

May 2014

The Admiral's Log

Sons of Confederate Veterans

1211 Government St., Mobile, AL 36604

Raphael Semmes Camp 11



Dear Friends and Compatriots of Camp 11,

Greetings and salutations from Camp 11. I certainly hope and pray that this edition of the Log finds all of you doing well.

Well once again a month has rushed by. I apologize for the tardiness of the newsletter. As I have said before any excuse will do. This month I have a good one. I have been dealing with my son's wedding which occurred this past Saturday. I am proud that the young man found a well-educated, hardworking, pretty, Christian girl. For a dad it just does not get better than this. By the way, I changed the locks on my house the day after the wedding.

I am happy to report that Compatriot Stephen Ellison has been recovering quite well from his surgery. Stephen has extended his gratitude to all of you for your prayers and concern for his well-being. We look forward to having Stephen back with us soon.

It is with heavy heart I must report that long time Camp 11 member Eddie Hickman has died. I ask that you keep his brother and fellow compatriot, Joe Hickman and all their family in your prayers. It is our prayer that the Holy Spirit will bring comfort to this family in this hour of darkness.

I am happy to report that our camp Facebook page is doing well. We now have 561 "likes" and it continues to grow. It is often a challenge to find material to post on the page but fortunately there are many good sources from which to draw. One page in particular is the National Civil War Naval Museum in Columbus, Georgia. They do a daily article called "Talk Like a Sailor". I plan to share some of these in the newsletter as space permits. Also I want to remind ya'll to visit the camp website. Compatriot Joe LoCicero continues to make this a fine place to visit on the World Wide Web.

The annual Alabama Division Reunion was held on May 17th. There is really not much news to report as the meeting went quite well. The biggest news for our camp is that Commander Tommy Rhodes of the Blakeley Camp is now the Brigade Commander. Yours truly will serve as the 1st Lieutenant Brigade Commander. Commander Rhodes is well suited for the job as he has been instrumental in the growth of the Blakeley Camp. I am quite sure he will bring his expertise to the Brigade Commander's job and will be an outstanding commander. I look forward to serving as his number two.

The Georgia Civil War Commission and the 290 Foundation will unveil a marker for John McIntosh Kell on June 16th at Oak Hill Cemetery in Griffin, Georgia. This ceremony is in honor of the sesquicentennial of the sinking of the CSS Alabama. Our camp certainly appreciates these folks for commemorating the CSS Alabama and Commander Kell.

Our next meeting will be on May 26th at 7pm. The Dew Drop is normally closed on Memorial Day therefore there will be no supper. This meeting is also our annual "show and tell" meeting. Ya'll come on and bring a "show and tell" and plan on having a great fellowship together.

Folks, let us continue to keep each other as well as our camp in our prayers.

Terry W. "Beetle" Bailey
Editor, The Admiral's Log

Minutes of Admiral Semmes, Camp 11
Sons of Confederate Veterans
April 28th, 2014

The meeting was called to order by Commander Joe Ringhoffer.

The invocation was given by Chaplain Steve Kennedy.

Following the pledge and salutes to the flags, the program was given by Compatriot DuPree. He showed us several clips from a four hour film shot in Charleston, SC. The event was the burial of the eight men whose bodies were found in the CSS Hunley. Several members of Camp 11 participated in the funeral march. They carried the first casket. In all, approximately 9,000 people marched and at least 250,000 lined the streets of Charleston as they marched from the waterfront to Charleston's Magnolia Cemetery where the bodies were buried. Joe also showed a few pictures of Fort McDermott.

As Boatswain Root had laryngitis, Commander Ringhoffer read the selection from the Admiral's memoirs. The Admiral shared how he had met 1st Lt. John McIntosh Kell several years earlier and had helped him. Then when the Admiral was given the CSS Sumter, he managed to have Kell transferred from a gunboat operating out of Savannah, GA. And when the Admiral was selected to be the Captain of the CSS Alabama, Kell went with him continuing to hold the position of Executive Officer. The Admiral mused in the passage of how much Kell had matured since the time he first met him.

