

# AGARITA GAZETTE



*A Chronicle of the Plum Creek Shooting Society*



Agarita Ranch

August 2012

Lockhart, Texas

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[www.pccss.org](http://www.pccss.org)



President Dragon Hill Dave

## The Plum Creek Shooting Society has **The President's Word** been making

marvelous progress since the club was officially organized in April. We now have 79 members (so close to 80!), we are averaging 50 shooters a month at our shoots, we have secured the state shoot in May 2013, and the fun factor is going through the roof. I can't tell you how much fun I am having in putting together the shoots with **Phantom**, making up the props, and working with folks in getting the range ready. I have been really blessed to have the opportunity to work on this project. As **Long Juan** has outlined in his column, there are a lot of folks doing a lot of hard work to make this club and the range the premier cowboy action shooting venue in Texas.

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Little Bullseye

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I also have to acknowledge the great support we are getting from local clubs. Last month we had several folks from the *Green Mountain Regulators* and the *Tejas Caballeros* join us. This month we had a good contingent of folks from the *Texican Rangers* in Fredericksburg and folks from San Antonio with the *Alamo Area Regulators* and the *San Antonio Rough Riders* as well as from several other clubs in central Texas.

The best return I can get as an officer at this club



is having a shooter come up to me, as **High Plains Hud** (from Kansas!) did this last shoot, to tell me that this was his first time to come to the club and that he was having a blast. The

joy in his eyes was palpable, and I can't ask for anything better. That is what we want to have happen every time a new shooter comes to our range. We want them to come away saying "Wow! That was fun!"

I want to thank **Phantom** for writing some neat stages that keep us moving and challenging our skills. An unsung hero that not a lot of the shooters see is **Elroy Rogers**, who week after

## Find Chuck!

We had more participation this month. Nine people found Chuck in one or more of the photos in the July issue. See photos to the right. Most found all three, but not the first time. I had to chuckle when one reader suggested that I missed a real opportunity by not putting Chuck in with the rattlesnakes. In addition to being "mentioned in the dispatches", anyone who finds Chuck this month will be entered in a drawing for a **free shoot in September**.



## Those who found Chuck in July:

Miss Cubbie	3	7/13
Skinny Steve	3	7/13
Boon Doggle	3	7/14
Meadow Biscuit Slim	2	7/15
Mesquite Creek Mike	3	7/15
Agarita Annie	3	7/15
Lincoln Drifter	3	7/16
Scooter	2	7/29
Cowboy Small	2	8/3

week is out at the range fixing and improving targets and working on range improvements. He has saved the club a huge amount of money by renovating and upgrading our current targets so we can dedicate club funds to other improvement projects.



But the main thanks goes to our club members and area shooters who join us to shoot and support the club in our efforts to get better and better.

We want to encourage folks to come out and shoot. If you have a friend who thinks they want to try this sport out, bring them out and let us know they are coming. Lots of us have extra guns and leather that we can supply to get them started in the sport. Our goal is to let everyone who is interested in cowboy action shooting try it out without spending a lot of money and decide whether they want to make the investment to become a cowboy action shooter. If they do, we want them shooting with us so they, like **High Plains Hud**, can come away from one of our shoots saying "Wow! That was fun!"



## Long Juan Here!

August was another great shoot. We had 53 shooters on four posses shooting five great stages with scenarios written by **Phantom**. You know I am starting to notice a trend. **Phantom** writes the stages. **Phantom** finishes first with times that average about 20 seconds, even with a few misses. Wonder if there is a connection? Just kidding **Phantom!!** The stages were great – quick, fun and mostly not too confusing. I cannot say totally unconfusing because I earned a P on Stage 5. There must have been

something confusing. It couldn't have just been me. Could it? With a theme and starting lines from the Clint Eastwood movie, *High Plains Drifter*, how could we not all have had fun? I just couldn't get **Jake Paladin** to say the timer's line. He just would say, "On your line" and I would say, "I'm still waiting for your line." He just looked at me with this blank stare. I guess you had to be there.

We had a number of first-timers and others for the first time in a long time. **Handlebar Bob**, **Sheriff Robert Love** and **Shooting Iron Miller**, stalwarts with the Texican Rangers joined us for the first time in a long time. Not sure if I mentioned another in that category who shot with us last month, **Dusty Leather**. **Cherokee Granny** (now **Tudelum Creek Granny**) shot with us for the first time in many months. **High Plains Hud** was here from Kansas. Did not get the full story there, but hope he will be shooting with us again soon. **T Bone Paul**, **Rocking M** and **Shotgun Jim** shot with us for the first time. **Richard Cranium** and **Little Scooter**, **Lincoln Drifter's** son and grandson also joined us for the weekend shoot. If I missed anyone, please let me know. Welcome to all and hope to have you back again soon.

