

FIRST TEXAS FIELD BATTERY, CSA

EDGAR'S BATTERY: A PROFILE OF A REBEL UNIT

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Character is not unique to individuals. Several units that participated in our country's civil war demonstrated distinctive personalities by their conduct in the face of conflict and crisis. Much has been written on the role of localism in a unit's experience regarding dedication, discipline and desertion. But, what about the effects of a lack of homogeneity within a unit? Are the effects just as pronounced in a negative fashion? A careful study of a multifarious unit plagued by many internal difficulties may answer this question. Was diversity linked with disunity?

A unit that fits the definition of a diverse group of men united under a common cause is the First Texas Field Battery of Light Artillery. Though the battery did experience unmistakable success, a cohesiveness was not present that many amalgamated units shared. This essay attempts to identify the unique military and personal experiences of this battery and its members by investigating the levels of dedication, discipline, and desertion in relation to its diversity.

It is important to first illustrate the battery's military experiences through a brief history of its service. The unit originated in early November of 1860 when Captain William Edgar established the company, and became the commander. The unit consisted of a loose band of volunteers from the San Antonio area, which Captain Edgar formed into an independent

company.⁽¹⁾ By early February of 1861, this group was called into service by the Texas Committee of Public Safety as a uniformed company consisting of less than fifty men.⁽²⁾ The Committee of Public Safety quickly moved to utilize the Texas troops in neutralizing the United States garrison dispersed across Texas with an estimated strength of some 2,800 men. The confiscation of Federal supplies and munitions was an important component of the mission bestowed upon the state troops. One important target was the United States Military Headquarters for Texas located in San Antonio.⁽³⁾ The Texas commissioners issued orders to Colonel Ben McCulloch to lead a force of Texas volunteers into the city and to seize the federal property. On the afternoon of February 15, 1861, Captain Edgar's company united with McCulloch's troops at the periphery of San Antonio and awaited action. Early the next morning, the armed Texans marched in and occupied the city streets. The outnumbered Federal garrison, commanded by Major General D. E. Twiggs, peacefully surrendered the federal buildings and arsenal to the state troops.⁽⁴⁾ On February 18, Twiggs called for the delivery of all possessions of military or federal property to the State Commissioners of Public Safety and ordered the evacuation of all federal garrisons within the state.⁽⁵⁾

Following the peaceful victory, the majority of McCulloch's force disbanded and returned to their homes. However, Edgar's company was assigned the duty of guarding the property of the "Arsenal-Alamo & Commissary Depots" by the Public Safety Commission. It was during the fulfillment of this assignment that the battery earned the nickname "Alamo City Guards."⁽⁶⁾ The unit continued in this capacity until April 20, 1861, when Colonel Earl Van Dorn called the company into Confederate service under the name of "Edgar's Company 'A', Texas Light Artillery" as an independent company attached to "McCulloch's Regiment of Texas Cavalry" under the command of the Military Department of Texas.⁽⁷⁾ The company strength had been reduced to about sixty men, who signed one year enlistments into Confederate service. The battery received an issue of four guns and ample ammunition seized at San Antonio.⁽⁸⁾ Two days later Captain Edgar was ordered to lead his unit on a march to Powderhorn.

During this march, the Battery received orders to return to San Antonio and prepare for the disarming of Federal troops under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Reeve.⁽⁹⁾ Edgar and the battery joined the forces commanded by Van Dorn near Castroville. The combined force numbered nearly 1400 men. Late on the night of the 8th of May, Reeve

moved his forces to the area near Adam's Hill and San Lucas Springs, fearing an attack by Van Dorn. The Federal forces had dwindled considerably during their marches, down to about 270 men, and were greatly outnumbered by Van Dorn's troops. Yet, Reeve insisted he was not willing to surrender and was prepared to "fight them three to one." Following a series of negotiations, Reeve sent First Lieutenant Zenas Bliss to count the Confederate numbers. After the lieutenant's return, Reeve hastily surrendered his forces.⁽¹⁰⁾

Following the battery's second successful and peaceful operation, Captain Edgar received orders to prepare the unit for action in northeastern Texas. The battery set up camps along the road between San Antonio and Dewitt County, near the Coletto Creek.⁽¹¹⁾ At these locations, Captain Edgar began a recruitment campaign, attempting to establish his company strength at one hundred men. Prior to reaching this goal, the battery was ordered to report to the junction of the Ouachita and Red Rivers. Upon arrival, the unit was then ordered to report to Harrisburg, Texas on Buffalo Bayou, by a route passing through Dallas County. Throughout the march, Edgar continued his recruiting attempts, conscripting men from all across the state. The battery reached Harrisburg and remained there until September of 1861. At this point, the battery was ordered to report to Galveston, where Captain Edgar directed the construction of winter quarters.⁽¹²⁾ During this time, Captain Edgar began attempts to increase the quality and quantity of supplies and guns for the battery. By October, the battery had six guns (four complete with caissons) and had secured ample horses for the transport of the artillery.⁽¹³⁾ Captain Edgar also intensified his recruiting attempts, requesting the appointments of two more officers and advancement for an additional sergeant and two corporals.⁽¹⁴⁾ Galveston Island also served as the location for intensive training of new and old recruits on the science of artillery. Captain Edgar had gained recognition in the Mexican War for his bravery and was regarded as an extremely capable teacher in artillery skills.⁽¹⁵⁾

