



# TRAVELLER

The official publication of the General Robert E. Lee Camp #1640

Sons of Confederate Veterans, Germantown, Tennessee

*Duty, Honor, Integrity, Chivalry*

*Deo Vindici*

February, 2014



## CAMP MEETING

February 10, 2014

7:00 p.m. at the Germantown Regional  
History and Genealogy Center

Don't miss our next camp meeting.

### Confederate Innovations: Gabriel Rains and the Confederate Torpedo Bureau

Gabriel James Rains served in the Confederate Torpedo Bureau and is famous for his development of sub-terra and aquatic torpedoes, including the "Rains' Barrel Torpedo". His brother George often assisted him and they were sometimes known as the "Torpedo Brothers". The first successful use of torpedoes in the war was by Rains, during the Siege of Yorktown.

Born 4th June 1803 in New Bern, North Carolina, Rains became a career Army officer and Brigadier General in the Confederate States Army. It was his explosive forte that earned him and his brother another name, "The Bomb Brothers." His younger brother, George Washington Rains, was also a Brigadier General in the Georgia Militia and the two were renowned for their creation and use of land mines, torpedoes, booby traps and other explosives. Rains graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1827 13th in his class. Among his classmates were Leonidas Polk, Napoleon Bonaparte Buford and Philip St. George Cooke.

On graduation, Rains was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant of Infantry, serving in the Seminole Wars. While serving on the frontier, prior to the Mexican War, he married Mary Jane McClellan, in 1835,

granddaughter of John Sevier, Tennessee Governor. By 1853 Rains was serving the frontier in the territory of Washington State earning fame as an Indian fighter. The troops Rains commanded in Washington, Oregon and California were all of a garrison nature. He was promoted to Captain 25 December 1837 and Brevet Major 28 April 1840 for his service against the Seminoles near Fort King in Florida. He routed a superior force and was twice severely wounded, one of the wounds was considered mortal.

Like many great Generals, Rains took part in the Mexican War and was engaged in defense of Fort Brown in May 1846. When General Pedro de Ampudia demanded surrender of the fort, Rains cast the deciding vote against surrender in a council of officers. Following the Battle of Resaca de la Palma he was ordered to the United States on recruiting duty and raised a large part of the recruits for General Winfield Scott's campaign. Promoted Major of regulars on 9 March 1851 and from 1853 until the War Between the States he served on the Pacific Coast, where he took part in the Indian Wars. In 1855 he was brevetted to Brigadier General of the Washington Territory Volunteers.

Rains commanded Fort Humboldt from 1856 through 1860. Promoted Lieutenant Colonel of regulars on 5 June 1860, he resigned his commission 31st July 1861 to join the Confederate States Army, in which he was immediately commissioned Brigadier General on the recommendation of President Jefferson Davis. Assigned to the Yorktown, Virginia Garrison, he spent much time drilling his men for armed combat.



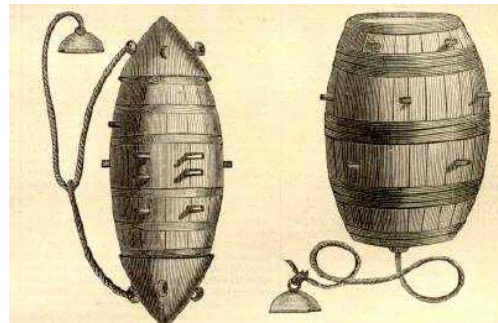
In the face of a mammoth attack by General McClellan's army, he deployed a number of "Subterra Shells" (land mines) so his men could safely evacuate unimpeded and move up the Peninsula. Generals Joseph Johnston and James Longstreet did not allow the use of the weapon because it was regarded as "unchristian." Afterwards Rains would tell superiors that he invented the weapons and asked for a ruling on their use. Secretary of War, George Randolph ruled the weapon may be used in rivers as a defensive deterrent. Soon General Robert E. Lee would call on Rains to mine the James River.