Congratulations to our clean shooters in August: **Little**

**Bullseye** (**Lightning McQueen's** daughter shooting her first match I think), **SkinDawg**, **Nueces Slim**, **Lucky Nickel** and **Skyhawk Hans**. **Phantom** finished first overall, followed by **Skyhawk Hans**, **Kit Carson** (shooting again for the first time since February), **SkinDawg** (shooting *Buckaroo*) and **Dutch Van Horn**. For what it's worth, did you notice that all the "slims" finished within a second or two of each other overall? **Minnetex Slim** (226.85), **Nueces Slim** (227.04), **Buckeye Slim** (228.07). See category winners next page. Complete results are available on the Plum Creek Shooting Society website, [www.pccss.org](http://www.pccss.org).

Planning for the Texas State Championship, *Ride with Pancho Villa 2013*, at the Agarita Ranch next May continues. We already have 28 shooters registered. President and Match Director, **Dragon Hill Dave**, continues his quest

for volunteers and workday workers. If you can help with anything, either from home between now and next May, on Friday or other workdays and/or at the match, please contact **Dragon Hill Dave** at [dhdonald@mindspring.com](mailto:dhdonald@mindspring.com). Thanks DHD and to everyone else who is already working so hard to make it all happen. I will start with the Energizer Bunny, **Agarita Annie**, our assistant match director. Annie is keeping all of us organized and on task. She is also working with **Delta Raider** on the Saturday night banquet. Range Marshal and owner of the Agarita Ranch, **Delta Raider**, is helping with everything, but is focused right now mostly on parking, food and awards. **Phantom**, and **Joe Darter**, are working hard to be sure we have great stages to shoot with great targets. They are also offering invaluable advice on awards and other matters where



their experience really counts. **Lightning McQueen**, our Range Deputy, and his daughter, **Little Bullseye**, are working wonders helping to maintain the range and get it in better and better shape as we move toward the big match next May. **Jake Paladin** and his lovely wife, **True Blue Cachoo** are working hard to secure sponsors and prizes, as are **Delta Raider** and **Dragon Hill Dave**. **Big Iron Patnode** has volunteered to be Side Match Marshal. **Joe Darter** is handling **Wild Bunch**. **Miss Cubbie** is lining up vendors with help from **Delta Raider**, **Jake Paladin** and **True Blue**.

Yours truly, **Long Juan**, is responsible for registration and scoring. Thanks to all.

While I am thanking folks, I want to thank my wife, **Powder Keg Patty**, for helping me this month with entering the scores from our August match making it quick and more accurate. Any mistakes that remain are solely mine. I also enjoyed shooting with a posse this month. In order to have the scores available at lunch most Saturdays, I have been shooting through or not shooting at all. This month we did not serve lunch and I enjoyed a much more relaxing match.

Our next shoot will be Saturday, September 1<sup>st</sup>. **Phantom** has promised more of his great stages. Can't wait to find what our theme will be this time. I have heard rumor of another Clint Eastwood film.



Dragon Hill Dave (shooting)  
Dutch Van Horn (timing)

## August Category Winners

Buckarett	Little Bullseye	Wrangler	Joe Darter
Buckaroo	SkinDawg	Cowgirl	Ivory Venom
Young Gun	Little Scooter	Cowboy	Mesquite Creek Mike
Grand Dame	Boosey Babe	Classic Cowgirl	Miss Cubbie
Cattle Baron	The Adobe Kid	Classic Cowboy	Dragon Hill Dave
Elder Statesman	Bison Jim	Senior Duelist	Handlebar Bob
Ladies Silver Senior	Tudelum Creek Granny	Duelist	Jake Jones
Silver Senior	Skyhawk Hans	Frontier Cartidge Duelist	Texas Sarge
Senior	Sheriff Robert Love	Frontiersman	Dawgtooth Dave
Ladies 49r	Six Goin' South	C/D Lever	Gold Dog
49r	Phantom	GAFR	Lefty Leo
Ladies Wrangler	True Blue Cachoo		



Cowboy Small

Sheriff Robert Love

Preacher Man

## Officer Profile: Phantom, Stage Marshal



Charlie Harris, known by most as **Phantom**, shooter extraordinaire wearing a signature black hat, is the *Plum Creek Shooting Society's* Stage Marshal.

