

# AAR for Battle of Camden/Eutaw Springs

Nov 12-13, 2022

Dragoons, Fire-goddess, and friends,

This year commemorated the 242<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Camden and the 241<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Eutaw Springs. Patrick O'Kelly planned the scenarios with input from Erick Nason and others. The battlefield was moved from the large cultivated field to a wooded but open area which provided a much better setting for the actual battle of Camden, as well as true black jack thickets for Eutaw Springs. It also afforded the crowd to line a dirt road and have a profile view of the action as it unfolded.

Surprisingly, the field had few holes, though we were in a thinned pine plantation. The openness of the trees allowed for trotting and even some cantering for charges. The field was a bit narrow, which restricted left to right movement (without masking our troops) but it probably made the numbers engaged seem larger since they were not dwarfed by the size of a large open field. Also, there were no anachronisms in view of the crowd or participants (other than the crowd itself).

We arrived Friday after two days of rain from a tropical storm. The rain ceased around 10 pm. We set up tents and some bivouacked in their trucks or trailers. The ground is pretty sandy and drained well. We camped in our usual place among pine trees which provided shade and easy picketing of horses. Water was plentiful with a hose running to watering troughs. The portolets were a bit of a hike, but that was the only issue. Wood was nearby and replenished during the event. The portolets were cleaned a couple of times during the weekend. There were plenty of sutlers to visit. Crowds were substantial both days. We were tasked with a cavalry demonstration at 10:30 am both days. We were able to do some drill between the British camp and the sutlers, but much of our demo was talking with the crowd, which seemed to be well received.

All of the horses save one were veteran mounts. I brought my new horse (King) Wallace to the event and he did very well, no doubt because he had seven others around who took no notice of the gunfire. Joel Koon came with his son and father. He rode Doc, one of Bert's horses and did very well. Nathan was mounted on Red, who performed well. Jesse was on Buddy, deciding wisely to take (Dammit) Zack at his word that he really doesn't like this type of play. Joey Koon kept us entertained. Though lacking his front two teeth, he never stopped talking. He was pretty fun. Jensen helped with cooking some. Chris kept us well victualed throughout the event. Neill and Jennifer Rose visited from Camden and gifted Chris with an original tripod frying pan. I provided a couple of gallons of Rum Punch which seemed to hit the spot, both in camp and later at the tavern. We did have two lovely days, but we got doused Saturday evening with about an hour of rain to make sure we didn't get too comfortable.

We were ably led by Ron Crawley (Calhoun) assuming the role of Captain and Eric Harrelson (Sody) acting as Sergeant. Saturday we portrayed an element of the British Legion, mostly we were in reserve until towards the end of the battle when we charged and disbursed Maryland troops and ran through the Patriot women and children. Sunday

was the battle of Eutaw Springs and we portrayed the Third Light Dragoons. It was nice to see eight white coats mounted as one, which we haven't done in a while. Ron attended the officer's call and knew the scenario. The rest of us were more or less informed of what was expected of us. During a charge into a black jack thicket against guards, Ron was "bayoneted in the hip, unhorsed and captured." Eric had to take command with no warning. He did very well controlling the remaining horse and charging multiple times into the thicket to try to liberate our commander. I note for all that our unit is exceptional in that we share the command duties. I appreciate both that we keep our egos in check and that we find opportunities to let everyone have a chance at leading troops, at least once they're comfortable with the commands. Pat O'Kelly seemed to notice as well, when he called for the dragoon commander and the youngest one of us stepped forward to take his orders. I think this enables each of us to experience the variety of roles in our reenacting world. It probably makes us better troopers as well since we appreciate the stress of trying to give orders while in the moment. Kudos to all for being diligent troopers. The last comment is really about the battles. On this weekend, both of these were scripted battles, not tacticals. There is an element of the tactical when the scenario gets busted, as they inevitably do. But, we were really performing a play, just one that we didn't rehearse for. The officers are given their instruction in the morning, and they have to try to remember what they're supposed to do and more or less recreate the scenes as we understand them from history. This can be frustrating at times, but it is important when the battle is narrated by someone (in this case, either Jay Callaham or Erick Nason). I am most pleased that no one was hurt and everyone arrived home safely. Well done, my brave fellows.

If you were not able to attend, you were greatly missed and hopefully you can make the next one.

Final numbers in attendance,

Total:

8 Dragoons, 8 horses, 4 distaff

Breakdown:

3rd CLD

Ron Crawley, Capt., commanding.

Eric Harrelson, Sergeant

Chris Puckett (Chief of Distaff, Fire-goddess and chef extraordinaire)

Bert Puckett

Jesse Tarver

Jensen Tarver (chief of mischief)

Dean Withers

Nathan Poston

Edward Harrelson

Joel Koon

(with Joey Koon and Lamar Koon)

I remain Your Most Humble Servant, Edward Harrelson