Placed in command of conscription and torpedo bureaus at Richmond, Rains organized the system of torpedoes and mines that protected the harbors of Charleston, Savannah, Mobile and various other port and river cities. It is Rains who invented the early land-mine that was successfully used in the battle at Yorktown in 1862. It was a mechanically fused high explosive anti-personnel land mine. However when Rains was a captain he had earlier used explosive booby-traps during the Seminole Wars in Florida in 1840 and his inventions had come a long way since then. Both mechanically and electrically fused "land torpedoes" were employed, although by the end of the war, mechanical fuses were found to be generally more reliable and incredibly effective. Many of these designs were improvised in the field, especially from explosive shells, but by the end of the war, nearly 2,000 standard pattern "Rains mines" were deployed. There were numerous innovative inventions and it's argued that the Rains Torpedoes lengthened the duration of the war.



Some of the 'mines' took unusual forms of deception; and when they worked it was a short cut to heaven. Gabriel Rains presented President Jefferson Davis with what appeared to be a heavy lump of coal. Davis studied the small, odd-looking object. The heavy, black iron casting, was however a bomb, fresh from the drawing boards of the Confederate Torpedo Bureau. This device, experts told Davis, could be spirited aboard Union steamers and dropped into the

ship's load of coal. When heated in a boiler, it would explode and cripples the vessel. Turning the weapon over in his hands, Davis exclaimed, "Perfection herself!" One of the first victims was the steamship Greyhound, being used as headquarters of the Union Army of the James's commanded by Major General Benjamin F. Butler. As the ship steamed along Virginia's James River on 27 November 1864, crewmen unwittingly shoveled one of the "coal lump" devices into the furnace; in moments the Greyhound erupted into flames and sank. Among her startled passengers, none of whom were seriously injured, were "The Beast" Butler and Rear Admiral David D. Porter. Union investigators declared, "Confederates dressed as roughly garbed stowaways slipped aboard and planted explosives, then fled." Confederates who knew the truth only laughed; the evidence of their attack disappeared in the explosion.



Confederate underwater torpedoes were also having an effect. Torpedoes detonated from shore destroyed seven of 12 Federal vessels steaming up the Roanoke River to capture Fort Branc, North Carolina on 9th December 1864. An electric torpedo sunk the U.S.S. Commodore Jones, a converted ferry on the James River 6th May 1864, killing 40 men. Witnesses claimed the ship was blown 50 feet into the air. A Confederate soldier, captured on the riverbank afterwards refused to reveal the location of other torpedoes until he was lashed to the bow of a Federal ship dragging the river for mines. Farther south, a large field of buried mines protecting Fort Fisher, North Carolina, helped stall the fort's capture until 15th January 1865.

As excellent as Rains' Torpedoes were, they had one weakness; they were susceptible to corrosion by prolonged submersion rendering them useless. An example came in Mobile Bay, Alabama, 5th August 1864, when Union Rear Admiral David Farragut steamed his fleet through heavily mined waters to capture Mobile. Farragut is famous for his command. "Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!" What seems like boldness, however, was actually recklessness; many officers in the fleet reported

hearing the almost constant snapping of primers under the bottoms of their ships and wonder why only one torpedo exploded, the one that sinks the Monitor Tecumseh. They later learned that the torpedoes had been in the water so long they had corroded.

Following the end of the war, Rains resided for some time at Augusta, Georgia but later moved to Charleston, South Carolina where he worked as a civilian clerk in the US. Army Quartermaster's Department. He and Mary Jane had a family of seven. His youngest son attended West Point, graduating in 1876 and served for a short while in the U.S. Cavalry before being killed by Nez Pierce Indians in Idaho.

