

The Fighting Joe Wheeler Dispatch



Volume XLVI, Issue 4

April, 2026

Camp Officers:

Commander: Spencer Harris

1st Lt. Commander: Barry Cook

2nd Lt. Commander: Joe Payne

Adjutant: Dave McCombs

Chaplain: Tim Whitfield

Color Sergeant: Pat Acton

Quartermaster: David Knight

Sergeant At Arms: Pat Acton

Camp Surgeon: Dr. Rick Price

Dispatch Editor: David Fisher

Commander Emeritus: Dr. Ira West

Fighting Joe Wheeler Camp 1372,
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Please send articles or other
information for inclusion in
"The Dispatch" to
David Fisher
810 Saulter Road
Birmingham, Alabama 35209
Or e-mail fisherda@mac.com

Tuesday, April 14, 6:00 pm

Admiral Raphael Semmes

Speaker: John McGraw

**!!! NEW MEETING TIME
6:00 PM !!!**

This Month During the War Between the States (1861-1865)

April 12, 1861

The Confederates in Charleston bombard Fort Sumter

April 18/19, 1861

Federal troops burn the U.S. Arsenal at Harpers Ferry to prevent it from falling into the hands of secessionists. The Confederates are nonetheless able to seize valuable military supplies when they occupy Harpers Ferry

April 19, 1861

President Lincoln declares a blockade of Southern ports

April 22, 1861

Robert E. Lee accepts command of Virginia forces

April 6/7, 1862

Battle of Shiloh (Pittsburg Landing), Tennessee begins

April 16, 1862

Slavery abolished in the District of Columbia

April 7, 1863

Naval attack on Charleston, SC

April 30, 1863

Battle of Chancellorsville begins near Fredericksburg, VA

April 22, 1864

The motto "In God We Trust" first stamped on U.S. coins

April 2, 1865

Confederate Government evacuates Richmond, VA

April 9, 1865

Lee surrenders to Grant at Appomattox Court House

April 14, 1865

Lincoln is shot at Ford's Theatre

April 15, 1865

Lincoln dies. Andrew Jackson sworn in as President



<http://www.fightingjoewheelercamp.org>



SCV Fighting Joe Wheeler Camp 1372



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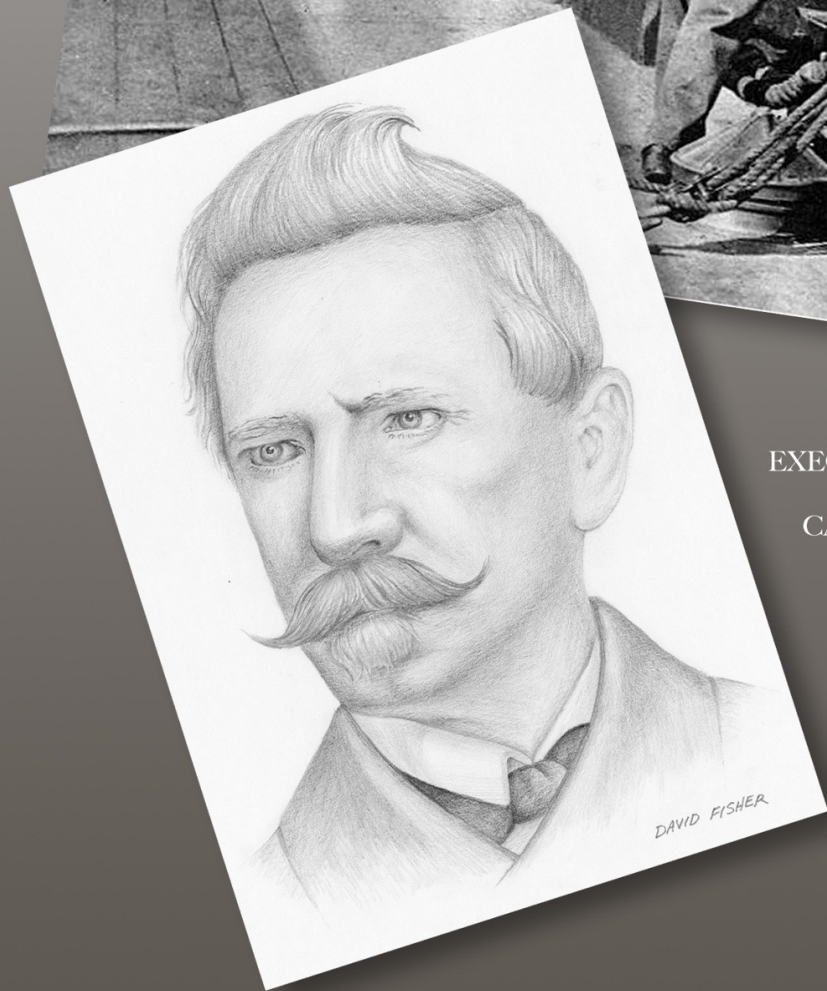
Alabama: We Dare Defend Our Rights

"The principal for which we contended is bound to reassert itself, though it may be at another time and in another form." - Jefferson Davis, May 1865