Though recruiting efforts continued, the battery continued to exist well under the required number of men into the year 1862.⁽¹⁶⁾ In February, the battery was in the First Brigade of the Texas Volunteer Forces. As plans for his battery were being decided, Captain Edgar began to realize that the numbers of conscripts were not sufficient to ensure its continuance. A further complication arose as the original twelve-month enlistments neared expiration on April 21, 1862. By late March, Captain Edgar's fears were realized as the men of the battery remained reluctant to reenlist.⁽¹⁷⁾ Captain Edgar requested, and was granted, a

twenty-day leave of absence in order to return to San Antonio and acquire new recruits.⁽¹⁸⁾ In early April, the battery was ordered to report to Brigadier General T. N. Waul and serve as his Legion's artillery company. The Legion spent some time at Camp Lubbock,⁽¹⁹⁾ but ultimately set up quarters at Camp Waul.⁽²⁰⁾ At the camp, Edgar began to experience success in the reenlistment of his men by providing furloughs and bounties. The battery was again shifted to another command in the Fall of 1862. Brigadier General Henry McCulloch had received orders to organize a division under the Trans-Mississippi Department to serve in Texas and Louisiana. The division was formed at Camp Nelson,⁽²¹⁾ with four brigades, each with its own battery of light artillery. Edgar's Battery had arrived in camp by September and was placed in the Third Brigade. The brigade commander was General McCulloch, who was relieved by Major General John G. Walker as the division commander in late 1862. In November, the division left Camp Nelson and began a difficult march into the area of Little Rock, Arkansas.⁽²²⁾

Following several marches and countermarches in the Little Rock region, orders were given to move toward the Arkansas Post. At the post, winter camp was established on the west bank of the Arkansas River. The division was forced to endure the cruel "winter in its most savage mood," at this camp, fittingly called "Camp Freeze Out."⁽²³⁾ The division abandoned this camp early in 1863, and moved back into the area of Pine Bluff. At these camps Edgar's Battery enjoyed ample provisions and improved health, things that had been lacking at "Camp Freeze Out."⁽²⁴⁾ From January to May, the division carried out several expeditions throughout southern Arkansas and northern Louisiana, ultimately settling camp near Alexandria. Late in May, the division returned to the vicinity of Monroe by steam transport, with orders to march to Vicksburg.⁽²⁵⁾ The Third Brigade was ordered to begin marching toward Judge Perkin's Plantation, where federal troops were reported to be camped. The brigade's presence surprised the federal troops, and they hastily abandoned the camp, leaving provisions and clothing behind. The Union force fell back into a line of battle supported by gun-boats on the Mississippi River. General McCulloch ordered Captain Edgar's Battery forward into an open field in range of the gun-boats. However, before the battery could get into position, they were fired upon. The battery quickly returned fire, and a duel ensued that lasted for over an hour. The federal cannon fire was inaccurate and ineffective, whereas, Edgar's Battery directed convincingly accurate and damaging fire against the federal gun-boats and transports. The federal troops retreated to the transports and withdrew from the area. In this, the battery's first important engagement, it

experienced tremendous success. General McCulloch was very pleased and commended the battery as behaving "gallantly" during the battle.⁽²⁶⁾

In June, McCulloch's Brigade was ordered to proceed to Millikien's Bend and engage the Union camp. Upon approach, the brigade's scouts were suddenly attacked by the Federal pickets. Edgar's Battery returned fire at nearby gun-boats while the remainder of the division initiated hand-to-hand combat. As firing intensified from the gunboat *Choctaw*,⁽²⁷⁾ the brigade was forced to withdraw out of the range of fire.⁽²⁸⁾ The brigade retreated to Richmond, after suffering significant losses.⁽²⁹⁾ At Richmond the division reunited and prepared to face the enemy. Captain Edgar was ordered to prepare his artillery with six rounds of ammunition at the side of each gun. The battery concealed itself until the Union soldiers were within one hundred fifty yards. At this point, Captain Edgar ordered the attack. The battery fired with superb swiftness, inflicting great damage to the Union troops. Following this engagement, the division fell back to the town of Delhi to form a stronger line. The division continued various operations and engagements from Delhi until the surrender of Vicksburg in July of 1863. The men of Walker's Division were surprised and angered by the surrender.⁽³⁰⁾

The division moved to Monroe in mid-July and then on to Alexandria. During the journey, at Vernon, General McCulloch was relieved as the Third Brigade commander by Colonel George Flourney.⁽³¹⁾ The division settled about twenty miles southwest of Alexandria at Camp Green. In late August the division once again picked up camp and began a series of marches and countermarches. On October 17, 1863, Walker's Division united with other Confederate forces, under the command of General Dick Taylor, near the small town of Moundville. About this time, command of the Third Brigade passed to General William R. Scurry, known for his brave leadership at the Battle of Valverde.⁽³²⁾ The brigade's participation was called for in various support actions in the area of Atchafalaya Bayou, including engagements at Grand Coteau, Bayou Boubeau, Carrion Crow and Buzzard's Prairie. In these, and other engagements along the rivers, the battery often dueled with Union gunboats and transports. During the winter movements, the battery suffered much from the poor quality of the roads and unfavorable weather conditions. At many points the battery was left behind until the weather let up and the land became more tolerable. In December the brigade was ordered to set camp at Bayou De Glaize. General Scurry moved his men to the Norwood plantation, a mile north of the camp, and took possession of

