

National Civil War Association

Dispatch

MAY 2020



NCWA1863.org

P.O. Box 266, Santa Clara, California 95052

NEXT COMBINED BOARD MEETING:

Saturday, July 11, 2020 at 11:00 a.m.

Location to be announced

TENTATIVE EVENTS FOR WHEN THIS CRUEL VIRUS WAR IS OVER

We of the club's admin board are very much aware of just how much our membership is itching for an event. It runs all the way from some folks wanting to ignore “social distancing” to cancelling all events for the year. We will not be following any extremes, but will do the best we can to be safe while still holding ourselves in a position of readiness to go. The developments of the current situation are being monitored closely, in the effort to keep our event plans as ready as possible.

Cosme Muñoz has located a couple of sites in Capay Valley, about 18 miles from Woodland and perhaps 30 miles apart. While the Elk Grove event would be open to the public, Cosme has envisioned a “backcountry” re-enactors-only event for Capay Valley, perhaps featuring a reunion, a School of the Soldier, and an auction or sale of various items we all have taking up storage space, to raise money for the club. Both sites have water and ample space for parking and camping, and Cosme says that both landowners have offered us the sites.

A private event sometime before the public event at Elk Grove would give us a chance to recover from our weeks of isolation, as well as the opportunity to evaluate the sites for future public events. It would also provide the opportunity to get together with other clubs and rehearse possible scenarios, honing our various skills to provide the public with a quality event at Elk Grove. Possible dates for Capay Valley would be June 20-21, July 25-26 or August 29-30. The dates are changeable based upon when state regulations on gatherings may be lifted. So we do have an event ready to go at the first opportunity. Those weekends can even be adjusted if need be. Thanks go to Coz & Yvonne Munoz for arranging this opportunity.

The Elk Grove full battle event is ready to go. We will have a safety waiting period from the date of restrictions being lifted until that reenactment will occur, probably 45 days, maybe 30. I have asked for input from members, but so far only our Vice President has given any feedback. A tactical is still a possibility at that site, a week or two before the main event. We have already prepared advertising, and so can add the date and get it out very quickly once we have that information. Assistance from members would be most appreciated when that time comes, to help with putting out fliers and ads, and setting up the site.

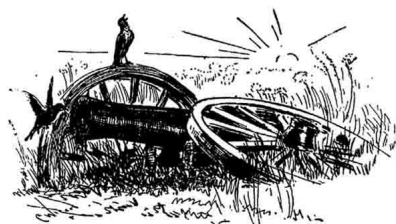
In regards to regularly scheduled events:

Angel Island has unfortunately been cancelled, but the Park staff is optimistic that there will be an event there in 2021. So far there has been no move made to cancel Tres Piños in September, nor any of our subsequent events.

So..... I really hope that our NCWA membership is confident that our reenacting interests are being furthered in a constructive and optimistic manner in these strange times.

I pray that all of you are well, and hope to see you soon. Feel free to call me if you have questions or suggestions.

Most respectfully,
Skott Borello, President



FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

AN OPEN INVITATION

Once we return to 'normal reenacting', I would like to invite everyone to visit Crossroads, our wonderful Town! Just so that everyone knows a bit more about Crossroads, permit me to explain a bit of our back story.

Crossroads was established long, long ago, well before the 'current unpleasantness' began. As a matter of fact, our little town has been here since before this country was formed, making it more than "four score and seven" years old-even older than any of our residents!

Located at the junction of two well-established travel routes, one North/South and one East/West, our strategic importance has not been lost on the Armies. While this location has made us an important center of commerce in the area, it also means we are frequently visited by soldiers from both Armies. This occasionally leads to some unfriendly interactions between the Armies, or between soldiers and our Townsfolk.

Recently, some members of the Confederate Army have been occupying Crossroads. To date, this situation has provided our residents with a feeling of security, as our local Militia is (at times) unreliable. Hopefully, there will be no issues with members of the Union Army when they are visiting in Crossroads!

We welcome and encourage everyone to stop by for a visit at their earliest convenience. Our unofficial motto here in Crossroads is: Everyone is welcome, until they prove themselves unwelcome. So stop on by for a friendly Crossroads welcome. Anytime!

