



Sons of Confederate Veterans

The Hunley Torpedo

The Lt. Dixon – CSS Hunley Camp # 2016, Sparks NV



Number Four Website: www.dixon-hunley.org September 2009

Camp Report

Compatriots,

Greetings! Summer's over and now our camp can resume normal operations; and this includes publication of your newsletter.

The Lt. Dixon – CSS Hunley Camp welcomes its newest members; they are:

Bill Murdock
Ron Smith



Dues

Our dues for the year 2009 came due on August 1st. About half of us haven't sent them in yet. Let us hope that the economic woes of our country don't serve to depopulate our camp in excess. Suffering is widespread, and a couple of our compatriots have lost their jobs and homes.

Many of you have received dues notices from our Adjutant, Jim White. But if needed, you have a grace period until November 1st. Dues for regular members are \$42 and for life members are \$12. Please send your checks made out to SCV to:

Jim White
8598 Corrigan
Reno, NV 89506



Next Meeting

It will be on **Saturday, September 12th at 9:00 a.m.** in the private room of the Black Bear Diner on Virginia St in Reno. We will have a special guest speaker from North Carolina, Bill Lockridge. Bill is a retired Army Helicopter pilot and Vietnam Veteran. He is now an active historian and writer specializing in The War Between the States. Bill often presents his numerous programs among the eastern camps. This is his second year in a row to be with us. Last September, he gave us a great presentation at the Sparks library.



Traditionally, as a camp, we have supported many heritage causes with our funds and donations. Let's hope we can continue. Please send your dues soon.



Take a look at the stellar cast of leaders shown below. In them, our ancestors had great role models to look up to and follow. Can we say the same about our own in these troubled times?

From left to right these men shown below are: Generals: Joe Johnston; Pierre Beauregard; James Longstreet; Thomas (Stonewall) Jackson; Robert E. Lee (Marse Robert); Jeb Stuart; Nathan Forrest; Patrick Cleburne; and Raphael Semmes—who served as both an Admiral and a General.



Commander's Page

My Fellow Compatriots,

Where has the time gone? We are now in September which marks nine months of my service as camp commander. Much has taken place since I began my watch. Our membership spiked this summer at 94, down from our 2008 record of 103, but still exceeding most camps in the Deep South. We were visited by the Field Representative of the Army of the Trans-Mississippi Curt Tipton, on the occasion of our flag-raising in Virginia City. This event along with our Lee-Jackson Dinner and Confederate Memorial Day has continued to improve. We as a camp have worked hard to make them classy events which I believe those of you who have attended one or more of these will agree.


On the next page you will see pictures of our flag-raising in June. Unfortunately, on the morning just a before it began; I tore an arm muscle which sent me to the emergency room. Though this last minute accident forced me to miss our flag-raising, all went well and many of our camp members were able to attend. Our ATM official visitor, Curt Tipton, was pleased.

There is much more I hope to accomplish in the remaining part of this year. We have a great program shaping up for our September meeting. We will have Bill Lockridge, from North Carolina, who is going to give us a historical presentation. And we can bring our ladies, have a great breakfast and enjoy each other's fellowship to boot. Y'all come and help us make it a bell-ringing day!

Compatriot Bill Hawkins, one of our own, who has been serving in Afghanistan for the last year is back in the States and will return home soon. He has been proudly displaying the Battle Flag that we sent him several months ago; and he has an extra that has been flown on several combat flights and which will be signed by his fellow troops. This will be a wonderful thing for us to see. We thank God for Bill's safe return, and this includes all of our fellow American Soldiers still in service there.

Planning for our 2010 Lee-Jackson dinner will commence soon. All input which might help improve this event is appreciated. Our camp elections will take place in November, as I have decided to combine the November / December meetings. More will be forthcoming prior to this election. With that, I wish you all well.

