



SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS, TEXAS DIVISION

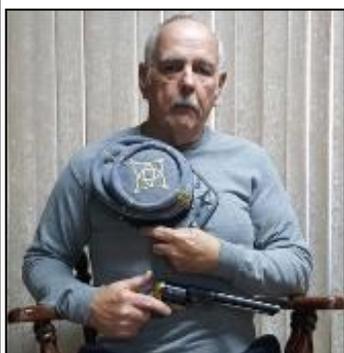
THE JOHN H. REAGAN CAMP NEWS

www.reaganscvcamp.org

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 4

APRIL 2021

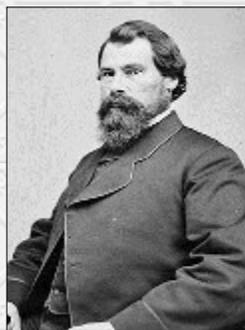
COMMANDER'S DISPATCH



We had a great time at our April 2021 meeting! Our program was presented by our own Calvin Nicholson. It was an informative program that was well presented. The subject of the program was the Rains brothers who were instrumental in the Confederate development of water and land torpedoes. For those of you who did not know, at the time of the Civil War, torpedoes were land and sea mines. Our camp is blessed with individuals who give great programs. All should come out and enjoy these

presentations. There was no old business to discuss but under new business we discussed the keeping up of the Confederate Plaza. I have received input from some individuals and we will discuss and attempt to put a plan into action for future maintenance. We had a huge pot of purple hull peas, hamburger casserole and a chicken and broccoli dish along with a homemade cake and Blue Bell ice cream for dessert. We were well fed and the fare was excellent.

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 PM. The next program will again be presented by Calvin Nicholson and if this one is as good as the



John H. Reagan

About 1863  
Oct 8, 1818 – March 6, 1905

Post Master General of the Confederate States of America  
Secretary of the Treasury CSA

U. S. Senator from Texas  
U. S. Rep. from Texas  
District Judge

Texas State Representative  
First Chairman - Railroad Commission of Texas

A Founder and President of the Texas State Historical Association

preceding, it will be greatly enjoyed.

Once again I encourage you to bring guests. If you have not been with us lately please come out and let us enjoy your company.

Richard Thornton  
Commander

CAMP MEETINGS

3rd Tuesday of Each Month  
06:30 PM

With a meal served at each meeting.

Commercial Bank of Texas on the corner of N. Mallard & E. Lacy Street

The Bank is located just south of the Anderson County Courthouse Annex.

Guests are welcome!  
Bring the family.

[www.reaganscvcamp.org](http://www.reaganscvcamp.org)

[www.reaganscvcamp.org](http://www.reaganscvcamp.org)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Commander's Dispatch	1
Calendar of Events	2
Remembering Your Ancestor	3
April Meeting Pictures	4
April Historical Program by Calvin Nicholson	5-6
April Civil War Calendar	7
Tx Civ. War History	8
Confederate Plaza Info	9
Reagan Camp	10

**Memorial Plaza  
Groundskeeping  
Calendar**

May—Need a volunteer  
 June - Marc Robinson  
 July - Dwight Franklin  
 August— Need volunteer  
 Sept - Need volunteer  
 October - Need volunteer  
 November - Need volunteer

**Officers for 2021**

Commander - Richard Thornton  
1st Lt. - Calvin Nicholson  
Adjutant/Treasurer - Dan Dyer  
Sgt at Arms - Frank Moore  
Quartermaster - Andrew Petty  
Chaplains - David Franklin  
 & Dwight Franklin



1890 United Confederate Veterans Convention in Alabama. Although the left might not like it, blacks, whites, and women were all in attendance & are all in the picture.

