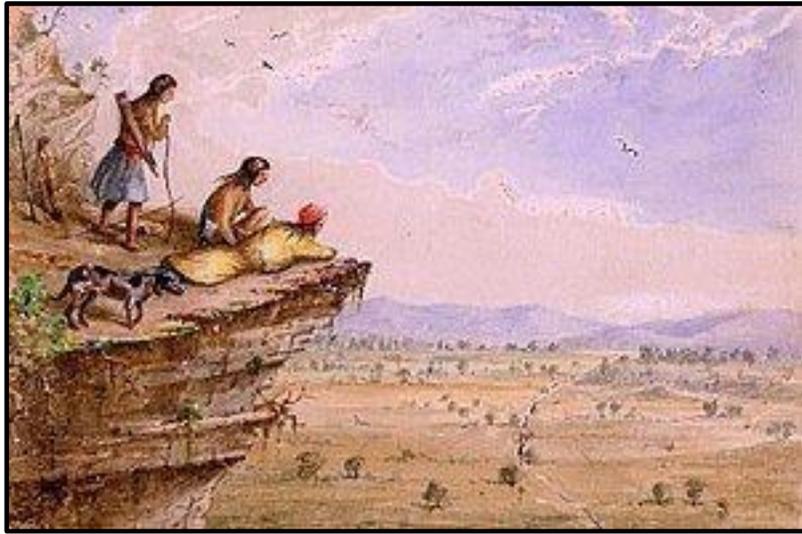


# Independence Creek's Indian Hideout/Lookout Site

West Texas Archeological Society

May 2025



*(painting by Arthur Lee Tracy)*

In 2016, members from the Concho Valley/Iraan Archeological Societies and the Independence Creek Nature Conservancy Preserve manager, Lisa Wrinkle, hiked up a nearby mesa slope to look at a spot that Lisa had encountered on a previous hike. It was unusual to find mid-1800s metal and glass trash on a ledge overlooking several valley drainages two hundred fifty yards upslope and 250 feet above the creek bed, but what we stumbled upon surprised everyone. We weren't sure what to do with it. So, we shelved it for the time being. No follow-up ever came of it. However, I could never put it to rest. It was important, somehow. During the 2016 investigation, C.A. Maedgen, using his metal detector as we climbed the hill, found an unexpected artifact – an 1850s-era military 'shoulder scale' epaulet, also called metallic scales.



**End Crescent of Shoulder Scale Epaulet**



**Underplate for Shoulder Scale Epaulet** (photos C.A. Maedgen)



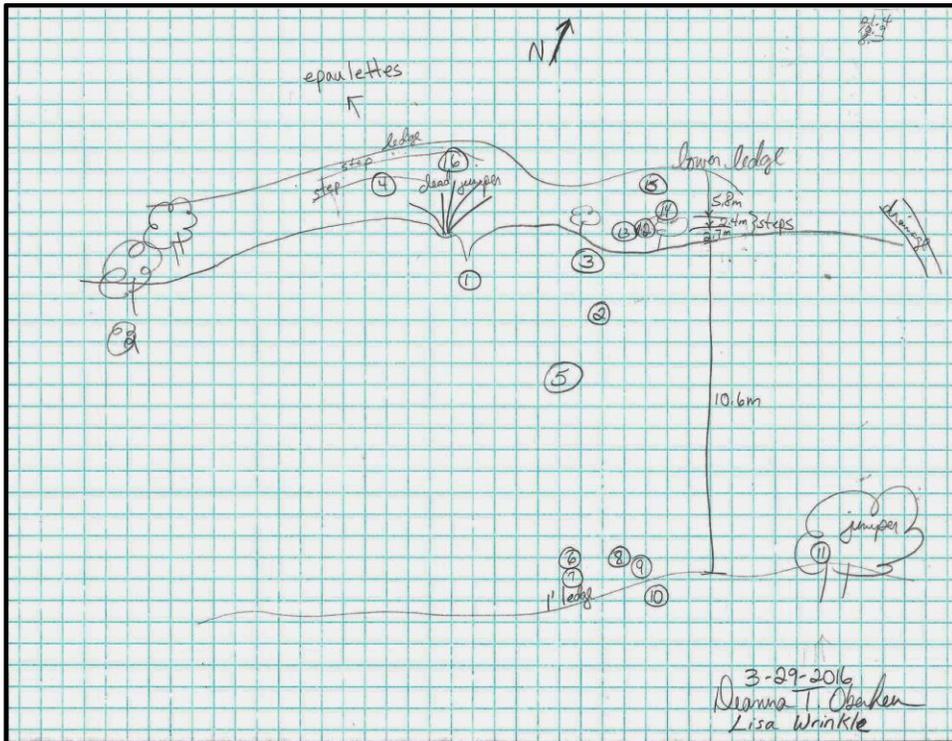
**The Mesas Surrounding Independence Creek**



**Underplate in Situ, Lodged Under Rock** (photo C.A. Maedgen)

Further investigation uncovered two more in the same area. They were around 30 feet below a rock ledge and lodged under rock outcroppings. In all, we found three brass epaulet crescents and iron underplates.

We also found trash left behind by those who had tossed the epaulets. Each of these trash items was GPS pinpointed and brought back for analysis. In that trash was the remnant of a fourth epaulet. It is a cut and hammered piece of the fourth epaulet crescent.



Artifact Data Sheet



Artifacts Display at Independence Creek Nature Preserve

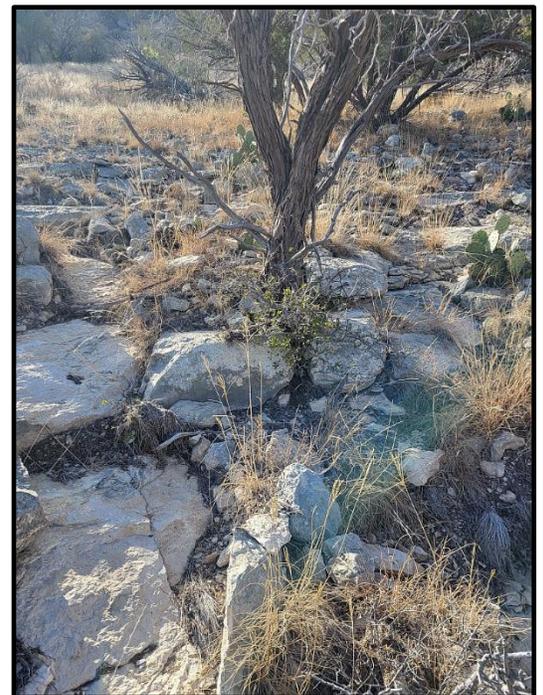
## **Our Return Field Investigation**

In early 2025, we contacted the current manager and asked about the artifacts. The items were being kept in a display case in the manager's office. We returned to view the items, conduct measurements, take new photos, and discuss the nine-year-old find. This led quickly to a second reconnaissance of the hill.