When Gabriel Rains died 6th September 1881 in Aiken, South Carolina it was believed to be from the wounds he suffered during the Seminole Wars. A post-war U.S. Navy report listed the loss of Union ships from torpedoes as much greater than all other causes combined. Russell Soley, a Northern observer and writer during the war, later said, "The torpedo service of the Confederacy probably contributed more to its defense by far than all the vessels of the Confederate Navy," Gabriel Rains and his brother George, had been sure of that all along. The competition and challenge of outdoing each other brought a competitive edge to the "Bomb Brothers" inventions and spurred them to outdo each other in their innovations and modifications.



### **A Message from 2nd Lt Commander Mark Buchanan:**

Men of the Memphis Brigade: I am placing myself at the service of the Memphis Brigade of the Tennessee Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans for reelection as Brigade Commander for the coming term of office. I have served in this position for the past two years and wish to continue working for the Brigade and leading it forward.

My experience includes:

- Served as Camp Commander, Lt Commander, and am current 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Commander of the Robert E. Lee Camp in Germantown, TN.
- Reenact with the 51<sup>st</sup> TN and 154<sup>th</sup> TN infantry regiments

- Member of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Regimental String Band in Memphis, TN.
- Member of the Memphis Brigade Color Guard, participating in graveside ceremonies, living history events, parades and banquets. I have
- Performed historical presentations to businesses in order to promote the image of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.
- Assisted with the installation and dedication of military exhibits and displays at Confederate Park in Memphis, Camp Yellowjacket in Randolph, TN and at Fort Germantown in Germantown, TN.
- Published "Memphis, the Gray Lady of the South" in the local paper "Fayette Falcon".

I am married to Mrs. Cindy Buchanan, have two sons, Cale and Jordan, one of which is a member of the Lee Camp and both reenact with the 51<sup>st</sup> TN as well.

I am also President of the Citizens to Save Our Parks; a grass roots organization dedicated to the preservation of the historical parks in the Memphis area.

During this last term, we of the Memphis Brigade along with the Citizens to Save Our Parks, have confronted a serious heritage confrontation in Memphis, TN, and met this challenge with all we have. The City of Memphis has attempted to illegally change the names of Confederate, Forrest, and Jefferson Davis Parks. The fight is not over. It is my desire to continue this fight till the ultimate victory. It has been my pleasure to serve with the members of the Memphis Brigade and feel we have so much more to accomplish. First and foremost, we must restore the names to Confederate, Forrest, and Jefferson Davis Parks. Additionally, recruiting and retention will be one of the key goals over the next two years. Over the past two years the Memphis Brigade camps have pulled together and made tremendous strides in presenting the Sons of Confederate Veterans as a positive community organization, all the while promoting the Charge set forth by General Stephen D. Lee. I intend to continue this effort to the best of my ability.

I would be honored by your consideration for reelection as Memphis Brigade Commander for the coming term, and will make every effort to serve with honor, the memory of the Confederate Soldier.

Your Compatriot,  
Commander Mark Buchanan

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# CITIZENS TO SAVE OUR PARKS

*Dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of our historic parks.*

## Fight City Hall ?

## We ARE !!!

Help us to save our historic parks: Forrest Park, Confederate Park, and Jefferson Davis Park.

I wish to join CTSOP. Please sign me up as a member. No membership fee.

name: \_\_\_\_\_

address: \_\_\_\_\_

city: \_\_\_\_\_ State: TN Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_

signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please donate to our cause: Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ check number \_\_\_\_\_

Citizens to Save Our Parks

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

PO Box 241875

Memphis, TN 38124



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**PROCLAMATION**  
BY THE GOVERNOR

**WHEREAS**, Robert E. Lee was born January 19, 1807, in Virginia, a state which furnished many who became leading citizens of Tennessee; and

**WHEREAS**, Robert E. Lee graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1829 and entered public service as an officer in the United States Army; and

**WHEREAS**, Robert E. Lee ably fulfilled various assignments in that capacity until resigning April 20, 1861 to accept appointment as an officer in the Army of Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, Robert E. Lee concluded in 1865 that the Confederate States could no longer successfully resist the Union Army and surrendered his army to General U. S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, thus ending the war; and

