

November 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.

Wow! What happened? We only had a few days of autumn then winter raged in at full force. The point here is to enjoy the cold because we all remember July and August!

Our first order of business is not pleasant. Regretfully our beloved camp member, John O'Donnell Rosales, crossed over to the land of the unseen. John was a lightning rod for recruitment. Our camp sincerely appreciates all of the good years that John devoted to Camp 11. I am sure he has rounded up all of his Cuban Confederate heroes by now. May he rest in peace and may the Holy Spirit comfort his family in these dark hours of loss.

Beauvoir was the venue this year for the Highland Games. Bag pipers, jousting, and telephone pole chunking; what a way to celebrate our Celtic heritage? As I watched the telephone pole chunkers I had to wonder how much Scotch whiskey was involved with this idea of a sporting event!

I must once again commend Greg Stewart and the staff at Beauvoir in their efforts at Beauvoir. Based on what I witnessed Saturday I suspect that the weekend was very successful.

Also, for you WWII buffs, there will be a WWII Living History event at Beauvoir on December 13, 2014. This event is to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge.

On Saturday [15th] our Confederate info table was set up by the folks promoting the WWII event. The fellow dressed as a German soldier and I walked together to watch the jousting. You can imagine the looks we got when a Confederate and a Nazi walked up. Please make the effort to visit Beauvoir. You will not be disappointed.

Our Facebook page and the camp web site have done well this month. The camp Facebook page now has over 800 followers. One of our posts at the first of November about the Wirz Execution Order got over 1800 hits. The "contact us" section of the web site paid off recently. A Tennessee compatriot reached out to us and as a result we will be doing a Confederate Head Stone Memorial Service in Magnolia Cemetery. This event is tentatively set for February.

Several of our members are recovering from illness. Let us all join in prayer for these members. On behalf of Camp 11 we pray that all of you will have a blessed Thanksgiving Holiday.

Best regards,

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

Minutes

Admiral Semmes, Camp 11
Sons of Confederate Veterans
27 October 2014

The meeting was called to order by Commander Joe Ringhoffer. Invocation was given by Assistant Chaplain Sid Phillips, III. The salutes and pledge were led by the Commander.

1st Lt. Commander Terry Bailey introduced Greg Stewart, the new Executive Director of Beauvoir, who updated the Camp on the history and current conditions at Beauvoir. A native of Granada, Greg moved to the Gulf Coast in 2003. Having joined the SCV in 1996, he recently was appointed as Executive of Director of Beauvoir. Beauvoir was in serious financial condition, losing \$30,000 each month. Pre-Katrina annual visitors were 100,000; post-Katrina 30,000. Since Greg took the helm, several employees have resigned and currently the staff is comprised of 28 employees who oversee the 52-acre site. Greg is encouraged by the dedication of new employees and the volunteers who serve during events. His goal is for Beauvoir to be solvent by next year. Donated to the MS Division in 1902 by the Davis family, the terms of the donation dictate that should the MS Division fail to maintain Beauvoir, title would pass to the State of MS, and then back to the Davis heirs. Greg, positive and pragmatic, finished by saying that 'the Flag will always fly at Beauvoir'!

Boatswain Tom Root read a selection from the Admiral's memoirs. The Admiral praised John N. Maffitt, the Captain of the CSS Florida. Never to miss an opportunity to express admiration for his Confederate colleagues, the Admiral took every opportunity to lambaste the 'puritan serpent'!

Commander Ringhoffer:

Dues without a late charge are payable by October 31. Approximately 100 of 131 members have paid.

The Riverview Hotel did not respond with a favorable package for the 2017 convention. Prospects are still in limbo.

Dr. Carolyn Ringhoffer, the wife of our Commander, will direct that certain fees be donated to the Camp.

Compatriot Joe Hickman displayed a Confederate knife.

1st Lt. Commander Bailey reported on the success of Fall Muster which was October 18-19 at Beauvoir. An event is scheduled for Natchez on November 8.

