



# THE TELEGRAPH KEY

THE OFFICIAL DISPATCH FOR THE MAJOR THOMAS J. KEY CAMP #1920  
KANSAS DIVISION, SCV • JOHNSON COUNTY, KANSAS

Volume 25, No. 6

Our Silver Anniversary Year

June 2025

## Major Thomas J Key Camp Officers



Commander - *Rick McPherson*



1st Lt. Commander- *Dan Peterson*



2nd Lt. Commander- *Larry Sumner*



Adjutant- *Walt Schley*



Chaplin - *Walt McKenzie*

## Newsletter Edited By Rick McPherson

The May meeting was attended by 17 members and 4 guests.  
This was the 260<sup>th</sup> regular meeting of the  
Major Thomas J Key Camp #1920



Chris Harris, receives the Key's "bullet plaque" as a thankyou for speaking to the group. Chris spoke on the Liberty Arsenal , a subject that everyone seemed to enjoy hearing about. Chris is also an author of a book also entitles the *Liberty Arsenal* which is can be purchased through Amazon.com

## Did You Know?

Less than three months after Kansas became a state (1861), the Civil War began.

Following the attack on Fort Sumter on April 12, in Washington, D.C., there were worries about President Abraham Lincoln's safety. A senator from Kansas, the notorious James Henry Lane, helped protect the President.

Senator Lane organized 120 men from Kansas. They were called the "Frontier Guard." For three weeks, they stayed at the White House to protect President Lincoln.

# News from the Meeting



The June meeting's attendance was 21 members and guests, which was greatly appreciated. We always welcome spouses, children, guests and especially prospective members. Thanks to all that joined with us!



**Compatriots Peterson, Coffelt, Stoker, Atherton, Sumner** and **McPherson** were given Certificates of Appreciation for their help at the Lone Jack Heritage Day.



It was great to welcome back, **Compatriot Craig Freeman**, to the June meeting. He had submitted the paperwork for his transferring back into the Key Camp.



**Ms. Elsa Sewell** once again entertained the "old guys" with her singing of *Won't you play me some country music....by Alabama*



The 2026 Kansas Division Reunion will be held in Johnson County. The decision was made at the KS Div Reunion held in Topeka on June 21<sup>st</sup>. **Adjutant Walt Schley** will be checking on possible locations. This will be convenient for more Key Camp members to attend next year.



The memorial service at Camden Point will be Saturday July 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm followed by a fried chicken dinner. **Please text Rick @ 913-638-4977 asap** if you are not listed below and how many are in your group. We need to know how many to buy enough fried chicken for.



Currently signed up for Camden Point is: McPherson 2, Schley 2, Smith 1, Atherton 1, VanSickle 1, Linck 1, Coffelt 1, McKenzie 2, Keitzman 3, Tucker 1, Sewell 3?, Sumner 1. Any others? **Please text Rick if this has changed.**



**Key Camp Web Page hits for last 30 days +33. Year to Date + 276 total hits**

Please make note on our calendar that the July meeting will be on **July 10<sup>th</sup>** rather than July 3<sup>rd</sup> due to the Fourth of July holiday

Our speaker will be Brother **Bill Stoker**



# June Camp Meeting

Prior to the start of each camp meeting, Key Camp members enjoy Zarda's BBQ and lots of great conversation. Thanks to all of you who make attending camp meetings part of your monthly events.





## Commemorative Candle

A new tradition was added during the June meeting, that of the lighting of the Commemorative Candle.

The candle will be lit to remember the ancestors of all Key Camp members who honorably served in the Army of the Confederacy.

The flickering of a candle reminds us of the fleeting nature of life while keeping their memory alive.

A special thanks to **Jill McPherson** who constructed the candle holder just hours before the June meeting.

**Compatriot Tim Peterman** became the first member of the Major Thomas J Key Camp to light the *Commemorative Candle* during the June camp meeting.

Each month a compatriot will be selected to light the candle during the start of camp meeting with the following words:

*"This isn't just any candle; it symbolizes a direct link to our Confederate ancestors. As we light this candle we recognize their courage and conviction and the legacy of their cause. Let us always remember them."*



**Confederate Minute  
with  
Compatriot Lane Smith**

**Key Camp's  
Heritage Defense  
Designee**

Beginning with June camp meeting, **Compatriot Lane Smith**, our Heritage Defense Designee, will present what we'll call the *Confederate Minute with Lane Smith*.

