



Camp Cresset

Finley's Brigade
Camp #1614
Havana, Florida



Recipient – 2011 and 2012 Dr. George R. Tabor “Most Distinguished Camp” Award

"To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we will commit the vindication of the cause for which we fought. To your strength will be given the defense of the Confederate soldier's good name, the guardianship of his history, the emulation of his virtues, the perpetuation of those principles which he loved and which you love also, and those ideals which made him glorious and which you also cherish."

Lt. General Stephen Dill Lee, UCV Commander General



March Camp Meeting

**Finley's Brigade Camp 1614 will hold its monthly Meeting on March 8th at the VFW.
Social time at 6:00 and meeting at 6:45.**

BATTLE OF NATURAL BRIDGE

Compatriot JR Miller

It was in the early morning hours that Federal ships were spotted in Apalachee Bay. A special train left St. Marks for Tallahassee with the news that the Federals were landing near the light house. The garrison at Fort Ward fired artillery at the fleet which had run aground trying to navigate the narrow channel of the St. Marks River.

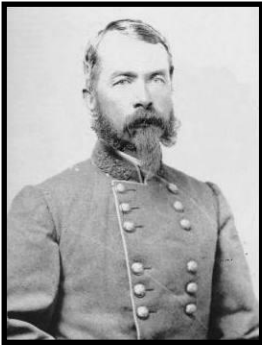


When the train arrived in Tallahassee signal cannons were fired to alert the populous. Quickly the citizens were aroused from their slumbers and quite a commotion started: Militia and Home Guards were ordered to muster; telegraphs were sent out for all available units from as far as Lake City and Marianna. The cadets of the West Florida Seminary were eager for a fight but the younger ones were assigned to protect Tallahassee and the older ones were told they would need a note from their parents. According to articles written after the war, there were some who did not want to send the cadets into battle. The cadets were referred to as “Seed Corn” and “the seed corn should not be sent to the Grinder (the battle)”. Approximately 25 cadets made the trip to Natural Bridge

by train and march from Tallahassee. Over the years Mr. Crocker and I have put together a list of those cadets, around 66.

Confederate scouts had successfully defended the East River Bridge on the evening of March 4. The Federal troops, however, began their march anew on the morning of the 5th. The defenders quickly arrived at the bridge over the East River with 60 men and only one piece of artillery. Lt. Col G.W. Scott had his men fire only one shot from the cannon before ordering retreat. They saved themselves and their guns but lost the cannon to the Federal troops.

The Confederates hastily retreated to Newport and were in the process of taking up the planks and burning the bridge when the Feds arrived. After much fighting, the Northern commander found out that he could ford the St. Marks River further upstream so he began a northern march towards Natural Bridge. So now it was a foot race won by the southern troops by only about ½ hour. That was due to the road of planks they took which to this day is named Old Plank Road. Some of the men that were on the march stated afterwards that they marched in their sleep.



The fighting at Natural Bride started in the pre-dawn hours on March 6 and throughout the day the Southern defensive position grew as reinforcements arrived. The cadets were assigned to protect the artillery and were told to keep below the earthen barriers.

The overall Southern commander was **Major General Samuel Jones**. Jones was a veteran of the Army of Northern Virginia and had held commanded in various other departments. It is not certain that Jones was ever on the battlefield but we know his aide was there for a short time. It has been said that if a general's aide is there, the general is there. We also know that the final defensive position was Jones' favorite: a semicircle which offered enfilade fire from the artillery.



The battlefield commander was **Brigadier General William Miller** (no relation), who was one of the few Northern born generals in the Southern army. Miller was also a veteran of the Army of Tennessee. Miller was wounded at the battle of Perryville and Stones River or Murfreesboro which knocked him out of action for a while. He received his promotion in 1864 and was put in command of the 1st Florida Reserves, the main infantry at the battle. They were augmented by the 1st Florida Militia, Various Home Guard Units, Cadets, Elements of 2nd & 5th Florida Cavalry and 6 artillery pieces: 3 guns of the Milton Artillery, 2 guns of the Kilcrease Artillery and 1 other gun. Also in the line of battle were elements of crewmen from the C.S.S. Spray and elements of artillerymen from Fort Ward.

History says that at least 8 attempts were made by the Federals to cross the natural bridge and all were repulsed. After a full day of fighting, with no victory in sight, the Federal troops retreated to the light house where they boarded their ships and set sail for their bases in Cedar Key and Key West.



Based upon the artifacts uncovered by the State and by private individuals, we know that this was not some little dust up. Both sides fired everything they had and then some. There are more than 2,000 pieces of various artifacts now in private and public hands to document the scope of the battle.