Adjutant Rodgers spoke of the death of Compatriot John E. (Eddie) Hickman. And as soon as funeral arrangements are made, he will send a blast email.

Commander Ringhoffer:

1. The Alabama Division Meeting is in Athens, AL, on May 16 and May 17.
2. 2nd Lt. Commander Smithweck reported that on July 30 the USPS will unveil a new stamp commemorating the Battle of Mobile Bay. The event will be at the History Museum.
3. The SCV will convene in Charleston in July.
4. The May meeting is our annual 'show and tell' meeting, so please bring something to "show and tell".

Compatriot DuPree passed around a couple of samples of signage for the signs to be erected at Ft. McDermott. The 2nd National is flying at Confederate Rest.

Chaplain Kennedy then offered a prayer for Compatriot Joe Hickman and the other members of the Hickman family in the loss of Compatriot Eddie Hickman who was a Life Member.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned with the benediction offered by Chaplain Kennedy.

Talk Like a Sailor

Ahoy: This old traditional greeting for hailing other vessels was originally a Viking battle cry.

Source: The National Civil War Naval Museum

Captain W. B. Amos and his Confederate Horse Navy

Much has been written with good cause about Nathan Bedford Forrest's seizure of a steamboat in Tennessee and his subsequent use of it as warship manned by his cavalrymen. Few realize however that a similar incident happened in Florida. Captain W.B. Amos was the commander of company I, Fifteenth Confederate Cavalry. Stationed at Milton in Santa Rosa County, his primary duty was to watch for Union raids out of Pensacola. Amos was good at this duty but he was an aggressive officer and chafed a bit at the natural restrictions of his duties. In June of 1864, he set off on an adventure that can only be described as one of the only naval raids ever carried out in coastal waters by a Confederate cavalryman. The following report was filed with Colonel Henry [Harry] Maury, Amos's commanding officer at Pollard, Alabama.

Milton, June 27, 1864

DEAR COLONEL: I left here on Saturday morning with two small boats and 15 men for the mouth of Yellow River. When I arrived there I discovered a small schooner lying about 2 miles below with her sails down. I landed my men and made my way to her, and succeeded in capturing her and crew. In a few minutes I discovered another small sail coming up the bay. I secreted myself and men until she came up, and succeeded in getting her and crew. I then sent my boats and prisoners up to camp, and took the small schooner and balance of my men and sailed down to East Bay, where I was informed that there was a schooner by the name of Osceola anchored out about 4 miles from shore with 5 men and some small arms. So I concealed my men in the boat and sailed for her and managed to get on her after dark and succeeded in boarding her. I ordered the crew to surrender. Three made to their guns. I ordered my men to fire on them, which they did, and killed the three. The remainder (2) surrendered. I divided my men on the two schooners and set sails for camp and arrived here yesterday morning and I send up the prisoners today and it will be late before they get there, as they have to foot it up. One of the men (W. Leonard) can give you all the information that you may desire about the yard and if you will let me, after the excitement dies off I will burn the mills on the island. I will come up on July 1 or 2 and see you, as there is some other important business that I want to see you about, &c. Will make my report to your acting assistant adjutant- general of the prisoners and where they belong, &c. My respects to Dr. Tillman and Lieutenant Hallett.

W. B. Amos

Captain, Commanding Outpost, Company I, 15th Confederate Cavalry

Thanks to my friend Don Green for this information. Don is a member of the Mississippi Division and a descendant of W. B. Amos. This article was published in the Rosin Heels SCV Camp newsletter. The Rosin Heels camp is in Laurel, Mississippi.

A Sesquicentennial Moment:

May 4th: Sherman's 98,000 man army prepares to advance from Chattanooga to Atlanta. The Atlanta Campaign has begun.

May 4th: Grant's Army of the Potomac, 122,000 troops, crosses the Rapidan once again. The old hands warned the winter recruits not to tear down their winter quarters as they expected to be back

soon. This was not the case this time and the Army of the Potomac would not cross the Rapidan again until war's end.

May5th: The Battle of The Wilderness begins.