This time is intended to provide a bit of history/trivia about our Confederate history.

Just another opportunity, to make attending a camp meeting more fun.



# I attended a SCV Meeting

The following was written by a contributor to a San Antonio, Texas newspaper a few years back.

I was sitting in the parking lot of Grady's Bar-B-Q, listening to the Chi-Lites' Oh Girl when the president of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, walked into the party room.



It was the monthly meeting of the Sons of Confederate Veterans Alamo Camp #1325, and I'd inadvertently written myself into an invitation.

I'd written a column sarcastically dismissive of Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell and Texas Gov. Rick Perry. While proclaiming my pride in being a child of the South and Southwest, I took issue with McDonnell's initial declaration of Confederate History Month — on behalf of the Sons of Confederate Veterans — which ignored slavery, and with Perry's earlier suggestion of secession.

The Heritage of Honor page on the SCV website didn't mention the word "slavery" either, but I saw that membership is open to "all male descendants of any veteran who served honorably in the Confederate armed services" and that I qualified.

I wrote, "I'm a Son of Confederate Veterans as well as a son of slavery" and expected an application.

I got one, as well as an invitation to attend the May meeting, from Russ Lane, the affable head of Alamo Camp #1325. I never doubted I'd go, just as I never doubted I would be treated kindly.

Including wives, there were about 30 people in the meeting that began with "the Pledge of Allegiance" to "the United States of America," which heartened me to know I wasn't in the presence of secessionists.

Afterward, each person stood to introduce him or herself and name an ancestor from the Confederate Army. They named them with the pride anyone should have when speaking of an ancestor.

When it was my turn, I stood and said, "The reason I'm here tonight is because of a slightly sarcastic column I wrote." There was good-natured laughter.

I continued, "Russ respectfully invited me, and I respectfully accepted. But my great-great uncle, Phil Coe, who was white, served in the Confederate Army. His half-brother, Dan, who was a slave, was my great-great grandfather. But Phil is better known because, in October of 1871, in Abilene, Kan., he became the last person killed by Wild Bill Hickok in a gunfight. We call Uncle Phil the white sheep of the family." I sat down to laughter and applause.

There were favorable comments about state rights and an unfavorable one about Abraham Lincoln. The man dressed as Jefferson Davis, local attorney Tom Jackson, gave a good and balanced presentation on the Confederacy's president.

I had only two cringe-inducing moments. The first was leafing through a copy of Southern Partisan magazine and seeing a glowing two-page spread on the first home of Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest. The story didn't mention that Forrest was the first Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan.

The other was when the meeting ended, as it always does, with a rousing rendition of Dixie. I tried singing a few lyrics, but knowing that the song was composed for a black-faced minstrel show and in the supposed dialect of a black man, I stopped. I felt ridiculous standing there singing it.

But I'll return. That is, if they don't mind the company of a left-of-center, Obama-voting, Lincoln-revering, Rachel Maddow-watching and Chi-Lites listening kin of someone killed by Wild Bill Hickok.

After the meeting, a lady sweetly said to me, "For

these guys, it's about heritage."

I told her I understood. It was important for me to be there, to hear their affection for their ancestors and to see that, for them at least, it was about heritage and not hate.

I also believe it was important for them to be in the presence of someone who shares their biological connection to Confederate soldiers but who also has the bloodlines of those who, without their shackled presence on Southern soil, there would have been no Civil War.

I share with the Sons of Confederate Veterans — my brothers — a desire to preserve Southern history even if it means some spirited, civil discussions about circumstances surrounding the war. Some differences may not be reconciled, but they're worth discussing.

As I left, one man said, "Don't be a stranger."

That's why I went and will go back.





# The Wheel of Misfortune

This wheel had a direct connection to the worst civil disorder in American history – not the riots recently going on in Los Angeles or the “Summer of Love” riots of 2020, but rather the New York City Draft Riots. Around a square case that contained this wheel and its draft cards - listing the names, addresses and occupations of potential draftees - the NY Historical Society displays this unique barrel and its timeline of use.



