

Hardaway's Alabama Battery

COL. JACK EAVES, COMMANDER
MAJ. BILL ANDERSON

CAPT. KEN JANSON, ADJUTANT
1st LT. MARK PRICE
2nd LT. BILL KOHSE

Cannoneers,

I have the honor to report on the recent military activity near the town of Moorpark in the state of California on November 7-8, 2009.



This event is billed as the largest reenactment west of the Mississippi and indeed there were an extraordinary number of reenactors present for the action. The estimates I heard were approximately 500 Rebels and 400 Yanks. I do not vouch for these figures but merely pass them along. I will say that, aside from the good company and victuals in camp, seeing the huge number of troops marching to and across the field was the highlight of the weekend.



The Confederate camp was located in a walnut grove and so a good deal of shade was available most of the day. The weather was clear and sunny but, because of the high humidity, especially on Saturday, it seemed much hotter than the 72 or so degrees that I believe was the reported high temperature. Sunday's air was less heavy with considerably less smog.



Present for duty from our Battery were:

Col. Jack Eaves, in charge of the very extensive pyrotechnics, and his good lady wife, Mrs. Izabella

On Sophia Antoinette's gun crew:

Capt. Ken Janson, who took the field as 1st Sgt. Janson (as there were enough officers at least in number)

Cpl. John Kalayjian and his good lady, Linda

Pvt. Ty LaRiviere and his good lady, Tiffany



Left: Ty and Tiffany



Left: Matt Nelson

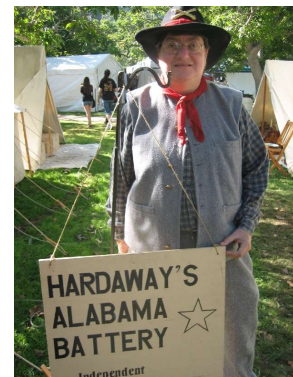
Seconded to the crew from the NCWA: Pvt. Debbie Grace

Seconded to the crew from the Richmond Howitzers: Pvt. Matthew Nelson

Cpl. Kalayjian was the only member of the crew with whom I had had the honor of working previously. Pvt.

LaRiviere was there to see the elephant for the very first time, and I knew little or nothing of the two seconded privates before I was on the scene. I had some concerns as to how well Sophia Antoinette would be served under the circumstances. I had no idea how much drill we would be able to get in all together before taking the field, and indeed I was ready to stand the gun down if I were not satisfied that our lady would be properly and safely served. Huzzah! All such apprehensions proved unfounded. I have never before had such a disparate crew come together so quickly. All crew members took their duties to heart and I could have asked for nothing better. Privates Grace and Nelson showed that they had learned their trade well in their own units, and I must especially single out Pvt.

LaRiviere who, despite this being his first event ever and his first time on a gun, rendered impeccable service. We are lucky to have him in our Battery.



Pvt. Debbie Grace

The host unit was the Richmond Howitzers. We camped next to, almost among them. Most of the folks were friendly in their speech with us, though no one ever went so far as to invite us to a drink, a bite, a visit. The Howitzers is a

very large unit. They fielded 8 full size guns (sort of – more on that later)



with plenty of men to man them. Most of the guns were 6 pdr. pieces and 10 pdr. parrots. There was one 3 inch ordnance gun which, I was told, was an original barrel. They had a Quaker gun that got blown up every battle. As far as I could see, there were no howitzers. The Yanks had eight guns, I believe, one of them being the CHAS gun.

As the Richmond Howitzers seemed to have a good number of officers, and as it seemed I would be serving as a chief of piece, I offered to doff my captain's coat and put on my sergeant's shell, putting myself under their orders. This offer was accepted. The “dark clouds” started gathering as we were just about to take the field. No one had yet told me anything about who was commanding what, what section we were to be part of and who might be commanding it. I went to the huddle of officers and asked. They stood there with puzzled expressions on their faces. That pretty much defined our relationship with the Howitzers during the entire weekend. They seldom thought out things in advance. The command structure was weak, at times contradictory and our crew often never received any orders at all. After several periods of inaction on Saturday due to lack of orders I decided to fire independently, but was later criticized for that decision by the officers of the Howitzers. Saturday night it was requested of me that we neither load nor fire without orders. I said I would abide by those instructions. The next day we were criticized for not being loaded and not firing when we had never received orders to do either. And so it went.



