



The Texas Union Herald



Colonel E. E. Ellsworth Camp #18
Department of Texas
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Volume ii Number 7, July 2017

Rattling Sabres

by
Glen E. Zook

I have to apologize for the lateness of this issue. The 1st of the month is when I try to put the newsletter “to bed” (“to bed” is an old newspaper term meaning “to publish”) and to get it out to the membership and others on the distribution list. Unfortunately, a few situations occurred that threw a monkey wrench into the equation.

Although I have been “retired” for over a decade and a half, I do have a little business to supplement Social Security and my pension from when I worked for Texas Utilities Company (TXU). That business involves making certain unique parts for older amateur radio equipment (called “boat anchors”) and repairing / restoring such equipment. One particular client brought me no less than 13 such units needing them repaired in a hurry. That would, probably, not slowed things down that much.

However, my arteries decided that they needed what has become about a bi-yearly occurrence, “Roto-Rooting”. Due to heredity, my arteries build up plaque and become clogged. The cardiologists say that I cannot do anything to prevent this because my father, and all uncles on both sides of my family, had the same problem and, probably, many of those before that. My heart is fine (have never had a heart attack). But, that required a few days residence in Methodist Hospital Richardson.

Finally, and all married Camp #18 members can identify with this, were the “honey do’s”. Having been married for over 52-years, I definitely know when to pick an argument and when to “go with the flow”! The swimming pool needed more attention than usual, for some reason the bushes were growing faster than normal and they needed trimming, the “ground cover” between the swimming pool and the fence was overtaking the concrete “deck” around the pool needed “cutting back”, and a few other things.

I was not able to either meet the National SUVCV Commander either at the open house nor at the Department encampment in Corsicana. I am hoping that someone, who was at either and / or both occasions will write a report that can be included in the next newsletter.

Fortunately, Brother Paul Ridenour has provided numerous photographs from the encampment. As such, I do have a few months’ supply of photographs for inclusion in the newsletter. However, I definitely need photographs from other happenings like the Memorial Day activities and any 4th of July activities. Please, anyone who has such get them to me for inclusion in the newsletter.

I believe that I am scheduled to present the program at the July meeting. At least that is what I have

“written down”! My subject will be about a relatively little known activity that started before the Civil War and continued, officially, until 1863. That was the United States Army Camel Corps. Be at the meeting for the entire presentation.

As I did with my presentation on Mahlon Loomis, the “real” inventor of wireless communications, I plan on writing an article on the Camel Corps that will be included in this newsletter. However, for the real “skinny” get to the July meeting!

Although the vast majority of my ancestors fought for the Union, I do have a few, on my father’s mother’s side, that fought for the Confederacy. Especially because the Confederate Naval Jack (the Naval Jack is the rectangular blue “Cross of St. Andrew” on a red background with up to 13 white stars on the cross) has been adopted by a number of “hate” groups, I can definitely see why that flag has become hated by certain minority groups in the country. Since the Confederate Battle Flag (primarily the battle flag of the Army of Northern Virginia but adopted by other Confederate units as well) has the same design, that flag is disdained as well.

As such, the Sons of Confederate Veterans have been refused the privilege of having a Texas license plate for that organization. I do wonder why that organization just does not use the Confederate “First National”, the real “Stars and Bars”, for a license plate. I am sure that such a license plate would be immediately approved!

There are other things happening that I definitely do NOT approve! All over the country Confederate memorials and statues of Confederate personnel are being removed. Schools named for Confederate persons are being renamed. An now, streets named for Confederate persons are being renamed. When will this “political correctness” end! The American Civil War is history and, no matter how much activists try, history cannot really be changed.

Slavery was one of the causes of the Civil War but was not “the” cause of the war. Unfortunately, the revisionists have done a lot to change the perception, to the unwashed masses, so that the vast majority of persons these days do believe such. Text books, magazine articles, newspaper articles, all have added to this misrepresentation.

I do have, on my father’s mother’s side of the family, ancestors who owned slaves. In fact, they owned a LOT of slaves. But, those times were different and even though I do not agree with slavery, I am not ashamed of my ancestors. What they did was acceptable to society in those times and even encouraged by many.

Anyway, I hope to see each, and everyone, at the July meeting. Until next month . . .