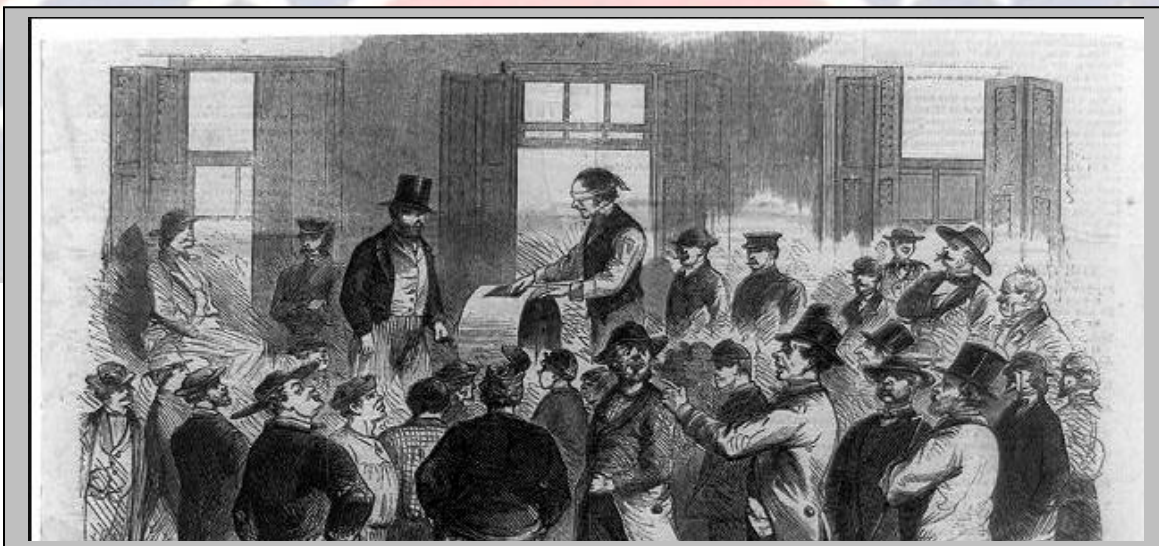
A draft lottery had begun on July 11th, 1863, a Saturday. On Monday morning, July 13th, a growing anger boiled over into violence that would last for four days.irate mobs destroyed buildings and, fueled by intense racial hatred, targeted the African American communities especially. By the end of the riots, at least 119 people had been killed. More than 100 soldiers and police had been injured, along with hundreds of civilians. The government in the end had to send soldiers from the

Army of the Potomac fresh from the Battle of Gettysburg to restore order.

Something speaks to you about the draft wheel and the manner in which it has been displayed. Walking around the case reading about the riots, you can't help but stare at the names on the draft cards. Those tiny slips of paper, represented the fate of many young men in New York City. Hence, the wheel earned the nickname "**The Wheel of Misfortune.**" One need only take a look at Civil War casualty lists to understand the staunch resistance to the draft. Viewing the wheel and the cards up-close makes the fate of a draftee more real. And yet, it's hard to sympathize with the rioters given the ugly racial violence that resulted. The information for the wheel indicates that the wheel was used on July 13th, 1863. However, if you [look up the wheel](#) on virtual *New York Divided*, a slightly different description appears:

The "**Wheel of Misfortune,**" as it was called by the anti-Lincoln *Daily News*, was designated for use in the 7th Congressional District (the Lower East Side). Very few men were actually drafted from New York after the draft riots, however, and this wheel was never used. The only known draft wheel to survive the riots, still contains 3,500 cards from when it was donated to the New-York Historical Society in 1865. The names of black men were included in the lottery pool, since the second conscription act of 1864 made black males eligible for the draft.

A second description would seem to indicate that the draft wheel was prepared for use, but never went into action. The names contained within then - from a later draft it would seem - never had their number come up.



# Camden Point Memorial Service

Join your Key Camp Compatriots on Saturday July 12<sup>th</sup> for our annual Memorial Service remembering six soldiers ambushed and killed by Union troops in July 1864.