Mrs. Lynne Ashby, Mayor of Crossroads

(And as it is not historically accurate to have a female mayor, my husband is actually the mayor. However, he and the other mayors for our county are away at the county seat, meeting with one of the generals to negotiate with him and have the Army leave the local residents alone. The mayors will return to their respective towns once negotiations are completed, hopefully soon. Until then, I will help out and serve in my husband's place as there are few men here in town to take over the daily duties of the office.)



RELIEF FROM THE VIRUS

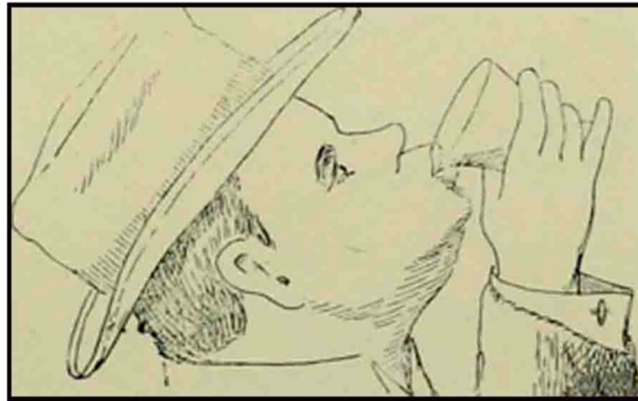
To reduce the stress of being confined, some people may have resorted to “medicinal spirits”. In the Old Navy, the one with ships, not clothing, they had their own “medicinal spirit” called Grog. Here’s a little history of that fine beverage.

In the 18th century, sailors were issued 8 oz. of rum daily, and this made climbing the rigging a bit tricky. British Admiral Edward Vernon, decided to increase the level of sobriety by cutting the rum with water. The Admiral wore a long coat made of grogram (a variation of grosgrain), a coarse, often stiffened fabric made of silk, mohair, wool, or a blend of them. This led to the Admiral’s nickname, “Old Grog”. After he watered down the rum, the sailors took to calling the mixture Grog in his “honor.”

Now the good part: for original British Navy Grog, mix one part rum with two parts water, stop right there, and drink it. Or take three parts water and mix with one part rum, add lime and sugar to taste for modified original style; or ¾ liter of rum, 1.5 liter of water, juice of 4-5 limes, and 4-6 tablespoons of brown sugar for modern grog. Shake well, and age at least 30 seconds.

Bonus Fact: George Washington’s older half-brother, Lawrence Washington, served on Admiral Vernon’s flagship as a Captain of the Royal Marines. He named his estate Mount Vernon in honor of his former commander and George kept the name.

Kevin Groom, Lt. Commanding
James River Squadron



WORK PARTY!

There is an NCWA Work Day scheduled for May 23rd, at Skott Borello’s place, 1405 Sliger Mine Road, Greenwood, CA 95635.

We will be prepping, sanding, fabricating, welding & painting the trailers and the club’s cannon, Flo. This is in El Dorado County, and there is little threat of catching you know what, as this is a rural location on a ranch. We will be working in open areas, with lots of room on a beautiful hilltop.

If anybody has materials to donate, that would be very helpful. In particular, we need 1" steel tubing to construct the frame for the School Day box trailer, and sheet metal to cover it with. Nice plywood, bolts, nuts and washers, etc...you get the idea! Hope to see you! Thanks in advance!

Skott Borello

FORT SUMTER OF THE WEST

Although it was never fired upon like its counterpart in Charleston Harbor, Fort Point was there at the Golden Gate to protect California from any Rebel attacks.

Its construction is like that of Fort Sumter, and the only one of its type on the West Coast. Its walls are roughly seven feet thick and forty-five feet high, with gun ports on three floors facing the water and all around on the roof level, known as the barbette.

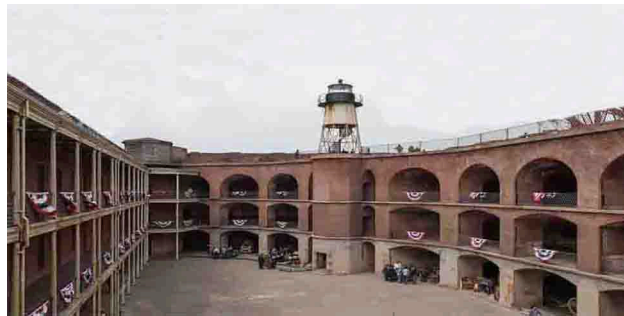
The armament in 1862 was listed as 127 guns: 6 each—24 pound; 11 each—32 pound; 28 each—42 pound; 73 each—8” Columbiad; and 9 each—10” Columbiad. There was even a shot furnace to heat shot red hot in order to set ships on fire as well as break them.