**Prayer List**

- Compatriot Forrest Bradberry
- Compatriot J.B. Mason
- Past Reagan Camp Historian Gary Williams
- Rod Skelton (former Camp Chaplain)
- Former Camp Commander Rudy Ray
- United Daughters of the Confederacy
- The Sovereign State of Texas
- The United States of America

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**The Reagan Camp will have monthly meetings on the 3rd Tuesday of each month.**

May 18th - May Meeting  
 June 15th - June Meeting  
 July 20th - July Meeting



This flag flies in honor and memory of over 1,000 Confederate veterans from Anderson County who marched off to war, one third of whom never returned, and the over 500 Confederate veterans from all across the South who are buried in this county. They fought for liberty and independence from a tyrannical and oppressive government. Provided by the John H. Reagan Camp # 2156, Sons of Confederate Veterans. [www.reaganscvcamp.org](http://www.reaganscvcamp.org)

Above: Reagan Camp's battle flag and sign displayed proudly at intersection of FM 315 and Anderson Cty Rd 448, ten miles north of Palestine.

“NOTHING FILLS ME WITH DEEPER SADNESS THAN TO SEE A SOUTHERN MAN APOLOGIZING FOR THE DEFENSE WE MADE OF OUR INHERITANCE. OUR CAUSE WAS SO JUST, SO SACRED, THAT HAD I KNOWN ALL THAT HAS COME TO PASS, HAD I KNOWN WHAT WAS TO BE INFLICTED UPON ME, ALL THAT MY COUNTRY WAS TO SUFFER, ALL THAT OUR POSTERITY WAS TO ENDURE, I WOULD DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN.”

-PRESIDENT JEFFERSON DAVIS-

“DUTY IS THE MOST SUBLIME WORD IN OUR LANGUAGE. DO YOUR DUTY IN ALL THINGS. YOU CANNOT DO MORE. YOU SHOULD NEVER WISH TO DO LESS.”

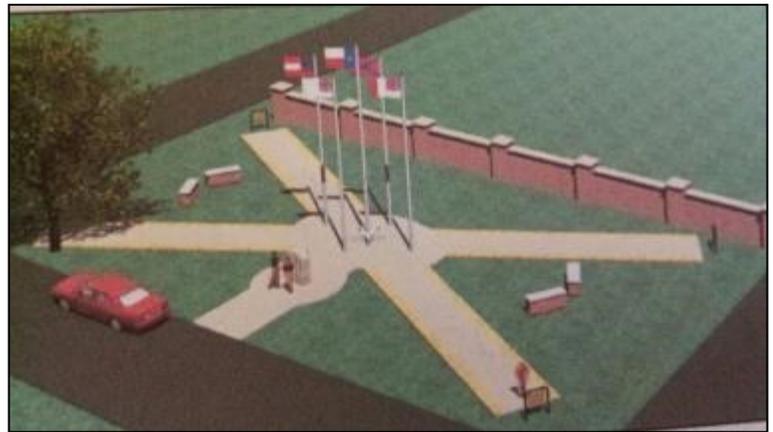
-GENERAL  
ROBERT E. LEE-



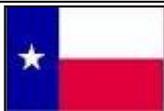
## A GREAT WAY TO ENSURE THAT YOUR ANCESTOR'S SERVICE AND HONOR IS NOT FORGOTTEN



Many Americans have forgotten that freedom isn't free at all. There have been hundreds of thousands of Americans who have willingly given their life for their country so that we could continue to have the rights of free men. But there is a group of people in our country who have decided that they have the right to take away the rights of others, especially if those others do not agree with their agenda. These people have no respect for the true history of anything that goes against what they want. Although they cannot change true history, they are changing the history books and in so doing are changing what people are taught about the history of our country. These people don't care if they are dishonoring our Confederate ancestors. They care nothing about our ancestor's service. Do you care about preserving your ancestor's service? If so, you can do so by having his service noted in the Confederate Veteran's Memorial Plaza with a paver that will include his name and service information on it for only \$50. It will last for years and years to come and will let countless people see his name and information. It is a wonderful way to give him the recognition that he deserves.