During the subsequent field investigation, a few more items were found directly above and below the ledge where the trash had been previously discovered. Although the area bounded by metal trash only measures about 30 by 75 feet, the total area of this intermediate plateau is large. It is relatively level ground covering about two and a half acres. We also found something that gave insight into the choice of this site as a lookout and hideout. We found an ancient burn rock midden 90 yards from the lookout area. It measures 18 feet in diameter and is about a foot deep in burned rock at the center. A midden of this size usually indicates a source of clean water nearby. In this case, being 250 feet in elevation above the creek, water would be an extremely important factor. Thirty yards from the midden is a former fractured rock seep spring source. If this spring source was still producing in the mid-1800s, it would also be invaluable to anyone with horses in a temporary camp so high up.

A Google Earth imagery review of the terrain below this ledge site reveals that there is only one way up, which is essentially the route our investigation group took as we climbed to the ledge and found the shoulder scales. This is especially true if someone was leading horses up to this site. It would not be easy, but it could be done with horses used to handling this rocky terrain.

On our return down to the creek, we discovered another metal detecting hot spot containing small metal items spread over a fairly confined area. This spot is on the logical trail leading up to the lookout ledge. However, two items found at this site are critical to the analysis that this metal trash is from Indians. Those are two square, hand-made bronze buttons, each being one centimeter in size. The buttons are chisel cut, filed, and the holes are crudely punched with nails. These items are depicted in Artifact Site #2, later in this report.



**Former Fracture Spring Source**



## Mounted Forces Shoulder Scale Epaulets



The shoulder scales were ordered to be worn by the mounted force in the 1851 uniform regulations. (Steffen) At that time, they were either mounted rifles or dragoons. In Texas, the mounted rifles were essentially a volunteer organization. For example, three companies arrived at Fort Chadbourne in 1854 to aid the 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Dragoons in a campaign against the Comanche. (Pate) The U.S. Army infantry also wore the metal scale epaulets, but according to the 1854 clarification (issued via General Orders No. 3, March 13, 1854, and Quartermaster Circular) which standardized and restricted their use, they were authorized only for enlisted infantry on dress parade only.

After the Mexican War, the dragoons were assigned to Texas and Kansas posts. By the mid-1850s, the army was transitioning, with two regiments of cavalry being added to the two regiments of dragoons, one regiment of mounted riflemen. (Ketcham) Dragoons are considered to have been active in Texas from 1848 to 1855. (Dragoons) The 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Dragoons Regiment at Fort Chadbourne was disbursed to Fort Riley, Kansas, in August 1855. (Pate)

The US Army organized two cavalry regiments in 1855. The Army considered the new cavalry a more mobile fighting force than dragoons. The Second United States Cavalry Regiment was one of four new regiments approved by Congress on March 4, 1855. It was an elite organization explicitly organized for service on the Texas frontier. The troopers rode the finest horses and were issued the latest equipment and firearms. Companies of the Second Cavalry were stationed at Forts Belknap, Chadbourne, Clark, Inge, Mason, McIntosh, McKavett, and camps Colorado, Cooper, and Verde. They remained in Texas until the Civil War. (Simpson)

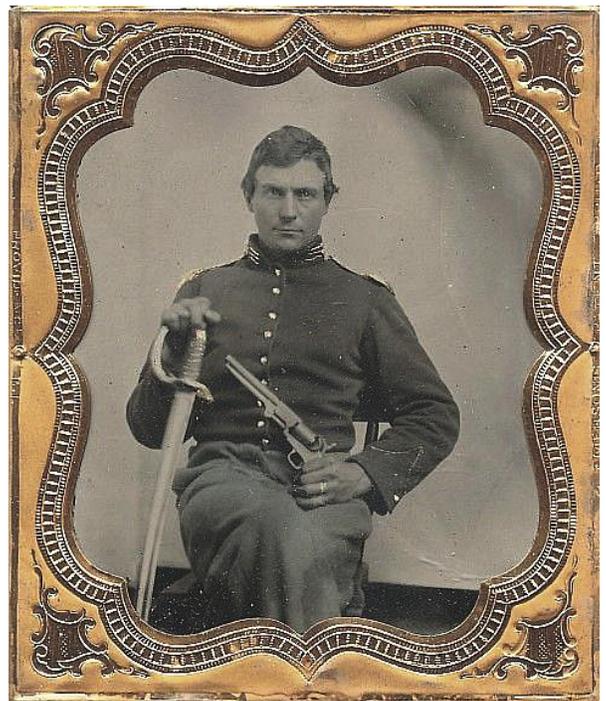
## Shoulder Scale Epaulets

The shoulder scales were produced in three different patterns of bronze and brass for mounted riflemen in the 1850s. It is unclear as to the timing, but it can be assumed that the bronze was first issued as early as 1846, and the brass was issued later, probably after the 1851 uniform regulation changes.

In 1854 to 1872, there were three styles: one for staff non-commissioned officers, one for sergeants, and one for privates. For staff NCOs, the scales had three rows of beads on the scales. For privates and corporals, the scales were plain, with only a thin undersection soldered to the top layer of scales and crescent. The underplate was substantially thicker for sergeants compared to the privates and corporals. A brass strip was soldered to the pan and attached to the bottom with a thumb turn, which would fit under a brass clip sewn onto the jacket. Shoulder scales were worn up to and through the Civil War. They were removed from the uniform in 1872.



Example of an intact shoulder scale from underneath



Cavalry Soldier with Shoulder Scales and an 1851 Colt Revolver (Library of Congress)

## History and Area Analysis

Finding four shoulder scales in this environment is highly unusual. The remnants came from two men's uniforms. Shoulder scales were an item to be treated with respect and care by soldiers. They were a statement of rank with a long military tradition. They would not be carelessly lost. Thus, all indications point to these being taken by force, which, in addition to the location, makes this site a probable Indian

raiding party hideout and lookout location. The other various trash artifacts indicate it was used more than once.