For years **Boon Doggle** did a fabulous job as our Stage Marshal. Then he decided to hang up his badge. Most of us simply do not know how lucky we are that

**Phantom** agreed to take on

responsibility for writing and setting up our stages. **Phantom** is really good at the game we play! He has been a frequent top-finisher in state, regional and national matches. If he isn't the top shooter in our monthly matches and the monthly matches of other area clubs, he's always near the top. He knows what he's doing and he knows how to write a stage that everyone understands and enjoys shooting. If you shoot with us regularly, you know **Phantom** also has a sense of humor - a weird sense of humor on occasion, but a great sense of humor nevertheless. He also has an astute understanding of Old West history and a keen knowledge of western film. Each month, he chooses a theme for the match – often with a little help from **Dragon Hill Dave**. When **DHD** returned from six weeks in Italy recently, the theme for our next monthly shoot was appropriately, Spaghetti Westerns. This month it was the Clint Eastwood film, *High Plains Drifter*. **Phantom** always includes a short but interesting story associated with each stage and a starting line that makes each shooter chuckle a little. **Phantom** *claims* those lines make people relax. In my experience, the vote is still out.

What many do not realize about **Phantom** is that he is such a caring mentor. I know he pays attention to new and particularly to young

shooters, but it just did not dawn on me how much he really cares until my daughter, **Sterling Sage**, shot with him recently one weekend at a *Green Mountain Regulators* match. Her comment when we finished included words to the effect:

**Phantom** is just so much fun to shoot with. He always has a relaxing word or two before the buzzer and an encouraging comment after the last shot, no matter the result. He shares tips on how to improve that are both positive and helpful. He really cares.



Little Mama with Phantom

From my own personal observation, I know that **Phantom** takes particular interest in young shooters and those who perhaps have just a little more difficulty shooting than others. I have seen him take those shooters under his wing and patiently coach and encourage them through an entire match. Not many accomplished shooters care or will take the time. **Phantom** does. That is true of others in our club also. **Joe Darter**, in particular, comes to mind. Thanks to you both and to others who are so patient and caring.

I asked **Phantom** when and how he got started in cowboy action shooting. When, was easy – 2004. How was a little different. He says, I was heavily involved in Jetski Racing on a national level. Age started getting the best of me so I went looking for something to replace racing. I had shot a couple of Pistol matches before and thought it would be fun to get more involved. In a nutshell, read an article in *American Rifleman* about how you put a lot of lead down range in CAS...that



attracted me over Pistol matches...signed up a couple of weeks later at a Gun Show. Next question, why "**Phantom**"? Answer, "My wife's favorite car at the time was a Bentley Phantom...so...one word... easy to remember...there ya go!" I did not ask if he and his wife owned her favorite car at the time.

**Phantom** shoots mostly in the 49'er category these days. He says sometimes he shoots Cowboy "just to p\_\_s off some of the younger shooters". His guns are Original Model Vaqueros, Winchester 1897's and an Uberti 1873. He says, "The Vaqueros are bullet proof, 1873's are the best gun overall for this game...and Pumps are FUN!" Over the years, he's had multiple wins in State and Regional matches in the Modern, Wrangler and 49'er categories. What's "Modern" you ask? Until sometime recently it was a shooting category, now replaced by the age-based categories. **Phantom** tells me that Traditional and Modern were the only two shooting categories when SASS first got started. He has finished in the top 20 at both Winter Range and EoT (End-of-Trail for you newbies). That makes him one of the premier cowboy action shooters in the entire US of A. Although most of us can only dream of competing with him (How many of us can shoot a stage in less than 20 seconds?), shooting with **Phantom's** posse is always fun. If you never have, you should try it sometime.

Charlie lives with his wife, Cherie, in nearby Lakeway. He spent the first 47 years of his life in Newport Beach, California. That may explain some of his idiosyncrasies. And believe me, he has some. He and his wife own **Storied Firearms**, "the Austin Gun Store without an Attitude." **Storied Firearms** is located in the restored Santa Fe Railroad Dumas Depot on Hwy 290 three miles west of the Y on your way from Austin to Dripping Springs. To read more about Storied Firearms, Charlie and Cherie, check out their website: [http://www.storiedfirearms.com/about-](http://www.storiedfirearms.com/about-us/)

[us/](http://www.storiedfirearms.com/about-us/) Prior to opening **Storied Firearms**, Charlie spent 31 years as Director of Marketing for a software company. During that time, he was everything from janitor to mechanical engineer. Charlie's hobbies include golf, (he once wanted to play professionally), snow skiing (but not in Central Texas), fishing and collecting guns.

Like **Dragon Hill Dave**, **Phantom's** vision for the **Plum Creek Shooting Society** is "to make it the premier (cowboy action shooting) club in central Texas, the place to go if you want a quality shooting experience." As Stage Marshal, he will be doing whatever he can to accomplish that vision.