The **Texas Union Herald** is published monthly by the **Colonel E.E. Ellsworth Camp #18, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War**. For official business, including editorial and article submission, the mailing address is as follows:

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Articles, news items, features, and the like are welcomed for publication in **The Texas Union Herald**. Deadline is normally the 1st of the month of the cover date of publication. Submissions may be handwritten, typewritten, or submitted in any of the popular computer formats (Microsoft Word, Open Office, Word Perfect, and ASCII). Please contact the editor for details.

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Articles Needed!

If the members of the **Colonel E.E. Ellsworth Camp #18** do not want to be inundated with articles that were chosen by the editor (what he wants to see in the newsletter) then they need to start inputting items for inclusion in **The Texas Union Herald**. Tidbits about the Civil War, stories, articles, current news items, photographs, even commentaries are most welcome.

Don't worry if you are not an accomplished author. Get the idea onto paper (computer, etc.) and get it to the editor. He really can edit (rewrite, etc.) and you'll be surprised at just how well you can write!

If you have E-Mail capabilities, you can either include the information in the body of the message or put it in either Word format or ACSII ("txt") format. If, for some reason, you cannot do either, contact the editor to see if your particular word processor format can be handled.

If "hard" copy, make sure the copy is legible (can be read by someone else!). Typewritten, computer printed, even in Crayon on "Big Chief" tablet is acceptable. Just get the information in!

Even small (1 or 2 paragraphs) material, or photographs, can be used. That makes editing and publishing the newsletter easier since "fill" material is available for those little areas that seem to happen whenever an article is included in the publication.

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Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

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General Order # 21
SERIES 2016-2017
31 May 2017

It has come to the attention of the National Order of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) of the events taking place regarding the Nash Farm Battlefield Museum in Georgia. We, the actual descendants of the Union Soldiers that fought to protect the Union of this great country, find the action portrayed in several news reports to be troubling to say the least.

Over the past decades the SUVCW has been called upon to explain our position regarding the flying of the flags of the confederacy as well as the destruction of various monuments and the renaming of battlefields to parks. We have taken the position that history must be preserved in complete truthfulness. If you change or revise history you change the meaning and quite possibly the credibility of the truth of that history. If you do away with the Confederacy and the soldiers that fought on that side, you also lessen the contribution of the soldiers and statesmen that fought to preserve the United States. The revision of history can also change the credibility of the reasons for which battles were fought and if they were in fact even fought.

The SUVCW website contains two policies that have and are currently the standing of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War regarding not only the flying of flags of the Civil War era, but the Interpretation of Civil War Battlefields for the National Park Service. We further believe that our policy on the NPS interpretation also applies to State and local parks and their position on the Civil War.

Policy on the National Park Service Interpretation Program of the Civil War Battlefields.

A statement made by Dr. John Latschar, when Superintendent of the Gettysburg National Military Park, best describes the mission of the National Park Service and their interpretive policy on the Civil War battlefields. According to Dr. Latschar, an Act of Congress in 1990 directed the Gettysburg NMP to "interpret the Battle of Gettysburg in the larger context of the Civil War and American history, including the causes and consequences of the Civil War and including the effects of the war on all the American people." He further states that in 1999, a Congressional report added that Civil War Battlefields such as Gettysburg should "recognize and include the unique role that the institution of slavery played in the Civil War."

The Constitution of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) clearly defines the mission or purpose of the SUVCW. Our Primary mission is "To Perpetuate the memory of the

Grand Army of the Republic....to teach.... the true history of our country...to oppose every tendency or movement that would weaken loyalty to, or make the destruction or impairment of our constitutional Union...to inculcate and broadly sustain the American principles of...equal rights, and of impartial justice for all.

In conformity to our Constitution and Congressional Charter the SUVCW maintains the most important goal of the National Park Service relative to Civil War battlefields should be (1) The physical preservation of the battlefields, and (2) The NPS interpretative program, which is designed to inform the public about what happened on the battlefield should focus on the story of the battle that took place on the battlefield. At the Gettysburg battlefield the interpretative program, has traditionally included such things according to Dr. Latschar as, "tactical movements, the decisions of generals, the engagements of opposing units, and the heroism and valor of individual soldiers, both Union and Confederate." This seems to have also been the prevalent policy at other Civil War battlefields. Based on the aforementioned Congressional mandates the interpretative program now includes the slavery issue.