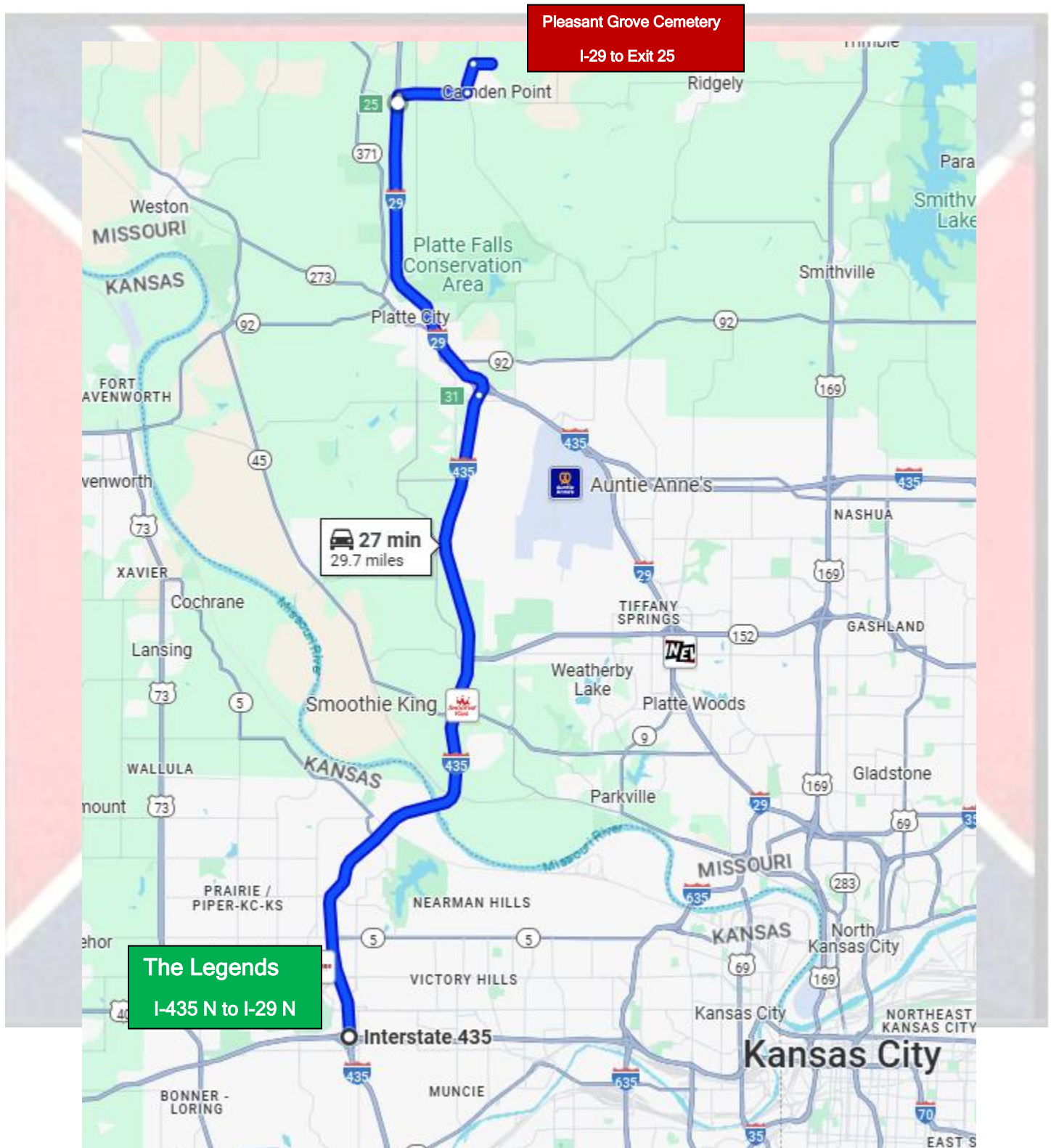


We will commemorate this event and honor each soldier, followed by a fried chicken dinner. Members are asked to bring a drink of your choice and a side dish or desert to share. Water will be available. [Bring your own lawn chair.](#)

A map to this location will be made available on our Facebook page and also printed on the next page. Please print off the map for your convenience.