At the end of each interview for this series of profiles, I have asked, "What's something interesting about you that would surprise your fellow shooters?" **Phantom's** answer, "I'm pretty transparent...and boring. Hell...I don't know...maybe that I love Cats?????"



**Note about the Dumas Depot that houses Storied Firearms:** The depot was built in 1930 from standard company blueprints that originated in 1910. One of the last "new-construction" depots built before the Depression, it was in active service until after the turn of the century. See photo on page 4. Charlie uses the original telegrapher's counter as his desk. His wife Cherie's office is the old "Whites Only" waiting room. The bathroom is the old "Black" waiting room. The depot was relocated from Dumas to Austin and restored by friend and Austin attorney, William Osborn.



Tudelum Creek Granny  
f/k/a  
Cherokee Granny

## Photos for the Gazette

We all love photos. Many of you have asked why there are not more and why does it seem like the same people are in the photos that appear? Answer, because yours truly, Long Juan, is generally the only one taking photos. That means shooters in my posse are my most frequent subjects. I get photos from others occasionally (thanks **Lincoln Drifter**, **Boon Doggle** and **Sterling Sage** in particular), but I do not get many and I do not get them often. **PLEASE**, let me encourage everyone to shoot a few photos before, during and after each shoot. Select your favorites and email them to me. [jsoule@scottdoug.com](mailto:jsoule@scottdoug.com) I would like nothing better than to have more photos of more shooters from which to select each month (and you will be mentioned in the dispatches if your photos are selected to appear). This month, thanks to **Lincoln Drifter** for taking photos and making every effort to get them to me. We are still trying to figure out the email problem. Maybe next month.



Legs to admire?



An unmatched pair!

A  
good  
lookin'  
cart  
to  
Admire!



One good lookin' hat!





# Texas Frontier Forts

by Long Juan

We have all heard of Fort Worth, Fort Davis and Fort Stockton. They have histories worth telling. There are, however, many, many other forts in Texas history. Some have been preserved and some survive only in writings, drawings and the imagination. As I have read books by Elmer Kelton, Louis L'Amour and others, I have found myself frequently going to the internet and/or other books to find out more about the location and history of many Texas "forts." This article reflects some of what I learned.

Let me start by answering the question, why did I put "forts" in quotes? Simple, we all (or at least I) have a mental image of what a frontier fort looks like – an enclosure with a fence or walls made from wooden stakes or tree trunks. That image comes from watching TV westerns from the 50's,



e.g., *The Adventures of Rin Tin Tin*, and many western movies, e.g. *Fort Apache*. Perhaps not so coincidentally, the fort in *Rin Tin Tin* on TV in the 50's was named Fort Apache. The film, starring John Wayne, was made in 1948. When I began researching Texas forts, I learned that forts with walls were actually very rare. Most did not have

defensive walls because Indians almost never attacked the forts.

When Texas was annexed and more of the southwest was acquired following the Mexican-American War, the politicians assumed that expansion would occur from east to west, in a gradual, predictable and orderly process. To protect this westward movement, the army established forts at what were thought to be strategic locations. A further assumption was that Indians would be relocated west of the forts. In reality, political and economic pressures, rather than sound military policy, frequently dictated the location of frontier posts.

Attracted by the discovery of gold in California, thousands migrated west, ruining hopes for an orderly American occupation of the newly acquired territories. In Texas, the army had to position its troops not only to face Indians from the west and north, but to protect the international border with Mexico. The first forts in Texas were established along the lower Rio Grande. Forts Brown (1845) and Polk, also known as Fort Brazos Santiago (1846), were established during the war against Mexico. Ringgold Barracks (1848), Fort Duncan (1849) and Fort McIntosh (1850), also along the Rio Grande, were added after the war. To protect the western frontier, Forts Martin Scott (1848), Inge (1849), Lincoln (1849), Croghan (1849), Gates (1849), Graham (1849) and Worth (1849) were established. Forts Merrill (1850) and Ewell (1852) were later added in South Texas. Pushing the line of forts further west, Forts Mason (1851), Phantom Hill (1851), Belknap (1851), Clark (1852), Terrett (1852), McKavett (1852) and Chadbourne (1852) were added later. Before the Civil War, a double line of forts protected the southern and western frontiers of Texas. In theory, it was a good plan. Posts were to be located in areas with good access to water, forage and construction



materials. In reality, the forts were too far apart and their garrisons too small to patrol and protect all of the Lone Star state. Some posts were poorly situated with inadequate water supplies and had to be abandoned. The inevitable expansion of settlement also meant the line of forts had to move west as settlers moved west. Furthermore, the initial plan provided no protection for the overland routes to Chihuahua, Santa Fe, and California, which were vital lines of communication. For all of these reasons, Forts Bliss (1854), Davis (1854), Lancaster (1855), Quitman (1858) and Stockton (1859), together with Camps Verde (1855) and Hudson (1857) were added. Forts Polk, Gates, Lincoln, Croghan, Graham, Worth, Terrett, Ewell and Merrill were quickly rendered unnecessary.

