

# MORMON BATTALION ASSOCIATION

**"...will be held in honorable remembrance..."**

## **GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

### **WHEN**

Thur, January 19th  
7:00 PM MST

### **WHAT**

"The Gold Story"

### **LINK**

**[https://  
www.gotomeet.me/  
LauraKayAnderson](https://www.gotomeet.me/LauraKayAnderson)**

Dial in: 224.501.3412  
Code: 498-830-885

### **PRESENTER**

Carl Witham

### **WHO**

Mormon Battalion  
Association members, guests



## **President's Message**

**Greg Christofferson**

Dear MBA Members,

In my last message, I reported on our Staff Retreat held in September. Following the success of the 175th Anniversary events, our theme was "What's Next?" I'm pleased to report on two projects our Association will be undertaking.



The first is seeking to get the Mormon Battalion Trail designated as a National Historic Trail. The Mormon Pioneer Trail was one of the first NHT's established following the National Trails System Act of 1968. Nineteen other NHT's are part of the system today.

To get the ball moving, Laura and Craig Anderson, Ron Kirkpatrick and I attended the Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) 2022 Workshop in Albuquerque, New Mexico, from November 2-4. At this conference, we learned more about the process of getting NHT designation, and made multiple contacts with people on the government and non-profit sides of the PNTS. We found universal enthusiasm for our effort and several key people who are willing to help us. We feel that the contacts we made and procedures we learned put us a year or two ahead of where we would be if we had not attended the Workshop. We also have the welcome support of the Oregon-California Trails Association.

Now, let me ask for your help. We have enlisted Utah Congressman Chris Stewart to be a sponsor for the first step in the process, which is an Act of Congress for a preliminary study by the National Parks Service. We need more congressional sponsors from states along the Battalion Trail, specifically Iowa, Kansas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. Ideally, we would like to find one Republican and one Democrat congressperson from each state.

**CONTINUE ON PAGE 6**

**PICTURES ON PAGE 7**



## Mormon Battalion Association Resources

### Website

[https://  
www.mormonbattalion.com/](https://www.mormonbattalion.com/)

### Facebook

[https://www.facebook.com/  
search/top/?](https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?)

### Youtube

[https://www.youtube.com/  
channel/  
UCaCSOJvkFSJWgmUxcNFBj4A](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaCSOJvkFSJWgmUxcNFBj4A)

### Email

[mobatoffice@gmail.com](mailto:mobatoffice@gmail.com)

### Meeting Link

[https://www.gotomeet.me/  
LauraKayAnderson](https://www.gotomeet.me/LauraKayAnderson)

### Newsletter

[dantzelle@gmail.com](mailto:dantzelle@gmail.com)



**Please consider contributing to our endowment fund. We have \$100,000 matching funds. All is needed is one hundred \$1,000 gifts or two hundred \$500 gifts. This funding is designed to produce enough annual interest to support our normal operating expenses each year.**

**Send your check to:**

Mormon Battalion Association  
C/O Ron Kirkpatrick  
8610 President Place NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87113

**PayPal**

[battalioncommander@mormonbattalion.com](mailto:battalioncommander@mormonbattalion.com).



### Upcoming Events

- **January 24-27, 2023** Southern Trails Chapter "Trail Gathering in Tombstone,"
- **March 30-April 2, 2023** OCTA's Spring Symposium in St. Joseph, Missouri
- **July 25-29, 2023** OCTA's 41st Annual Convention at Gering, Nebraska

**Website**     <https://octa-trails.org/>

**Youtube Library**     [https://www.youtube.com/channel/  
UC5CyC-R68lzhvw1f57V-yQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5CyC-R68lzhvw1f57V-yQ)