We also believe that the shoulder scales also point to a time frame from 1854 to 1861 when the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment was brought in to do longer range patrolling for Indians. In 1861 the Civil War required Union troops to leave Texas.

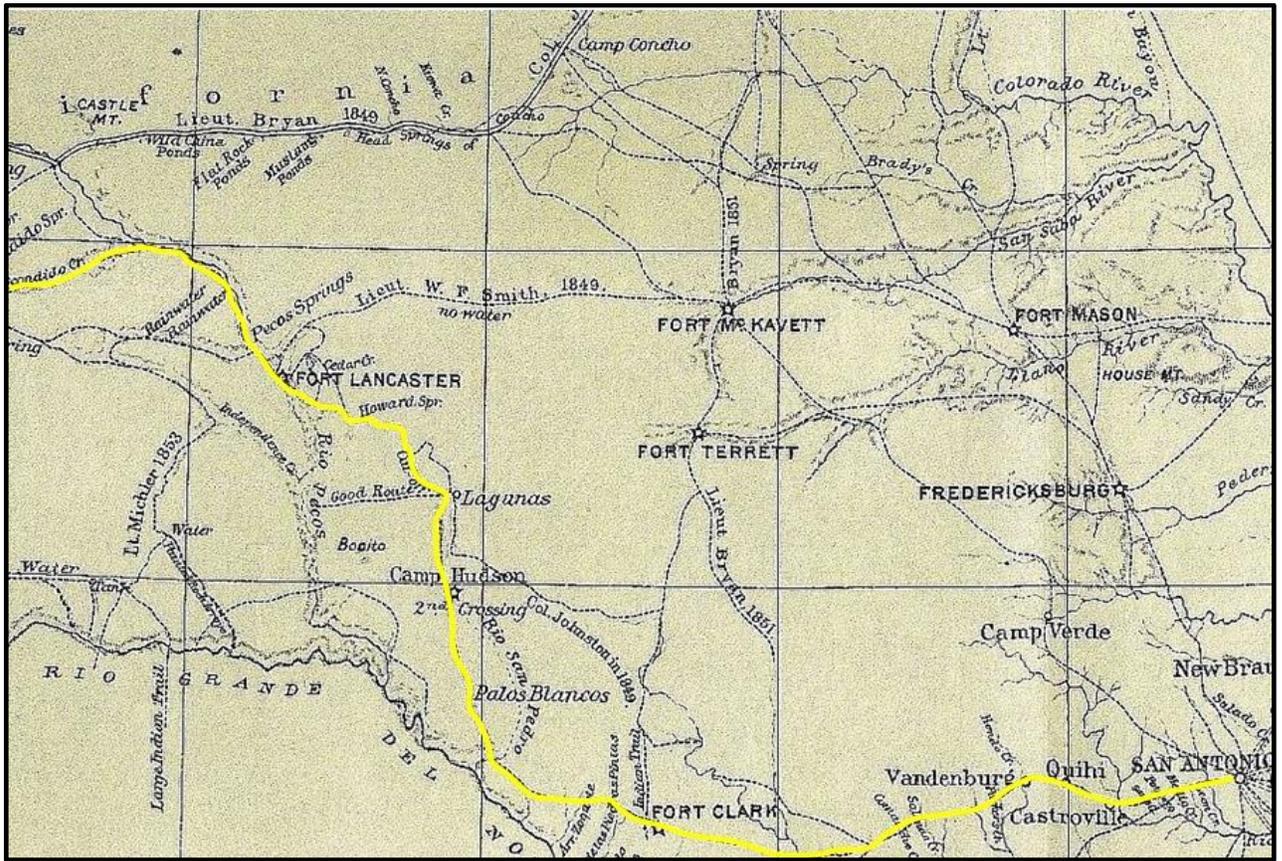
When Union troops returned after the war, they continued wearing shoulder scales until 1872. During the period before the Civil War, little was known about Independence Creek. It was not until the mid-1870s that the military began patrolling through this Lower Pecos River region. However, the 'Lower Emigrant Road/Chihuahua Trail,' running up the Devil's River and over to Fort Lancaster, was very active in the 1850s with Indian raids. They were a real danger to all travelers.

This road was given many names. In addition to the Lower Emigrant Trail, it was the Chihuahua Trail, Government Road, Old Spanish Road, and later, San Antonio-El Paso Road. It was a major route for early emigrants on their way to California, as well as military, stagecoaches, and freighters. One location on the southern portion of the road, now Texas State Highway 163, is named Dead Man's Pass due to the many attacks during this period.

The Lower Emigrant Road was easily accessible from this location by Indians who knew the area from millennia of migrations through the area, coming up from Mexico for their buffalo hunts in the plains of the upper Pecos River region or migrations to northeastern New Mexico and the Guadalupe Mountains.

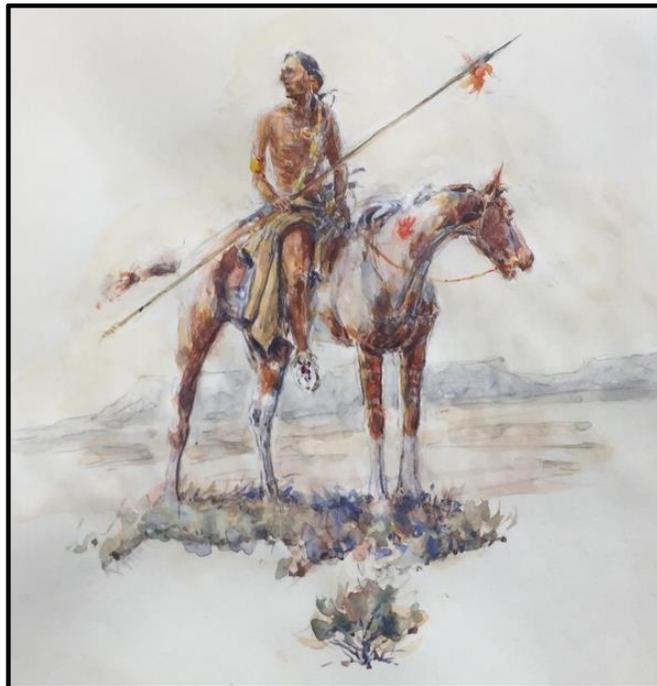
Coming up from the south, the northern section of the road crosses westerly at an angle from the Devil's River to Fort Lancaster. On the westerly crossing, there was a significant stopping point called Howard's Spring. This was the location of many Indian attacks over the years. It is only 20 miles from Independence Creek.