When Texas seceded in 1861, Texas or Confederate troops occupied several of the forts abandoned by Union forces, especially in northwest (now north central) Texas. Indians burned and looted others, such as Fort Davis. In the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, the army was more interested re-establishing federal authority in Texas than it was in re-establishing the army's presence on the state's sparsely settled frontiers. Major General Phil Sheridan, the post-war military commander of Louisiana and Texas, declared that "Texas has not yet suffered from the war and will require some intimidation." As reports of Indian attacks increased in 1866-67, the bluecoats nevertheless moved west. The army once again occupied Forts Bliss, Clark, Davis, McIntosh, Ringgold, and Stockton. Those forts became the strongholds of post-Civil War frontier forts in Texas. Forts Lancaster, Belknap, Martin Scott, Mason, Inge, Chadbourne, Hudson and Verde were only briefly garrisoned after the war. Instead new Forts Griffin (1867), Concho (1867), Richardson (1868) and Elliott (1875) were established further west and north. Many

garrisons also tended sub-posts to help them patrol the long, sparsely settled distances of west Texas. In some cases sub-posts evolved into semi-permanent forts that outlived their mother bases, e.g., Camp Pena Colorado (1879) and Fort Hancock (1881), which both began life as sub-posts of Fort Davis.



The effectiveness of frontier forts in Texas is difficult to assess. Many officers saw the Indian Wars as not worthy of the time or energy it would take to develop suitable tactics or strategy. Instead, successful officers developed their tactics and strategy through personal observation, by trial and error, by word of mouth and by individual ingenuity, rather than through recognized army doctrine. Despite some shortfalls, the frontier forts had an enormous impact on Texas history. The forts served "as the oasis in the desert" for many weary travelers. (Hint: Chuck is in a picture on page 1.) The forts also provided an economic stimulus. Not only did the army spend money, but with the army and their forts came schools, churches, roads, surveys and towns. The army's forts often served as the genesis for permanent civilian settlement, resulting in new towns like San Angelo,

Gatesville, Fort Davis, Fort Stockton and Fort Worth. As one Texas historian put it, "No story of the Texas heritage can be complete without telling the role its forts played in making that heritage possible."

If you want to visit what remains of some Texas forts, pick up a copy of *Along Texas Old Forts Trail* by Rupert N. Richardson, B.W. Aston & Ira Donathan Taylor (1972) or *Along the Texas Forts Trail* by B.W. Aston & Ira Donathan (1997). The latter is an update of the former, which is out of print. Both books provide a guided tour of several Texas forts, or what is left of them. The journey begins in Jacksboro, the location of Fort Richardson and continues south and west to Forts Belknap, Griffin, Phantom Hill, Chadbourne, Concho, McKavett and Mason, then back to Jacksboro. The route can easily be modified to start at any point. From Austin, the logical starting point



would Fort Mason. The following brief descriptions of these forts are paraphrased from my copy of the earlier edition.

**Fort Mason** was established in 1851 as part of a line of forts from the Rio Grande to the Red River. Twenty officers stationed at Fort Mason before the Civil War became generals, 12 for the Confederacy and 8 for the Union. Fort Mason was Robert E. Lee's last command before being called to Washington, where he refused command of the Union Army. Fort Mason was surrendered to the Confederacy in 1861. The U.S. Army reoccupied Fort Mason in 1866. It was deactivated in 1869

and then re-activated a year later and utilized by the state of Texas as headquarters for its frontier forces. It closed for the last time in 1871.

**Fort McKavett** was established in 1852, not too far from what is now the town of Menard. It was first known as Camp San Saba because it overlooks the headwaters of the San Saba River Valley. Its purpose was to protect frontier settlers and travelers on the Upper El Paso Road. Fort McKavett was abandoned in 1859, but reoccupied in 1868 following the Civil War. Buffalo Soldiers were stationed at Fort McKavett during the Indian Wars. By 1880, the fort was no longer needed; it was abandoned in 1883.

**Fort Concho** is a favorite of mine. My grandson, **Wasabe**, and I enjoyed a half-day tour of the fort during the summer of 2010. It was hot, but fascinating. Established along the banks of the Concho River in November 1867, Fort Concho replaced Fort Chadbourne, which did not have an adequate water supply. Fort Concho is named after the Middle and North Concho rivers, which converge in what is now San Angelo to form the Concho River. The government did not buy the land on which the fort was built, but leased it from private owners. Fort Concho's commissary storehouse is today the oldest building in San Angelo. The commissary storehouse and its twin, the quartermaster storehouse, were constructed in 1868 by civilian stonemasons and carpenters from the Fredericksburg area.