some abandoned slave cabins. Here, the brigade established winter quarters. The cabins provided accommodations far superior to what the men had been accustomed.⁽³³⁾ Captain Edgar's Battery, along with a company from each regiment of the brigade, was sent to Simmsport to guard the pontoon bridge on the Atchafalaya Bayou. By late December, the entire brigade was moved to Simmsport, based on reports of Union movement.⁽³⁴⁾ General Scurry ordered the construction of fortifications a short distance from Simmsport at the mouth of Yellow Bayou.⁽³⁵⁾ In the first few months of 1864, the brigade was inundated with rumors of Union movement toward the bayou. On March 7, General Scurry gave orders to prepare for an advancing Union force, led by General Nathaniel P. Banks.⁽³⁶⁾ As the federal troops arrived in Simmsport, the Third Brigade prepared for action.⁽³⁷⁾ However, before an engagement was initiated, General Walker ordered the brigade to fall back and rejoin the division at Marksville. The division, located three miles from Fort De Russy, fought Union advances and engaged in skirmishes all around the fort. However, the fort was overwhelmed by Union advances and surrendered.⁽³⁸⁾

The division moved to a campsite within the Piney Woods. From there, a rigorous march was initiated toward Shreveport up the Alexandra & Burr's ferry road. On March 20th, heavy firing was heard about twelve miles from camp, at McNutt's Hill. Reports were received that the Second Louisiana Cavalry was being pushed from their position by Union forces. The weather had turned to pouring rain and sleet making movements extremely challenging. The next day, Captain Edgar was ordered to lead his battery in support of Colonel Vincent, the cavalry commander. The battery was placed in a "strong position near James' store, where it commanded the valley of the Rapides."⁽³⁹⁾ At this location, the battery spent the entire day engaging the opposing union forces. Orders were sent for the battery and the second Louisiana Cavalry to fall back. However, the courier, Captain Elgee, was captured by Union soldiers, and the orders were never delivered. Captain Edgar, fighting Union aggression and punishing weather, had several men from his battery flee. That night, Union forces, led by General Mower, lodged a surprise attack. The Union soldiers were led by deserters to the rear of the battery on a hidden road (See Figure 1). The surprise resulted in the capture of Captain Edgar's guns and most of his men.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The few men of the battery who managed to escape capture were placed in various positions throughout the brigade.⁽⁴¹⁾

The soldiers of Edgar's Battery were transported to New Orleans where most of the men were imprisoned. In June of 1864, Union Major General E.R.S. Canby and Confederate

General E. Kirby Smith began negotiations on the exchange of prisoners captured in Louisiana. By July, a compromise had been reached and an exchange was ordered.⁽⁴²⁾ At Red River Landing, on July 22, 1864, all the personnel of Edgar's Battery who were imprisoned at New Orleans were exchanged.⁽⁴³⁾ Following the exchange, Captain Edgar began the reformation of the battery. Many members who escaped capture had disbanded, or deserted their posts within the brigade. Captain Edgar struggled to maintain the battery and conciliate his men. They continued to serve in various capacities in the Red River area as an unattached unit. In September of 1864, the battery was placed under the command of the Eighth Mounted Artillery Battalion. The battery moved to Natchitoches where winter quarters were established. Early in 1865, the battery began a move back within the Texas borders. As reports of Confederate units surrendering in the east increased, the battery quickly dissolved. At the surrender in Galveston on June 2, 1865, the battery was included in the list of Confederate troops surrendered, though they had long since disbanded.⁽⁴⁴⁾

With an understanding of the military career of this unit, questions arise concerning the nature of the common soldier. What role did the social, and political profiles of these men play in their experiences? And, how does this unit's pattern compare with others? A look into these factors may provide an indication of the importance of the soldier's background and experiences with relation to unit cohesiveness.

In a military setting, dedication to a command and mission is intrinsically related to the solidarity of a unit. Therefore, in units with close social relations and similarities, a bond is created. In times of war, units must compel their members to exhibit dedication to collective goals that they would not normally pursue. To reach this united nature, units must encourage an environment in which the collective end is synonymous with the individual end. In some units solidarity is present at the outset but becomes weakened as individual desires intensify. This can be seen in the early formation of Edgar's Battery.

As Captain Edgar formed his independent company late in 1860, the membership was generally a closely linked, homogeneous group. In respect to their county of origin, the original unit shared complete uniformity. Twenty-nine men were recruited by Captain Edgar prior to state service, all residents of San Antonio. The unit met and drilled in San Antonio under the power of its own dedication to the captain and the company. This commonality and dedication continued into mid-1861, with the unit's first eighty-five men claiming their residence in Bexar County.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Captain Edgar himself lived in San Antonio and had placed

his residence there since 1848. San Antonio had become the largest town in Texas, following rapid growth in the 1850's.⁽⁴⁶⁾ In this urban setting, the captain had become a respected member of the local society and had held several positions of public office.⁽⁴⁷⁾ His prominent position in the local community undoubtedly played a role in the early unity and dedication of the company. In the early months of the unit's existence, allegiance of purpose must have been present. This is demonstrated by the emergence of desertions and misconduct within the unit at times of adjustment.