SAMUEL R. CORN CO B 33RD ALA. INF CSA	PVT. DAVID A. BRAY CO H 34TH GA. INF CSA	O. M. ROBERTS CAMP 178 - SCV WAXAHACHE, TEXAS	UPSHUR COUNTY PATRIOTS CAMP 2109 GILMER, TEXAS	PRIMUS KELLY BODY SERVANT GRIMES COUNTY
GEN. HORACE RANDEL CAMP # 1533 CARTHAGE, TEXAS	ERASTUS W DAVIS 31ST MISS INFANTRY 1825-1862	WILLIAM A LOYD 30TH TEXAS CAVALRY COMPANY F PRIVATE	1ST LT. LEWIS P. BROOKS CO. B /7TH GA REGT	ROGER O. MILLS CHAPTER 2466 UDC
PVT. JOHN LAND 54TH GA. INF CO H RUSSELL GUARDS	1ST LT. LEWIS P. BROOKS CO. B 7TH GA REGT	PVT THOMAS M. LORD CO L MARTIN-HOWELL G & LT ART. CSA	CPL J RILEY PATTY 59TH TN MTD INF. CO. A	MARY WEST #26 UDC WACO, TEXAS
PVT T. JEFF PARKS 22ND TX INFANTRY CO K	TERRY LEE HULSEY FOR 24 GA CO I PVT JOHN MCAFEE HULSEY	JAMES HALL BENDY PVT CO. A 25 TEXAS CAV. CSA	JOHN A. BUCHANAN SERGEANT CO H 27TH MISS INFANTRY	JOEL S. WALTERS PRIVATE CO C 12TH MISS INFANTRY
PVT W.C. HERRING 12TH TX INFANTRY CO K	JOHN PINKNEY MANN PVT. CO. K 13 TEXAS CAV. CSA	WILLIAM H L WELLS VA LIGHT ARTILLERY WELLS CLAY PLANO	WILLIAM L. WALTERS PRIVATE CO K 37TH MISS INF REGT	JESSIE C. ROBERTS 1ST LIEUTENANT 20TH TEXAS CAVALRY



# APRIL REAGAN CAMP MEETING PICTURES

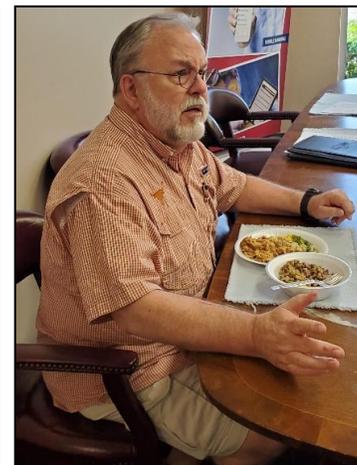
## APRIL 20, 2021



The John H. Reagan held it's monthly meeting on April 20, 2021 at the Commercial Bank of Texas. We had 14 who enjoyed a delicious meal of ground meat casserole, purple hull peas, chicken and broccoli, deviled eggs, cornbread, rolls, and cinnamon spice cake with Blue Bell ice cream. We appreciate Richard Thornton, David Franklin, Doug Smith, and Dwight Franklin for bringing the meal. Following the meal, 1st Lt. Calvin Nicholson presented the

historical program. His program is on the following pages for those who were not able to attend.

Our next meeting will be on May 18th at 6:30pm at the same location. We hope to see you there.





## HISTORICAL PROGRAM BY CALVIN NICHOLSON

### “THE RAINS BROTHERS” (PART 1)



The April Historical Program was presented by 1st Lt. Calvin Nicholson. Calvin present part one of his two part program on “The Rains Brothers”. The Rains brothers were both brigadier generals for the Confederacy who were known as the “Bomb Brothers” for their creation and use of land mines, torpedoes, booby traps, and other explosives.

This is part one of his two part program. This program centers around General Gabriel J. Rains. Next month’s program will center around his brother, George Washington Rains.

We really appreciate Calvin for his interesting program and for allowing us to use his notes so others may learn about these two men.