**WHEREAS**, Robert E. Lee after Appomattox devoted his life as a civilian to binding up the wounds of the war and reuniting the splintered United States of America; and

**WHEREAS**, Robert E. Lee ministered to the young men of the postwar period through his office as President of Washington University, an institution that later added his name to its own: Washington and Lee University of Lexington, Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, Tennessee Code Annotated 15-2-101 requires that the governor proclaim January 19 of each year as "Robert E. Lee Day;" and

**WHEREAS**, Robert E. Lee is widely recognized as one of the outstanding Americans of the nineteenth century;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I Bill Haslam, Governor of the State of Tennessee, do hereby proclaim January 19, 2014 as

*Robert E. Lee Day*

in Tennessee and encourage all citizens to join me in this worthy observance.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the official seal of the State of Tennessee to be affixed at Nashville on this twenty-third day of December, 2013.



*Bill Haslam*

Governor

*Jae W. King*

Secretary of State

## Commander's Corner

OUR JANUARY MEETING was very good, and was very well attended. Dr. C. Bruce Lynch brought an excellent presentation on the United Confederate Veterans who had their best reunions right here in Memphis in 1901, 1909, and 1924. There were pictures of thousands lining Main and Front Streets and around Court Square to watch the parades, banners on the front page of the Commercial Appeal saying "Welcome Veterans", Confederate bunting, flags, oh it was quite a spectacle and an exciting event for the City of Memphis. My, how things have changed.

The cannon are in place at Fort Germantown, the tubes are painted and welded in place with the carriages secured and we are waiting for a sign that describes them and marks them as being placed there by the Robert E. Lee Camp, SCV. That should be along shortly, and then we will have a dedication ceremony in the spring that will double as the Memphis Brigade Family Picnic.

The camp voted to name Joe Elkins as a new member, so we welcome him. A Proclamation by the SCV was read in remembrance of Bill Simmons and is to be added to the minutes and a copy provided to his next of kin. While that was going on, a text message was received letting us know that we have been approved to carry out a Memorial Ceremony for the 17 Unknown Confederate soldiers buried at Pleasant Hill on May 31 (tentative date). In the meantime, we will plant some small First National flags along the row in remembrance.

Mark Buchanan gave us an update on the fight with the City regarding FORREST, CONFEDERATE, AND JEFFERSON DAVIS parks (emphasis on their real names), and our case is looking better every day. Get ready for a major celebration, y'all, this is going to happen. Also, I am happy to report a big win for our compatriots in Selma, AL who got back some land and a large cash settlement in their similar case against a local government that tried similar shenanigans to what ours is trying.

I gave a presentation on our organization, our structure and our mission. Gentlemen, presentations are only as good as the action that comes from them. Several of you missed it, but our action items and plans for the year are going to revolve around Recruiting, Education, Community Service and Heritage Defense. Our newly forming committees and indeed our camp will be answering the call of

Tennessee Senator Edward Carnack who said:

*"The Confederate Soldiers were our kinfolk and our heroes. We testify to the country our enduring fidelity to their memory. We commemorate their valor and devotion. There were some things that were NOT surrendered at Appomattox. We did not surrender our rights and history; nor was it one of the conditions of surrender that unfriendly lips should be suffered to tell the story of that war or that unfriendly hands should write the epitaphs of the Confederate dead. We have the right to teach our children the true history of the war, the causes that led up to it and the principles involved."*

How will you help?

Gentlemen, these are exciting times for the Lee Camp and if you're not there you're missing it. Please join us for our next camp meeting if at all possible.