Directions shown from I-435 & I-70 **the Legends** to **Pleasant Grove Cemetery** in Camden Point, MO. (approx 29 miles) Directions: From I-29 take Exit 25. East to Interurban Rd. Then Turn Left (N) 0.7 mi onto Pleasant Grove Rd. Then turn Right (E) 0.4 miles to cemetery.



# SCV MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL SOON

## Attention

In July, **Adjutant Walt Schley** will be mailing our membership renewals for the next fiscal year (August 1 to July 31). Regular membership renewal is \$50. Life Member annual dues are \$15.

Checks are to be made out to:

**Major Thomas J Key Camp #1920**

and returned to:

**Adjutant Walt Schley**

**13760 NW 74<sup>th</sup>**

**Parkville, MO 64152**

We hope each of you will return your renewal and remain with the **Key Camp**.



# Kansas Division Recap





# McPherson is new Division Commander

Major Thomas J Key Camp Commander, **Rick McPherson** was installed as the new Kansas Division Commander at the June 21<sup>st</sup> Division Reunion in Topeka, Kansas. He becomes the 13<sup>th</sup> Division Commander and just the 3<sup>rd</sup> Key Camp Compatriot to be elected to this position following **Lawson Rener** and **Jim "Spike" Speicher**.

The Key Camp was well represented by 12 compatriots including **Michael Birenbach-Lytle, Craig Freeman, Bill Stoker**, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Commander **Dan Peterson**, Division Adjutant **Walt Schley, Lane Smith, Lawson Rener**, Commander **Rick McPherson**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Commander **Larry Sumner, Jerry Coffelt, Tim Peterman** and **Dale Walters** and also Ladies of the Plains's **Monet Keitzman**.

Following Division Officer report, each Camp Commander reported on their camp activities. Brother **Bill Stoker** was the main speaker followed by Ms. Jodi Izzo of the UDC.

Division Commander Rener presented a SCV medal to Linda Curtis of the Ladies of the Plains, recognizing her as a "Real Granddaughter of a Confederate soldier. Her grandfather, Pvt John Bishop served in Co. F of the South Carolina Infantry. This rarity was matched by the Pvt Riley Crawford Camp who also have a Real Granddaughter they will be honoring but also a Real Grandson, at an event to be held August 9<sup>th</sup> in Baxter Springs.

Camp Commanders from all five camps in Kansas were present as well as multiple guests. Attendees enjoyed a catered lasagna dinner and salad and were able to visit all the relics on hand at the National Guard Museum. In all, we had 30 folks in attendance.

At the conclusion of the meeting, new **Commander McPherson** presented outgoing **Commander Rener** with a plaque recognizing his leadership and service to the Division.

The Reunion will move to Lenexa, Kansas on Saturday June 13<sup>th</sup> in 2026. **Adjutant Schley** is looking at locations for this event. This is done to rotate the event which in addition to Topeka, has also been held in Emporia, Wichita, Lawrence and even at its first location, Mine Creek in 1999.



Lawson Rener



Rick McPherson



Walt Schley



Bill Stoker





Major

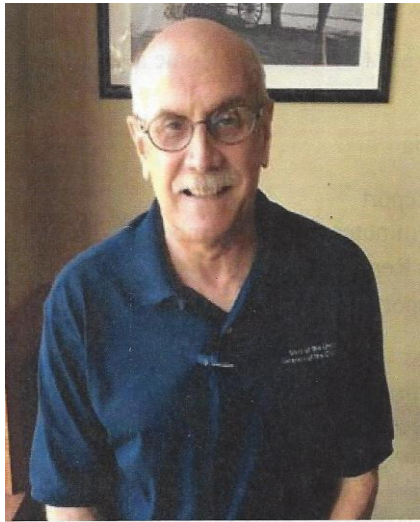
**Thomas J. Key Camp** #1920

Johnson County, Kansas  
Camp Activities



\*\*\*\*\*NEXT CAMP MEETING\*\*\*\*\*

The Key Camp will meet on Thursday July 10<sup>th</sup> at Zarda's Bar B-Q on the southwest corner of 87<sup>th</sup> and Quivira in Lenexa, Kansas with the official meeting starting at 6:30 p.m. You are invited to arrive early for BBQ, conversation and camaraderie.



