



THE CALIFORNIA REGIMENT

Calico Ghost Town After Action Report 2005

Attendance Summary:

- *Saturday: 14 rifles (2 NCO), 1 officer
- *Sunday: 13 rifles (2 NCO), 1 officer
- *Monday: 5 rifles (1 NCO), 1 officer (projected)

A warm welcome, and congratulations on seeing the Elephant, to our 6 new soldiers this year as well: John Francen (TDY from UT to NV), Bob Amerine (from CA), Steven Weatherman, Kyle Mahathey, Ryan Johnson and Mykel Rameriez (from NV). We were also graced with the presence of 3 new Ladies as well.



Battle Summary:

*Saturday Morning's battle was for me the most interesting. Apparently on the march north into the 'Silver Bowl' our Battalion Commander got wacked by stray musket fire. This forced our gallant Lieutenant to run the Battalion and our Company on the field of battle. Three cheers for our Officer's ability to take charge of the other Companies Officer's and make things work. We marched into the 'Silver Bowl' by way of the south road onto the mesa. As we crested the lip, to our great surprise, the Confederates were entrenched in the Adobe!



We were directed to support the 6th and 7th Wisconsin along the east side of the bowl along the railroad tracks. As we advanced up the rocky slope parallel to the railroad, we discovered the joy of brogans on sloping, muddy ground. The hand cannons of the Wisconsin boys provided our advance with covering fire – and we took up a line of battle to help cover the advance of our Battalion. Our Battalion pressed the Rebs back into the Adobe, and our Company skirted along the high ground to provide enfilading fire onto them.

Eventually the order was given, and 1st Platoon slid down the slope into the Adobe, to cover the advance of the 2nd Platoon. This gave me ample opportunity to try out my new Christmas present and make sure that there were no 'shirkers' not firing in our unit after a long winter quarters. 1st Platoon was ordered to take the Cornfed artillery on the north side of the 'Silver Bowl' so we charged out of the adobe, and ran back in as the Rebel

gun crews prepared to fire. When the suckers had emptied their guns – we charged out of cover and discovered how high the Adobe’s walls really were when they are wet. We worked our way around the flank(s) a couple of times and finally found a safe direction to capture the guns. This was pretty much the conclusion of the battle for us as the Rebel lines broke and ran north past the brothel.

*Saturday Afternoon’s Battle was preceded by the usual pomp and circumstance surrounding the President and the General Grant. Although President Lincoln did not appear quite himself... perhaps he was simply under the weather as well? Our good Lieutenant appears to have a theory on this as well, but he was unavailable for comment.



This turned out to be an outstanding battle, as the rain had stopped, and at no point in time did the attack on ‘School Hill’ leave the control of our Brigade Headquarters. So we marched down west from the town, out across and up to Artillery Point, down the back of the hill, curved along the base of the hill with the road, and started back up to the north side of the School House before we halted. Did I mention up, down, up, down, up, down? After the command to ‘hurry up and wait’ was issued, along came ‘Plan B’.

It was an even better plan as we had just spent much time preparing for it! With an about face, we marched back down the hill, moved off the road and into the rough ground to the west of the School House. You guessed it! We then marched up the hill and popped out

in front of the School House (south side), much to the Rebs surprise. The major downside turned out to be that the Confederate forces were able to hop around us like jack rabbits!

This of course caused us to march round and round the hill between the School House and Artillery Point all during, and after the battle. From our position(s) we could see the 7th Wisconsin get cut down on the relative dryness of the bridge east into the Rebel encampment. But the 10th and 69th NY, 95th Ill., and 116th PVI kept them at bay along with a few well placed shots from our unit which was mostly kept in reserve.



*Sunday's Tactical was ordinary for such things. We moved up to our "usual" building on the fire break just south of the beer garden and across from the flag poles. The 69th made an ill fated attempt to force its way up the unprotected left/west side of the street against the Confederate skirmishers. The 7th charged into the 'Silver Bowl' guns ablaze for a direct attack on the occupied Adobe. The pushed the Cornfed's out of the bowl and up towards the Bottle House. The 71st spent a while pinned down behind our usual building providing supporting fire for the 69th and 7th's efforts. Our unit showed an excellent grasp of skirmish tactics via continuous musket fire, and kept the street too hot for the Rebs to advance down – while remaining loaded incase they did.

When the 69th evaporated, and the 7th pushed forward, we were able to move across the street to the flag poles. Unfortunately, once we occupied that position we discovered that the only gap in the north part of the fence was blocked by a tent. A few members of the unit then in turn fired, dropped, and rolled under the fence – only getting up long enough to charge across the fire break into the next porch. Alas, the glass popcorn machine and wooden bills (signs) did not provide nearly as much cover for our men as they did for the Rebs.