By 1879 Fort Concho was an eight-company post with forty permanent structures built of locally quarried limestone around a parade ground that measured about 500 by 1,000 feet. The fort was not stockaded, but stone walls surrounded the hospital and the backyards of the officers' quarters. A cupola on the post hospital commanded a view in every direction. Fort Concho was commanded by such famous officers as William Shafter, Ranald "Bad Hand" Mackenzie, Benja-



min Grierson, John Hatch and Wesley Merritt. Fort Concho served as regimental headquarters for the Tenth U.S. Cavalry, known as the Buffalo Soldiers, from 1875 until 1882. Soldiers from Fort Concho scouted and mapped large portions of West Texas, built roads and telegraph lines, escorted stagecoaches, cattle drives, and railroad survey parties and served generally as a police force. Its soldiers skirmished with numerous small parties of Indians and furnished personnel and supplies for three major Indian campaigns: Mackenzie's 1872 campaign, the 1874 Red River War and the Victorio campaign of 1879-80.

In 1870 a town, which later became San Angelo, began to form across the river from the fort. Fort Concho was deactivated on June 20, 1889. Most of Fort Concho's buildings were not demolished but were converted into civilian housing or used for commercial storage space, which is why they remain today. Visiting Fort Concho is absolutely worth the time, but I recommend a time of year other than mid-summer.

**Fort Chadbourne** was established on Oak Creek between modern-day San Angelo and Abilene in 1852. The post was named for 2nd Lt. Theodore Lincoln Chadbourne, who was killed in the Mexican War. Much Indian activity occurred in the area during the 1850s, including a skirmish inside the fort in 1856. The fort was a defensive station on the Butterfield Overland Mail route from 1858 to 1861. It was surrendered to the Confederacy in 1861. Chadbourne was occupied briefly by United States troops after the Civil War, but lack of water, wood and adequate facilities caused its abandonment in 1868.

**Fort Phantom Hill** was one of the second line of forts laid out in the early 1850's to protect the westward-moving frontier settlement of Texas. Never officially named, military records usually refer to it as the "Post on the Clear Fork of the Brazos." The name "Phantom Hill" probably

comes from the fact that the hill on which it was located rises sharply from the plains but seems to level out as it is approached, "vanishing like a phantom." Sporadically occupied, the site served as a frontier garrison—including a stint under Confederate control—and as a stagecoach and mail stop. A unit of the Buffalo Soldiers fought Comanche and Kiowa Indians near Fort Phantom Hill in 1869. Shortly after the army abandoned the fort, fire destroyed most of the log walls and thatched roofs of the post's buildings.



**Fort Griffin** is located on the Clear Fork of the Brazos River between Abilene and Graham. Named after General Charles Griffin, commander of the Military District of Texas, Fort Griffin was established in 1867 when the Kiowa and Comanche were raiding settlements and attacking travelers in the area. The older posts of Belknap, Phantom Hill and Chadbourne became sub-posts of Griffin. The sub-posts furnished escorts for stagecoaches, wagon trains and surveying parties. Buffalo Soldiers manned the fort and used it as a resting point from which they could patrol the surrounding areas and pursue raiders. Fort Griffin was the nucleus of the border-defense line from Fort Richardson at Jacksboro to the Big Bend country. Law enforcement at Fort Griffin was strengthened in 1877 by the arrival of more than two dozen Texas Rangers led by Capt. G. W. Campbell. In July 1878 Campbell was replaced by Capt. George W. Arrington, who opposed federal Indian policy and whose approach to Indian-fighting was

therefore preferred by the townspeople. Fort Griffin served as an active garrison until it was deactivated in 1881.

**Fort Belknap** was founded by Brigadier General William Belknap in 1851 near Graham, Texas. Not finding water in shafts dug for that purpose, the location of Fort Belknap was moved two miles south, where adequate water was found in springs by the Brazos River. At the time it was established, Fort Belknap was the northern anchor of a chain of forts protecting the Texas frontier from the Red River to the Rio Grande. It was a four-company post without defensive works. Troops stationed at Belknap pursued raiding bands of Indians. On occasion, mounted expeditions from the fort carried the war as far north as the Kansas plains. The fort gave such confidence to citizens that several new counties were established in the surrounding lands. Fort Belknap became the hub of a network of roads stretching in every direction; the most notable of these was the Butterfield Overland Mail route from St. Louis to San Francisco. The fort was abandoned before the Civil War, but was occupied from time-to-time during the war by troopers of the Texas Frontier Regiment. In April 1867, U.S. Cavalry troops re-occupied Fort Belknap. When **Fort Griffin** was founded in Shackelford County in September of 1867, Fort Belknap was abandoned for the last time.