Respectively,
Rodney L. Clifton
Camp Commander
Lt Dixon-CSS Hunley, #2016



In June 1865, rather than surrender, Shelby and approximately 1,000 of his remaining troops rode south into Mexico. For their determination not to surrender, they were immortalized as "the undefeated". A later verse appended to the angry post-war Confederate anthem, "The Unreconstructed Rebel" commemorates the defiance of Shelby and his men: *"I won't be reconstructed, I'm better now than then. And for a Carpetbagger I do not give a damn. So it's forward to the frontier, soon as I can go. I'll fix me up a weapon and start for Mexico."* Their plan was to offer their services to Emperor Maximilian as a 'foreign legion.' Maximilian declined to accept the ex-Confederates into his armed forces, but he did grant them land for an American colony in Mexico near Vera Cruz. The grant would be revoked two years later following the collapse of the empire and Maximilian's execution. Reportedly, Shelby sank his battle flag in the Rio Grande River near present-day Eagle Pass (TX) on the way to Mexico rather than risk the flag falling into the hands of the Federals. The event is depicted in a painting displayed at the Eagle Pass City Hall. The memory of Shelby and his men as *"The Undefeated"* is used as a distant basis for the 1969 John Wayne-Rock Hudson film by the same name. Shelby returned to Missouri in 1867 and resumed farming. He was appointed the U.S. Marshal for the Western District of Missouri in 1893 and retained the position until his death in 1897. He died in Adrian, Missouri, and is buried in Forest Hill Cemetery, Kansas City.

Our 2009 Virginia City Flag-Raising

On June 20th we raised the Stars and Bars in commemoration of the original event in June of 1861, when this flag was raised in Virginia City, albeit temporarily. We raised the flag on the tall flagpole in the center of Virginia City across from the Delta Saloon. Immediately after this we held a camp meeting in a private room above the Delta Saloon. Our guest speaker, Curtis Tipton, was there to present his program. Curt and his lovely wife are both retired U.S. Army personnel whose specialty was the Russian language; and no, understandably, they wouldn't tell us anything about their work in that capacity! After his military service, Curt became an Arizona Highway Patrolman and is now retired in this second career too.



The first machine-gun type weapon ever used in combat was built for the Confederate War Dept in Sept 1861 by Confederate Captain R.S. Williams. The Williams breech-loading rapid-fire gun was first used at the Battle of Seven Pines (May 1862) and worked so well that the War Dept ordered 42 more of them. The gun was actually a crank-operated, very light artillery piece that fired a one-pound (1.57 caliber) projectile with a range of 2,000 yards. The gun operated by a lever attached to a revolving cam shaft, which rotated a cylinder. Each time the cylinder turned, a cartridge was dropped into the breech and a sliding hammer struck the cartridge's percussion cap. It was manned by a crew of three and could fire at a rate of 65 rounds per minute. One operator aimed and fired the weapon by turning the crank, the second placed a paper cartridge into the breech, and the third placed the percussion cap. The major problem with this gun was overheating, which made the breech jam due to heat expansion.



The Battle of Ringgold Gap General Cleburne Saves the Army of Tennessee



The Ringgold Depot

Shown at left as it looks today, it was the anchor point of Gen. Cleburne's defense. This building was used to host one of the dinners at the 2004 SCV Reunion in Dalton.

The rout of the Army of Tennessee at Missionary Ridge on November 25, 1863 was devastating. General Bragg's troops were strung out across 15 miles, their wagons hub deep in mud. Federal troops under the command of "Fighting Joe" Hooker were right behind him. He needed time. General Patrick Cleburne was chosen to give him that time.

Bragg passed through the city of Ringgold earlier in the day and left orders for Cleburne to protect his retreating army while he organized in Dalton. Cleburne, who had his men bed down before crossing East Chickamauga Creek and entering town, did not get the orders until midnight. He was off to scout the situation in the moonlight.

Early next morning, as his men began crossing the creek and marching towards Ringgold the Confederate general was standing at a gap in the mountains where the Western and Atlantic Railroad plunged toward Atlanta. Using the Ringgold Depot as an anchor, Cleburne carefully concealed men and 2 cannon. They watched the Union soldiers approaching in standard formation, unaware of the Confederates. Ordered not to fire until the bluecoats were upon them, Cleburne's men let loose a volley on the advancing line just before it entered the gap. The line shuddered and fell, retreating under the withering fire.

