18 & 19	Ardenwood	<a href="#">Fremont</a>	NCWA
September 2007			
September 14 - 16	San Benito Historical Park	<a href="#">Tres Pinos</a>	NCWA
October 2007			
19 - 20 or 26 - 28	Kearney Park	<a href="#">Fresno</a>	NCWA
November 2007			
TBD	Tactical	<a href="#">Duncans Mills</a>	NCWA