

## Hastings 2024 After Action Report

My apologies for the overdue After-Action Report. Hastings was another one for the books this year. Before I go into the weekend's events, I want to extend my most sincere gratitude for all of those that served on staff for the weekend as well as those who took a leadership role within a company. My sincere thanks to Ryan VanMaldegen for again serving as my right hand for the weekend, to Robbie Giorlando for serving as Adjutant, to Ed Cuneo for standing as our Provost Marshall all weekend, to Matt Guinn for nourishing the spiritual needs of the group in his first roll with us as battalion Chaplain, to JR Schroeder for tending their physical needs as Surgeon, and to Michael Schroeder for his part time musical talents. I'd also like to acknowledge the company commanders, Marty Walker, Andrew McComas, Scott Lawalin, Scot Spiekerman, Andy Roscoe, and Mark Dembski who performed above any expectation all weekend. I'd also like to extend my thanks to Kevin Yaeger, Paul Fay, Ben Cwayna, and Blake Sponsel for always being willing to work with us. I arrived on site Friday afternoon to set up to find there were already a handful of people set up. Set up for everyone went very smoothly from what I could see and there were plenty of handshakes and hugs from old friends passed around as more arrived. Friday night cooled off pleasantly to the point the fires and conversation went long into the night in more than a couple of spots.

After not enough sleep for many of us, we woke up and made breakfast and coffee (not necessarily in that order for some), and had the whole battalion up and moving by 8:45 for a morning fight. We marched up the hill and proceeded to push the battalion down some of the paths towards one of the far meadows. As we breached the opening behind the skirmish company headed by Captain Andy Roscoe, we started deploying the battalion and made contact with two Confederate companies. As we proceeded to drive them back, our left flank was suddenly under fire from a previously hidden enemy company. As the enemy company drove into our left flank, we were forced to redeploy to try and force back the enemy. They were determined, and left us no room to redeploy as they pressed their attack. We were forced to retire from the field and fight another day. With the morning battle concluded, and much to the dismay of the rest of the battalion, the morning drill was cancelled to allow everyone to rest and water up before the rest of the day's activities. I would like to extend a thank you to those that stood guard mount all weekend for taking the role with sincerity. There were many a shout for the Sergeant of the Guard heard to deal with intruders. I'd also like to thank our full time Provost officer Captain Ed Cuneo for taking on the role in his first time with us and handing out passes and processing all of the necessary paperwork, as well as for his last-minute redistribution of times and such for the weekend. It was an awesome addition to the group and I look forward to seeing him again with us. Saturday afternoon's battle started with the two cavalry forces engaging in the high meadow. From the officers present, it was a heated contest that was then followed by a short infantry engagement which ended in us capturing the hill and strategically withdrawing down the road towards town so we didn't get overextended. As we attempted to reform the battalion in town, the cavalry forces under Captain Kevin Yaeger and Captain Blake Sponsel re-engaged and attempted to outmaneuver each other just outside the village proper. As the cavalry battle evolved, the remaining Federal infantry companies were attacked again by Confederate infantry ending in us retiring from the field again. The Provost Guard was able to find one of the deserters from the battle and marched him back to headquarters to stand for a board of inquisition. After being found guilty of fleeing the battle, this poor private found out the definition of having the book thrown at him, and he was forcibly returned to the ranks. Saturday evening passed mostly uneventfully with more stories shared around campfires.

Sunday arrived to a somewhat cool morning where the battalion again stepped off before 8am in search of the enemy. We stepped into the woods in search of the enemy only to make contact with the Confederate cavalry who never stopped trying to harass us. After disabling a mountain howitzer strategically left to obstruct our path, we moved off again in search of the main Confederate infantry body. Scattered reports started coming in and we moved around nearly the entire field in search of our enemy. Towards the end of the engagement, we were finally able to get in sight of them and as we started pushing across the field to fully engage, we again lost contact with our enemy. With the day full on and the men tired, we decided to save our strength and return to camp to hydrate and fill our stomachs. Chaplain Matt Guinn provided a church service on Sunday morning and was shortly thereafter accused of thievery by a fellow Chaplain from a neighboring battalion and another board of inquisition was held to determine the truth. The men demanded that the book again be thrown at him after incontrovertible evidence was found, and justice was done. The Sunday afternoon battle began just outside town with the two cavalry units again engaging under supporting artillery fire. After being forced out of position by advancing Confederate infantry, we drew them into the town where an ambush was prepared and the enemy formation was crushed and forced the survivors to flee the field. Afterwards, tents were struck, handshakes were again given as everyone started packing up and leaving. A successful weekend had by all and we look forward to next year again.

If you've made it this far, I apologize for being long winded, but I wanted to give my last message of thanks to all of the men in the ranks who showed up that weekend to make it successful and for allowing me the privilege of standing in front of you and commanding. I look forward to seeing many of you at Jackson, and let's all get registered for Bentonville!

As always, your obedient,

*Col. Miner*