# Upcoming EVENTS



<b>Sat</b>	<b>Jan 14</b>	<b>Yuma Commemoration</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>11:00 AM MST</b>
<b>Thu</b>	<b>Jan 19</b>	<b>MBA General Membership Meeting</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>7:00 PM MST</b>
<b>Sat</b>	<b>Jan 28</b>	<b>Mormon Battalion Day at San Diego</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>10 AM - 3 PM</b>
<b>Thu</b>	<b>Feb 23</b>	<b>Tucson, AZ Rodeo Days Parade</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>9:00 AM MST</b>
<b>Thu</b>	<b>Mar 16</b>	<b>General Membership Meeting</b>		<b>7:00 PM MDT</b>
<b>Sat</b>	<b>Mar 18</b>	<b>Ft. Lowell 150th Anniversary (Tucson, AZ)*</b>		
<b>Thu</b>	<b>May 18</b>	<b>General Membership Meeting</b>		<b>7:00 PM MDT</b>
<b>July - TBD</b>		<b>General Membership Meeting</b>		
<b>Thu</b>	<b>Sep 21</b>	<b>General Membership Meeting</b>		<b>7:00 PM MDT</b>
<b>Thu</b>	<b>Nov 16</b>	<b>General Membership Meeting</b>		<b>7:00 PM MDT</b>

**\* more information found in this newsletter**



**General Membership**

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**meeting**

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**Thu, January 19th**

**7:00 PM MST**

**Meeting Link**

**<https://www.gotomeet.me/>**

**[LauraKayAnderson](#)**



**January 19th presenter: Carl Witham**

Carl and his wife Pat grew up in Los Angeles, but they have lived in Dublin, CA for 47 years since then. They have five children and twenty-one grandchildren. Carl has a special interest in Church History of California, especially Northern California. Carl is currently serving in the Church as a Primary Boys Activity leader. Previously he has served in almost all of the Auxiliary and Priesthood callings including bishop and in a stake presidency. He served many years as a Temple Ordinance Worker (Oakland Temple). Carl and Pat served for several years teaching a religion class in a

Federal Prison. They also served a mission at the Mormon Battalion Historic Site (2019-2021) where he researched and presented information on the Gold Rush for missionaries serving there. Carl attended UCLA where he received a master's degree in Mechanical Engineering. He spent most of his career years in the field of Robotics design for factories.





## NEW BOARD MEMBERS

### Michael (Mike) Bilbo

has spent his career at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), bringing an important skill set to the Mormon Battalion Association's efforts to achieve recognition for the



Mormon Battalion Trail as a national historic

trail. A military veteran, he loves history and the story of the Mormon Battalion and has spent time as a historic re-enactor.

**Mark Hunter** is a descendant of Mormon Battalion soldiers David Study and Frederick Forney. He has a special interest in the history of the soldiers who returned to the southernmost area of the original 90 settlements in Southwest Iowa, Plum Hollow.

**Terry Rosvall** developed organizational and people skills through many years of professional and church leadership responsibilities. He has a passion for family history and wants others to experience and benefit from the strength that comes from connecting to their family roots and the Mormon Battalion story. One of Terry's ancestors, Jacob Butterfield, was a member of the Mormon Battalion, in Company C.



**MORMON BATTALION**  
U.S. ARMY OF THE WEST

**Parade & Community Event**  
Old Town San Diego State Historic Park  
Saturday, January 28, 2023  
10:00 am - 3:00 pm

**Free Children's Crafts & Activities**  
**Great Family Fun**

Historic Displays	Dutch Oven Cook-off
Frontier Games & Music	Re-enactments
Living History Displays	Children's Parade

**FREE ADMISSION & TOURS**  
Come hear our amazing story!  
For Information: (619) 296-3317

## 175th anniversary of Mormon Volunteer Reenlistment

To join in the March assemble at 9:00 AM at the gravel area north west of the Robinson Rose House Visitor Center (4098 Mason St) in Old Town Park.

At 10:00 AM -The March will circle the grass block in the Park three times, stop at the grand stand for The flag ceremony, then be discharged to return or store accouterments and enjoy the Mormon Battalion Day activities.



## Mormon Battalion Activities (Tucson)

Randy Madsen

### Battle of the Bulls Hike – San Pedro River Basin, AZ took place on Dec. 10, 2022

I have the privilege of living just a few miles from where the battle supposedly occurred. For the past seven years I have hosted a Mormon Battalion/Battle of the Bulls Commemoration hike along the San Pedro River.

This year was a small turnout. We visited the ruins of the Presidio Santa Cruz de Terranate that some of the Battalion soldiers surveyed the day after the Battle of the Bulls. The ruins are about two miles north of Fairbank Historic Townsite along the San Pedro River. I host this hike usually on the second Saturday of December each year.