As the unit prepared to be called into state service in February of 1861, definite manifestations of disunity were emerging. No reports of desertion or misconduct occurred prior to February. However, within the month following acceptance into state service, the unit experienced a flood of desertion and misconduct. Eight men were reported to have deserted; ten men were discharged for "unsoldierlike conduct"; and one sergeant refused to transfer to state service.⁽⁴⁸⁾ This was a 30 percent reduction in the size of the unit within a one-month period. This abandonment of the unit suggests that the solidarity experienced had been largely based on acceptance of the group mission. The early mission of the unit had been based principally on pride and protection of the local community, not the whole state. With the modification of the unit's collective mission came disunity. Furthermore, this pattern repeated itself within the unit as the men prepared for Confederate duty. Following the call to Confederate service, a ground swell of dissonance was present within the unit. Records show twelve desertions within two weeks of the 20th of April, decreasing the unit size by an additional eighteen percent.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Again, the willingness to protect the Confederacy was not as strong as the desire to preserve the state and the local community.

As the unit prepared for its first movement into northeastern Louisiana, the number of men had been reduced to almost fifty percent of the original company strength. However, the unit remained a homogeneous group, in regard to community origin. The necessity of securing additional enlistees sparked a recruiting campaign led by Captain Edgar. As the unit marched throughout the state, recruits were taken in at various camps along the way. Captain Edgar's statewide recruiting campaign greatly altered the composition of the unit. Fifty-one men enlisted between March of 1861 and April of 1862. The county origins of these men represent the route that the unit followed through the state. The enlistment pattern starts in Bexar County and works its way to the northeastern portion of the state. The largest portion of these men, 38 percent, were from Galveston county. Fourteen percent of the men

were not even residents of Texas; they were from Arkansas. Only 24 percent of the new enlistees were from the unit's home of Bexar County.⁽⁵⁰⁾ This system of recruitment, no doubt, had tremendous impact on the solidarity of the unit. In its first year as a Confederate unit, the importance of community origin had been greatly reduced. As the company became increasingly heterogeneous with respect to county origin, the social solidarity of the unit was decreased. This pattern of recruitment continued throughout the history of the unit. The astounding diversity regarding origin can be seen by looking at the residency of the entire unit. In all, thirty-four Texas counties and five states were represented by members of this unit (See Figure 2).⁽⁵¹⁾

Residence of unit members
County/Enrollees

Anderson	.47%
Austin	2.36%
Bexar	41.2%
Brazoria	.94%
Caldwell	.47%
Calhoun	2.84%
Cameron	.47%
Cherokee	.94%
Dallas	.94%
Fannin	.47%
Galveston	11.84%

Grayson	.47%
Guadalupe	.94%
Harris	.47%
Houston	3.31%
Lavaca	.47%
Limestone	.47%
McLennan	.47%
Marion	.47%
Mason	.47%
Matagorda	.47%
Navarro	.47%
Orange	1.89%
Polk	.47%
Presidio	.94%
Red River	.47%
Rusk	1.42%
Smith	.47%
Starr	.47%
Titus	2.36%
Victoria	3.31%
Washington	1.89%
Wharton	.47%

Williamson	.47%
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States

Arkansas 10.43%

Georgia .47%

Louisiana 2.36%

Tennessee .47%

Data is based on research collected from the Manuscript Returns of the Eighth Census of the U.S., 1860, Schedule 1; Texas Counties Tax rolls, 1860; Compiled Service Records.

Figure 2

The level of diversity ultimately reached within the unit is demonstrated by the members' ages, places of birth and occupations. The men shared no overwhelming commonality in background. Members were from various parts of the country and the world, with no one region holding a majority. The highest percentage of men were born in the lower South, with the next highest percentage being those of foreign birth.⁽⁵²⁾ A large number of the men were Irish and German. These vast cultural differences were made obvious in the battery's camp when various cliques were created based on ethnic origin. German and Irish communities arose within the camp. This difference in background contributed greatly to the breakdown of community within the unit.⁽⁵³⁾ The ages of the men were also very incongruous to one

another. The ages at enlistment ranged from seventeen to fifty-three. Though a slight majority of the men were in their twenties, the ages were spread throughout the age groups. The average age of unit members was twenty-eight. This was about five years older than other Confederate units from Texas.⁽⁵⁴⁾ The unit also displayed its diversity in its members' previous occupations. The men of Edgar's battery came from various occupational backgrounds, from physicians to farm laborers. The two occupations with the highest percentages of men from the unit were farmer and unskilled worker. Thirty-three percent of the men were in a farm-related job, while 23 percent were unskilled workers.⁽⁵⁵⁾ The combination of the very different backgrounds intensified the the lack of cohesion within the battery. This divisive character of the unit contributed to the decreased vision of the unit as one. And, as the unit members began to separate themselves from each other, individuality was emphasized and group solidarity was sacrificed.