#### “The Rains Brothers”

In the first month of 1864, an expert from the Confederate torpedo Bureau entered the office of Jefferson Davis with a curious object - an iron casting, heavy and black, for all the world like a lump of coal. The President, turning it in his hands pronounced it “Perfection itself”.

It was a small bomb, designed to be tossed into a Federal coal barge, whence it would be shoveled into an enemy warship’s boiler with devastating effect.

The secret weapon was soon in action, and first of its victims was the captured blockade-runner Greyhound, which exploded and sank under mysterious circumstances in the James River.

The notables, General Ben Butler and Admiral David Porter, were among her startled passengers. Investigators laid the blame to Confederates who had sneaked aboard as “roughly dressed stowaways”, planted their bombs and fled. Porter sent orders through the fleet that coal barges were to be guarded around the clock-and that strangers found with lumps of imitation coal were to be shot.

This invention was the work of General Gabriel J. Rains the elder son of a cabinetmaker from New Bern, North Carolina, a West Point graduate who had been mooning over explosives since his days in the Seminole War. His younger brother George Washington Rains, also a West Pointer, was busy making most of the Confederacy’s gunpowder.

The Rains boys were mysterious and are largely overlooked by historians, though they were outstanding munitions makers whose innovations did much to improve the art of administering violent death.

Gabriel, fifty-eight when the war opened, was a brigadier general in early 1862 when Federals drove between the York and James rivers toward Richmond. He made a memorable debut.

Federal cavalry trotted confidently in the sandy roads after the retreating Rebels, but under the hoofs of their horses’ explosives fared, and casualties were considerable. Many companies bolted in panic. They had stumbled onto the first landmines used in battle, clever little devices made by Gabriel Rains after the early design of Samuel Colt, complete even to the tin shields against rain.

There were more of these weapons, and the Northern press soon thundered against Rebel barbarity: mines had exploded in wells, around houses, in bags of flour and carpetbags, and around telegraph poles—the counterpart of the modern booby trap had claimed several Union lives. The Confederate commander in the front, James Longstreet, as almost as indignant as the enemy press, and forbade further use of the mines.

- continued on the next page -



## HISTORICAL PROGRAM BY CALVIN NICHOLSON



### “THE RAINS BROTHERS” PG 2

Rains denied that he had rigged booby traps, but he took credit for the land mines in the roads. The affair became a Confederate policy squabble, for Rains appealed to Richmond over Longstreet's head, and Secretary of War George Randolph (Thomas Jefferson's grandson) took the inventor into the War Department where he was safe from Longstreet. Randolph announced the policy: “It is admissible to plant shells in parapet to repel assault, or in a road to check pursuit.... It is not admissible to plant shells merely to destroy life and without other design than that of depriving the enemy of a few men.”

Rains reported to President Davis on the possibilities of experimental explosives and was asked to head a Torpedo Bureau; a few months later the bureau filled General R.E. Lee's order for hundreds of torpedo and mines to bar the James River to enemy shipping. Months later the Federals were reporting mines in the river, most of them fired by wires leading from the banks. They ranged in size to 1,950 pounds.

At the end of the war the United States Navy estimated greater loss ships from torpedoes than from all other causes combined. Rains estimated his bag of enemy ships sunk by torpedo at fifty-eight. It was a quiet and still largely unrecognized revolution in naval warfare.

Rains solved some horny problems. There was not a foot of wire in the Confederacy for his electrical mines; he sent women operatives behind enemy lines to steal. His biggest haul was an abandoned enemy cable in the Chesapeake Bay, which he shredded and used in hundreds of mines. The Confederate Army was also an adversary, both in the struggle for supplies and claims of victory. For months the Torpedo Bureau squabbled with General D.H. Maury over laurels for sinking the Federal monitor Tecumseh at Mobile.

Rains had too little money for his work. He began with an appropriation of \$20,000 for torpedoes, but though this rose to \$350,000 in 1864— and soon afterward to \$6,000,000— it was too late.