When the monument was erected in 1921, according to reports, it was actually a replacement monument for an older wooden monument that was on the opposite side of natural bridge. That wooden monument was erected on the site of one of the two Kilcrease's guns. It was also reported that today's monument was erected on the site of the other Kilcrease Artillery gun.

Overall, the battlefield deaths were low. During some of my research I have discovered two injuries of the battle worth noting here. These two men were both in the artillery. One was shot in the arm by a sharpshooter. The gun crew spotted

the sharpshooter atop a cypress tree, loaded a solid shot and fired. There was no more firing from that tree during the battle. Afterwards, some of the men got permission to go look for the sniper. They reported that he took a direct hit that nearly severed his body and he was found at the base of the tree. The other Confederate injury was when a federal shell exploded at the chest of one of the artillerymen inflicting over thirty different wounds. Remarkably, he survived and lived to an old age, taking Yankee metal with him to his grave.

Since the 1865 battle, the battlefield has changed. What was once a very open area with lots of river cane and few trees has now become mostly a forested area. What was once a quiet place with a sandy dirt road is now a paved by-way with increased traffic bisecting the battlefield. At one time the battlefield was on the 10 most endangered battlefields in the U.S. Thanks to various land purchases, the battlefield that was once 7 acres is now several hundred acres in size. It is now protected as a State Park.

As I visit the park from time to time and I see the cars fly by, I wonder how many know that people died here?



Grave Keepers Report – Remembering Our Ancestors

Cemetery Chairman: Mark Bess

The orders were received and Finley's Brigade, Camp 1614, was called to duty. Saturday, February 26, was "Road Cleanup" at Natural Bridge. With a good turn-out of 11, we were able to remove an estimated 500 pounds of trash from the shoulders of the road. Once that was completed, our merry band travelled to Pigott Cemetery in Medart. There we installed the headstone for **Henry W. Walker**. Private Walker was truly an "x marks the spot" treasure hunt.



Commander Kelly Crocker discovered a previously unknown account of Private Walker's grave. The instructions were to the effect of take x steps east of one point, then x number to ... (get the point?). **Compatriot J.R. Miller** trekked out with his best Indiana Jones impression and found the grave marked with a simple concrete brick. Through much hard work and red tape, Private Walker now has a marker. Commander Crocker reminded us that, "In a hundred years, people will not remember or know that we individuals obtained this stone, but they will know that **Henry W. Walker** is buried here and he was a Confederate Veteran".

Members in the photo are (l-r) Compatriot J.R. Miller, 2nd Lt. Commander John Bess, Compatriot Kevin Drawdy, Compatriot Pat Adams and Florida Division Commander Kelly Crocker. Kneeling are Compatriot Jed Drawdy and Commander Ned Roberts. Cresset Editor Gerald Bell, 1st Lt. Commander Mark Bess, Compatriot Michael Thomas and 3rd Brigade Commander Randy Nichols also assisted.

Please email Compatriot Mark Bess at saafinleysbrigade@icloud.com with any questions.



Color Guard

Compatriot Mark Bess

On Sunday, February 27, 2022, the Color Guard of Finley's Brigade, Camp 1614, was invited to assist the CSS Chattahoochee, Camp, #2314.

We traveled to Iron City Georgia for the dedication of the memorial headstone for **Isaac Rich**, 50th Georgia, CSA. The program was led by **Captain Jack Cowart**, Commander of the Chattahoochee Camp, a naval camp. The color Guard was led by **Lt. Rick George**, CSS Chattahoochee, followed by **Cpl Robert Crisler**, **Cpl Jim Windsor**, and **1st Sgt Mark R. Bess**.



The program was solemn, dignified, and well attended. A direct relative of Private Rich, gave a history of his life and times. Re-enactors from across Georgia and Florida participated and showed their support with a cannon shot and a firing line.

It is always an honor and a privilege, to support our fellows and continue to follow the charge as given to the Sons of Confederate Veterans by **Lt. General Stephen Dill Lee**.



Chaplain's Corner

Chaplin Keith Lassiter



My wife and I have been very sick lately with the Covid-19 virus. It has been a long time since I have been sick for any extended time, and it made me keenly aware of my health and being grateful to God for it. We humans take entirely too much for granted—our families; our health; our wealth; our possessions. How foolish! They can all be taken from us in an instant. I am reminded of the parable of the rich fool that the Lord Jesus told us in Luke 12:18-20:

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and I will build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry'.

20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall these things be, which thou hast provided?

Thinking back on the last year in our camp, I am reminded of all the precious souls we lost. I am sure not one of them woke up the last day of their lives and decided that that particular day would be their last day on earth; yet, they slipped from this veil of tears and into eternity. May we be reminded that we are not put here to stay. Actually, that really is a good thing. We are only passing through. May we be grateful for all God “loans” us while we are here. May we be good stewards of all He “loans” us. May we NEVER take anything He does for us for granted. Be ye thankful.