Paul Harvey, had “The Rest of the Story”, and so do we:

“The first commander of Fort Point was a General and a graduate of West Point by the name of Albert Sidney Johnston. Although he was a veteran of the Texas fight against Mexican rule and deeply tied to the South, he pledged, as a Union officer, to defend the U.S. against any aggressor. Just as General Johnston was about to be replaced, he resigned his command because Texas had seceded. In April 1862, he found himself at Shiloh, Tennessee, fighting Sherman and Grant at a sunken road known as the “Hornets Nest”. When wave after wave of rebel attacks were repelled, he rallied his men for another assault. Unaware of being hit in the leg by a minie ball, he led his troops until suddenly he collapsed and died from a loss of blood. His men finally took the Hornet’s Nest, until the Union was able to regroup and take it back the next day.

“One must wonder what Shiloh, if things had gone quite ten years earlier...

“While workers were down the cliff at the south



may have been different at different in California not

figuring out how to cut entrance to San Francisco

Bay to its present height, prior to building Fort Point, they heard some men calling to them from a rowboat out in the chilly waters of the Golden Gate. One of the men was a soggy, skinny fellow struggling to get his breath back. Earlier that same day, before sunrise, he had been sleeping on a steamship traveling near Bolinas Bay when it struck a reef. The passengers were taken ashore safely and this fellow walked down the beach until he found a lumber ship headed for San Francisco. The skipper was willing to help him get to the city. As they made the approach to the bay, they faced an outgoing tide, which forced the ship over on its beam ends (the side of the boat for you landlubbers). This poor fellow was in the water again and after he and the crew clawed their way onto the upturned keel, a fishing boat rescued them. When they were able to get off at Fort Point, the fellow commented that two shipwrecks in one day was not the way to start a new job. He borrowed a horse at the Presidio and rode into town to open a bank for a St. Louis company. The fellow was William Tecumseh Sherman.”