The Fighting Joe Wheeler Camp presents

Admiral Raphael Semmes

by
John McGraw



CAPTAIN RAPHAEL SEMMES AND HIS
EXECUTIVE OFFICER, JOHN MCINTOSH KELL,
ABOARD THE CSS ALABAMA IN
CAPETOWN, SOUTH AFRICA, AUGUST 1863

April 14, 2026
New Merkel House
6:00pm



April 2026

Gentlemen, Brothers, Compatriots,

What an excellent presentation from Miss. Leigh Ann last month. I believe that I'll work to get her back again when I can bring my girls and my soon to be wife. I believe that they would love to hear from her. When she told me that her presentation was going to be about life in the 1860s, I didn't expect the extent of her collection or knowledge and the focus on fashion that she would provide.

This month I'm excited to have John McGraw joining us to speak on Admiral Semmes. The CSS Alabama has such an amazing history for our country and our cause, and Admiral Semmes was the man who led her there.

We also had an excellent gun show in March handing out 300 flyers with flags in just 5 hours on the first day! We also generated almost \$200 in camp donations. I've also been told that the display of our flags was prominent and could be seen across the entire venue, drawing people to our table to hear our message. Many thanks to Barry Cook and David Knight for their leadership in making this happen and to all who were able to get involved and support the camp in this event. We have two more of these coming up and I hope that we will all be able to be involved in at least one of these events.

April is a big month for our cause. Memorial Day, as we know it today, was founded by our ancestors who wanted to honor their noble dead. Again, our ancestors not only enriched the lives of every American today but set in place one of our most sacred holidays. We have two events scheduled this month to celebrate our ancestors. April 25th at the Capital we will hold the Confederate Memorial Day and April 26th we will have a Camp Memorial Day at Elmwood. More details to come, but as always as much Camp participation as possible is what we want.

Growth!! We always need growth. We have almost 2 weeks until our next camp meeting. Call someone, bring someone, talk to someone. Let's pack the New Merkle house out on the 14th. The future of our Camp and the SCV in general is going to come from growth. We also have about half of our camp roster that doesn't attend regularly. We are going to check on all of the ones who haven't made an appearance in a while and if you would like to participate in this effort, making a call and sending an email, then we'd love your support. It's light work if we put many hands to it.



Commander's Report



Finances! When I took over we had \$3,000 in the bank and we are currently at \$2,881. We spent money on inventory and flyers for the gun show, but have almost completely recovered that cost through two sources: the gun show and through your donations. Your donations at the camp meeting mean so much more than you know. With just \$5.00 dollars from each of you at each camp meeting we will have that number back above \$3,000 in no time and growing. Please participate in this as these funds not only cover our rent for the year, but speaker honorariums, flags on graves, and the flyers for our camp along with the flags that we handed out to the gun show visitors. Every little bit helps and I appreciate all of you that have participated!

As always, thank you for the honor of being your camp commander. I look forward to continuing to improve on what is already one of the best camps in the state if not the entire SCV organization.

With love and respect,
Deo Vindice

Spencer Harris
Commander Fighting Joe Wheeler Camp 1372



Chaplain's Report



Reading from Acts Chapter 4 Verse 29: *The early believers prayed, "Now, Lord, enable your servants to speak your word with great audacity."*

If you were a 1st Century Christian it took audacity to speak about Christ. These early Christians faced severe persecution, often facing death for their faith. Audacity is about taking risks and the early Christians certainly did that.

General Lee is often associated with the word audacity for the battlefield risks he took facing superior forces. But you have to be audacious and calculating. Custer was audacious at Little Bighorn, but he didn't calculate very well, thus his audacity spelled disaster for his force.

In 1967 the modern nation of Israel was 19 years old and facing a massive Arab military buildup from the north (Syrian), east (Jordanian) and south (Egyptian). The Arabs were intent on invading Israel and destroying what they perceived as a vulnerable new nation. Facing attack on 3 sides, the Israeli cabinet, at the urging of Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, decided on an audacious, preemptive strike on the Arab forces. When the cabinet left the room after this difficult decision was made Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol asked Moshe Dayan when the preemptive strike should occur. Dayan's reply: *"Right now"*.

This preemptive Israeli attack on June 5, 1967 wiped out the Egyptian Air Force on the ground and rolled back Egyptian ground forces on Israel's southern border. The Israeli armed forces went on to rout all 3 Arab armies arrayed on their borders in just 6 days. The young nation of Israel could have been overrun in 1967 if it had been passive, but with smart, calculating planning and audacity they prevailed.

Let us all pray to God for wisdom to know when and how to employ audacious words and actions in our lives and not be passive when it comes to the values we hold dear

Deo Vindice

Tim Whitfield,

Chaplain FJW Camp 1362



Reader's Corner



Event Schedule:

- i. Confederate Memorial Day at the Capital in Montgomery – **April 25**
- ii. Wheeler Camp Memorial Day at Elmwood – **April 26**
- iii. Gun Show – **July 25-26**
- iv. Gun Show – **October 10-11**