Lower Emigrant Road

## The Indians



(painting by Mike Capron)

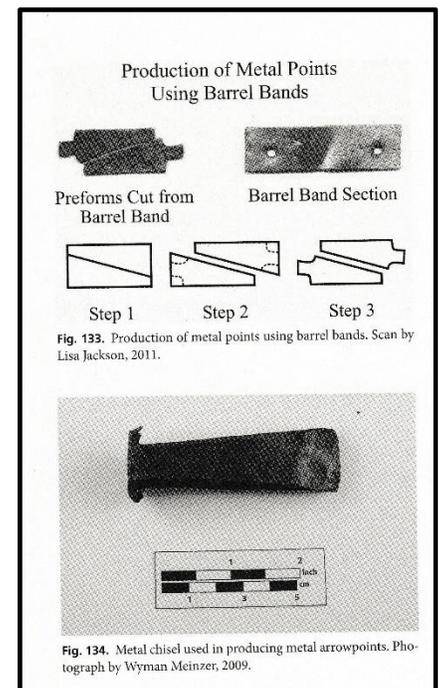
The attacks on the Lower Emigrant Road were usually by Comanche and/or Apache. Traffic along the road began to pick up in the mid-1800s. Wagon trains, freighters, stagecoaches, and the military used it. To the Indians, the growing traffic along the road was the harbinger of the final demise of their nations and culture. Both Comanche and Apache had been at war with Mexico for decades, and this continued throughout Texas as westward expansion grew across the land. European diseases had dramatically reduced their numbers. The westward expansion was perceived as the Indian's ultimate threat above the border. To them, it was a desperate fight for survival. They hoped that their brutal guerrilla attacks would halt traffic flow altogether. With each successful attack, they would take what they could scavenge and carry on a swift horse. If an armed party returned and gave chase, the spoils would be divided, and the group would split into smaller bands to head in multiple directions. Besides the obvious food and weapons they might acquire, the prized possessions were metal objects that could be reused into tools, weapons (such as metal arrowheads), and ornaments. Metal files, chisels, hammers, and other tools that could help work the metal were highly prized. Brass was prized for ceremonial ornamentation. Another fight trophy for young warriors would be military uniform jackets. It was often reported that certain Indian chiefs were seen wearing a military jacket from a previous fight.



(painting by Mike Capron)

The Independence Creek hideout appears to have been an intermediate stopping point rather than a full metalworking camp. The evidence suggests that this was a place to reduce the number of items to carry for the remainder of the journey, probably heading south and back into Mexico. Camps with artifacts of more final production have been found closer to the Rio Grande, where the Indians could slip across the river quickly if they thought they might be discovered. The Independence Creek camp gave them the safety and security of being up high up to observe anyone heading down the mesa valley drainages while resting themselves and their horses.

Although barrel hoops were well known to be used by the plains Indians for arrow points, as shown in the attached example, any thick metal that could be carried on horseback through rough terrain was probably a



priority in the Lower Pecos region. Skillets and thick metal pieces and plates are items found in other metalworking camps of the region. These were probably good items if they were in small bands that needed to move quickly across difficult territory. Other items were probably planned for ornamentation. Metal nails of all sizes were probably difficult to obtain for Indians in the mid-1850s, and could be used for all sorts of small projects.

As for the three metal shoulder scale crescents being left behind, we can only speculate. With evidence that the fourth crescent was initially worked, they may have determined that working those pieces into something useful was too much trouble and threw the rest away, keeping just the scaled top pieces and brass underplates.

That leaves the question of the men from whom these uniforms were taken. We found two nearby fights during the period when soldiers were wearing the metallic epaulets. Although there were multiple engagements throughout West Texas, we were looking specifically for ones that were relatively near this location, and where men were killed and had to be left behind, leaving them to be stripped of their uniforms by their Indian attackers. Both of these engagements were in 1857. They were: (1) Lieutenant John Bell Hood and the 1857 ambush at Devil's River, 45 miles east of Independence Creek, and (2) the 1857 attack on a Fort Davis 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment mail detachment at Howard's Spring.

### **Fight on the Devil's River**

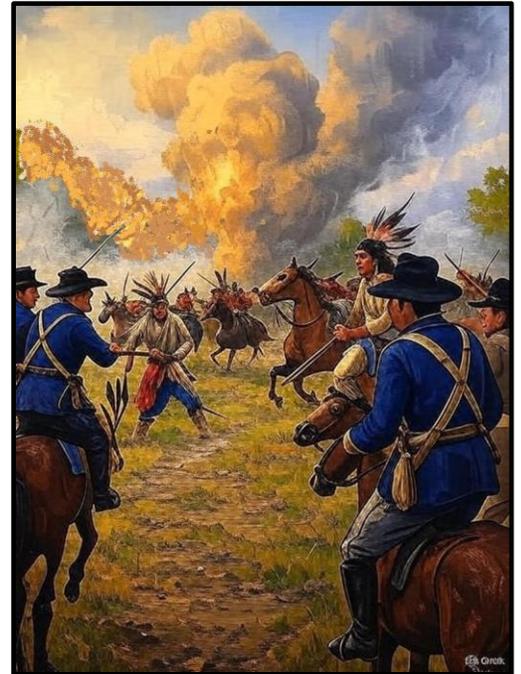
Lieutenant John Bell Hood left Fort Mason on July 5<sup>th</sup> 1857, with a 24-man detachment of Company G, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment, and one Indian guide. His mission was to explore the west to find any sign of Indians passing from north to south. He continued west until coming across a 3-day-old trail of some 15 animals heading south. He followed the trail, which led him down to the Devil's River. He followed the trail down the Devil's River to a point about two miles north of the current junction of Highways 163 and 189. By this time, seven of his men had fallen behind due to exhaustion, leaving him with 17 men. While at the river, ten Indians came off a ridge holding a white flag. Lieutenant Hood thought they might be friendly Tonkawa Indians. The Indians stopped, and five came forward with the flag of peace. Hood ordered his men to remain ready but not fire unless ordered. Suddenly, the Indians dropped the flag, and 30 more rose from



hiding, attacking while others lit dry grass on fire to fill the ambush site with smoke. The ambush was in close quarters and the men were in hand-to-hand combat.