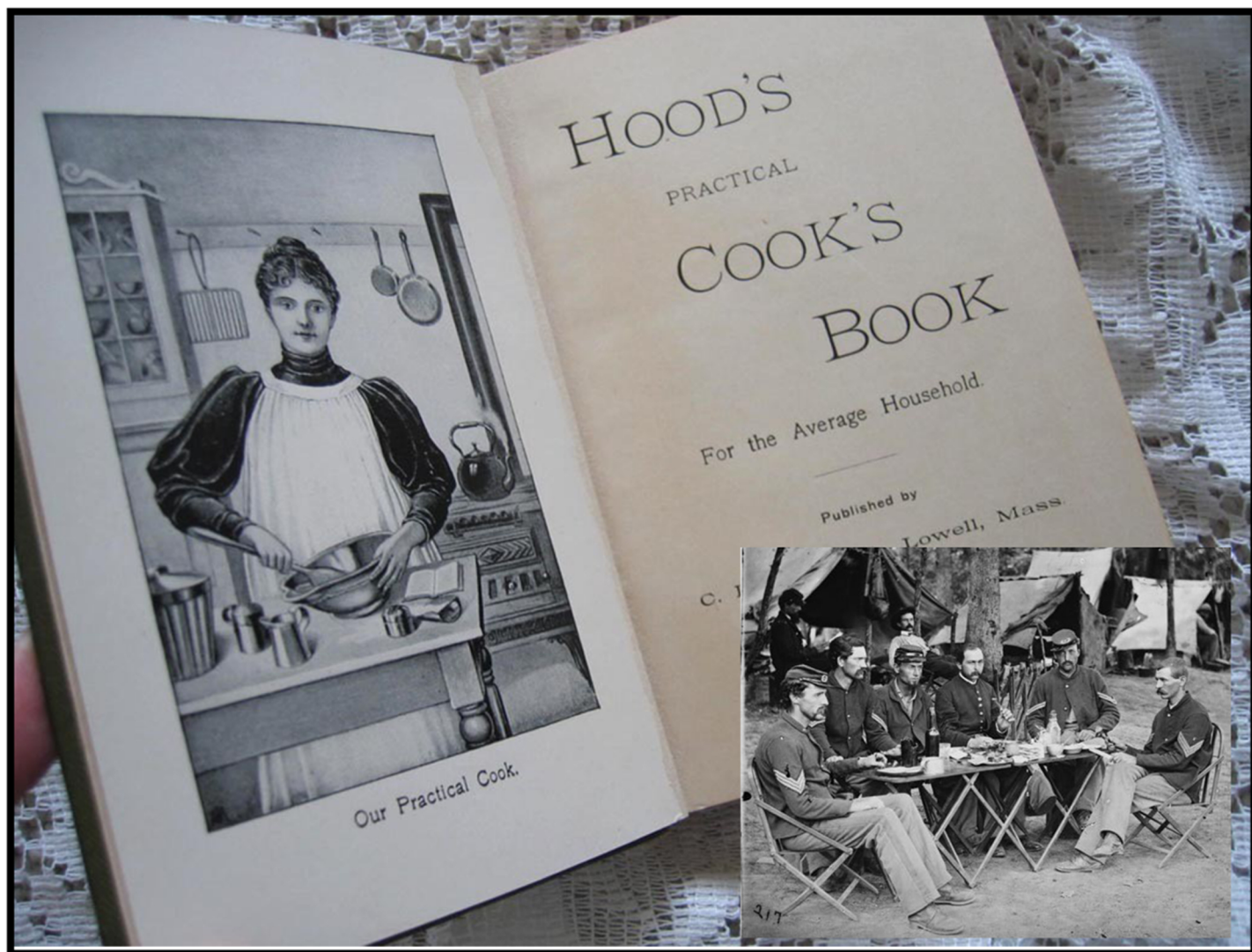
Thanks to Dave Rogers for these articles from the newsletter of Berdan's Sharpshooters!

FOR THE DISPATCH

THE EAGLE EYE

SHARPSHOOTERS' CULINARY CONTRIBUTION

From Hood's Practical Cook's Handbook, 1897



HOOD'S Practical Cook's Book: SOUPS:

Soup stock may be made from meat procured for the purpose, or from the trimmings and "left overs." Mrs. Lincoln says: "Every pantry should have a 'catch-all.' It is vastly more important there than in the sewing-room or on the toilet-table. The coal-hod, refuse-pail and sink catch all in many households. One or two large bowls — not tin, but deep earthen dishes, provided they are sweet and do not leak — will better answer the purpose. After breakfast or dinner, do not put away the remnants of steaks or roasts on the platters, but look them over, and put by them selves any pieces that can be used again, or in made dishes. Then put all the bones, trimmings, fat, gristle, and everything, especially the platter gravy, which usually flavors the dish-water, into the 'catch-all.'"

If you have just one bone from a steak or chop, if it be not burned, it is worth saving, and in cool weather will

keep till you have another. If there be a teaspoonful of any vegetables, a stalk of celery, an egg, a baked apple, or a bit of macaroni, put them away neatly. You will find a use for them. If you have boiled a fresh tongue, a fowl, a leg of lamb, or a cup of rice, plan to make a soup also, and thus save the water."

Col. Ben Thurston, a veteran New England "tavern keeper" of the olden time, used to say that he always gave his guests a good soup to begin their dinner with, as it saved a good deal later in the bill of fare. The Americans do not eat soups enough.

In *Berdan's Sharpshooters*, in the winter of 1861-62 at Washington, was a company of Swiss riflemen, most of whom had seen army service at home. They were noted for their robust health, and Captain Trepp, their commander, himself a veteran Swiss soldier, said it was because they all knew how to make a good soup, which our Yankee soldiers knew nothing about.

A REGIMENTAL SURGEON'S LETTER ON THE SUPERIORITY OF COFFEE

Ironton, Lawrence Co., Ohio September 23, 1861

When in Western Virginia with the 18th (three months) Regiment, it was my intention to make some remarks upon the mode in which, and the means by which coffee was prepared by the soldiers. But before I carried out my design, a severe attack of fever drove me home, and, until the present date, I have been too feeble, mentally and physically, to undertake it. Indeed, I am still in no condition to do justice to the subject.