**Fort Richardson**, officially established in 1868, was named in honor of Union General Israel ("Fightin' Dick") Richardson, who died in the Battle of Antietam during the Civil War. Located seventy miles from the Indian Territory and 120 miles from Fort Sill, Richardson was the northernmost army outpost in Texas and the anchor of a defensive line of fortifications that included Forts Griffin and Concho. Fort Richardson was strategically the most important post in Texas from 1868-1872. In 1872 it was the largest post in

the United States. During the Red River War, Fort Richardson was a major staging base for the cavalry and infantry that finally defeated the Comanche and Kiowa Indians. Fort Richardson was abandoned in 1878.

**Fort Croghan.** If you are looking for a day-trip, consider a visit to the **Fort Croghan Grounds and Museum** in Burnet, about 50 miles northwest of Austin. After the annexation of Texas in 1845, several companies of Texas Rangers were stationed along the frontier to protect settlers from Indian raids. In December of 1847, a company commanded by Henry McCulloch, the younger brother of Captain Ben McCullough, established what became known as McCulloch's Station. In 1849, the station became a fort, named Fort Croghan in honor of Colonel George Croghan, a hero in the War of 1812. The presence of troops encouraged settlers to make their homes in what became Burnet County. By December of 1851 the population was large enough to establish a new county and Burnet County was formed, with the county seat near the location of the fort. Fort Croghan was abandoned in 1853 when it was thought the population of the area was sufficient to hold its own against the remaining Indians.

**I**n conclusion, I have barely touched the surface and have only mentioned in passing many famous Texas forts. Two I have visited and among my favorites are Forts Davis and Lancaster. For anyone wanting to read more about Texas forts, there is much information online. In addition to the two books mentioned earlier, you might also be interested in the *Illustrated History of Texas*





*Forts* by Rod Timanus (2001) and *Frontier Forts of Texas* by Roger Conger and others (1985). The latter includes short narrative histories of Forts Belknap, Bliss, Brown, Clark, Concho, Davis, Mason and Sam Houston by different authors. It is out-of-print but is a wonderful book worth the time and expense to add a copy to your library.

From the flyleaf of *Frontier Forts of Texas*:  
*Accompanying the historical narratives are the remarkable paintings of the well-known Western*



## RO's Corner: What's a Miss?

Spotters, remember the benefit of the doubt ALWAYS goes to the shooter. If you know it's a hit, it's a hit. If you're unsure whether it is a hit or a miss, it's a **HIT**. During and after our August shoot, I had more than one shooter express doubt about some of the calls, especially on Stage 4. Looking at the final scores, either everyone had a hard time hitting the targets on that stage OR there were some missed calls. I started thinking about why that might be. One possible explanation: The rifle targets on that Stage 4 were a little smaller and were angled down and to the shooter's left. They were also off to the side and a little harder for the spotters to see from inside the Livery. Smaller and off to the side meant less sound and harder to see. Angles down and left meant ricochets hit the ground and

*artist, Mel Warren of Fort Worth. Warren traveled over 4,000 miles to visit and sketch the sites of the eight forts and spent hours perusing old maps, sketches, and reports in order to achieve complete authenticity. He has captured on canvases the old forts as they appeared at the climax of their history .*

Some of the pictures included in this article are taken from *Frontier Forts of Texas*. In my opinion they alone are worth the price of the book.

## What's it mean? Drover

Droving is the practice of moving livestock over long distances by walking them "on the hoof." A Drover is one who drives cattle or sheep. Settlement of the Old West, led to drives of cattle over great distances by men on horseback, supported by wagons or packhorses. "Drover" was used by cattlemen to describe a cowboy who worked the cattle drives, moving large numbers of cattle to locations where they could be put on rail cars and sent to Kansas City, Omaha or Chicago for slaughter.

kicked up dust not too far from the target, often looking like misses. Spotters, be sure you have a good view. On some stages that may mean you need to be off to the side. Listen, of course, but no sound does not mean it was a miss. Don't be misled by dust kicking up. Be sure of your call. Only if you **KNOW** it was a miss should you call a miss. If you have any doubt or just don't know, it's hit. All of that said, make your own calls. Don't ask the other spotters and don't look at what they call to decide what you should call. If you are sure it was a miss, that's what you should call. Otherwise, it was a hit.