Upon the demise of our unit as well, we regrouped at the corrals. Since modern tactics proved ineffective, we decided to do with the 'time honored' power of Napoleonic Tactics. We formed a Union Battalion and marched down the street about 30 yards from the Reb position. As they saw us coming they formed a disordered mass and prepared to defend themselves. We halted on and fired a volley on command and they returned fire in kind. As we reloaded, they 'turned tail' and evaporated. We then noted that the battle was continuing in the 'Silver Bowl'. The Battalion marched off to the right and headed into the breach.

As we entered into the North side of the Bowl, we deployed into a line of battle and advanced towards the Beer Garden firing by rank. We noticed several Cornfeds reappear from the rear and support their troops on the porch. Chunks of wooden lattice lay strewn about the north part of the Bowl when the smoke cleared, and not a happy Reb was to be seen. It appears that the Wooden Lattice of the Beer Garden was unable to protect them from the massed musket fire of the Union as it had in past years.

*Sunday Morning's Battle was, to be blunt, a massacre! After the 95th Illinois captured the Confederate held 'Silver Bowl', they proceeded to encamp themselves. As our Battalion marched up, we spied their arms stacked and many a game of chance going on. While our gallant Lieutenant marched up to their Officers to find out what was going on, we all found out. From the road we just marched in on came a rowdy horde of Rebels, which forced the 20th Maine to come about and deal with. As the order to come about was given, we started to receive fire from the left and right as well. Many a girlish scream could be heard from behind us as the 95th Illinois was cut down over their card games and rifle stacks as they tried to react.



Our Brigade Headquarters formed a 'square' and pulled all units into its solid defense. The Wisconsin boys tried to maneuver down the hillside against the Zouves, but were not able to make it back to the protection of our square. Unit by unit we were cut down, and forced to join the 95th on their march of death. As the last of our Company was cut down and lay wounded we saw almost nothing left of our square except some Officer's and Brigade Headquarters. Apparently the Rebels intended to take no quarter and Major Copeland along with his staff was dispatched to join our march. It was simply, a sudden, muddy, death.

*Sunday Afternoon's Battle could have been missed if anyone had blinked. The Infantry hurried up and waited on the road through Calico. As soon as the Artillery was done shelling 'School Hill' we double timed it down the hill out west past Calico, then up the side of 'School Hill' through Artillery Point. The 95th charged so fast they passed right through the Confederate Battery on Artillery Point and towards the bridge. Our unit helped take the Battery, and then moved down the opposite side of the hill towards the School House.

Before we could fire our first volley, however, the Rebels decided concession was the better part of valor. I am sure this was caused in part because they had never witnessed a blue charge across ground they had no light of sight over. Feeling tired from the charge, and remembering Sgt. York's orders from the day before, we pretty much held our ground till things finalized. After that we had the long march back to camp – and for the Lost Vegas Detachment... we unfortunately had to return to camp to pack before dinner with the 8th Alabama.



*Monday's Tactical and 2 Battles I have no info on.

Personal Note:

I wanted to thank everyone for giving me the opportunity to fill half of Dave's shoes. It was an honor and privilege to be Acting Sgt for the (majority) of Calico this year. I gained a unique perception and appreciation for what Dave does, as many things are not listed in the regulations. Like everyone else I hope that his education TDY goes well, and he comes back home safely and S-M-R-T'er to his family and friends because it's just not the same without him!

I was pleased to help double our fighting strength this weekend, with the growth of our Venture Crew and some of our new contacts here in Lost Vegas. I was very proud of the kids, as they have used their time to learn Drill and weapon safety while participating in our local Living History programs.

Of course I appreciate everyone's efforts overall. But special note to everyone for giving our new Lance Corporal the respect he deserves so that he can accomplish his tasks on his first major event. And this was even without our 1st Sgt around to ensure that happened!

It filled me with a great sense of pride to see so many new faces (6 total) amongst the soldiers and even a couple of new Ladies on our units 1st anniversary event. Nothing can attest to the success of ones ventures like substantial growth. We do not brag, even though we have every reason to since we are the largest, safest, non-political, and fun Union unit in the best ACW organization in Southern California – the ACWS.

And remember everyone... in November... don't forget to vote for Lieutenant Iverson for President over that drunken General Grant guy! Gary dresses neater too!

In your service,

Cpl. Coffey, Acting Sr. NCO
71st REGt. PVI, COY. "B"
Lost Vegas Detachment