Deo Vindice,

Keith Lassiter



Tallahassee Veterans Village

Veterans Chairman: Keith Lassiter

There is not a lot to report this month regarding the Veteran’s Village. We had asked that donations be delayed until the Lee & Jackson Southern Heritage Event and you responded with about \$200.00 worth on that night. I want to offer a heartfelt thanks for all who donated.

The Village still has a big need for donations. They can use most anything you can think of to make the lives of the veterans livable. Clothing and blankets are always welcomed and food and toiletries will always find a place in the pantry. Anything you can spare or provide will go a long way to helping.

Let’s make these donations a priority this year. It seems like such a small gift that we can give to support those who have given so much to keep America safe.

Deo Vindice

Keith Lassiter



Commander’s Guidon

Commander Ned Roberts

March is upon us, which means that the Re-enactment of the Battle of Natural Bridge is here – Saturday, March 5 and Sunday, March 6.

Eleven Compatriots met at the Natural Bridge and Old Plank Road intersection on Saturday, February 26th, to clean-up the road prior to visitors coming for the re-enactment. We did our best to make it look nice, with about 500 pounds of trash picked up from the side of the road.

Starting Friday morning, March 4th, and continuing into Saturday and Sunday, March 5 & 6, we need everyone who can to show up and help. On Friday morning we need to setup the Camp flies and erect the Florida Confederate Wall. We will start at 8:30 AM.

On Saturday and Sunday, I need everyone to show up and be Goodwill Ambassadors for Finley's Brigade and the SCV. This is our best opportunity to get new recruits and tell our story. Sunday afternoon we need help breaking down the flies and the Wall.

On the following weekend, March 12th, we will be manning a booth at the Woodville Founder Days event, to be held at the Woodville Community Center. This will be another opportunity to be Goodwill Ambassadors: spreading the truth about Finley's Brigade and Sons of Confederate Veterans.

You can make a difference, so please show up where you can.



Dates in History of the War - March

- March 6, 1865** – Federal troops are repulsed at Battle of Natural Bridge near Tallahassee, FL by West Florida Cadets and Southern troops.
- March 9, 1862** - Battle of Hampton Roads between USS Monitor and CSS Virginia.
- March 11, 1861** – Brig. Gen. Braxton Bragg assumed command of all CSA forces in Florida.
- March 26, 1863** – The Confederate Congress passes act authorizing the impressment of any property or slaves for the Army's needs.
- March 31, 1864** – Skirmish at Palatka, FL.



Upcoming Heritage Events and Opportunities

- Mar 4th– 6th** – Battle of Natural Bridge Reenactment.
- Mar 8th** - Regular Camp Meeting at VFW. Social Hour starts at 6:00 with meeting at 6:45 PM.
- Mar 14th**- Woodville Founders' Day- 9am to 4pm.
- Apr 12th**- Regular Camp Meeting at VFW. Social Hour starts at 6:00 with meeting at 6:45 PM.
- May 10th**- Regular Camp Meeting at VFW. Social Hour starts at 6:00 with meeting at 6:45 PM.
- Jun 14th**- Regular Camp Meeting at VFW. Social Hour starts at 6:00 with meeting at 6:45 PM.
- Jul 12th**- Regular Camp Meeting at VFW. Social Hour starts at 6:00 with meeting at 6:45 PM.
- Jul 19-23** -SCV 127th National Annual Reunion – Cartersville, Georgia



Birth Days

Winston Montague-Mar 8
Daniel Fletcher-Mar 13

Richard White-Mar 17
James Gerrell-Mar23

David Cline-Mar 28





GEORGIA 2022



SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS 127th National Annual Reunion



The Atlanta Campaign Battlefield Tour Reunion July 19 to 23, 2022

Clarence Brown Conference Center
Cartersville, Georgia

Hosted by: William J. Hardee Camp #1397
and Kennesaw Battlefield Camp# 700

THREE DAYS OF BATTLEFIELD TOURS FOLLOWING THE 1864 ATLANTA CAMPAIGN WITH SOME OF THE MOST INTACT TRENCHES AND FORTIFICATIONS IN THE COUNTRY. FOURTH DAY CLIMAX SEE THE 1886 CYCLORAMA THE BATTLE OF ATLANTA.

July 20, Battlefield Tour of Chickamauga.



July 21, Battlefield Tour of Ringgold Gap, Resaca & Dalton.



July 22, Battlefield Tour of Kennesaw Mountain & Cheatham Hill.



July 23, Personal Tour of the 1886 Cyclorama of the Battle of Atlanta.