RO's be sure to brief your posse **BEFORE** you start shooting. And don't be afraid to ask a spotter if he or she is sure it was a miss. RO's cannot overrule a spotter's call, but an RO can question if there is doubt.

## Western Movies on "Opportunity"

Nothing is done until it is said and done. And the good Lord always opens a window when He shuts a door.

Devin O'Neil played by Clive Owen in *Class of '61* (1993)

There's always a door, Ebenezer, if you choose to open it.

Ghost of Christmas Past played by Michelle Thrush in *Ebenezer* (1997)

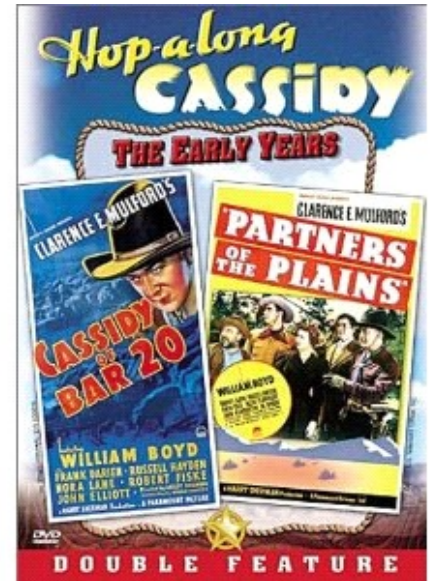
Once or twice in life, if you're really lucky, you get the chance to do something bigger and braver than you think you can.

Amos Russell played by MC. Gainey in *The Last Cowboy* (2003)

When a fox is asleep, nothing falls into his mouth. Frank "Blackie" Marshall played by James Craig in *Northwest Rangers* (1942)

Tomorrow is always another day. You never can tell just what will happen.

Hopalong Cassidy played by William Boyd in *Partners of the Plains* (1938)



Dumas Depot



Dawgtooth Dave



Texas Sarge

True Blue Cachoo







Shooters' Safety Meeting



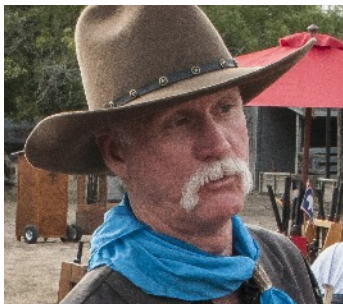
Massachusetts Molly  
& Grandma Agarita Annie



Miss Cubbie



Kickshot



Nueces Ranger



Dragon Hill Dave





Gold Dog



SkinDawg (shooting)  
Kit Carson (timing)

Phantom had a  
shotgun flyer  
for us in  
August. How  
many hit the  
water bottle?



Dutch Van Horn must  
really like those braces.  
This is two months in a  
row. Will he go for  
three?

Jake Jones







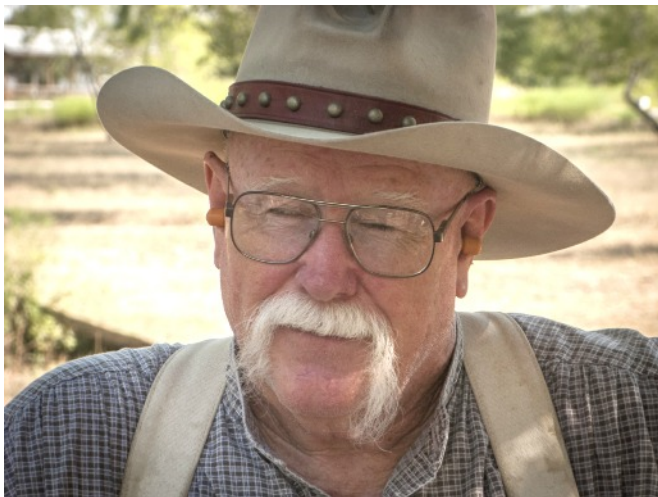
Lightning McQueen



Miss Cubbie  
Reloading



SkinDawg



Scooter



Joe Darter



Little Bullseye



Handlebar Bob



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	105	FP	54
	125	RNFP	58
	125	FP	58
	130	RNFP	59
	158	RNFP	63
	158	FP	63
	158	SWC	63
.380	100	RNFP	53
.38-55	245	RNFP	92*
.41	215	SWC	77
.44	180	RNFP	67
	240	SWC	81
.44-40	200	RNFP	70
.45 COLT	160	RNFP	76*
	180	RNFP	67
	200	RNFP	70
	250	RNFP	83
9MM	124	RN	58
	125	CN	58
40 S&W	180	FP	67
.45ACP	200	SWC	70
"New"	200	RN	70
	230	RN	79
45-70	405	FPT	168*



High Plains Hud (shooting)  
The Adobe Kid (timing)

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