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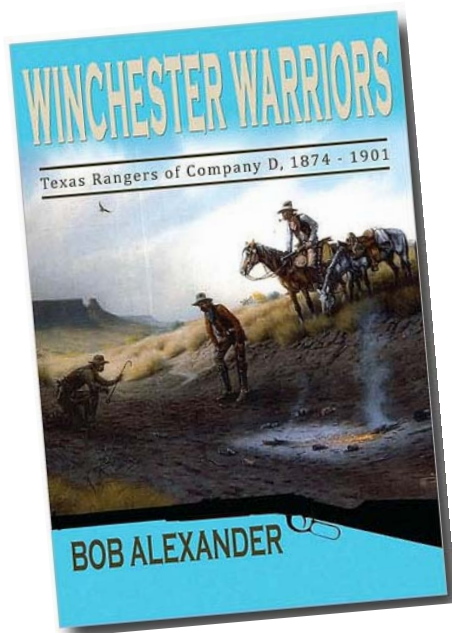
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## Winchester Warriors

*Texas Rangers of Company D, 1874-1901*

by **Bob Alexander**

Denton, Texas: University of North Texas Press. xiv + 402 pages. Profusely illustrated with photographs, extensive endnotes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.

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**Review by Chuck Parsons**

Bob Alexander is now a highly recognized author and historian of factual books dealing with the nineteenth century West. His previous works include biographies of Sheriff John Behan, Sheriff Harvey Whitehill, and Texas lawman W.D. “Dave” Allison. His works of a broader appeal include the two-volume work, *Lawmen, Outlaws, and S.O.B.s*, which highlights the lives of rough and tough men. Each of Alexander’s books underscores his ability to uncover fascinating stories of genuine strong men who brought law and order to a frontier land – or who contributed to the lawlessness.

*Winchester Warriors* provides a nearly complete biography through a quarter century, not of a single individual but of a group: the men of Company D, Frontier Battalion, Texas Rangers. Being a study of just one company naturally limits the scope. We are well versed with studies of the history of the Texas Rangers: Walter Prescott Webb’s *The Texas Rangers*; Charles Robinson III’s Ranger histories; Robert Utley’s two-volume *Lone Star Lawmen*; and most recently the two-volume work by Mike Cox, *Wearing the Cinco Peso*. Bob Alexander limits his focus to the working men of one company, essentially the privates, though some, of course, rose to higher ranks. Although there is naturally a great deal of shooting and killing, there is also considerable attention given to the tracking down of fugitives and to the day-to-day existence of a Texas Ranger in that most exciting quarter century of the Rangers’ existence, the 1874-1901 period.

What is most unique with Alexander’s treatment of Company D is his avoidance of too much attention to the captains who led the best-known company through the years. The sterling qualities of Cicero R. “Rufe” Perry, Daniel W. Roberts, L.P. Sieker, Frank Jones, and John R. Hughes have not been evaded, but the focus is on the men who followed the orders of those captains. Has there even been an attempt to provide a history of a single company prior to this



## Book Reviews

book? The effort may have been made, but apparently it has not come to fruition.

Naturally, some of the men of Company D receive more attention than others. Ira Aten and his brothers Ed and Cal; “Lam” Sieker and his brothers Frank, Ed, and Tom; Alonzo Van Oden; and B.L. Outlaw all receive due notice. There are many, though, who remain little more than names on a muster roll.

Some men who joined the Rangers remained only a very short time, quickly discovering that the life of a private in Company D was more than nonstop adventure. At times, it was dull; cleaning up the campsite was nothing to write home about. On the other hand, surviving a skirmish with a band of horse thieves or Comanches was exciting. All too often, however, those thrilling engagements resulted in death to an Indian brave, a fugitive from justice—or a Texas Ranger. George R. Bingham, Frank Sieker, and Charles Fusselman all died answering the call to duty; they were shot to death in action. Of lesser recognition are the names of William A. Glass and D.W.H. “Dave” Bailey, who both lost their lives in that first engagement with Indians in 1874 led by Frontier Battalion Commander Major John B. Jones.

*Winchester Warriors* is exciting reading. It is also accurate and provides a great model for future writers of Ranger history. Bob Alexander can be proud of his biography of Company D, but can we suggest that he also contribute histories of the other companies? What about the men of Company A? Company B? Company C? Company E? Company F? The captains of those groups are fairly familiar: Bill McDonald, N.O. Reynolds, Charles L. Nevill, John H. Rogers, J.A. Brooks, and others. Will Alexander make this contribution? We can only hope!



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