Dedication can also be revealed by examining the various patterns and processes of a unit's reenlistment. It is possible that no other data reveal as much about unit solidarity as a person's willingness to remain with a unit. The diversity and lack of cohesiveness of the First Texas Field Battery are confirmed by the difficulties encountered with reenlistment in the Spring of 1862. Many of the original unit members were twelve-month volunteers whose terms of service expired in April of 1862. Early in the year, Captain Edgar began to encourage these men to extend their service with the unit for the remainder of the war. This request was not fulfilled. There were over fifty men with enlistments that were about to expire (about half the company strength). Captain Edgar informed the men of the provisions of the *1861 Furlough and Bounty Act* that insured them a bounty of fifty dollars and a furlough of sixty days for their reenlistment. Regretfully, he also informed them that the bounties and furloughs would not be issued at the time of reenlistment. The men responded by refusing to reenlist; only twelve of the men reenlisted by March 17, 1862. Captain Edgar lacked faith in his company's devotion and requested a leave of absence to return to San Antonio to replace the men.⁽⁵⁶⁾ The unit was then ordered to reorganize under Waul's Texas Legion in early April. Under the new command, furloughs and bounties were made available to the men. Many of the men were enticed by these incentives and reenlisted. However, of the 54 men with one year enlistments, only fifty-three percent extended their service. The unwillingness of the men to place the group's needs above individual needs represented a weakening of social solidarity within the unit. Magnifying this point, the refusal to reenlist even with incentives demonstrated the capricious loyalty of many of the unit members.

For a unit to be successful, men must be recruited and soldiers must be created. In the development of a unit, various mechanisms are put in place to produce uniformity and cohesion. Controls such as collective rewards and punishments, structured ranking systems, and uniformity of personal experience all work to integrate a unit. However, in units with a reduced sense of solidarity, these measures often meet with resistance and challenge. Also, as units continued in the war effort, most soldiers suffered deprivations of nutrition, clothing, sleep and medical care.⁽⁵⁷⁾ The defiant nature of some men and the righteous rebellion of others may explain many of the problems with conformity within Civil War units.

There are several ways to judge the level of discipline within a unit. The frequency of dishonorable discharges, court-martials and men placed in camp confinement, are all very revealing indicators. Research on Edgar's Battery offers an illustration of an outfit plagued with discipline problems that continually undermined the authority and community of the unit. The occurrence of dishonorable discharges has been briefly covered earlier in this paper, but not in context of discipline and unit solidarity. It is understandable that when common regulations of a group are broken, it reflects the membership's respect for the collective goals of the group. Early in the unit's history, misconduct became an important issue as the unit moved into state and then, later, Confederate service. The majority of these cases can be dismissed as members who did not share the same desires and ambitions as the group. More often than not, early Texas recruits saw the war as a sort of holiday excursion. Many young men anticipated a short fight and a speedy return home.⁽⁵⁸⁾ As the reality of military service faced these men, misconduct was often the result. The environment of Captain Edgar's camps often demonstrated the lack of discipline by his men. A young German man witnessed the battery's Galveston camp in 1861. The young man told of what he saw at the camp.

*...the day before two men had strung up another by the
hand and had let him just hang there that way for three
hours, and another one was hitched in stocks, and lots
more, from which we could see that the people were not
treated like civilians...*⁽⁵⁹⁾

However, as most units spent time in service together, discipline problems usually diminished, if not disappeared altogether.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Edgar's Battery does not fit this model. Discipline remained a primary concern for the unit throughout the war. Misconduct and camp confinements remained fairly constant during the unit's service. The unit placed twenty-two men in confinement for misconduct from 1861 to 1865. In each of these four years, a similar number of men were punished in this manner.⁽⁶¹⁾ The reasons for the confinements range from "improper language with an officer" to "prejudice of good order and military discipline."⁽⁶²⁾ The consumption of alcohol had a direct impact on the occurrence of misconduct within the unit.⁽⁶³⁾ One such case is documented in the court records of the court-martial of James Drumm, a private in the battery. In this case Private Drumm was accused of the two offenses of "cursing an officer" and "threatening an officer physically." Apparently, the officer was on duty transporting prisoners to the nearby camp. Witnesses reported that the officer, the guards on duty and the accused were all "under the influence of liquor at the time." The court found it hard to find truth in any of the witnesses and split their decision. The private was found guilty of "threatening words," but innocent of "threatening actions." The sentence the private was given called for a public reprimand by Captain Edgar and a short confinement.⁽⁶⁴⁾ However, not all of the confinements within the unit were the result of general court-martials. Some apparently were ordered by officers without any due process. Within the unit, the problem was pervasive. Officers were punished almost as frequently as enlisted men. There are even reports of a two month arrest of Captain Edgar for unknown charges.⁽⁶⁵⁾ This continual conflict between conformity and malcontent threatened the already weak unit solidarity.

The more serious offenses usually resulted not only in confinement in the "guard house",⁽⁶⁶⁾ but also an appearance before a general court-martial. The courts usually consisted of five to thirteen officers, usually holding rank above the person on trial. Generals in the field had the authority to appoint courts as they deemed necessary. The courts held jurisdiction over all persons and offenses subject to military law.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Edgar's men experienced a high rate of court-martials. In three years, the battery had eight men stand before a general court-martial. One of the more serious cases involved Private William Johnson, who was accused of "theft of government arms." After brief testimony was given, Johnson was quickly found guilty on all counts. The witness "saw the accused selling pistols" that resembled the "new colt patent army size to a citizen of Galveston County" in October and November of 1861. Johnson was sentenced to reimburse the Army \$225 for the cost of the pistols. He was also ordered

to be placed in confinement and "to hard labor with a ball and chain during the term of his enlistment." The court also stipulated that upon discharge of service, Johnson would receive a dishonorable discharge.⁽⁶⁸⁾ The sentences and punishments of the court-martial differed greatly from case to case. It was often left to the discretion of the company captain to enforce minor sentences. The number of court martials within Edgar's Battery did taper off as the war continued. After January of 1863, only one court-martial was held for a member of the unit.⁽⁶⁹⁾ However, the impact of court-martials were evident throughout the battery's service, with several prisoners and penalties lingering until the battery disbanded.