There were three battles on Saturday that came one so close upon the heels of the other that there was left but little time to replenish the munitions and primers before we needs must be in the field again. The two day-time battles on Saturday left much to be desired. Only a part of the available field was utilized and at times there were so many men on the field that it look more like a mob scene than a battle. But the evening/night battle was spectacular and while during the day I don't believe one person went down to artillery fire, during the night battle – it was supposed to be Cold Harbor – we got to mow down Yankees in droves. Our Colonel's pyrotechnics were omnipresent and a joy to the eye and ear. The infantry units on either side of Sophia Antoinette behaved gallantly



and were very well commanded. One of them was our own CCWR contingent. The officers made sure they kept in contact with me and that we each knew what the other was up to. This was important as the units were placed way to close to the gun by the high command.

This brings up the most negative aspect of the weekend. Safety zone violation were rampant. Infantry and Cavalry of both colors routinely entered our forward safety zone, often taking hits and leaving us without the ability to participate in the battle without putting them in danger – which we would not do. Galloping horsemen tore between the gun and the munitions box putting Pvt. Kalayjian at no small risk. The guns themselves were placed too near the public so that the munitions were very much too close to them. Infantry was placed in line with the guns but much too close to the hubs rendering it a touchy thing to pull out a charge from the gunner's haversack for there were muskets going off just by. None of the officers in charge seemed the least troubled by all of this except of course for those of our Battery and of the CCWR. Having now reenacted with many clubs in different states I can relate that we can be very proud of the way we handle safety as compared to many others.

The Sunday battles were a glorious sight to see. The infantry was maneuvered extremely well. The hundreds and hundreds of spectators got a real show. While it was unfortunately true that the scenarios played out in a way that limited the amount of artillery action, both battles were first rate and were exciting to witness.

The best of the event was our time in camp. We enjoyed great camaraderie, some music – Ty is learning to play the penny whistle – and great food thanks to Mrs. Linda Kalayjian. Many a cannoneer from the Richmond Howitzers cast a longing eye on the delights that were being served up to Hardaway's boys. In fact it was Linda's made-from-scratch biscuits



and gravy that brought Mat Nelson to our crew. He looked so desperately on the gravy as he went back and forth through camp that good hearted Linda took pity, gave him a plate and invited him to join us. And he did, not only for breakfast, but he joined Sophia Antoinette's crew for the weekend. And at the end of the weekend said he would like to be on Hardaway's roster, hoping he might be able to get to



some of our more southerly events. Debbie Grace also asked to be a member of the Battery with the same hope.

Another of the high points of the event was the impression Sophia Antoinette and her loyal crew made on other cannoneers, other reenactors and on the public. We heard from many, many sources that our crew was the sharpest in execution and that Sophia Antoinette spoke the gospel with a voice that left the other guns seeming timid by comparison. It turned out that most of the guns of the Howitzers were sleeved down to very small bore sizes. In addition, they didn't seem to use much powder in any of them. We were told by several sources that the public waited with anticipation for Sophia Antoinette's preaching and could always tell which she was.



There were many sutlers at the event. Those of the Battery who know my song, *The Sergeant, His Pig* should ask me about the set of miniatures I purchased at Moorpark.

All in all it was worth all the traveling and expense to experience a truly large event. At times it was deeply moving to witness the hundreds of troops in column and in line. The night battle was spectacular, and just seeing the row upon row upon row of tents in camp was emotive. I believe all our people enjoyed the weekend and as a special bonus some very good new friends were made.



Huzzah for Hardaway's Battery, and

Keep the guns hot!

Your servant,

Capt. Ken Janson
Battery Adjutant
Hardaway's Alabama Battery