Regards, David Barnhill

### American Heritage Festival – San Tan Valley, AZ took place on Nov. 17-19, 2022

This year was the 20th year of the Festival. This event featured numerous educational and hands-on activities representing the history of America. About 3,000 school students attended this event to learn first-hand about American history, patriotism, and frontier life. The Mormon Battalion entry represented the Mexican War era. In addition to displays about the legacy of the Battalion, frontier games and toys were provided to the enjoyment of both young and old.

### Tucson Rodeo Days Parade - Feb. 23, 2023

The Tucson Rodeo Parade is the largest non-mechanized parade in the United States. Mormon Battalion has participated with the brass band playing from a horse-drawn wagon for 38 years.

### Ft. Lowell 150th Anniversary Celebration - Mar 18, 2023

Ft. Lowell was the main Army cavalry staging base in Tucson during the 1870's-1890's. Anticipating large community participation, including Baffle Soldiers, performing cavalry unit from Fort Huachuca among others. Mormon Battalion has been invited to bring historical perspective for the Mexican War era.



## US Army of the West Mormon Battalion Commemoration

Saturday, January 14, 2023

11:00 AM

West Wetlands Park

(2100 W Water, Yuma, AZ)

Lunch will be served



For additional information. <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=22686>



## Kindex Research Project

By Laura Anderson



Our research team's efforts have been many and varied for the last 8 years. We have located the official Federal Muster rolls, payrolls and pay vouchers. We have also located letters and so many more documents which have allowed us to prove who was in fact, in, the Battalion and who was never there. See "Correcting the Record" by Kristine Forbes and Tom Brown on the home page of our web site.

One of our most valuable research tools is called [Kindex](#) which allows us to transcribe documents and make them fully searchable. We now have over 21,000 documents posted on Kindex and have 10,000 or 46% transcribed concerning the Mormon Battalion and the Church History they are involved in. We can always use more transcribers on this project. This work on Kindex is helping us to quickly write well researched biographies for each of the persons who were in or went with or assisted the Battalion. For this project we need writers and researchers to join our team.

Many hands make light work and we have had many people involved in what we have done thus far. We are excited about what is happening in the Mormon Battalion Association's research team and have room for many more hands to help out in our efforts. Please come and help us! Contact Laura Anderson at [paffanatic10@yahoo.com](mailto:paffanatic10@yahoo.com) or [maryannkirk@gmail.com](mailto:maryannkirk@gmail.com)

### **CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 - Greg Christofferson's "President's Message"**

If you have a relationship with someone who fits this category, please contact me at [gregmobatt@gmail.com](mailto:gregmobatt@gmail.com).

We have organized an MBA Trail Designation Committee, and are excited about the prospect of this worthwhile goal.

The second project is the refurbishment of the Mormon Battalion Monument in Budaghers, New Mexico. I'll give you the details about this in our next newsletter.

Finally, please remember to donate to our MBA Endowment. We are seeking to match the incredibly generous \$100,000 gift from Craig and Laura Anderson, and your donation of any size will be appreciated. Send your check to Ron Kirkpatrick, MBA Treasurer, at 8610 President Place NW Albuquerque, NM 87113.

**Looking forward to a great 2023!**

**President Greg Christofferson**



## Possible Topics for the MBA Membership Meetings

Please submit any recommendations for topics to

**Brad Allen** at [bradallenbsa@gmail.com](mailto:bradallenbsa@gmail.com)



- \* Monuments of the Mormon Battalion
- \* 175th anniversary of the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill – Jan. 1848
- \* Tragedy Springs, the second blaze and the Ezra and Sarah Allen story
- \* The Army personnel and officers
- \* “Where’s Waldo” – After discharge where do all the soldiers go?
- \* Fort Leavenworth, KS experience
- \* Battalion cross the Colorado river in Yuma, AZ in a starving and weakened condition
- \* The “AWE” moment of seeing the Pacific Ocean and the SD Temple dedication
- \* The importance of Winter Quarters and families left behind
- \* Recruiting efforts and the influence of Brigham Young
- \* Efforts to have the Mormon Battalion trail recognized as a National Historic Trail
- \* Uniforms and clothing of the Mormon Battalion members
- \* The Mississippi Saints and the three sick detachments in Pueblo, CO.
- \* The stories of the five women who arrived in San Diego (and other women of the MB)
- \* The Battle of the Bulls in AZ
- \* Christmas camp near the Maricopa AZ mountains (kindness of the first people of AZ)
- \* Challenges of crossing the barren CA desert, Box Canyon and Warner Ranch
- \* Significant influence of the Mormon Battalion Historic Site in San Diego, CA
- \* Notable accomplishments of the Mormon Battalion
- \* Thomas Kane – “Friend of the Mormons”
- \* Levi Hancock – a closer look at one of the spiritual leaders of the Battalion
- \* New discoveries and correcting errors of the past
- \* Telling an accurate story – how to verify family histories