I desire to call the attention of the country, and more especially to those who can, and whose duty it is to correct and control these matters, to the errors and abuses in the preparation of the invaluable beverage in the army.

Coffee is furnished to the soldier in the crude state — that is just from the sack. The first thing therefore, he has to do, is to "toast" it. This is done in a camp kettle; and I was informed by privates, whose veracity was beyond dispute, that this radically important process is frequently done in from ten to fifteen minutes. Now every person that can "get up" a cup of good coffee knows that it cannot be properly "toasted" in less than an hour, and still a longer time improves it. But to complete the process in ten or fifteen minutes most necessarily burn it, and instead of "toasted" coffee, the soldier has charcoal.

The next step is to reduce this burnt coffee to powder, or, in a more familiar phrase, to "grind" it. How, and with what do you suppose the soldier does this? "Why," quite naively, you respond, "of course with a coffee mill, or at least, with a mortar and pestle." How simple you are! You were never more "out of it" in your life. His sole available means are the same identical camp kettle, and his musket — the butt end of which is plain, straight and smooth. (Query); Did the government have that use of the musket in view in making the butt a plain surface? But to proceed. The soldier puts his "burnt" coffee in the kettle, and seizing his musket by the barrel, used it as a "tamper." To see him at work at a little distance, you would think he was churning in one of those old fashioned upright churns. The first sight I had of the operation I indulged in the vain delusion that he was going to regale us with sweet fresh butter for supper.

You can imagine what sort of "ground" coffee the soldier will have; especially when the fact is added that he generally hurries through the operation. More properly it should be called cracked coffee. If there were such a thing, I should call it black hominy. Not a few of the grains are halved, more quartered, and the rest of diverse size, of course comminution. In such a state, neither boiling water, nor even boiling, can extract half its strength. Have partaken of it often I speak from personal knowledge — I have made the experimentum crucis. Now, I say, if the Government will persist in supplying the ration of coffee in the grain, it should furnish the means of reducing it to a uniform powder of the proper fineness. But it

would be much better to furnish it to the soldier already toasted, ground and packed in tight tin cases.

The prime importance of this matter is not, I fear, properly appreciated by the Government, nor by the soldier; for if it were, more attention would be given to it. But perhaps, I am doing the poor private injustice; he may be aware of its importance, but how can he help himself. His health, comfort and efficiency are at the mercy of those placed over him.

But I was speaking of the importance of this matter. Not only from three months of observation, but from actual trial, I am thoroughly convinced that a pint of good coffee is a better beverage for the soldier than the rye, bourbon, brandy, or even "S. N. Pike's Army Cordial" or any alcoholic nostrum that ever flowed from a worm. Reasons could be given for its superiority. Alcohol acts specially on the stomach and brain; coffee, or rather its principal ingredient — caffeine — acts on the whole nervous system. The former leaves the system more debilitated than it found it. Coffee, on the other hand, does so in a greatly diminished degree, and perhaps not at all when the beverage is not too strong, nor taken too frequently. Lastly, distilled liquors are transitory, requiring repetition every half hour or hour to sustain their effects on the system. The effects of coffee are, comparatively, permanent, lasting from eight to twelve hours. This is an invaluable property to the soldier and if in its operation it differed in no other respects from spirits, this peculiarity alone would be amply sufficient to entitle it to the supremacy. I say, therefore, give the well soldier no spirituous drink, but a pint of good wholesome coffee at least twice a day. It has no equal as a preparation for a hard day's march, nor any rival as a restorative after one.

Yours truly,

A. C. Swartwelder
Surgeon, O V, U S A



MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT, LT. LEWIS PARMALEE'S FAMILY LEARNS OF HIS DEATH AT ANTIETAM

Being a letter of condolence written by Regimental Quartermaster Benjamin Calef, 2nd USSS

To me is given the painful task of informing you that your son, Lewis C. Parmelee, was killed in the battle near this place on the morning of the 17th.