The cavalry detachment was armed with M1855 pistol carbines and an 1851 Colt 44-caliber cap and ball revolver. The Indians had about 12 musket rifles. The rest used lances, knives, bows and arrows. Lieutenant Hood was armed with a double-barrel shotgun and two Colt revolvers. The detachment retreated to draw their 44-caliber revolvers. The additional firepower drove the Indians back and into full retreat.

Lieutenant Hood reported that they killed nine and wounded 10 – 12 Indians. The Indians were not expecting the unit to have such firepower. The detachment surely would have been wiped out if not so well armed.



One cavalry soldier was killed, one was missing, and five were severely wounded, including Lieutenant Hood. They immediately sent to Camp Hudson, 20 miles south of the fight site, for transport of the injured and later retreated to that camp. After initial treatment they went further south to Fort Clark for full medical treatment and to report the incident.

Lieutenant Hood returned to the fight site from Camp Hudson soon thereafter to bury the dead soldier and search for their missing man. They never found the missing soldier. His report stated that the Indians had scattered in all directions when they left. His guide also told him the Indians were Comanche and Lipan Apache, with two separate chiefs. One chief was killed in the fight. John Bell Hood later became a Confederate general during the Civil War. (See **Appendix A for Lieutenant Hood's hand-written report on the fight**)



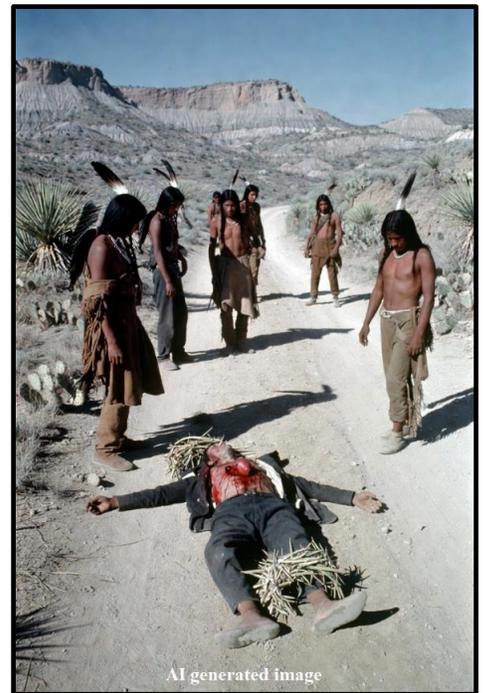
**John B. Hood during Civil War**

## The 1857 Fight at Howard's Spring

A seven-man 8th Infantry Regiment detachment was on their way from Fort Davis to Fort Clark on a military mail run in late 1857. They stopped at Howard's Spring, a regular stop for travelers on the road. It is 20 miles east of Independence Creek and 20 miles southeast of Fort Lancaster.

Two Indians approached their camp, asking for food and tobacco, which they gave them. However, this was a ruse, probably to determine their exact strength. After the Indians departed the camp, the main group of about 60 Indians began their attack with a rifle volley that broke both legs of the sergeant. Three other men were killed in the initial fight. Only three survived and were able to retreat to Fort Lancaster.

When the rescue party arrived at the scene, the Indians had taken the mules, wagon, and mail. They found the sergeant stripped but unscalped. His heart had been cut out and cut into four pieces and laid back on his chest. A wreath of Spanish Dagger yucca leaves was placed around one ankle. (Williams) Historian Clayton Williams theorized that these may have been in honor of the bravery of a fallen warrior. However, a different perspective was conveyed to us by Chief Gonzalez of the Lipan Apache Band of Texas. It is documented that the sergeant chose suicide, which Indians considered a disgrace to the Lipan Apache Indians. The cut heart and yucca band on the ankle might have been to indicate the soldier would not be allowed to pass to the Great Spirit. Cutting the heart into four pieces means the soldier's legacy was eternally shattered - his spirit condemned to aimless exile across the four winds as retribution for cowardice. The fact the body was unscalped tends to support this theory. The Encyclopedia of American Indian History notes that scalping gave prestige to the scalper since it furnished direct proof of a warrior's prowess.



## Artifact Analysis

### **Artifact Site #1 (Upper ledge): Significant Items**

Of the two 1857 incidents, the Hood fight appears to fit more closely with the three epaulets and piece of the fourth found at Independence Creek Indian lookout/hideout. However, this is based on the fact

that four epaulets can be accounted for instead of eight, which would have come from the bodies of the Howard Spring ambush.



**Artifact Epaulets after Investigation Hike** (photo C.A. Maedgen)

**Fourth Epaulet:** The fourth epaulet was not found because they had already begun working it. Although it was already cut and hammered, one discarded artifact fits as being from a metal epaulet. It is brass, fits the exact width of metal, matches the patina, and matches curvature of the epaulet crescent. It also has clear chisel marks along the cut section. The cut indicates a 1/2 inch wide chisel.



**Cut and Hammered Epaulet Crescent**



**Epaulet and Cut/Hammered Epaulet Piece Inserted Into Photo For Comparison**

We did not find any military jacket buttons, leading us to believe the jackets were kept as trophies while the epaulet scales were cut off. However, although the brass crescents and iron underplates were found, the brass scales on the top of the epaulets and brass uniform connection plates were not found. These may have been kept for some future ornamentation. One example found in an archeological dig, called the Dark Canyon Rancheria Apache/military fight site, New Mexico. The remnants of a shoulder scales epaulet was incorporated into a handbag. (Adams)



#### Re-creation of New Mexico Apache Bag from Shoulder Scale Artifact

Another example of shoulder scale pieces used as ornamentation was found by one of our members at an Indian campsite 50 miles south of Independence Creek. It is the brass connecting plate from a shoulder scale epaulet. It was in a canyon leading down to a Rio Grande River crossing. It was made into ornamentation, possibly to be incorporated into a necklace.



(photo Kinley Coyan)

Trash found below a ledge 250 yards up a steep slope is anomalous in itself. Neither military nor civilians went to such extremes to occupy lookout sites. On further examination, several of the items had been cut with a chisel, probably in production of metal arrowheads, tools, and ornamentation pieces.

**Frying Pan Rim:** An iron camp frying pan was hacked up in a way that clearly indicates chiseling out pieces for metal arrowhead production. The metal rim section measures 14 inches. It is fairly thick (1.3mm), typical of the types used for arrowhead production. The piece had been thoroughly exploited and discarded.



**Skillet Rim with Chisel Cuts**

A good comparison can be made with another frying pan found in a canyon along the Comanche Trail farther south and west. When compared with the Independence Creek frying pan, the cut up similarities are striking.