The SUVCW has no quarrel with the inclusion of this issue in the NPS interpretative program as long as it does not negatively impact the two goals previously mentioned, and as long as it is presented in a historically accurate manner. Under no circumstances do we support what has come to be referred to as "revisionist" history - "altering" historical facts to fit modern social philosophy. *Approved February 27, 2003 Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War*

There were numerous issues that culminates in the American Civil War. But, regardless of whether we make a short list, or a long list of the causes for the Civil War, they all invariably emanate from the issue of slavery. Thus it seems only reasonable that the National Park Service should mention this issue in their interpretative program. We view the inclusion of the slave issue as an expansion of the existing program. The slave issue should not be used by the NPS as a substitute for their traditional interpretative program.

Ordered this 31st Day of May 2017.

Donald L. Martin
Commander-In-Chief
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Attested:
Jonathan Davis
Secretary, National Order,
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

The war is over — the rebels are our countrymen again. — Ulysses S. Grant



Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

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General Order # 22
SERIES 2016-2017
8 June 2017

Brothers,

Please note that by Council of Administration vote the following awards have had their name changed.

1. The B.F. Stephenson Award for recruitment is now the David R. Medert Award.
2. The Lifetime Achievement Award is now the Elmer (Bud) Atkinson Lifetime Achievement Award.
3. **Nominations for the following awards must be submitted to the Commander in Chief no later than 27 June 2017. All nominations should be in an official format suitable for reading at presentation.**

The Meritorious Service Award – The award consists of a certificate awarded at the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief to a Brother of the Order for exceptional service to the Order or to society.

The Meritorious Service Award with Gold Star – The award is presented by the Commander-in-Chief, with the concurrence of the Council of Administration, to a Brother who has served the Order for an extended period in an outstanding and exemplary manner or for an extraordinary action by a Brother. Recommendations for this award must be accompanied by an appropriate Citation utilizing SUVCW Form 17, which is on the National Website.

Elmer (Bud) Atkinson Lifetime Achievement Award – This award is to recognize Brothers of the Order who have a minimum of thirty (30) years with the Order and have provided significant and continuous support over that entire timeframe as either a full member or an associate.

The Joseph S. Rippey Award – Is presented to a new Camp, which was chartered within the last calendar year and determined to be active in the areas of recruiting, Civil War graves registration, and Civil War memorials assessment.

Page 1

The National Aide Award – This award may be presented, by the Commander-in-Chief to any Brother who recruits five or more members during his term of office. Recipients of this award are recognized in General Orders and may wear the National Ribbon behind their respective membership badge for a period of twelve (12) months. Recommendations for this award has been extended to 27 June this year.

4. **Nominations for the Founder's Award should be made to the National Secretary no later than 27 June 2017. All nominations should be in an official format suitable for reading in award presentation.**

The Founder's Award – This award is presented a maximum of once per calendar year to a non-member group or individual who performs outstanding service in the memory of Union Civil War Soldiers. The award consists of a walnut plaque with the name of the recipient and the year of presentation engraved in wood. A permanent plaque with the names of the recipients is maintained in the National Headquarters of the SUVCW. No member of the SUVCW or any organization which is part of the Allied Orders of the GAR is eligible for this award. The award is made solely at the discretion of the Council of Administration which is under no obligation to make such an award.

Ordered this 8th Day of June, 2017.

Donald L. Martin
Commander-In-Chief
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Attested:
Jonathan Davis
Secretary, National Order,
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Whatever you are, be a good one. Abraham Lincoln

Page 2



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General Order # 23
SERIES 2016-2017
8 June 2017

By the authority vested in me as Commander-in-Chief of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, the National Constitution and Regulations, and National Policies, it is hereby ordered:

SECTION 1: Commander Peter J. Hritsko of the Department of Ohio has requested the revocation of the following Charter: General Henry B. Banning Camp #207.

SECTION 2: The camp has failed to comply with reporting requirements for camp monies and is delinquent in filing mandatory annual reports. The Department of Ohio Secretary/Treasurer has indicated that the Camp Commander indicated that the camp no longer wanted to exist. Further attempts to correspond to the Camp have been non-responsive to correspondence, telephone and email.