*President Greg with  
Stephanie Garcia  
Richard, New Mexico  
Land Commissioner*



*L to R Ron, Laura, Greg,  
Travis Boley, Executive  
Director of OCTA*



## Where did they go?

Where do you think most veterans were in December of 1847? A graph will provide an interesting snapshot that may surprise some.

Researchers Kristine Forbes, Mary Ann Kirk and Tom Brown are currently working on a project to correctly identify the movement and locations of Mormon Battalion Veterans as of Dec 1847.

Questions often arise about how many men arrived in Salt Lake with the detachments, how many stayed in California, how many returned to Utah, and how many men continued on to Iowa. This project will help answer some of those questions and has involved validating or identifying errors in previous publications such as Norma Ricketts book, *The Mormon Battalion US Army of the West*, and data from Church sites related to Overland Travel. A focused effort using primary sources such as journals, letters, church documents and records, and military documents from pension and bounty land has helped identify where mistakes have been made. Other clues help identify locations such as the birth date and location of a child. Occasionally, secondary sources of children or grandchildren of the soldiers have been used where first-hand accounts were not available. While a few educated guesses have been needed, a new data set will soon be ready for release and hopefully an on-line presentation will be scheduled for members and the public to enjoy. Watch for details!

The next step will be to identify the movement of the men from 1848 through about 1850 to help capture how many men returned and remained in Utah or spread out in new church organized settlements throughout the mountain west along with how many returned and remained in CA and IA or surrounding areas. One of the results of this project has been the realization that movement after discharge was just as fluid as the enlistment process. It wasn't just one tidy little story but a multi-faceted story of men moving about in small and large groups to find work, and in most cases, to find and return to families. Although the majority continued to support their religious leaders in the Great Basin, some chose to follow a different path.

One of the challenges descendants have in trying to connect the dots is finding detailed records that document groups going both east and west. Since the Church's Overland Travel has focused only on groups coming TO Utah, it can create confusion about how and when they got from one place to the other. It is quite common for family members who don't understand the whole context of the battalion to think soldiers in the detachments went straight from Pueblo to Iowa - and then came to Salt Lake. They don't realize that most arrived in Salt Lake first and then traveled back to Iowa to retrieve their families so stories created by families on family search can be quite confusing - and inaccurate. We hope this research will help descendants tell the story of their family member accurately. It is truly a fun process of discovery!



# RESEARCH FUN

We have been finding many interesting primary documents as we research the Mormon Battalion which you can also find. A good example is a letter submitted by Azariah Smith to the local Manti, Utah newspaper in 1897 that was announcing a 50-year Jubilee and soliciting information about those who arrived in the valley in 1847. You can also find a book of entries from the 1897 Jubilee Celebration.

Jubilee:

<https://archives.utah.gov/research/exhibits/jubilee/3-book-pioneer.html>

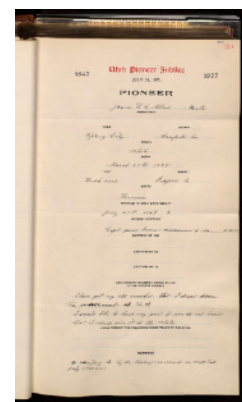
More information on the Pioneer Jubilee can also be found on the Pioneer Jubilee website for the International Society Daughters of Utah Pioneers.