**(Comparison example) Skillet Found At Indian Camp on Comanche Trail near Rio Grande River**

**More Chiseled Metal:** A large piece of chiseled up metal measures 1.19mm thick. This piece indicates a 1/2 inch wide chisel was used.



**Cut Up Piece of Metal**

**Chiseled Metal Strip:** A thin discarded metal strip gives good resolution to the chiseling being done to the metal trash pieces. This is some of the best evidence of Indian metal working for arrowhead production. Similar to the epaulet piece, the cuts indicate a  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch wide chisel was used to cut through the metal. The metal in question was 2mm thick. Thus, it was not the same as the skillet rim trash.



**Chiseled Metal Strip**

**Roller Buckle:** A roller buckle found at this site. The roller had been removed. The leather strapping may have been considered more important than the buckle itself.

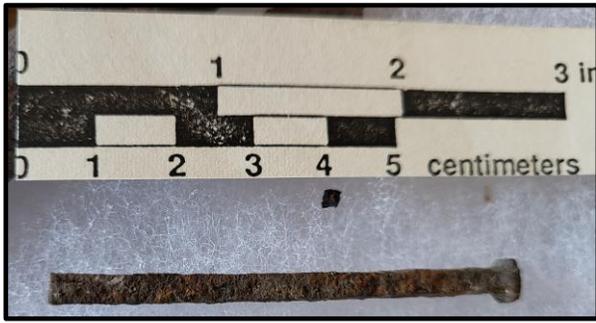


**Roller Buckle**

**Can lids:** The three can lids found are hole-and-cap manufacturing. Hole-and-cap manufacturing began in the late 1840s and was used prior to and throughout the Civil War and into the 1870s. These cans would have been carried by military and emigrants traveling along the Lower Emigrant Road during the period in question. These tops were soldered on, leaving the larger hole open for foods to be inserted. The second round cap with another center hole was then soldered on. The can was heated to remove as much inner air as possible, and then the small center hole was soldered over the seal of the can. The method of opening these particular cans is anomalous. They appear crudely cut open with a large knife, whereas most cans we find of this type are cut circularly around the rim.



**Crudely Cut Hole-and-Cap Can Lids**



One of Two Square Nail Cut and Hammered Into Hole Punch

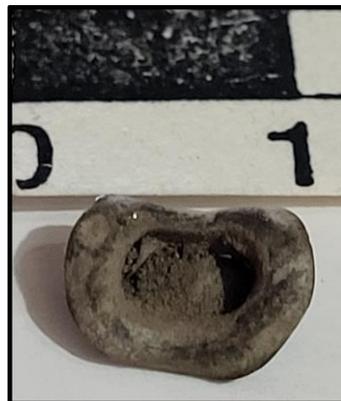


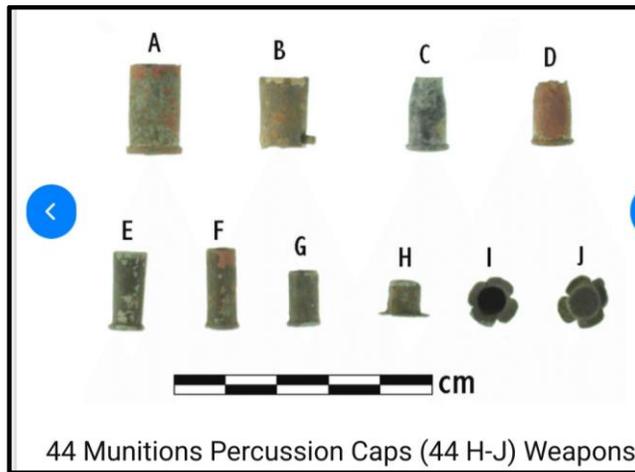
Cut Up Wagon Trace Chain



Cut Chain or Latch

**Percussion Cap for a 44-Caliber Revolver:** This percussion cap was found 30 feet from the general area that appeared to be a metal working area of the lookout camp. It matches example 'H' in the chart below. One man of the Hood fight was never found. He was last seen crawling to a hiding spot in bushes and would have had his revolver with him. This may have been an attempt of a firing that revolver by Indians who were completely unfamiliar with that weapon in 1857.





Various percussion caps for .44 caliber cap & ball revolvers. Item H matches the Independence Creek artifact.

**Artifact Site #2 (Mesa slope below ledge):**



All items at this site were found within a boundary of 120 square yards, leading us to believe they were initially in some kind of bag (or several bags) which got dropped while heading up the trail. There are four pieces to a brass monocular (probably telescoping). The brass brad is probably from a military rucksack or uniform item. The two items on the far right appear to be cut-up gun cleaning rods. The hook item is probably a buckle prong that was pried off the buckle bar. The tacks may be off a wagon tarp or boot nails. The nails appear to be box nails of various sizes. The screws are typical wagon type. Above the buckles is a

cinch buckle, usually on the back of a vest. Note that the hole-in-cap cans are missing all solder. Lead solder was usually collected to gather enough to make lead rifle balls. Interestingly, the upper site tin can lids still contain the solder. This may indicate that, although the two sites could be related, they were probably not from the same time period. Can lids were usually left behind, while the can body was hammered flat to be cut for making ornamental tinklers. The bronze cut and punched handmade buttons are the key items that identify this entire grouping of metal scrap as being of Indian loot origin.



**Brass Monocular pieces**



**Actual 1850s example measuring just 5" closed**



**Hand-made Bronze Buttons**



**Pewter button**



**Hole-in-Cap Can Lids missing lead solder**



**DR. GUYSOTT'S - YELLOW DOCK / & / SARSAPARILLA - B. & P. NEW YORK**

The B. & P. is for Demas Barnes & John Park who had a New York business partnership from 1855 to 1868 with the rectangular bottle being introduced in about 1857 (Fike 1987). The pontil scar indicates this is one of the earliest bottles.

### **An Additional Artifact:**

An unknown lodge guest found an unidentified metal hat pin, which we began researching. The pin is a partial piece of an 1855 Hardee Cavalry Hat Pin.



The Hardee Hat was created by Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, in 1855 as a distinctive hat for the two new cavalry regiments being stood up. One of those regiments was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment in Texas. Fort Mason was one of the forts for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment, which Lieutenant Hood's detachment attacked at the Devil's River in 1857 belonged to. The hats were first issued to the regiments in 1857. (Smithsonian)

The hatpin is missing the background usually found between the eagle wings. That background has been cut away, probably with a knife. It also has two crude holes punched in it from behind and at the top corners of the shield. This pin was likely a looted item from the Hood River fight site and was probably to be used as an Indian trophy ornamentation. It appears that the olive branch that would be in the right talon was cut out, but the arrows were kept.



