

Stones River Campaign After Action Report

What a weekend! This weekend was a shining example of everyone working together to create a phenomenal event for everyone. There was so much going on in the Federal camp that there was hardly time to take a breath. The Brigade staff began arriving on Wednesday to start laying out the camps for the regimental officers. Thursday broke to the regiments starting to arrive. As their staff officers got the streets organized, it was nice to catch up with old friends. The Brigade staff had a lovely dinner to start our weekend long birthday celebration for Ordnance Officer Chuck Munson. It was excellent to see everyone showing up and getting all of their gear set up for the weekend. Friday morning started with a beautiful day for the remainder of the brigade to arrive and set up. There was also a school program running which was very well attended with around 150 kids of all ages. Talks put on by the medical staff, commissary, ordnance, infantry, cavalry, and artillery were all very well received. As Friday evening began, a skirmish broke out in the woods where the Alton Jaeger Guard regiment was bivouacked which ended up drawing in our artillery to help subdue the Confederate attackers. As Friday night went on, many a pard spent a lot of time around the campfires catching up until late in the evening.

Saturday morning broke to an early reveille to kick off the weekend's battle scenarios. The Jaegers were the first out of camp and went to settle into position in a lightly wooded area to engage our Confederate opponents. The remaining regiments marched out of camp to the sound of the gunfire of the opening of the battle. The cavalry advanced first in support of the Jaegers who were quickly being routed by overwhelming numbers. The fog was so dense it was hard to distinguish friend from foe and limited visibility hampered troop coordination on both sides. The battle raged on heatedly with both sides trying to gain an advantage. Outnumbered, we were slowly withdrawing to a more strategic position when, unfortunately we had to put a stop to the battle due to a neighbor complaint. Both sides got a good feel for the what was to come of the weekend though as we marched back to camp in the remaining wisps of fog.

Saturday morning and afternoon activities continued on with each of the regiments taking some solid drill time, which the brigade staff was very happy to see, and needed by everyone. The AIG and AAG made rounds through the camps doing haversack inspections which kept the men on their toes. Medical officers went through and performed a syphilis exam on one of the companies as well to the laughter of nearby companies. We even had some impromptu pugilist fights break out which I'm told there was heavy betting on both sides. The Saturday afternoon battle went off without a hitch with the Confederates attacking us in open ground and driving us back into the tree line where we were able to repulse multiple advances. The federal cavalry was heavily engaged the whole battle and performed great, driving the rebel cavalry away from the infantry formations. The evening hours were a mostly quiet affair with everyone worn out from the day's activities.

Sunday morning's tactical was unfortunately cancelled due to the neighbors which allowed everyone to sleep in a little and rest up for the day to come, but there was a little skirmish in the woods to keep the rebels on their toes. I'm told it was a sight to see watching them scramble for rifles and into formations. Sunday morning started quietly with church services at 10am performed by Reverend Murphy, and NCO's and officers moving about submitting all of the required paperwork for the clerk's office. This weekend was no small paperwork load thanks to the fully functioning clerk's office manned by two of the hardest working men at the event. The Brigade staff appreciates all of your cooperation in that effort and was really glad to see some of you having fun with it. We were getting some very humorous requests, and even filled one stationary requisition much to the surprise and delight of our Jaeger regiment major. There was more drilling from some of the regiments and even an early afternoon parade with a rifle salute at the request of a dignitary in our midst representing a foreign leader. The Sunday afternoon battle started off a little slow and uncoordinated, much to the dismay of the Federal artillery commander who needed to move some pieces around in order to engage his cannons safely. The infantry moved about the field great, despite the wind hampering the use of the bugle. After some heavy firing, the infantry got pushed back behind the artillery line who then opened up on the waiting Confederates with everything they had. After softening up the Confederate infantry formations, the Federals charged again pushing them off of the field. It looked awesome from everyone I spoke to and everyone performed magnificently. The camps broke down quickly and efficiently after getting back from the battle and they were left nearly spotless once everyone was gone. You all have my sincere gratitude for that effort as it goes a long way to making things easier on the Brigade staff and event organizers.

Special thanks go out to all of my Brigade staff officers and staff NCO's and regimental officers and their staffs for working so well together to make this one an event that will be talked about for a few years to come. Special thanks also goes out to the Atlanta Campaign for their tireless effort in securing the land the event was held on and everything they did throughout the weekend. See you on the field at the next one.

BG Nick Miner