

Taylor Ranch

From: "Larry Kingsbury" <lkingsbury@fs.fed.us>
To: "Taylor Ranch" <tayranch@direcpc.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 03, 2004 2:07 PM
Subject: Re: Cave Containing 1879 Military Weapons Has Been Found!

Greetings Jim and Holly! I have received information suggesting that a cave in the Big Creek drainage has been found to contain several boxes of .45.70 trapdoor rifles, and one mountain howitzer. Here is what I learned on July 25, 2004, in conversation with Kenneth J. Swanson, Idaho Historical Museum Administrator. Last October a man in his 30's walked into the Idaho Historical Museum. He looked like the kind of guy on a helitack crew. Maybe a fire fighter from National Fire Center? He asked to speak with Mr. Swanson. He showed Swanson a full paper box containing 20, .45.70 caliber copper shelled bullets with internal primers. The box was labeled Frankfurt Ammunition Company. The man said that he found the ammunition in a cave that contained several full boxes of trapdoor muskets. Each box of muskets contained 10 guns with 10 bayonets. There were several boxes of ammunition. There was a mountain howitzer and other cannon tools, carriage and caisson. The man asked Swanson what would the value of such a find be worth. Swanson said...nothing! That is property of the United States Government. The man took offense and stated that he found the stuff and that it was his. Swanson said, it all belongs to the Forest Service, US government and that it was not his. The man said that he would take the cannon and sell it. Swanson said that as soon as he tried to sell it, people would ask where he got it. There would be an investigation. Swanson asked the man about the size of the howitzer. The man pointed to the full scale 12 pounder Napoleon in the foyer of the museum and said that the bore was about the same as that one, but only half the length. The man asked Swanson if the museum would like the guns and cannon. Swanson said yes, with agreement from the Forest Service, the museum would like the 19th century weapons. Swanson asked the man if the cave was in the area of Big Creek? The man said yes! The man began to act squirrely and did not offer any further information. Swanson said that he knew about the cave, that the man and his friend, were not the first ones to find the cave, that Pat Reed, former Forest Service packer, and son of the infamous Dead shot Reed knew of the cave, as told to Swanson by George Reed, under-sherriff at Jordon Valley, Oregon (circa 1998). The man did not offer his name, nor any further information. Here is my interpretation of the events. In September of 2000, after the big wildfire burned through the wilderness, there were several helicopters with crews flying around. I was with one of the crews flying out of McCall. The pilot on the ship asked me several historical questions about the events of the 1879 Sheepeater War. I provided him with the requested information. Maybe I provided too much information. Maybe they found the cave? Here is the variable. The

helicopter crew would not have been able to remove the items in a sling without a sling crew and other Forest Service personnel observing the action. Maybe men on a different helitack crew found the cave? I suspect that the cave is somewhere very difficult to access, even for an experienced packer like Pat Reed or a helicopter crew. I suspect that the 1879 cave cache took place after the advance up to Vinegar Creek? Anyway, I want you folks to be aware and to watch for any suspicious packers, packing out several 6 foot long boxes. Send me an e-mail pronto if you see anything suspicious. I recommend keeping this e-mail or make a copy of it for the record. Larry

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