**Example**

## Conclusion

The artifacts at both sites strongly suggest that this was an Indian hideout and lookout, with some initial metal cutting being conducted. However, the difference becomes evident when compared to metal production camps found farther south. Other than the two handmade buttons that were dropped, no finished or partially finished products were at the Independence Creek site. Everything was initial cuts of looted items, with the remaining unwanted pieces left behind. A comparison of items found farther south on private property near the Rio Grande River provides a good comparison and difference.



**These items were found at Indian metal production camp south of Independence Creek, near the Rio Grande River. Left to right: Arrowhead stem cutouts, needles, arrowhead preforms, tinklers, horseshoe nails, buttons, musket sight, horseshoe pieces, tin can top left behind from can body that was used for tinklers**

Who may have used this camp is more difficult to assess. We know that the Comanche were still using the Devil's River route as one of their western trails into and out of Mexico in the early and mid-1800s. In fact, Lieutenant Hood was following a Comanche group down that route from the Middle Concho River, where the trail was discovered. However, the Lipan Apache had been using the migration route up through Independence Creek for centuries as part of their annual migrations to the upper Pecos River plains for buffalo hunts and into the Guadalupe Mountains in the hot summer months. By the mid-1800s, the Mescalero Apache of Mexico had made New Mexico their home territory. It was the Lipan Apache that maintained their encampments in northern Mexico and carried out their raids into southern Texas. This continued well into the late 1870s, as reported by Lieutenant John L. Bullis. (Bullis) So, it is a reasonable proposition that the Lipan Apache were the ones using this site after raids on travelers of the Lower Emigrant

Road. Had pursuers followed, they would have lost the trail as they reached Independence Creek while the Indians could watch from above. The raiding party could then continue their trek up to the mesa top and safely continue their journey to the south.

Although it cannot be absolutely determined, the most likely fight from which the four shoulder scales originated is the Hood Devil's River fight. That fight lost two men who had to be left behind. One man was never found, and one was left for at least one day before the soldiers could return to bury the body. In combination, three items tie back to that fight site: the 44-caliber percussion cap, four epaulets, and the Hardee Hat eagle pin.

The Howard's Well fight left four men behind, one of whom was a sergeant. The infantry did not wear shoulder scales. However, the expensive brass monocular may well have been something a detachment sergeant would have carried. So, it could be that the site was used for a respite after multiple fights. Could there be artifacts brought from two different fight sites? It's an intriguing possibility.



A depiction of a Lipan Apache warrior by Fredrich Richard Petri, circa 1850

***Note: Independence Creek Preserve visitation is limited to volunteer workdays and various special events throughout the calendar year. An appointment is needed for visits outside of these organized events. For more information, contact West Texas Preserves Manager Ryan Thornton [ryan.thornton@TNC.ORG](mailto:ryan.thornton@TNC.ORG)  
<https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/places-we-protect/independence-creek-preserve/>***

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## Appendix A: Lieutenant Hood's Written Report

Fort Clark, Texas

July 27<sup>th</sup> 1857

Sir,

I have the honor to submit the following detailed report of a scouting party under my command, consisting of twenty-four men of Company G, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of July, I left Fort Mason to proceed to a point some fifteen miles west of Fort Terrett, and examine and explore a trail reported by Lieutenant Shaaff to be running north and south. I found no such trail. I then marched for the head of the South Concho, about half way between Fort Terrett and this point. I found a water hole, which is a general camp for Indians, passing from Fort Terrett to the head of the Concho, avoiding of the San Saba. I proceeded from the head of the mouth of the South Concho, up the main Concho, to Royall Creek; thence to its source, and from there to the mouth of Kiowa Creek, where I struck an Indian trail about three days old, leading south with some fifteen animals in the party. I followed it south, then east, to a water hole two miles south of the head of Lipan Creek. I then followed them due south to water holes from thirty five to fifty miles apart, this line of water holes being their main route from the lower to the upper country, and on the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, which was my fourth day in their pursuit, I came to a water hole some seven miles above the head of the Devils River where a second party had joined them. Their camp showed that some thirty or forty had camped there. I hurried on, although my horses were very much wearied, and trailed over the bluffs and mountains, down the river, but some three miles from it, late in the afternoon, from extreme thirst of my men, I left the trail to go to the river and camp. About one mile from the trail, I discovered some two miles and a half from me on a ridge, some horses and a large white flag waving. I then crossed over to the ridge without water, supposing they were a party of Tonkawa, as instructions had been received at Fort Mason that a party of Tonkawa had gone for the

families, and the troops, on their raising the white flag, were to allow them to pass. I cautioned my men not to fire until I ordered it. My fighting force consisted of seventeen men.

I advanced upon them about an hour by sun, with my precautions, ready to fight or talk. They were on a very small mound, but only some ten Indians in sight. I advanced and some five of them came forward with the flag, and when my party were in some thirty paces, they dropped the flag, set fire to a lot of rubbish they had collected, and about thirty rose up from among the Spanish Bayonets, in ten paces of us, with about twelve rifles, and the rest with arrows. Besides, eight or them attacked us mounted with lances and arrows. My men gave one yell and went right in their midst and fought hand to hand. The Indians, from their heavy fire beating us back a little until I rallied my men with their six shooters. Our being in four or five paces, our shots were so heavy we drove them back. One of my men hung his rifle on the cantle of his saddle to use his six-shooter, and an Indian took it off. I forced them back until all the shots of my rifles and six-shooters were expended, then found I could not reload owing to their deadly fire. I fell back a short distance to do so. If had had two six-shooters to a man I would have killed and wounded near all of them. The Indians were then busy gathering up their dead and wounded and leaving, weeping and moaning over their loss. In the engagement, I killed nine and wounded ten or twelve. I regret to be compelled to report my loss. One man killed, one man missing, supposed to be killed. One man dangerously wounded, myself and three men severely wounded. One horse killed and three wounded. After the engagement, I had but eleven men to protect my wounded men and horses. I then withdrew to water, which I found about ten o'clock at night. I immediately sent an express to Lieutenant Finck, 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Commanding Camp Hudson, for a wagon to transport my wounded to his camp.