Despite everything, he built torpedo factories at Richmond, Wilmington, Mobile, Charleston, and Savannah. In one “munitions plant” on the Mississippi a few men, under a shed packed glass demijohns with powder, attached crude ignition devices piled them on a wagon, and saw them off under “Old Pat”, Negro driver whose duty was to drop them into the river, where the current was to take them among an invading Federal fleet.

By ones means or other torpedoes spread through the Confederacy. Seven of twelve Federal ships on a foray up the Roanoke River in North Carolina were victims of the floating mines. Before Fort Fisher, Wilmington, North Carolina, a great field of buried torpedoes helped hold Federals at bay until the very end of the war. In May, 1864, the USS Steam Corvette Commodore Jones, torpedoed in Virginia waters, was blown fifty feet into the air, according to witnesses, with loss of 147 of 150-man crew.

Rains said that the Richmond approaches were guarded by 1300 and mines in 1864, many of them operated by trip cords to be pulled by hidden Confederates when unwary Union soldiers walked nearby. To prevent Southern deaths in the mine fields, each torpedo was marked with a red flag by day and a shielded lantern by night. At the fall of Richmond, Federal columns were guided through the mine fields by Rebels, but a few incautious bluecoats looters were killed by the explosions.

**This is the end of part 1 of this program. Part two will be in next month's Reagan Camp newsletter.**

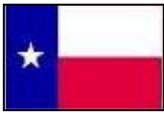




# ROBERT E. LEE CALENDAR

## APRIL 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1, 1863 Hooker advises war department that he needs 10,000 shovels for assault on Richmond	2, 1865 Confederates flee Richmond, burning the city before it falls into Union hands.	3, 1865 After years of attempts, Union forces finally occupy Richmond
4, 1862 From Ft. Monroe, Federal troops begin movement towards Richmond.	5, 1862 Andrew Johnson, military governor of Tennessee, suspends city government of Nashville	6, 1862 U.S. Grant caught by surprise attack at Shiloh along Tennessee River	7, 1862 Union bury thousands of dead at Shiloh—some 300 per trench	8, 1864 Grant issues famous order to Meade: "Wherever Lee goes, you will also	9, 1865 One year after that order, Lee surrenders his army at Appomattox	10, 1863 President Lincoln reviews Hooker's army near Falmouth, Va.
11, 1861 Confederate officials visit Fort Sumter and demand its surrender	12, 1861 Confederates open fire on Ft. Sumter and demand its surrender	13, 1861 After 34 hours of shelling, Ft. Sumter is surrendered to Confederates	14, 1865 Lincoln spends the evening at Ford's Theatre on Good Friday	15, 1865 Lincoln dies at 7:22 am	16, 1862 Lincoln signs a bill ending slavery in District of Columbia	17, 1861 Virginia votes narrowly to secede from Union
18, 1861 R.E. Lee is offered command of Union Army and declines the offer	19, 1865 Washington draped in black for Lincoln's funeral	20, 1861 Lee resigns from U.S. Army after Lincoln offers him command	21, 1861 Stonewall Jackson attends church with VMI cadets then leaves Lexington, never to return alive	22, 1865 Lincoln's funeral train travels through Pennsylvania	23, 1865 John Wilkes Booth is cornered in Virginia	24, 1863 Confederate Congress imposes 10 percent tax on all agricultural products
25, 1865 President Davis arrives in Charlotte, NC, hoping to resume war efforts	26, 1865 Johnston surrenders to Sherman at Durham Station, NC	27, 1822 U.S. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant is born	28, 1865 USS Sultana explodes at Memphis, TN, killing more than 1,200	29, 1865 Lincoln's funeral train reaches Cleveland, OH, where 50,000 pay respects	30, 1864 President Davis' son falls to his death while playing on a balcony at the Confederate White House	



## TEXAS CIVIL WAR HISTORY IN APRIL



From the Texas State Historical Association— <https://texasdaybyday.com/#feedCarousel>

