

### Spartan Band: Burnett's 13th Texas Cavalry in the Civil War

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## Review

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**Reid, Thomas** *Spartan Band: Burnett's 13th Texas Cavalry in the Civil War*.  
University of North Texas Press, \$29.95, hardcover ISBN 157441896

New drama in the western theatre

Unit fought in Vicksburg, Red River, and Camden campaigns

Thomas Reid's **Spartan Band: Burnett's 13th Texas Cavalry in the Civil War** is a splendidly crafted account of an East Texas cavalry regiment formed in 1862. Like many Texas cavalry units, it was forced to dismount and fight as infantry for the majority of the war. The 13th Texas Cavalry was part of the largest unit from the Lone Star state, Maj. Gen. John G. Walker's Texas Division of infantry.

Regimental histories in the Trans-Mississippi theatre are rare, and thoroughly researched well-written efforts are rarer still. This volume is among the best. In a comparison of literature of the Civil War by theatre, the Trans-Mississippi is very under-reported, and quite often dismissed as a side-show. Although the actions were smaller in scale compared to great battles in the east, the fighting was no less fierce, the combatants had equally strong beliefs in the cause for which they fought, and this theatre saw the last major significant successes for the Confederates. Walker's Texas Division and the 13th Texas Cavalry played a major part in this effort.

The 13th saw action in Louisiana and Arkansas, fighting in the 1863 Vicksburg Campaign and the 1864 Red River Campaign and its companion Camden Campaign. It fought and made a good account of itself at the battles of Lake Providence, Fort DeRussy, Mansfield, Pleasant Hill, and, finally, at Jenkins' Ferry. The author has done an excellent job of describing the unit's actions and long periods of marching and encampments. The reader is left with a strong sense of what it was like to be a regimental component in a large command on the vicious periphery of the war.

Of particular appeal to those interested, not only in unit histories, but also in genealogical research, are several fine appendices. There is a list of the unit's soldiers who died on active duty during the war, detailing their name, the location and date of their death, the cause and the company in which they served. There is also a unit organization of Walker's Division at the time of the Red River Campaign, a list of the commissioned officers of the 13th Cavalry, and a roster of the soldiers who served in the unit, listed by company.

The author used many primary sources, including letters and diaries from members of the unit, and oral histories from descendents of the participants. This adds to the effectiveness of the work, distinguishing it from most regimental histories. It adds a human face to the story and allows the reader to see the war in the context of private events as well as the greater scope of the war in the West. The book acts a great companion volume to Professor Richard Lowe's incomparable *Walker's Texas Division: Greyhounds of the Trans-Mississippi* (Louisiana State University Press, 2004).

This volume is Number 9 in the *War and the Southwest Series* by the University of North Texas University Press.

*Gary D. Joiner, Ph.D. is an assistant professor of history at Louisiana State University in Shreveport and the director of the Red River Regional Studies Center at LSU. He is the author of One Damn Blunder From Beginning to End: The Red River Campaign in 1864 and a number of books and articles on the Civil War in the West.*