During the Civil War, many Confederate units successfully fused the importance of local community with military solidarity. In units where strong social relations existed, desertion was limited. This was due to the enormous social barriers placed in the way of individuals by their shared community. Edgar's Battery did not originate from a distinct local community. Thus, the men of the unit were moderately free from apprehension of community reaction to their desertion. The diversity of the unit ensured almost complete anonymity to deserters. Another factor that allowed many deserters to escape the stigma of desertion was their residence in a large city. In Edgar's Battery, fifty percent of all deserters had enlisted in Bexar County.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Living in a county with a population of around 15,000 people, a person often lived in obscurity.⁽⁷¹⁾ This allowed a person to sometimes return home without being cast as a deserter.

The effects of reduced unit solidarity can also be illustrated by looking at the county of enlistment for deserters. In units with strong solidarity, deserters were often recruits who had limited social ties to the unit's home county. These men often felt dejected and excluded from the unit, lacking a local bond. In Edgar's Battery, the absence of any local influence is illustrated by investigating where deserters enlisted. As stated before, fifty percent of all deserters from the battery were residents of Bexar County.⁽⁷²⁾ This is important because, in most cohesive units where localism played a role, enlistees from the unit's home deserted less.⁽⁷³⁾ Of the forty-six deserters from Edgar's Battery, only eleven were found in the 1860 federal census, and only seven were found in both the federal census and the county tax rolls. This data suggests that the men were unstable, even prior to military service. And, also suggests that these men lacked ties to a community which may have influenced their individualistic nature in the military setting.

In summary, the First Texas Field Battery of Light Artillery achieved a fair amount of success militarily. However, the unit was continually plagued with internal problems based on its vast differences. The results of this great diversity are demonstrated by continual problems with a lack of dedication and discipline within the unit. The lack of unit solidarity is further demonstrated by the willingness of many members to abandon the unit by desertion. Is diversity linked with disunity? In the case of Edgar's Battery, the group was more than a Rebel unit. They were a group of rebels. They cherished individuality and resisted solidarity within the unit. The data collected in this research suggests that the diversity within this unit was directly related to an environment of disunity.

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[Return to Texas Confederate Regiments](#)

Endnotes

1. ¹ A Twentieth Century History of Southwest Texas, Vol. I (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1907; reprint, University Microfilms, Inc., Michigan, 1962) 150.
2. ² Texas State Archives, "Muster Roll of Captain William Edgar's company, Alamo City Guards", dated April 19, 1861 (Hereafter referred to as "Alamo City Guards, Muster Roll). Texas State Archives. (401-382-8) Adjutant General, General Correspondence, dated June of 1861.
3. ³ W. C. Nunn, ed. Ten More Texans in Gray (Hillsboro: Hill Junior College Press, 1980), 72.
4. ⁴ United States War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compendium of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (128 vols., Washington; Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series 1, vo. 1, 517-518 (hereafter cited as Official Records).
5. ⁵ Official Records, Ser. 1, vol. 1, 1515-1516.
6. ⁶ Texas State Archives. (401-382-8) Adjutant General, General Correspondence, dated June of 1861.
7. ⁷ Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers who Served in Organizations from the State of Texas, (Washington, D.C., 1960), roll 231. Hereafter referred to as Compiled Service Records.
8. ⁸ The muster roll dated April 19, 1861 and labeled "Muster Roll of Captain William Edgar's company of Alamo City Guards" list four commissioned officers, two sergeants, three corporals, two buglers, and forty-nine privates that transferred enlistment to the Confederate service. Ten men as discharged, fourteen as deserters and one sergeant's who refused to transfer his enlistment.

9. ⁹ Texas State Archives. (401-382-8) Adjutant General, General Correspondence, dated June of 1861.

10. ¹⁰ Diary of William Fisk King -April 1861-June 2, 1865, located in the Waul's Legion folder at The Confederate Research Center, Hillsboro, Texas. J.J. Bowden, The Exodus of Federal Forces from Texas, 1861 (Austin: Eakin Press, 1986) 109-113.

11. ¹¹ Francis Trevelyan Miller, ed., Forts and artillery (New York: Castle Books, 1957).

12. ¹² A Twentieth Century History of Southwest Texas, Vol. 1, 150.

13. ¹³ Compiled Service Records; Roll 231. Letter dated October 1, 1861.

14. ¹⁴ Compiled Service Records; Roll 231. Letter dated October 31, 1861; "Camp near Galveston".

15. ¹⁵ A Twentieth Century History of Southwest Texas, Vol. 1, 150-157.

16. ¹⁶ Official Records, ser.1, vol.48, 701. Abstract from the morning report of the First Texas Volunteers in Galveston, dated February 28, 1862. Lists five officers and fifty-eight enlisted men present for Edgar's battery.

17. ¹⁷ Compiled Service Records; roll 231. Letter from Captain Edgar, dated March 17, 1862, states "...not more than twelve, out of the entire company have thus far renewed their enlistment."

18. ¹⁸ Compiled Service Records; reel 231. The show only eight men who enlisted during Captain Edgar's recruiting trip, March 20-April 20, 1862.