**April 8th, 1864:** On this day, Confederate forces under Richard Taylor defeated a much larger Union force at the battle of Mansfield, Louisiana. Union general Nathaniel Banks had gathered an army of some 17,000 Federal troops to advance up the Red River to Alexandria and Shreveport, hoping to cut off the flow of supplies from Texas and to capture large quantities of cotton. General Taylor, commanding a Confederate force of Texas and Louisiana units, attacked the long, 12,000-man Union column three miles south of Mansfield with an army of 8,800 men. Taylor's force killed or wounded 700 Union soldiers, captured 1,500, and took 20 Union cannons and 200 wagons. About 1,000 Confederates were killed or wounded. It was one of the most humiliating Union defeats of the war. The following day Taylor's army was repulsed when it attacked the Union army at Pleasant Hill. Nevertheless, stung by his defeat on the 8th and convinced that Taylor's army was much larger than it was, Banks gave the order to retire on the night of April 9.

**April 15th, 1869:** the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Texas v. White* that the state still had the right to sue in the federal courts despite having seceded in 1861. In a suit originally filed by the state in 1867, George Paschal argued on behalf of the state for an injunction preventing defendants George W. White, John Chiles, and others from transferring bonds they received from the secession-era Texas State Military Board for supplying the Confederate States of America during the Civil War. The most historically significant question involved was whether or not Texas, having seceded and not having completed Reconstruction, had status in the Union and therefore the right to sue in the United States Supreme Court. Paschal argued that the Union was indestructible and that the state's status in the Union therefore had been unchanged by the war. The defense argued that Texas by seceding from the Union and later waging a war against the United States, had lost the status of a state in the Union and therefore had no right to sue in the United States Supreme Court. In its five-to-three decision, read by Chief Justice S.P. Chase, the court held the Union to be indestructible and thus not dissoluble by any act of a state, the government, or the people. The court thus repudiated the doctrine of state sovereignty.

**April 20th, 1928:** On this day, Felix Huston Robertson died in Waco. Robertson, the only Texas-born general officer to serve the Confederacy, was born in 1839 at Washington-on-the-Brazos. His father, Jerome Bonaparte Robertson, also fought in the Civil War, and was for a time commander of Hood's Texas Brigade. Felix Robertson was appointed brigadier general in 1864. He was a harsh disciplinarian whose savage punishments and Indian-like features earned him the sobriquet "Comanche Robertson." The most controversial incident of his military tenure occurred in Saltville, Virginia. There, on October 3, 1864, troops under Robertson's command killed well over 100 wounded, mostly black survivors of a Union attack. Though Robertson was never charged with any crime, one of his subordinate officers was hanged for murder. After the war, Robertson returned to Texas, where he became an enthusiastic member of the United Confederate Veterans and served as the commander of the Texas Division in 1911. At the time of his death he was the last surviving general of the Confederacy.

**April 25th, 1861:** On this day, 500 Federal troops stranded at the port of Saluria in Calhoun County were forced to surrender to Confederate colonel Earl Van Dorn. Saluria, at the eastern end of Matagorda Island, was founded in the 1840s and was a thriving port and ranching center in the 1850s. With the outbreak of the Civil War, Federal troops flocked to the coast, hoping to find transport to the North. Van Dorn intercepted 500 of them at Saluria. After being paroled, they were allowed to sail for New York. During the federal blockade of 1862, when invasion seemed imminent, Saluria inhabitants fled to the mainland. Confederate troops stationed at nearby Fort Esperanze later burned the town, dismantled the lighthouse, and drove most of the cattle off the island. Confederate artillerymen defended the fort until November 29, 1863, when they retreated to the mainland. In June 1864 Federal troops left Fort Esperanze. Afterward, citizens began moving back to the island. What finally destroyed Saluria was hurricanes, in 1875 and 1886. By 1904 a rural school with one teacher and seven students was the only vestige of the community. The more famous nearby port of Indianola was similarly destroyed.