SECTION 3: In accordance with the National Constitution, Article VI, Section 2, Commander Hritsko's request is therefore approved and the Charter of General Henry B. Banning Camp #207, Department of Ohio, is hereby revoked.

SECTION 4:

a. Camp physical property, including Camp records, correspondence, archives, etc. should be collected and delivered to the Ohio Department Commander. Camp funds shall be inventoried and delivered to the Ohio Department Commander and financial accounts shall be closed.

b. Any members in good standing, not just life members, can become members-at-large in the nearest Department or National MAL. The Department Commander may issue a transfer card, if requested, to another Camp or Department.

c. The Camp Charter is to be delivered, via an accountable method, to the Department of Ohio Commander.

Ordered this 8th Day of June, 2017.

Donald L. Martin
Commander-In-Chief
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Donald L. Martin

Attested:
Jonathan Davis
Secretary, National Order,
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Every man as well as every day has its lights and shades. ~Winfield Scott



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General Order # 24
SERIES 2016-2017
15 June 2017

It is with great pleasure that I announce the lifting of the 2016 suspension on the Department of Vermont. They have successfully met all items required and are hereby reinstated effective this date.

Ordered this 15th Day of June, 2017.

Donald L. Martin
Commander-In-Chief
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Donald L. Martin

Attested:
Jonathan Davis
Secretary, National Order,
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

*How many legs does a dog have if you call the tail a leg?
Four. Calling a tail a leg doesn't make it a leg. ~ Lincoln*

Department Order No. 1

SERIES 2017-2018

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War Department of Texas

Beau B. Moore, Commander
3702 Applewood Rd.
Melissa, TX 75454

Appointments:

The following Brothers are hereby appointed to serve as members of the Department Staff until relieved at the next Department Encampment.

Patriotic Instructor	Brother Don Brannon	Camp #1
Chaplain	Brother Stephen Schulze, PDC	Camp #2
Graves Registration Officer	Brother Hal Hughes, PCC	Camp #1
Historian	Brother Michael Lance	Camp #2
Civil War Memorials Officer	Brother Charles Sprague, PDC	Camp #18
Eagle Scout Coordinator	Brother John Schneider	Camp #18
Counselor	Brother John Schneider	Camp #18
Department Organizer	Brother Brian Glass, PCC	Camp #1

Ordered this 1st Day of July, 2017

By Order of:

Beau B. Moore, Commander
Department of Texas
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Attest:

Don Gates, Secretary Treasurer
Department of Texas
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Some Civil War Books

by
Glen E. Zook

A while back, I purchased several books to add to my Civil War library. The first is entitled Confederate States Paper Money (9th Edition). The price I paid was \$4.99 (list price \$19.95) for the paperback. This book is a compendium of the paper money issued by both the Confederacy and the states therein. It was written by Arlie R. Slabaugh and gives both a history of the various notes and their values to collectors today.

The second is Volume I of Who Was Who in the Union of the Who Was Who in the Civil War collection. This was found in new condition at Half Price Books in Richardson. Since my ancestral cousin, Brevet Major General Samuel K. Zook was the last person listed, I had to pay the price of \$7.98 for the book (list price \$22.95). It lists a brief biographical sketch of over 1500 men who served in the Union Army or who were important to the Union. A number of photographs or sketches of about 180 of the persons listed therein are also included. This book is a full 8.5 inches by 11 inches in size, and was compiled by Stewart Sifakis. According to the back cover, it contains information on all the 583 Union Officers who attained rank of general; lesser ranking officers, soldiers, seamen, scouts and spies who particularly distinguished themselves in action; Major political leaders; Political activists; and important civilian noncombatants.

Half Price Books is well known in the Dallas / Fort

Worth area. I have been adding to my collection of Civil War books at least once or twice a month. Every time I go into a book store the books available are different from the time before. You do have to look around a bit, but there are certainly bargains, and, from time to time, quite a selection available.

Again, a while back, I bought a collection of maps from the West Point educational series on the battles of the Civil War. A copy of the Civil War novel Gods and Generals was obtained, as were a number of books about various battles, generals, etc. In addition, I have obtained books about World War II, guns and ammunition, and even a very large illustrated history on the Hindenburg!