On behalf of Howard Andrews, Chair of the Nominating Committee, Compatriot Joe DuPree brought the report for officers for 2015 and 2016. There were no nominations from the floor. Election will be at the November meeting. The slate is:

Commander J. E. (Joe) Ringhoffer
1st Lt. Commander T. W. (Beetle) Bailey
2nd Lt. Commander David Smithweck
Adjutant W. P. (Bill) Rodgers
Paymaster C. E. (Charlie) Christmas
Judge Advocate David Toifel
Quartermaster Darrell Neese
Boatswain T. M. (Tom) Root
Surgeon S. C. (Sid) Phillips, Jr.
Color Sergeant S. M. (Steve) Ellison
Sergeant-at-Arms C. E. (Claude) Turberville
Dustin Marshall

Chaplain Steve Kennedy

Assistant Chaplain S. C. (Sid) Phillips, III

Memorials Chairman Joe DuPree the 2nd National Flag and the Battle Flag are flying at Confederate Rest. And the Alabama Division meeting is 11 April 2015 at Ft. McDermott.

Compatriot Greg Stewart read the Thanksgiving Proclamation of President Jefferson Davis which he delivered on 31 October 1861.

The membership application of Ed Travis based on his ancestor Col. Buck Travis was approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned with the benediction by Assistant Chaplain Sid Phillips, III.

A Sesquicentennial Moment

Davidson's West Pascagoula Raid: Nov. 27th – Dec. 12th, 1864. A 4000 man cavalry raid from Baton Rouge across southeast Louisiana into southeast Mississippi. The purpose of the raid was to disrupt the Mobile and Ohio RR at State Line. Davidson's troopers were stopped by the Confederates at Vernal, Mississippi [present day Greene County, Mississippi]. This raid will be the subject of the camp program on Nov. 24th. On Dec. 5th at Leakesville, Mississippi the raid will be the focus of a sesquicentennial commemoration.

On Nov. 15th Sherman completes his destruction of Atlanta and on the 17th he sets out on his March to the Sea.

Nov.30th: The Battle of Franklin. This battle was the death knell for the Army of Tennessee. Six Confederate generals and 1750 troops were killed.

WBTS Usage

Strake: a band of planking or plates on the hull of a ship.

Wire road: a road bounded by a telegraph wire or line.

Wolfhounds: a reference to ragged Confederate soldiers.

Yearling: a second year cadet at West Point.

Confederate Birthday

Hugh Weedon Mercer was born in Fredericksburg, Virginia on Nov. 27th, 1808. His grandfather and namesake, Hugh Mercer, was a general under George Washington in the American Revolution. Mercer was an 1828 graduate of West Point [3 of 33]. After a brief stint in the US Army he settled in Savannah, Ga. and became a banker. When the war began he served with the 1st Ga. Infantry and later commanded the District of Georgia. During the war he also served in the AoT. After the war he was briefly imprisoned at Ft. Pulaski which he once commanded. He again settled in Savannah and returned to banking. Later he lived in Baltimore. While in Baden-Baden, Germany he died on June 9, 1877. Gen. Hugh Weedon Mercer is at rest in Bonaventure Cemetery in Chatham County, Georgia.

Quotes from our Heroes

A reconstructed Southerner commented to Miss Mildred Lewis Rutherford: "My father was a Confederate soldier, but had he lived, I am sure he would have regretted having fought for the wrong side." To which Miss Rutherford replied: "Far more probably he would have regretted having a son so disloyal to the principles for which he was willing to give his life".

And another one from Miss Rutherford:

"The next quotation is from Dan Vorhees, Representative for many years, and later a United States Senator from Indiana. In his speech, "Plunder of Eleven States," made in the House of Representatives, March 23, 1872, he pictures well the animus of Reconstruction. He said:

"From turret to foundation you tore down the government of eleven States. You left not one stone upon another. You not only destroyed their local laws, but you trampled upon their ruins. You called conventions to frame new Constitutions for these old States. You not only said who should be elected to rule over these States, but you said who should elect them."

TRUTHS OF HISTORY

Mildred Lewis Rutherford
Historian General
United Daughters of the Confederacy

WBTS Trivia

There were approximately 10,435 engagements during the WBTS.

The most common illness during the war was diarrhea.

A full strength regiment had 1000 men.

Sherman's neckties or hairpins were the name given to the heated and twisted rails of a railroad.

Events

Nov.22 & 23: Camp Moore Reenactment at Camp Moore in Tangipahoa, La.

Nov. 29: Living History at Landrums Country Village near Laurel, Miss. [Highway 15 on the south side of Laurel]

Dec. 5 & 6: Sesquicentennial of Davidson's Raid in Leakesville, Miss.