19. ¹⁹ Camp Lubbock was the central headquarters for General John Magruder, commanding troops in the District of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. For more information on camps and forts, see Francis Trevelyan Miller, ed., Forts and artillery. Compiled Service Records; roll 231; Letter from E.C. Wharton dated May 21, 1862.

20. ²⁰ Camp Waul was located in Washington County along the Brazos River, seven miles from Brenham Texas.

21. ²¹ Camp Nelson was located about ten miles from Austin, Texas.
22. ²² Official Records, ser. 1, vol. 13, 978. Special Orders, No. 42. In this, McCulloch is ordered to move to "Devall's Bluff" with his entire infantry, cavalry, and Halderman's and Edgar's Batteries. De Valls Bluff is located about thirty miles East of Little Rock. See Jeremiah Yellcot Dashiell Papers, William Thomas Mechling Collection, Center for American History, Austin. For more information on Waul's Legion.
23. ²³ Joseph P. Blessington, The Campaigns of Walker's Texas Division (Austin: The Pemberton Press, 1968), 61-70. Norman d. Brown, ed., Journey to Pleasant Hill: The Civil War Letters of Captain Elijah Petty, Walker's Texas Division, C.S.A., (San Antonio, Texas; The University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures, 1982), 203-231.
24. ²⁴ Camp Mills and Camp Wright were the two primary camps during this period. Camp Mills was located northwest of Pine Bluff, and named for Colonel R.Q. Mills of the 10th Infantry. Camp Wright was located about four miles north of Pine Bluff along the Arkansas River.
25. ²⁵ A member of Edgar's Battery is reported to have fallen overboard of the steamer "Doctor Batey" during this journey and drowned in the Little River. Brown, Journey to Pleasant Hill, 230.
26. ²⁶ General McCulloch, in his official report of the skirmish at Perkin's landing reported that unofficial sources revealed that eleven union soldiers had been killed and several wounded. McCulloch listed his losses as one killed, two wounded and two missing. Edwin Cole Bearss, The Campaign for Vicksburg, 3 vols. (Dayton, OH; Morningside, 1985-86), 1172.
27. ²⁷ The *Choctaw* was equipped with a 100-pound Parrott rifle and a 9-inch Dahlgren.
28. ²⁸ John D. Winters, The Civil War in Louisiana (New York: Louisiana State University Press, 1963), 198. Blessington, Walker's Texas Division, 79-93. Brown, Journey to Pleasant Hill, 231-233.
29. ²⁹ McCulloch reported the losses of 44 killed, 130 wounded and 10 missing. Official Records, ser. 1, vol. 24, pt. 2, 451-53. Winters, Civil War in Louisiana, 202-203.

30. ³⁰ Blessington, Walker's Texas Division, 110-127. Brown, Journey to Pleasant Hill, 240-242.

31. ³¹ General Scurry assumed command on July 22, 1863. Blessington, Walker's Texas Division, 127-131. Brown, Journey to Pleasant Hill, 279.

32. ³² General Scurry had led the Valverde Battery in the Arizona expedition; including the battles of Valverde and Glorieta. Scurry also led the ground forces in the reoccupation of Galveston under the command of General Magruder.

33. ³³ "Edgar's Texas Battery file", Harold B. Simpson Confederate Research Center, Hill College. Blessington, Walker's Texas Division, 132-163. Brown, Journey to Pleasant Hill, 265-290.

34. ³⁴ Compiled Service Records, roll 231.

35. ³⁵ This camp was known by the name of Fort Humbug.

36. ³⁶ Early in January, General Banks was ordered to direct operations toward the Atchafalaya and Red Rivers, in what became called the Red River campaign. Official records, ser. 1, vol. 34, pt. 2, 15, 481, 496-97.

37. ³⁷ General Banks' force was reported by General Scurry to have arrived on at least twenty-seven transports, with an estimated 18,000 men (15,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry, and a portion of artillery). Official Records, ser. 1, vol. 34, 492-493. Blessington, Walker's Texas Division, 169-171. Brown, Journey to Pleasant Hill, 240-242.

38. ³⁸ Official Records, ser. 1, vol. 34, 550-559, 577.

39. ³⁹ (Clement A. Evans, ed.), Confederate military history: a library of Confederate States history, vol.13, (Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Company, 1899; reprint, Wilmington, N.C.: Broadfoot, 1988), 127. Official Records, ser. 1, vol. 34, 561.

40. ⁴⁰ This location is known as Henderson's Hill or Bayou Rapides. A report of surrendered Confederate artillery reports the capture of the First Texas Field Battery's

guns: four 3.67-inch rifle guns near Natchitoches, Louisiana. Official Records, ser. 1, vol. 48, pt. 2, 963-64.

41. ⁴¹ Official Records, ser. 1, vol. 34, 179, 561-563, 551-559. Blessington, Walker's Texas Division, 177-179. Winters, The Civil War in Louisiana, 336. Brown, Journey to Pleasant Hill, 383. Edwin Cole Bearrs, ed., and Eugenie Watson Somdal, trans. A Louisiana Confederate: Diary of Felix Pierre Poche, (Louisiana Studies Institute, Northwestern State university, 1972), 98-99, 280-281.

42. ⁴² Robert E. Denney, Civil War Prisons & Escapes: A Day-by-Day Chronicle, (New York: Sterling Publishing Company, 1993), 209.