The Siege of Port Hudson

22 May - 9 July, 1863

(From American Battlefields by Hubbard Cobb)

Port Hudson, on the east side of the Mississippi River about 13 miles north of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was a Confederate bastion almost as formidable as Vicksburg. It rose on a steep bluff high above the river and was well surrounded by deep, steep-sided ravines that were dense with trees and vines. Gun batteries protected the fort on all sides. In March 1863, when Union Rear Admiral David Farragut tried to take a fleet of seven ships north to shut off the flow of supplies reaching the fort from the Red River country in Louisiana, only two safely survived the batteries. So, it was clear to the Union command that, if the Mississippi was to become a Union waterway, they had to remove this obstacle in addition to conquering Vicksburg. No real effort to achieve this goal was made, however, until May 22, 1863, when Port Hudson was surrounded by Federal troops under Major General Nathaniel Banks, and a fleet under Farragut moved in to provide cannon support. In all, not counting navy men, about 30,000 Federals faced a garrison of 7,500.

Five days after taking positions around Port Hudson, Banks set in motion a grand assault against all points of the Confederate line. But because the attack was made sporadically, the defenders were able to reposition themselves for each onslaught. About 2,000 Union soldiers were killed or wounded.

Another great assault was made by the Federals on June 14, following a day of extremely heavy cannon fire. This assault was centered at the Priest Cap, on the east side of the fortifications, but once again, the attackers were repulsed with 1,800 casualties.

Realizing that he was not going to overcome Port Hudson by direct assault, Banks settled in for a siege, during which his men dug approach trenches and inched their cannon forward. The Confederates were totally cut off and were reduced to eating their mules and even rats.

Finally, on July 7, Major General Franklin Gardner, who commanded the Confederates, received word that Vicksburg had fallen. Without Vicksburg, Port Hudson was of little strategic value to the South, and on July 9, Gardner surrendered. The siege, which lasted 46 days, was the longest in American military history. Federal losses totaled almost 10,000 men. The Confederates lost 1,000. About half of the Federal casualties and a fourth of the Confederates were attributable to disease and heat stroke.

Bragg in Tennessee

Following his unsuccessful invasion of Kentucky (ending with the battle of Perryville on October 8), General Braxton Bragg withdrew his Confederate army to Tennessee. With 35,000 men he established a line on both sides of Stones River, Tennessee, northwest of his supply depot at Murfreesboro.

Pressed by Washington to pursue and attack Bragg's army, Major General William Rosecrans, with some 45,000 men, moved out of Nashville and headed south. Though harassed by Brigadier Joseph Wheeler's Confederate cavalry, he reached Stones River on December 30 and deployed his force in a line facing Bragg.

Rosecrans's plan of attack was to send Major General Thomas Cirttenden's and Major General George Thomas's corps against Bragg's right, held by Major General John Breckinridge positioned on the east side of the river.

Bragg also planned to strike his enemy's right and he hit first.

Early on the Morning of December 31, Major General William J. Hardee, supported by divisions of Lieutenant General Leonidas Polk, attacked Major General Alexander McCook's corps on the Union right.

The attack by 10,000 Confederates came as a total surprise to McCook, who understood that it would be the Union left who would be attacking and his three divisions, around 14,000, were to protect the army's right flank, the nearby Nashville Pike, and the Nashville Chattanooga Railroad - Rosecrans's supply lines and also his only path of retreat.

One of McCook's divisions practically disintegrated under the force of the initial attack and another was only able to put up resistance for a short time before withdrawing.

But Brigadier General Philip Sheridan was a fighter and his 5,000 man division held on, giving better than they took.

Hardee now sent in two fresh divisions of Polk's corps to dislodge him. Sheridan repulsed the first, commanded by Major General Cheatham. Sheridan withdrew to get ammunition and then took a position near the Nashville Pike, alongside one of Thomas's divisions that had also been forced back.

By then the Union right had been driven back about three miles and the center had also given ground.

Sheridan's resistance provided Rosecrans, who had given up his idea of attacking, time to concentrate on saving his army by reinforcing the right and center by drawing men from Cirttenden's corps.

By 10:00 A.M., Bragg thought that final victory would be his in short order and threw a whole series of attacks against the Federals. But by this time Rosecrans had established a strong line, somewhat in the shape of an open door hinge. Much of the fighting to follow was around the pivot of the hinge.