As soon as my wounded were cared for, Lieutenant Finck cheerfully joined me with fifteen men, and we proceeded to the place of action to bury the dead and make search for the missing man, but no traces of him could be found. From this place, the Indians

had scattered in all directions. Owing to my small force and the broken-down condition of my horses, I was unable to make any further pursuit. I then came to Camp Hudson and from there to this post, where I shall remain a day or two to recruit my men and horses and proceed to Fort Mason.

It is due my noncommissioned officers and men, one and all, to say during the scout in all their suffering for water, they did their duty cheerfully, and that during the action, they did all men could do, accomplishing more than could be expected from their number and the odds against which they had to contend.

From what my guide says, I suppose they were Comanche and Lipan. There were two chiefs. One was killed by my adjutant.

I am sir,

Very respectfully, your servant

John B. Hood

Lieutenant, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cav



Fort Clark,  
July 27<sup>th</sup> 1837.

Sir:

I have the honor to submit the following detailed report of a Scouting party under my command, consisting of twenty-four men of Company "G." 2<sup>d</sup> Cavalry.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of July, I left Fort Mason to proceed to a point some fifteen miles West of Fort Terrett, and examine and explore a trail reported by Lieut Thraff to be running North and South. I found no such trail. I then marched for the head of the South Concho, about half way between Fort Terrett and this point. I found a water hole which is a general Camp for Indians passing from Fort Terrett to the head of the Concho, avoiding the San Jaba. I proceeded from the head to the mouth of the South Concho, up the main Concho, to Royall Creek; thence to its source, and from there to the mouth of Kioway Creek, where I struck an Indian trail about three days old, leading South with some fifteen Animals in the party. I followed it South, then East, to a water hole two miles South of the head of Lapsan Creek. I then followed them due South, to water holes from thirty-five to fifty miles apart (this line of water holes being their main route from the lower to the upper Country), and on the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> inst. which was my fourth day in their pursuit, I came to a water hole some seven miles above the head of Devil's River, where a second party

had joined them; their Camps showed that some thirty or forty had camped there. I hurried on, although my horses were very much wearied, and trailed over the bluffs and mountains, down the River, but some three miles from it; late in the afternoon, from the extreme thirst of my men, I left the trail to go to the River and Camps. About one mile from the trail, I discovered, some two miles and a half from me on a ridge, some horses and a large white flag waving. I then crossed over to the ridge without water, supposing they were a party of Outlaws, as instructions had been received at Fort Mason that a party of Outlaws had gone for their families, and the Troops, on their raising a white flag, were to allow them pass. I cautioned my men not to fire until I ordered it; my fighting force consisting of seventeen men, I advanced upon them about an hour by Sun, with every precaution, ready to fight or talk. They were on a very small mound, but only some ten Indians in sight. I advanced and some five of them came forward with the flag, and when my party were in some thirty paces they dropped the flag, set fire to a lot of rubbish they had collected, and about thirty rose up from among the Spanish Bayonets, in ten paces of us, with about twelve Rifles, and the rest with Arrows; besides eight or ten attacked us mounted with Lances and Arrows, my



T-189 1857 Enc-1  
FW T-203 1857

So soon as my wounded were cared for  
Lieut Flint cheerfully joined me with fifteen  
men, and we proceeded to the place of  
action, to bury the dead and make  
search for the missing man, but no  
traces of him could be found. From  
this place the Indians had scattered  
in all directions & owing to my small force  
and the broken down condition of my horses  
I was unable to make any further pursuit.  
I then came to Camp Hudson and from  
there to this Post, where I shall remain a  
day or two to recruit my men and horses  
and then proceed to Fort Mason.

It is due my Non Commissioned Officers  
and men, one and all, to say during  
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they did their duty cheerfully, and that  
during the action they did all men  
could do, accomplishing more than  
could be expected from their number  
and the odds against which they  
had to contend.

From what my Guide says, I suppose  
they were Comanches and Lipans. There  
were two Cheifs, one was killed by my  
Sergeant.

To  
Sr Chas. W. Fisher  
Post Capt,  
Fort Mason,  
Texas

Off. 19 (Com. Cav.) Aug 1857  
189 5 (Pass. Aug. 21 1857)  
FW T-203 1857

I am, Sir,  
very Respectfully,  
your obt. Servant,  
J. W. Wood  
Sr. 2<sup>nd</sup> Cav.

T-159 1857 ENCL-1  
FW T-203 1857

As soon as my wounded were cared for  
Gier & I with cheerfully joined me with fifteen  
men, and we proceeded to the place of  
action, to bury the dead and make  
search for the missing man, but no  
traces of him could be found. From  
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they were Comanches and Lipans. There  
were two Cheips. One was killed by my  
Sergeant.

To  
Sr. Chas. W. Fisher  
Post Capt,  
Fort Mason,  
Texas

1897  
FW T-203  
1857

87  
1857  
Aug 18 1857

I am, Sir,  
very Respectfully,  
your obt. Servt.,  
Geo. F. Wood  
Sr., 2<sup>nd</sup> Cav.

Return of a Detachment of Company G, 3<sup>d</sup> Cavalry, Commanded by 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant John B. Reed, 3<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry, after an affair with Indians on the South River, Texas, on the 29<sup>th</sup> July 1857.

Regiment	Company	In Duty						Total	Engaged	Killed or Wounded	Missing	Killed	
		1 <sup>st</sup> Sergeant	Sergeant	Corporal	Private	Drum	Musician					Killed on Action	Wounded
3 <sup>d</sup> Cavalry	G	1	1	1	1	13	4	22	23	1	1	1	3

No	Name	Rank	Description
<u>Killed on Action</u>			
1	Thomas Ryan	Squad	Killed in a hand to hand conflict with the Indians, being shot through the head part of the rifle ball.
<u>Wounded</u>			
1	John B. Reed	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut	Wounded in a hand to hand conflict with the Indians, shot through the left hand and finger with an arrow.
1	John Smith	Squad	Shot in the right leg with an arrow, his hand being under him, and on falling to the ground the arrow entered in the back.
2	William F. Williams	"	Shot through the left hand and wrist with an arrow.
3	Thomas C. Smith	"	Shot in the back near the point of the shoulder with an arrow.
4	John S. Reed	"	Shot in the right side near the lower part of the spine with an arrow.
<u>Missing</u>			
1	William Denny	Squad	When I last saw him he was fighting bravely by my side, and I suppose received a mortal wound, and would not have survived, had he not been rescued.

John B. Reed  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut  
Commanding the Detachment.