

Prado Station (DAM)
After Action Report
30 March – 1 April 2007

1st Sgt sends:



Fri 30 Mar –

It was real windy on Friday and it was almost more than Terry and I could handle as the wind would catch the canvas and try and turn us into kites. The 1st US Sharp Shooters were setting up behind us and several of their folks came over and gave us a much needed hand. By the time Faye showed up we were well on our way to having our company street formed and starting to look like an Army unit. We pretty much had everyone in by the time the sun went down.

It was real dry this year – take a step and the dust kinda poofed. Unlike last year when it was very green and rained on us, this year it was very brown and real dry – what a contrast.

We got everything set up and Faye cooked burgers, dogs and chili – it was another great meal and plenty of it as unfortunately some folks who had planned on being there couldn't make it.

Picket was set and we settled into our weekend mentality of being Civil War Warriors ready – which I'm pretty sure is very different from person to person.

Sat 31 Mar –

Saturday dawned clear and a tad cool, but it didn't stay that way long. 0600 came around and the sweet voice of the 1st Sgt and 1st Cpl could be heard politely asking the troops and our civilians to please rise and shine. The sounds of the bugle and drum could also be heard – shades of a military camp – there we were.

At 0700 we formed the company, posted the Colors, did some preliminary manual of arms, inspected weapons and passed out instructions for the day. A grand breakfast of ham and eggs was had. Amazing how the cook always comes up with the right chow at the right meal.



Fish drill was conducted by the 1st Cpl and then it was time for Company Drill. We practiced some close order drill, wheels, counting off and forming fours, the firings and stack arms. Everything we did during company drill we did on the field of battle.



At around 1000 we formed the Brigade or Battalion was never sure exactly what we were – but it worked anyway. For drill we learned forming a column of companies in a couple of ways, closing the column of companies and deploying the column into line of battle. And we actually used the movements on the field – that was a good thing. I dislike drilling and then not ever using it on the field. We have little enough time to learn things we use on the field without spending time on stuff we’ll never use. Maj Busic did a good job I think.

At around 1130 we formed for the first battle. It was getting “pretty warm” about this time which didn’t bode well for the fight. Drink water was the most frequent command heard that day. This fight was scheduled to be a Union loss. However as the fight started developing it really appeared the Union was going to sweep the field. But slowly relentlessly we started getting pushed and we were right in front of a battery of cannons, however it was the Infantry that finally converged on and decimated the 71st PVI. So ended the first battle.

We returned to camp for lunch and to refit in preparation for the 2nd fight, which came sooner than some of us were really ready for. We formed up and moved out on the field of battle, we moved east and moved east and moved east, when we stopped and looked back our jaws dropped. We would have to move almost a mile to the other hilltop way to the West. We thought we might miss the whole thing, but the 1st Brigade was held in reserve for a short time, and then sent down the far right. We moved down the flank to the rail fence and us and the Confeds started slugging it out. The combined volleys of the 1st and 2nd Brigades started taking their toll and we moved forward thru the fence line and pushed the Rebs down the field. Wasn’t to long and the Rebs cut and run leaving the federal force in control of the field.

After the fight we moved back to camp for some well deserved rest. We had a great supper and some of the more hardy folks went off to the dance. So ended Saturday at Prado Station.

Sun 1 Apr

Don’t know about everyone else, but the morning came entirely too soon. I gotta find the person who keeps setting wake up at 0600 – he he. Everyone rose just in time to see the sun coming up. Early morning at Prado is kinda cool as the mist floats across the battlefield.



Folks finally rolled out. The cook with some help got another grand breakfast going and folks started preparing for church. After church the unit started preparing for the days fights. We formed and moved towards the battlefield. We stopped on the high ground overlooking the fence line. Then the amazing order to conduct a Division wheel into line of battle came. The command of right wheel was given and around we came. There were some bows but they soon straightened out and the Division was on line, including the cavalry. It actually looked pretty cool from the vantage point I had on the far right. Once again the 1st Brigade was put into action on the far right. The fighting was pretty stiff for a while and the 1st Brigade moved forward right into a withering fire that pretty much dropped the entire 71st where it stood bound and determined not to give ground. After the 71st was decimated the Union line broke and was pushed at a rapid pace back the way it had come. So ended the 1st Battle on April fools day.



After the fight we moved back to camp for lunch and refit for what we new was coming – a counter attack by the Rebs. They're confidence having been regained by pushing the Federal force back from its assault. The Brigade formed and moved out to take positions to repel the Reb counter attack.



The Brigade took up positions behind the screen of skirmishers to our front. At first I thought the dismounted Cav would be able to handle the counterattack. Then the Rebs threw everything into the mix – all its reserve. The skirmishers were being pressed pretty hard. However, an opportunity presented itself as the Rebs were concentrating on action to their front and not their flank. The 2nd Brigade was sent to flank the Rebs on their right as the 1st Brigade was sent in to reinforce the skirmishers and keep the Rebs attention focused on their front. Pretty soon the Rebs figured out what was going on but by then it was too late. All their reserves had been committed and they were being cut to ribbons. Both Brigades started pressuring the Rebs and they refused to give, and then it was over, the ground was littered with gray clad bodies. So ended the Battle of Prado Station.

After the fight we moved up to the flag pole for the raffles. Congratulations to Cpl Quinlan for winning a Cavalry Guidon. Not sure what he's going to do with it, but congratulations any way.

After the raffle the 71st moved back to camp as other units gaggled about. After returning to camp we retired the colors until the next time we come together. Rumors have come in that a Confederate force may be preparing to move on Wooden Nickel Ranch vicinity of Menifee.

The 71st broke camp with everyone helping and making sure folks were packed up and ready to go. I am always proud of how this unit never fails to pitch where ever and when ever needed. Folks, I've been told more than once that other units wish theirs operated as we do. To bad they can't as there is no other unit like the 71st PVI (The California Regiment) – and you are a part of it. I'm also relieved to report that all returned to their homes safely.

Your Obedient Servant, 1st Sgt C



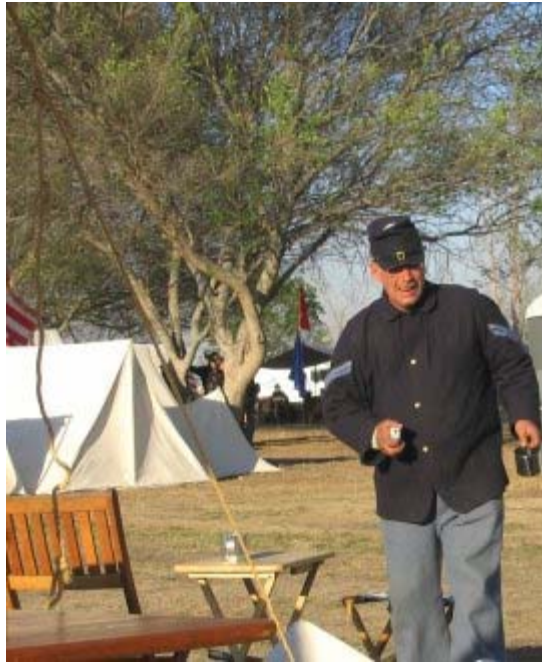
The men of Company B



The 71st at Prado Station



Awwwwwwww.....



I'm good, got my coffee



Cook prepares to ring the meal gong



A time of fellowship – my favorite part of this hobby



Our Company Street



Waiting to be sent in



Never harass the 1st Sgt or else – gads what a face!