The terrain of the battle area was rather flat and dotted with rocks and clumps of trees. There was no high ground from which troop movements could readily be observed and was therefore unsuited for organized warfare, so the men fought each other as best they could.

Fighting was especially vicious around a cluster of

trees called Round Forest. This place was later referred by soldiers of both sides as "Hell's Half Acre," with good reason.

Confederate forces made many attacks on this position that was near the center of the Union line. A Mississippi regiment tried to take it with half its men carrying sticks, for lack of rifles. Another regiment of the same state used their rifles as clubs because the recent rain made their rifles too wet to fire.

Despite the terrible casualties suffered as his men crossed an open field to attack the strong Union position at Round Forest, Bragg believed that with sufficient men he could take it and win the battle.

In the early afternoon he ordered Breckinridge, who had so far played no important role in the battle, to send his five brigades to join in the attack. But the four brigades that Breckinridge reluctantly delivered were sent in piecemeal and were torn to pieces by Union artillery and rifle fire.

The Union defenders were also suffering from the repeated attack on their position, but their line held and late afternoon the firing stopped and the day's fighting was over.

There was no fighting on January 1, but the following day Bragg ordered Breckinridge to dislodge a Union force under Colonel Samuel Beatty that had crossed the river and occupied a hill threatening Polk's position

Breckinridge's brigades, supported by artillery, attacked Beatty's position, and after fierce fighting drove them from the hilltop. But as the Confederate troops pursued them down the slope, they came under massive artillery fire from 58 of Crittenden's guns. Beatty, then reinforced, retook the hill. The attempt to take and hold the hill resulted in 1,700 Confederate casualties.

Bragg now decided that he should desert the battlefield entirely. The river was rising and could isolate his forces. Furthermore, he had received captured papers showing the Rosecrans had been reinforced. So during the night of January 2, the Confederate army withdrew south to take up winter quarters 20 or so miles away at Tullahoma, Tennessee, leaving 2,000 wounded behind.

The battle had been one of the bloodiest of the war. In three days, Federal casualties were about 12,906 of the 41,400 troops engaged. Bragg lost around 11,700 of his smaller army of about 35,000.

It had been a fight that neither side could claim as a clear victory. But it cost the Confederacy men it could not readily replaced and forced Bragg to give up more of Tennessee as he moved south toward Chattanooga, where he would clash again with Rosecrans..

Civil War Quiz

1. Whittier's poem "Barbara Frietchie" takes place in:
 - a. Atlanta
 - b. Baltimore
 - c. Frederick
 - d. Fredericksburg
 - e. Charleston
2. What general caused a furor by ordering the Jews expelled from his department?

- a. Benjamin Butler
 - b. U. S. Grant
 - c. George McClellan
 - d. William Rosecrans
 - e. W. T. Sherman
3. It proposed to ban slavery in all territory conquered from Mexico:
 - a. The Compromise of 1850
 - b. The Emancipation Proclamation
 - c. The Missouri Compromise
 - d. The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo
 - e. The Wilmot Proviso
 4. Union forces at the Battle of Franklin were under:
 - a. O. O. Howard
 - b. E. O. C. Ord
 - c. John Schofield
 - d. Wm. T. Sherman
 - e. George H. Thomas
 5. Fort Blakely and Spanish Fort guarded what city?
 - a. Baton Rouge
 - b. Mobile
 - c. New Orleans
 - d. Pensacola
 - e. Vicksburg

1-c 2-b 3-e 4-e 5-b
Answers to Quiz

Camp Ford at Tyler, Texas

The Most Humane POW Camp of
The War Between the States

by

Thomas S. McCall, Th.D., SRA
Chaplain, James P. Douglas Camp #124, SCV
Member, Camp Ford Preservation Committee

One of the darkest chapters in the annals of the War Between the States was the miserable account of the POW camps on both sides of the conflict. Rock Island in Illinois and Andersonville in Georgia evoke images of horror, starvation, disease, mistreatment, overcrowding and death. There were no bright stars in this constellation of misery, but one of the least devastating of all the POW camps was Camp Ford in northeast Texas, just outside of the city of Tyler.