Mr. Bill Stoker

Brother **Bill Stoker** will be our guest speaker.

Bill is the Past Commander of the **Franklin Camp of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War** and a long time friend of the Key Camp.

Bill has been interested in the Civil War since he was a lad, reading about Johns Singleton Mosby and JEB Stuart and has traveled extensively visiting many battlefields and civil war sites. And though he has no Confederate ancestor, he believes its existence is a valuable period in our history

Come hear "*A conversation with Bill Stoker*" on Thursday evening July the 10<sup>th</sup>.

*As always, we encourage your participation in your Camp's activities.*

*Email **Commander McPherson** for more information on any events you are interested in assisting.*

Key Camp Web Page: [www.majorthomaskeycamp1920.com](http://www.majorthomaskeycamp1920.com)

Email: Commander McPherson @ [mcphersonsales@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mcphersonsales@sbcglobal.net)

Key Camp Facebook Page:  
Major Thomas J Key Camp #1920

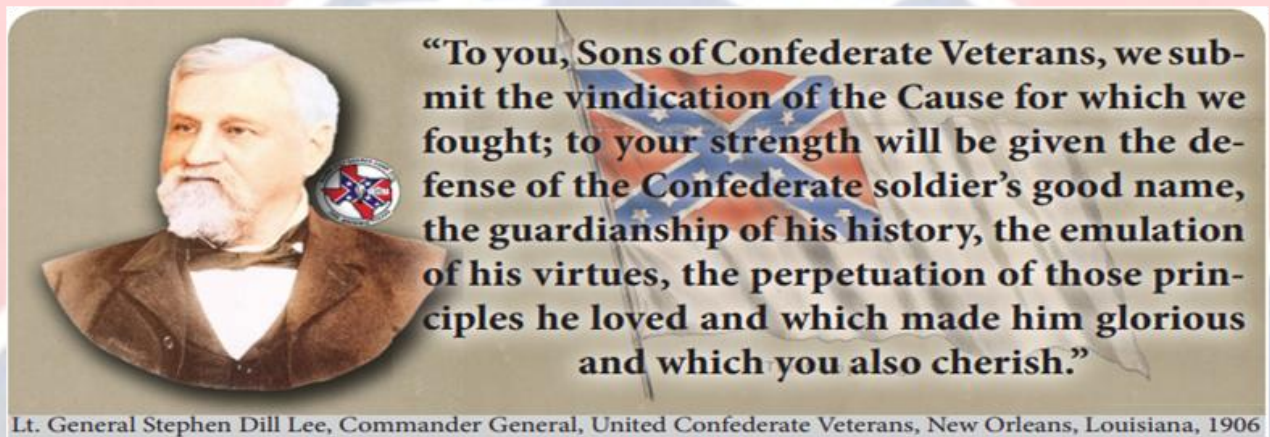
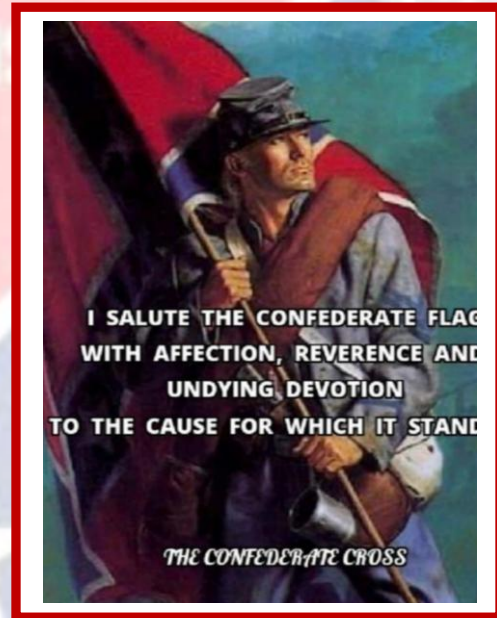
National SCV Web Page  
[www.scv.org](http://www.scv.org)

## The Telegraph Key

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Major Thomas J Key



Lt. General Stephen Dill Lee, Commander General, United Confederate Veterans, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1906

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