Until then, I am, and shall remain your Obedient Servant,

Mike Daugherty, Commander

## The Confederate Calendar 2014 Event Schedule

A listing of events of interest for Southern Heritage organizations:

### February

10 Germantown -- Lee Camp meeting, TnGen Center, Old Poplar Pike, 7pm

11 Collierville -- Wigfall Greys meeting, VFW, 247 Center St, 7pm

13 Memphis -- Forrest Camp meeting, Jason's Deli, Poplar @ Highland, 7pm

**15 Ft Donelson -- Valentine's Confederate Ball  
15-16 Southaven -- Chalmers annual Civil War Show & Sale, Southaven Arena**

19 Memphis -- Gen'l Forrest Chapter UDC meeting/lunch, Chickasaw Country Club, 1130

20 Memphis -- Chalmers Camp meeting, 7pm

### March

10 Germantown -- Lee Camp meeting, TnGen Center, Old Poplar Pike, 7pm

11 Collierville -- Wigfall Greys meeting, VFW, 247 Center St, 7pm

13 Memphis -- Forrest Camp meeting, Jason's Deli, Poplar @ Highland, 7pm

19 Memphis -- Gen'l Forrest Chapter UDC meeting/lunch, Chickasaw Country Club, 1130

20 Memphis -- Chalmers Camp meeting, 7pm

29 West Tenn -- UDC District meeting, location TBA

**(Confederate Calendar Continued)**

**April**

**4-6 Shiloh -- annual Battle of Shiloh living history encampment & demonstrations**

10 Memphis -- Forrest Camp meeting, Jason's Deli, Poplar @ Highland, 7pm

**12 Ft. Pillow -- 150th anniversary reenactment**

14 Germantown -- Lee Camp meeting, TnGen Center, Old Poplar Pike, 7pm

15 Collierville -- Wigfall Greys meeting, VFW, 247 Center St, 7pm

?? Cordova -- Shelby County History Festival, Davies Plantation

16 Memphis -- Gen'l Forrest Chapter UDC meeting/lunch, Chickasaw Country Club, 1130

17 Memphis -- Chalmers Camp meeting, 7pm

**25-26 Union City, TN -- SCV Tenn Div convention**

**SCV LIFE MEMBERS ROSTER**

T. Tarry Beasley II	T. Tarry Beasley III
Winston Blackley	Eugene Callaway
John Cole	W. Kent Daniel Jr.
James Anthony Davis	Hubert Dellinger Jr., MD
H. Clark Doan	Eugene Forrester
Robert Freeman	Donald Harrison
Frederick Harrison	Frank Holeman
M. Gary Hood	William P Hunter, Jr.
Bobby Lessel	Jerry C. Lunsford
Frank M. McCroskey	Steve McIntyre
Arthur Oliver	Charles Wendell Park
Steve Reason	Larry J. Spiller, Jr.
Larry J. Spiller, Sr.	Osborn Turner, IV
Charles L Vernon	William C. Wilson

*41% of active members*



**Traveller** is the monthly newsletter of:

The General Robert E. Lee Camp #1640

Sons of Confederate Veterans

and

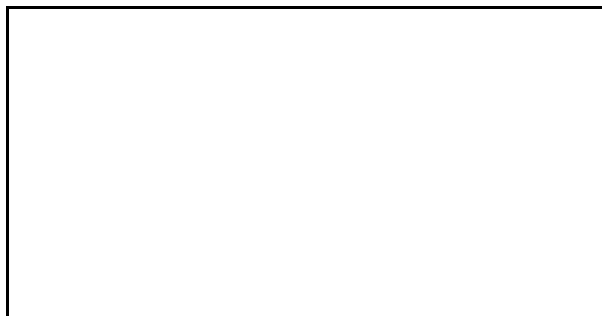
The Mary Custis Lee Chapter,

Order of the Confederate Rose

P.O. Box 171251

Memphis, Tennessee 38187

Steve M. McIntyre, Editor



**Next Camp Meeting \*\* February 10, 2014**

**Germantown Regional History and Genealogy Center, 7779 Old Poplar Pike, Germantown, TN**