Reflections from the Editor's Desk

Reconstruction and Revision or Making a Lie of the Truth

This excerpt comes from the Atlanta Journal on 11/14/14. The article titled "150 Years Later, Wrestling With a Revised Vision of Sherman's March", was written by Alan Blinder.

"Yet this week, Atlanta became the site of a historical marker annotating Sherman folklore to reflect an expanding body of more forgiving scholarship about the general's behavior. One of the marker's sentences specifically targets some of the harsher imagery about him as "popular myth."

The marker near the picnic tables at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum is the fruit of a reassessment of Sherman and his tactics that has been decades in the making. Historians have increasingly written that Sherman's plan for the systematic obliteration in late 1864 of the South's war machine, including its transportation network and factories, was destructive but not gratuitously destructive. Instead, those experts contend, the strategy was an effective and legal application of the general's authority and the hard-edged masterstroke necessary to break the Confederacy.

They have described plenty of family accounts of cruelty as nothing more than fables that unfairly mar Sherman's reputation.

"What is really happening is that over time, the views that are out there are being challenged by historical research," said John F. Marszalek, a Sherman biographer and the executive director of the Mississippi-based Ulysses S. Grant Association. "The facts are coming out."

To that end, the marker in Atlanta mentions that more than 62,000 soldiers under Sherman's command devastated "Atlanta's industrial and business (but not residential) districts" and talks of how, "contrary to popular myth, Sherman's troops primarily destroyed only property used for waging war — railroads, train depots, factories, cotton gins and warehouses."

Sherman's aggressiveness, the marker concludes, "demoralized Confederates, hastening the end of slavery and the reunification of the nation."

The marker, placed in Atlanta at a time when more and more of its residents are not natives of the area, drew relatively little criticism ahead of its dedication on Wednesday morning, Dr. Groce said.

But some say its text is an inaccurate portrayal of history that amounts to an academic pardon for a general some believe committed acts that would now be deemed war crimes."

In spite of all this so called "historical research", I will continue to look for the account of an eyewitness. "War Crimes Against Southern Civilians" by Walter B. Cisco is an excellent book and should be in every Southerner's library. The next excerpt comes from his book.

"The men in the ranks shared their commander's hatred for the first Southern state to declare independence. An Ohio private looked forward to destroying "everything" and predicted to his sister that "ere long you will hear of Sherman's army sweeping through S.C. like a hericane." South Carolina "will soon reap the whirlwhind", wrote one Iowan. "Sherman's army are with him to a man and his reputation is their reputation." Another soldier prophesied to a Georgia woman about the punishment that lay in store. 'You think the people of Georgia are faring badly, and they are, but God pity the people of South Carolina when this army gets there, for we have orders to lay everything in ashes-not to leave a green thing in the State for man or beast. That State will be made to feel the fearful sin of Secession before our army gets through with it. Here our soldiers were held in check...and when they get to South Carolina they will be turned loose to follow their own inclinations."

It does not matter how long one tries to scrub the pages of history, there is not enough white wash in this world to cover Sherman's crimes. But it certainly appears that 150 years later the revisionists are getting close.

As we close this edition of The Admiral's Log let us reflect on the words of D. H. Hill in 1885:

"And what shall be said of those unselfish patriots who were true to their colors to the last, when the ravages of armies had desolated their country, and the torches of bummers had left blackened chimneys as monuments over the buried treasures of a husband's and father's love? How can we sufficiently honor these men, who, knowing that their families, without food and without shelter, were starving to death or were living on the offal of the enemy's camps, who, knowing even this, yet still answered to roll call, yet still filled their places in the ranks, yet still faced death again and again, putting duty to country above duty to wife and children?

Aye, how many of these poured out their heart's blood in that last despairing struggle, leaving those they loved more than life to the cold charities of a forgetful world? Hard must be the heart of that foeman which does not warm with a generous glow at this simple tale of sublime devotion to principle. And how should this story affect us, their comrades in danger and their partners in the same buoyant hopes and the same deep despair? May my arm be palsied by my side when it ceases to hold up the banner inscribed all over with their glorious deeds. May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth when it ceases to pronounce the praises of such matchless courage, unrivalled fortitude, and unselfish patriotism?"

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**