Yankee Gen. Hooker paused. After considering the situation, he decided to test the flanks of the rebel force. Cleburne knew his opponent. Immediately after the initial volley, Cleburne began moving troops to his flanks. He repulsed Union attacks on both sides of his center. Hooker decided to wait for his big guns, a day behind. Bragg reorganized his ranks in Dalton and ordered Cleburne to join him. With 4,100 men, the Confederate General stalled the advance of Hooker's Union troops numbering over 12,000 strong.

Hooker, always capable of a little self-aggrandizement, reported his losses as less than 500. Descriptions of the scene of the battlefield by enlisted personnel tend to indicate the general lost significantly more men. Grant, at the bottom of the report filed by Hooker, took note of the apparent discrepancy.

The photo at right, taken less than a year after the battle, shows the site of the fighting, with the town of Ringgold in the background.



The Great Train Raid The Largest Railroad Heist in History

The stage was set for the inevitable War Between the States. The B&O Railroad was supplying large amounts of coal which was shipped from the Ohio Valley to Union Naval bases in Baltimore. This coal was fueling warships that had begun to blockade the South. The president of the B&O was John Garrett, a Unionist. Confederate Colonel Thomas Jackson (later to become Stonewall Jackson) devised a plan that would simultaneously destroy B&O Railroad operations and supply Virginia.

Knowing that Garrett wanted to minimize interference with his railroad operations, Jackson concocted a ruse. He sent a message to Garrett telling him that trains running along the line were disturbing his troop's sleep and that these trains would only be allowed to pass between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. This was before the Battle of Manassas and Garrett fell for the trick. He amassed his trains in railroad yards on each side of Harper's Ferry to maximize their passage during this allotted time. This caused a bottleneck and the trains piled up on both sides.

On May 23, 1861, Jackson's troops cut the B&O Line at a bridge near Cherry Run on the Potomac River northwest of Martinsburg and the signal tower west of Point of Rocks, trapping a large quantity of rolling stock in between, especially in the rail yard at Martinsburg. May 23rd was the day Virginia ratified secession.

The Winchester and Potomac Railroad connected with the B&O at Harper's Ferry. This allowed the captured equipment to be sent to Winchester. But once here it became more difficult. There were forty miles of dirt road between Winchester and Strasburg. This was solved through the ingenuity of Colonel Thomas R. Sharp, Chief Engineer of the Winchester and Potomac Railroad. The engines and rolling stock had to be disassembled in Winchester, placed on special wagons and dollies and moved overland to Strasburg. At Strasburg, Virginia, they were reassembled and moved south on the Manassas Gap Railroad, though he had only thirty-five men, Sharp moved a total of fourteen locomotives and an undetermined number of railroad cars in this manner. The first four locomotives were dragged over this route with 40 horse teams including: **the thirty-ton Engine Number 199 shown below.**

Altogether, Jackson captured 56 locomotives with tenders and 386 railroad cars, which were staged at the Martinsburg rail yard for movement south. But since only fourteen of these locomotives could be saved before Jackson evacuated the Harper's Ferry area, it became necessary that by June 23rd the 42 remaining locomotives and all the remaining railroad cars be destroyed. He also destroyed 23 bridges—including the 800 foot bridge at Harper's Ferry; two water stations; 102 miles of telegraph; engine houses and machine shops and he carried 36 ½ miles of torn up rail with his forces south when he withdrew. Some railcars were hidden by patriotic citizens in Winchester in their barns. As late as 1863 some these were hauled up the Shenandoah Valley to Staunton for use on the Confederate railroad system. Later Jackson was able to salvage another ten "burnt" locomotives. By this time it became too risky to send them on the Manassas Gap Railroad, so they were dragged by the carriage and dolly method overland, 125 miles to Staunton, Virginia.

So devastating was Jackson's raid on the B&O that from June 14th 1861 until March 18th 1862, no trains ran between Wheeling in Western Virginia and Baltimore, Maryland.

As a point of irony, Garrett, President of the B&O so admired Colonel Sharp's ability, that in the years after the war he hired him after the death of his own chief engineer.