43. ⁴³ Confederate Pensions Records of Texas, file no.13166, "Frederick Koch"; file no.30284, "John Moore"; file no. 50441, "James McSorley".

44. ⁴⁴ Confederate Pension Records, file no.13166, "Frederick Koch". "Edgar's Battery file", Harold B. Simpson Confederate Research Center, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas.

45. ⁴⁵ Texas State Archives, "Alamo City Guards, Muster Roll". U.S. Eighth Census, 1860: Free Schedules (Washington, D.C.).

46. ⁴⁶ The population of Bexar county in 1860 was 14,454. The population of San Antonio in 1860 was approximately 8,200. The Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide, 1994-1995. Dallas, Texas: A.H. Belo Corporation, 1993), 302-303, 331. Randolph B. Campbell and Richard G. Lowe, Wealth and Power in Antebellum Texas (College Station and London: Texas A&M University Press, 1977), 91-106.

47. ⁴⁷ Captain William M. Edgar is reported to have served as an agent with the United States ordinance department, as first assistant Marshall of San Antonio, as Marshall of San Antonio, and as storekeeper in the United States quartermaster's department. A Twentieth Century History of Southwest Texas, Vol. 1, 150-152.

48. ⁴⁸ Texas State Archives, "Alamo City Guards, Muster Roll". Compiled Service Records, roll 231.

49. ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

50. ⁵⁰ Residency of the fifty-one who enlisted in the unit from March of 1861 to April of 1862 were as follows: 24% Bexar county, 2% Lavaca county, 38% Galveston county, 2% Harris county, 2% Waller county, 4% Austin, 6% Houston county, and 14% were residents of the state of Arkansas. Compiled Service Records, roll 231. 1860 Census: Free Schedules.

51. ⁵¹ Ibid. Texas Pension Records

52. ⁵² The member's places of birth were represented as follows: Lower South, 36%; Upper South, 24.14%; Northwest, 5.1%; Middle Atlantic, 5.17%; New England, 1.72%; and foreign birth, 27.6%. The Upper South represents the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Texas. The Upper South represents the states of North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri and the District of Columbia. The Northwest states are Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, and Iowa. The Middle Atlantic states are New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. The New England states are Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Data on places of birth are drawn from the 1860 Census: Free Schedules, Pension records and Compiled Service Records.

53. ⁵³ See Lone Star and Double Eagle: Civil War Letters of a German-Texas Family (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1982) by Minetta Altgelt Goyne for accounts of ethnic diversity.

54. ⁵⁴ Data on enlistment ages are drawn from the Compiled Service Records. See also Ralph A. and Robert Wooster, " 'Rarin' for a Fight'; Texans in the Confederate Army," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, (April, 1981), 394-395.

55. ⁵⁵ Data on occupations are drawn from the 1860 census: Free Schedules, Pension records and Compiled Service Records.

56. ⁵⁶ Compiled Service Records, roll 231, muster rolls; "letter dated March 17, 1862. "Diary of William Fisk King", Waul's Texas Legion file, Confederate Research Center. Bell Irvin Wiley, The Life of Johnny Reb (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 133.

57.⁵⁷ Wiley, The Life of Johnny Reb, 133-137. Seymour V. Connor, ed., Dear America: Some Letters of Orange and Mary America (Aikin) Connor (Austin and New York: The Pemberton Press, 1971), 65-81.

58.⁵⁸ Wiley, The Life of Johnny Reb, 123-150.

59.⁵⁹ Lone Star and Double Eagle, 20-21.

60.⁶⁰ Douglas Hale, "Life and Death Among the Lone Star Defenders: Cherokee County Boys in the Civil War," East Texas Historical Journal 91 (29, 2): 26-40.

61.⁶¹ The Compiled Service Records show twenty-two men placed in confinement for misconduct from 1861-1865. The yearly breakdown is as follows: 1861, 8, 36% of total; 1862, 6, 27% of total; 1863, 6, 27% of total; and 1864 1, 9% of total.

62.⁶² Compiled Service Records. Transcripts from court-martial of Thomas Ashton.

63.⁶³ Charles P. Roland, An American Iliad: The Story of the Civil War, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991), 39-66.

64.⁶⁴ Compiled Service Records. Transcripts from court-martial of James Drumm.

65.⁶⁵ The muster rolls in the Compiled Service Records show Captain Edgar under arrest from January to February of 1864. No reason is given and no other reports are made of it.

66.⁶⁶ Transcripts from the court-martial of James Drumm. Compiled Service Records, roll 231.

67.⁶⁷ Wiley, The Life of Johnny Reb, 217-243.

68.⁶⁸ Transcripts from the court-martial of William Johnson. Compiled Service Records.

69.⁶⁹ Various court-martials were held for members of Edgar's Battery from 1861-1863. There were five reported in 1861, two in 1862 and only one in 1863. See the Compiled Service Records for transcripts of the court-martials of James Drumm, John Dailey, William Johnson, James McCanna, Michael Daugherty, Thomas Ashton, John McCool and James Welch.

70.⁷⁰ Compiled Service Records, roll 231.

71.⁷¹ The Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide, 1994-1995, 331.

72.⁷² Compiled Service Records, roll 231.

73.⁷³ Judith Lee Hallock, "The Role of the Community in Civil war Desertion," Civil War History 29 (1983): 123-134.