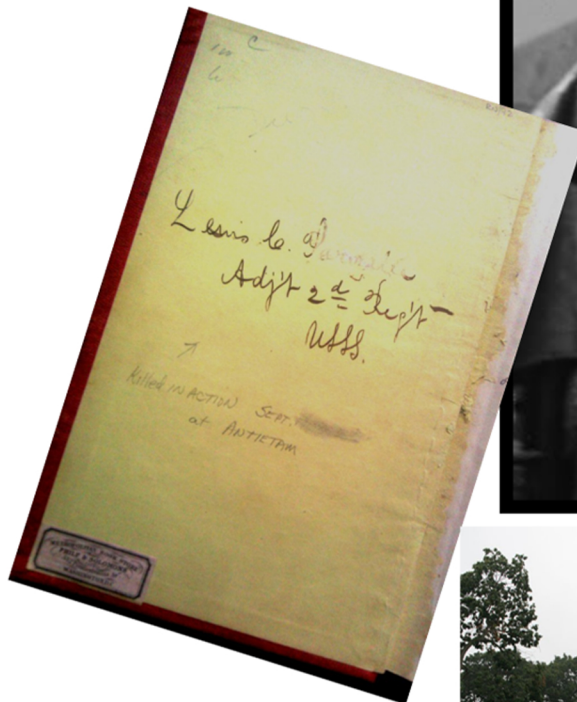
He had been leading on the remnant of our little band after the Col. Was wounded, & had just succeeded in taking a rebel color, when he was struck by a ball in the arm & breast. He could have lived but a short time.

His body was recovered this morning & interred near the field. The place will be marked so it maybe known where he lies. It was impossible to have it sent home as the army is moving & there are no facilities for doing so.

'Twere seeming mockery to offer our poor condolences in this hour of affliction. Yet I would assure you, our deepest sympathies are yours, & we morn the loss of a true friend, good soldier, & brave man, who has fallen in nobly defending a nation's honor.



This book, the 1861 publication entitled "Hand-Book for Active Service," was among the lieutenant's personal possessions.



EDITORS NOTE: Lewis Parmelee's body was later recovered by friends and reinterred at Evergreen Cemetery in New Haven Connecticut where he rests today. His impressive gravestone is shown at right.

TO ARMS! TO ARMS!

Well, for the purpose of this article, **TO HORNS! TO HORNS!** The Fort Point Garrison Brass Band (www.fortpointbrassband.org) was established in 2005.

2020 is our 15th anniversary. This Civil War reenactment band performs on authentic, period horns. We've performed as a Union band, a Confederate band, and as a civilian "town" band. The FPGBB has played at reenactments, balls, living history events, dances, and concerts...at Duncans Mills, Gibson Ranch, Old Town Sacramento, Fresno, Fort Point, Gettysburg, Virginia City, Dog Island, and Monterey, just to name a few venues.

We are a registered non-profit educational group.

Over the years the band has had a variety of musicians rehearse and perform with us (36 or so), and now carries a roster of 9 (about the size of an actual Civil War brass band).

We currently stand at one **Eb cornet**, two **Bb cornets**, two **Eb alto horns**, one **Bb tenor baritone**, one **Bb tenor trombone**, and two **tubas**. We hail from **Chico, the Bay Area, Stockton, Hollister, Nevada, Ahwantee, and Grass Valley**.

The Fort Point Garrison Brass Band is always seeking new musicians and talent. Our period, antique horns can be provided for any musicians interested in "trying us out," rehearsing with us, or performing with us. We can outfit musicians with uniforms, too, if necessary...though reenactors reading this probably have their own kit.

If anyone is interested in playing with a Civil War band, on authentic horns, with period Civil War music please contact our president, Doug Thompson, at dctsjt@charter.net or (831) 207-2796.



2020 CIVIL WAR REENACTING EVENT SCHEDULE

DATES	EVENT	SPONSOR
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The Elk Grove Tactical has been cancelled

May 16-17	Elk Grove	NCWA
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This event has been postponed until a later date, TBA

**The Angel Island event has been canceled for 2020
See you in 2021!**

Duncan's Mills has been canceled for 2020

September 19-20	Tres Pinos	NCWA
School Day September 18		

October 3-4	Marysville	NCWA
School Day October 2		

November 7-8	Half Moon Bay	NCWA
School Day November 6		

FOR MORE INFORMATION

PLEASE GO TO

NCWA1863.ORG/EVENT-CALENDAR/

ncwa1863.org

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