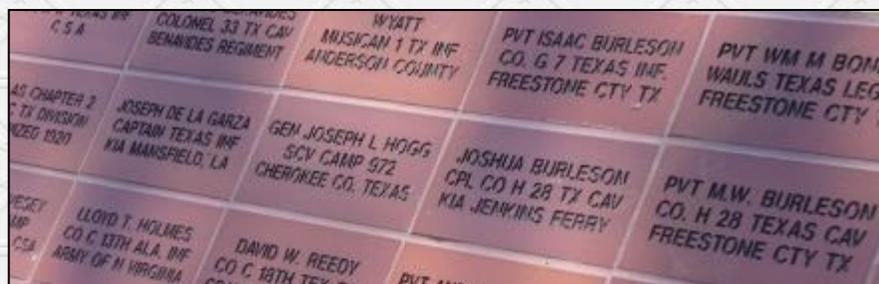




## CONFEDERATE VETERANS MEMORIAL PLAZA INFORMATION



The Confederate Veterans Memorial Plaza had the official opening and dedication on April 13, 2013. It is a beautiful Memorial to the Confederate Veterans. Although it is open for visitors, there is still room along the sidewalks for you to purchase a brick paver in the name of your confederate ancestor. This will ensure that your ancestor's service to the confederacy will not be forgotten, but will be remembered for years to come. If you would like to make a donation for a paver, please contact Dan Dyer at E-mail: [danielyer497@yahoo.com](mailto:danielyer497@yahoo.com) or Phone: (903) 391-2224



Would you like to honor you ancestor? There is still room in the plaza for you to have a paver with your ancestor's name and military information. You can also acquire a paver in the name of your SCV Camp.



## JOHN H. REAGAN CAMP #2156

c/o Dan Dyer, Adjutant/Treasurer  
Palestine, Texas 75802  
E-mail: [danieldyer497@yahoo.com](mailto:danieldyer497@yahoo.com)

Richard Thornton  
Palestine, Texas  
Email: [tx\\_tsar@hotmail.com](mailto:tx_tsar@hotmail.com)  
Phone: (903) 791-1557

Dwight Franklin, Chaplain/Newsletter  
Editor—[dwightfranklin1@yahoo.com](mailto:dwightfranklin1@yahoo.com)

Please visit our website @  
[www.reaganscvcamp.org](http://www.reaganscvcamp.org)

The citizen-soldiers who fought for the Confederacy personified the best qualities of America. The preservation of liberty and freedom was the motivating factor in the South's decision to fight the *Second American Revolution*. The tenacity with which Confederate soldiers fought underscored their belief in the rights guaranteed by the Constitution. These attributes are the underpinning of our democratic society and represent the foundation on which this nation was built.

Today, the **Sons of Confederate Veterans** is preserving the history and legacy of these heroes, so future generations can understand the motives that animated the Southern Cause.

The SCV is the direct heir of the United Confederate Veterans, and the oldest hereditary organization for male descendants of Confederate soldiers. Organized at Richmond, Virginia in 1896, the SCV continues to serve as a historical, patriotic, and non-political organization dedicated to ensuring that a true history of the 1861-1865 period is preserved.

Membership in the **Sons of Confederate Veterans** is open to all male descendants of any veteran who served honorably in the Confederate armed forces. Membership can be obtained through either **lineal or collateral** family lines and kinship to a veteran must be **documented genealogically**. The minimum age for full membership is 12, but there is no minimum for Cadet membership. **Friends of the SCV** memberships are available as well to those who are committed to upholding our charge, but do not have the Confederate ancestry.

## THE 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."*

Lt. General Stephen Dill Lee, Commander-in-Chief

United Confederate Veterans

New Orleans, Louisiana, April 25, 1906.



Camp meetings: 3rd Tuesday Each  
Month - 06:30 PM  
Snacks served at each meeting.

Email Commander Thornton for the  
monthly meeting's location.