Even though some 5,000 prisoners were squeezed into the cramped stockade at its peak, and it was almost as overcrowded as some of the other hell-holes of the war, the general welfare of the prisoners was better and the death rate was far lower than any of the other POW camps on either side. Experts on the subject believe that the main reason for the relatively superior conditions at Camp Ford was the plentiful fresh-water spring that originated on the site and flowed through the enclosed area. Union engineer officer prisoners devised a water flow plan that kept the water potable, and this project was encouraged by the Confederate guards.

Camp Ford began in the early stages of the war as a training camp for Confederate recruits. In time, it became a POW camp, and received prisoners from battles at Brashear City and Marganzie, Louisiana. Later, when Dick Dowling defeated the Union Naval attack at Sabine Pass, the prisoners taken at that conflict were ultimately brought up to Camp Ford and remained there for the duration of the war. After that, prisoners taken during the Mansfield Campaign were added along with others, until thousands of POWs were in the East Texas prison. By the war's end, soldiers and sailors from about 20 states of the Union had been incarcerated at Camp Ford.

After the war the prison area was abandoned, was covered up, and was largely forgotten. The prisoners, though, remembered their involuntary quarters, wrote articles for newspapers and even drew pictures of the prison with its stockade and temporary huts from at least two different views. These materials provided eyewitness accounts of the prison. During the last several decades several books and articles on the subject have been published on Camp Ford by local historians, Dr. Bob Glover, Lee Lawrence and Randy Gilbert. Ultimately, this interest led to an increased interest in the site, the formation of the **Camp Ford Preservation Committee**, and the securing of a Federal grant to purchase the property and arrange for its archaeological excavation.

Crook's Raid On Dublin

by
Harry Dolbier

To open the spring campaign of 1864, Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant ordered a Union advance on all fronts, minor as well as major. Grant sent for Brigadier General George R. Crook, in winter quarters at Charleston, West Virginia, and ordered him to attack the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, Richmond's primary link to Knoxville and the southwest, and to destroy the Confederate salt works at Saltville, Virginia.

The thirty-five-year-old Crook, an 1852 West Point graduate and the most magnificently whiskered Civil War general on either side, reported to army headquarters at City Point, Virginia, where the commanding general explained the mission in person. Crook, Grant instructed, was to march his force, the Kanawha Division, against the railroad at Dublin, Virginia, a hundred and forty miles south of Charleston. At Dublin he would put the railroad out of business and destroy rebel military property. He was then to destroy the railroad bridge over New River, a few miles to the east. When these actions were accomplished, along

with the destruction of the salt works, Crook was to march east and join forces with Major General Franz Sigel, who meanwhile was to be driving south up the Shenandoah Valley.

Crook returned to Charleston and set his force in motion. After long dreary months of garrison duty, the men were ready for action. Crook did not reveal the nature or objective of their mission, but everyone sensed that something important was brewing. "All things point to early action," the commander of the second brigade, Colonel Rutherford B. Hayes, noted in his diary.

On April 29, 1864, the Kanawha Division marched out of Charleston and headed south. Crook sent a force under Brigadier General William W. Averell westward towards Saltville, then pushed on towards Dublin with nine infantry regiments, seven cavalry regiments, and fifteen artillery pieces, a force of about 6,500 men organized into three brigades. The West Virginia countryside was beautiful that spring, but the mountainous terrain made the march a difficult undertaking. The way was narrow and steep, and spring rains slowed the march as tramping feet churned the roads into mud. In places, Crook's engineers had to built bridges across wash-outs before the army could advance.

The column reached Fayette on May 2, then passed through Raleigh Court House and Princeton. On the night of May 8, the division camped at Shannon's Bridge, Virginia, ten miles north of Dublin.

The Confederates at Dublin soon learned the enemy was approaching. Their commander, Colonel John McCausland, prepared to evacuate his 1100 men, but before transportation could arrive, up rode a courier from Brigadier General Albert G. Jenkins, who informed McCausland that the two of them were ordered by General John C. Breckenridge to stop Crook's advance. The combined forces of Jenkins and McCausland amounted to 2,400 men. Jenkins, the senior officer, took command.

Breaking camp on the morning of May 9, Crook moved his men South to the top of a spur of Cloyd's Mountain. Before the Union troops lay a precipitous, densely wood slope with a meadow about four hundred yards across at the bottom. On the other side of the meadow, the land rose in another spur of the mountain, and there Jenkins' rebels waited behind hastily erected fortifications.