[archives.utah.gov](https://archives.utah.gov)

Here is a brief excerpt of his letter, but one can click on the link and read the entire article in his own handwriting. Letter:

<https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets/2dcd74a0-5597-453a-82b3-3d3dec4da2fa/0/1>

"Manti, May 11, 1897 To the Editor: I have been reading, with interest, a great deal concerning the grand Jubilee, to be held at Salt Lake City in July next, and the pains taken to prepare for the same. Also, to get the names of all those who arrived in 1847. My father, Albert Smith, arrived there in 1847 from California; but before we got to Salt Lake, I was advised to go back to California until spring. I would not have written, but several were telling me I ought to write something of what we passed through in coming to the valleys of the mountains...We had a hard time to break a road through the mountains, breaking some of the wagons; but I came with pack animals, and helping the brethren pack their load through the canyon my mule broke his leg, and I had to leave him. I then put my pack in the wagon and helped drive the stock, having some cows and calves with us. The Indians bothered us much, stealing them and trying to shoot us, but by keeping guard we got along very well. We had much trouble, crossing mountains and rivers and plains, until we gained our object. We brought with us two cannon, that we bought of Sutter. On September 28th I rode ahead, and about 2 o'clock I arrived at Salt Lake City. After riding about some, I found father, mother, sisters and brothers all well, living four miles from the city, where father had got in his crop, but the hoppers had destroyed most of it; only saving twelve bushels of wheat, and some corn, beans, peas, melons, etc., growing. But we were all much pleased to meet again. I had a bolt of hickory shirting, etc., and also the gold that I brought with me. I went to Brother Brigham and paid my tithing, gave some to the poor, and one dollar to each of the Twelve. Also bought some wheat at \$12 per bushel. Father had been back with a recruiting company to meet Brother Brigham and Heber C. Kimball's emigrating company, and got mother and family, bringing them to Salt Lake. On the 6th of October we had a feast made by the members of the Mormon Battalion, having good music, marching to the table in good order, with our wives, children, and friends. Over a thousand partook; after which there was dancing until night."



**AZARIAH SMITH.** Source: "Tells of Pioneering," *Deseret Evening News*, May 15, 1897, 8; *Utah Digital Newspapers*

# Don't Believe Everything You Read!

By Mary Ann Kirk



We encourage descendants of Mormon Battalion members to analyze stories of their ancestor with a critical eye to identify and correct "myths" that were created without primary sources and have been perpetuated through generations. Some of those errors and myths still exist on Family Search and even in DUP lesson books. Our goal is to tell an accurate story and encourage descendants to do the same.



- ♦ Look for primary sources. First hand written accounts at the time of the event are the most reliable which might include a journal or a letter written to a family member. Sources can often be found on the new Church biographical pages for individuals previously called Overland Travel. An autobiography or even pension applications written later from memories of earlier events may also contain important clues, but may have some inaccuracies - especially if it is 40-50 years later when memory is a little fuzzy and distorted at times.
- ♦ Analyze secondary and tertiary sources to determine accuracy. Information gathered by a family member through oral communication while the individual was alive can provide some important information but should be analyzed carefully. Watch for accounts that appear to be first-hand accounts but were really written by someone else who turned it into a first-person narrative to share with family members. Secondary sources can be helpful to validate primary sources but look for the author of a biography and determine what sources the writer is using to compile the information.
- ♦ Be aware that stories of events or situations can change as it is told from one person to another or retold from generation to generation and even recounted in later history or church publications. Historical publications can provide new information, but also have errors - including Norma Ricketts. So again, check sources!
- ♦ Watch for context. Sometimes biography writers do not understand the full context of the battalion history and where a soldier fits into that story. Families often write a biography on incomplete understanding of events and then post an inaccurate account on Family Search. Many often just copy a story from another source and place their ancestor into that story inaccurately - especially related to finding gold.
- ♦ If you don't have enough information, it is okay to suggest a "possibility" or state you don't know or don't say anything at all. New information and documents may provide new insights in the future.

This process provides a fun opportunity for new discoveries! We hope to write a brief life sketch approximately one page in length about each individual involved with the Mormon Battalion which can be attached on the MBA website. This has been accomplished with the 38 women associated with the Battalion and our next goal is to create a life sketch for the 496 soldiers. If you are interested in helping with that project that is focused on primary sources, contact Mary Ann Kirk at [mary\\_ann\\_kirk@hotmail.com](mailto:mary_ann_kirk@hotmail.com).