May13th: The savage fight at the Bloody Angle ends leaving 6800 Union casualties and 5000 Confederate casualties.

[Source: "1400 Days The US Civil War Day By Day" by Bishop, Drury, & Gibbons]

WBTS Usage

Brogan: a Gaelic term for shoe and applied to the coarse flat-heeled footgear at least ankle high and fastened with laces.

Buck: a nickname for Confederate General Earl Van Dorn as well as a nickname for Missouri guerilla fighter Frank James.

Budge barrel: a special container for artillery charges used to transport them from powder magazines to batteries.

Mess: a group of four to six men who ate together and took turns cooking and cleaning.

[Source: The Encyclopedia of Civil War Usage by Webb Garrison]

WBTS Trivia

The only two Confederate state capitols never captured by the Union were Austin, Texas and Tallahassee, Florida.

General Leonidas Polk, an Episcopal Bishop, baptized two fellow generals during the war; John Bell Hood and Joseph E. Johnston.

Union troops referred to diarrhea as the "Tennessee Quickstep".

The Spencer carbine carried seven shots in its magazine.

Confederate Birthdays

Brigadier General Felix Kirk Zollicoffer was born in Tennessee on May 19th, 1812. He was a newspaperman and a three term US Congressman from that state. General Zollicoffer was killed at the Battle of Mill Springs on January 19th, 1862. He is at rest in the Old City Cemetery at Nashville, Tennessee.

Quotes from the Heroes

A Moment of Reflection from Capt. Semmes

As the day was coming to an end, after Semmes made his escape from the USS Brooklyn, he had a moment of reflection. Here are his thoughts:

"The evening of the escape of the Sumter was one of those Gulf evenings, which can only be felt, and not described. The wind died gently away, as the sun declined, leaving a calm, and sleeping sea, to reflect a myriad of stars. The sun had gone down behind a screen of purple, and gold, and to add to the beauty of the scene, as night set in, a blazing comet, whose tail spanned nearly a quarter of the heavens, mirrored itself within a hundred feet of our little bark, as she ploughed her noiseless way through the waters. As I leaned on the carriage of a howitzer on the poop of my ship, and cast a glance toward the quarter of the horizon whence the land had disappeared, memory was busy with the events of the last few months. How hurried and confused they had been! It seemed as though I had dreamed a dream, and found it difficult, upon waking, to unite the discordant parts. A great government had been broken up, family ties had been severed, and war--grim, ghastly war--was arraying a household against itself. A little while back, and I had served under the very flag which I had that day defiled. Strange revolution of feeling, how I now hated that flag! It had been to me as a mistress to a lover; I had looked upon it with admiring eyes, had dallied with it in the hours of ease,

and had had recourse to it, in hours of trouble, and now I found it false! What wonder that I felt a lover's resentment?

When the last gray cavalier
Rides off to meet his God....
When the final flag draped coffin
Has slipped beneath the sod...
When the final notes of Dixie
Have echoed down the wind
Twill be left to us, their Southern sons,
Their memories to tend

Sgt. Benjamin R. Gromley
October, 1992

Benjamin R. Gromley was a well-known and respected reenactor from Florida. These are truly appropriate words for us to live by as members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

We Take Our Stand

By Carolyn Kent, Southern Cross Chapter #2578, UDC

"The Battle Flag has suffered much abuse and we, the descendants of the Confederate heroes whose honor that Cross verifies, must continually do battle with ignorance and defamation from those who choose to misunderstand our heritage. We, whose ancestors gave us that centuries-old Cross, have a duty to protect it, to restore it to its position of dignity and respect, and that we must do. The Confederates were neither cold nor timid...neither can we be."

Northern historian Professor Jay Hoar summed up the situation with precision and accuracy when he said: "The worst fears of those Boys in Gray are now a fact of American life—a Federal government completely out of control."

Charge to the Sons of Confederate Veterans

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. Remember, it is your duty to see that the true history of the South is presented to future generations.

**Lt. General Stephen Dill Lee
Commander-General
United Confederate Veterans
New Orleans, 25 April 1906**