Crook dispatched the third brigade under Colonel Carr B. White to work its way through the woods and deliver a flank attack on the rebel right. At eleven o'clock, he sent Hayes' first brigade and Colonel Horatio G. Sickel's second brigade down the slope to the edge of the meadow, where they were to launch a frontal assault on the Confederates as soon as they heard the sound of White's guns.

The slope before them was so steep that the officers had to dismount and descend on foot. Crook stationed himself with Hayes' brigade, which was to lead the assault. After a long, anxious wait, Hayes at last heard cannon fire off to his left and led his men at a slow double time out onto the meadow and into the rebels' musketry and artillery fire, which Crook called "galling". Their pace quickened as they neared the other side, but just before the up-slope they came to a waist-deep creek. The barrier caused little delay and the Yankee infantry stormed up the hill and engaged the rebel defenders at close range.

The only man to have trouble with the creek was General Crook. Dismounted, he still wore his high riding boots, and as he stepped into the stream, they filled with

2017 Department Encampment Photographs

Courtesy of
Brother Paul Ridenour

water and bogged him down. Nearby soldiers grabbed their commander's arms and hauled him to the other side.

Vicious hand-to-hand fighting erupted as the Yankees reached the crude rebel defenses. The Southerners gave way, tried to re-form, then broke and retreated up and over the hill towards Dublin.

The Yankees rounded up rebel prisoners by the hundreds and seized General Jenkins, who had fallen wounded. At this point the discipline of the Union men wavered, and there was no organized pursuit of the fleeing enemy. General Crook was unable to provide leadership as the excitement and exertion had sent him into a faint.

Colonel Hayes kept his head and organized a force of about five hundred men from the soldiers milling about the site of their victory. With his improvised command, he set off, closely pressing the rebels.

While the fight at Cloyd's Mountain was going on, a train pulled into the Dublin station and disgorged 500 fresh troops of General John Hunt Morgan's cavalry, which had just defeated Averell at Saltville. The fresh troops hastened towards the battlefield, where they soon met their compatriots retreating from Cloyd's Mountain. The reinforcements halted the rout, but Colonel Hayes, although ignorant of the strength of the force now before him, immediately ordered his men to "yell like devils" and rush the enemy. Within a few minutes General Crook arrived with the rest of the division, and the defenders broke and ran.

The battle of Cloyd's Mountain cost the Union army 688 casualties, while the rebels suffered 538 killed, wounded, and captured.

Unopposed, Crook moved his command into Dublin, where he laid waste to the railroad and the military stores. He then sent a party eastward to tear up the tracks and burn the ties. The next morning the main body set out for their next objective: the New River bridge, a key point on the railroad, a few miles to the east.

The Confederates, now commanded by Colonel McCausland, waited on the east side of the New River to defend the bridge. Crook pulled up on the west bank, and a long, ineffective artillery duel ensued. Seeing that there was little danger from the rebel cannon, Crook ordered the bridge destroyed, and both sides watch in awe as the structure collapsed magnificently into the river. McCausland, without the resources to oppose the Yankees any further, withdrew his battered command to the east.

General Crook, supplies running low in a country not suited for major foraging, now entertained second thoughts about his orders to push on east and join Sigel in the Shenandoah Valley. At Dublin he had intercepted an unconfirmed report that General Robert E. Lee had beaten Grant badly in the Wilderness, which led him to consider whether the Confederate commander might not soon move against Crook with a vastly superior force.

Having accomplished the major part of his mission, destruction of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, Crook turned his men north and after another hard march, reached the Union base at Mountain Bluff, West Virginia.







July Meeting

The July 2017 meeting of the
Colonel E. E. Ellsworth Camp #18
SUVCW
Will be held on
Tuesday 18 July 2017
At the
Heritage Farmstead Museum, Plano, TX.



James Gilpatrick Blunt
21 July 1826



Christain Fleetwood
21 July 1840



George Thomas
31 July 1816



Nathanal Lyon
14 July 1818



Alfred T. A. Torbent
1 July 1833



Richard James Oglesby
25 July 1824



David Farragatt
5 July 1801



Alfred Pleasonton
7 July 1824



John Adams Dix
24 July 1798