

David's Dispatch

1st Lt. David Richard Reynolds Camp #2270
Sons of Confederate Veterans
Mount Pleasant, Texas



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WINNER OF THE TEXAS DIVISION BEST NEWSLETTER AWARD, 2017, 2018 & 2020

WINNER OF THE SCV NATIONAL BEST NEWSLETTER AWARD, 2016, 2017 & 2018

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UPCOMING EVENTS

NEXT MEETING

Monday, December 21st 7:00 p.m.
Refreshments at 6:30 p.m.
Old Union Community Center
Hwy 67E, Mount Pleasant, Texas

2021 Texas Division Reunion

May 28 – 30, 2021
Lee Lockwood Library and Museum
2801 West Waco Drive
Waco, Texas

2021 National Reunion

July 21-24, 2021
Copeland Tower & Conference Center
2601 Severn Avenue
Metairie, Louisiana 70002

COMMANDER'S CORNER

by Larry "Joe" Reynolds



As we come to the end of 2020, I must say that this year has been something else. With the Corona Virus, the Civil unrest, the destruction of so many of our beautiful monuments, the rioting in the streets, our National Election, and the attempted destruction of all things Southern, this is indeed a year that we won't soon forget.

I'm truly looking forward to 2021, I think it's going to be the start of not only a new year but a new beginning. I'm looking for great things for the Camp. We already have two new members that will be sworn in this month, Terry Lee Landrum and Dennis' son Joshua Wayne Beckham. A great way to start off the new year, let's keep them coming!

DAVIDRREYNOLDS.ORG

This month the following changes have been made to our web site: <http://www.davidreynolds.org>

- I've updated our Calendar of Events.
- I've updated our Events page to include all known events by the Camp and its members. Please let me know when you do anything for the SCV, this includes attending other camp meeting, public speaking, or even putting flags on graves.

I'm still looking for biographies of your Confederate Ancestor. Please try to come up with a short bio that we can put on-line.

If you have any suggestions, recommendations or comments you can send me an email to: Joe.Reynolds@davidrreynolds.org and I promise to give it my full consideration.



OUR CHARGE...

"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, Louisiana April 25, 1906*



A BLAST FROM THE PAST

*(Taken from the December 1920 Edition of the
Confederate Veteran - 100 Years Ago)*

**"AND A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD
THEM."**

*By C. C. Baker, Battery C. 1st
Wisconsin Heavy Artillery*

A few days ago, in the town where I live, Weatherford, Tex., North Alain Street was crowded with traffic, trucks, cars, wagons, and vehicles of every kind and description passing in every direction.

A little child, a sweet little blue-eyed, curly-haired girl, had escaped her mother's watchful eyes as she

was shopping in one of the stores and had wandered out on the street. She was unafraid, innocent, sweet, and was enjoying the sights and sounds about her as she watched the cars passing by- One large touring car came toward her, and the driver, seeing the danger, was afraid to try to pass around her, fearing she might run in front of the car. He stopped his car and pleasantly spoke to the child, telling her to move out of the way.

She obeyed and stood wonderingly watching the car go on. By this time several others had observed the child, and, realizing that if she was seen there was no danger of running over her, they rather enjoyed the novel spectacle of a little child blocking the traffic of the busy street.

In the meantime, the little girl was taking in the sights as unconscious of danger as though she were at home. By this time traffic had stopped, and the innocent cause of this congestion was standing in the middle of the street, smiling and unafraid.

But the mother, having missed the child and discovering her whereabouts, rushed frantically out into the street and gathered the child in her arms, scarce realizing that the baby's innocence and sweetness were her greatest protection. And then my mind went back to the dark days of 1863, when I witnessed a scene somewhat similar to the one just enacted before my eyes.

Two armies, the Confederate and the Union, were facing each other upon the eve of battle. The Confederate army was aligned on Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, while the Union army was entrenched in the valley below. Both were preparing for the death struggle awaiting them. The armies were pretty near to each other, and both had pickets out watching every movement of the enemy.

One day we were perfectly astonished by the sight of a little child toddling toward our lines. She was such a little innocent, unafraid creature, entirely unconscious of any danger. She came from the direction of the Rebel army, and, needless to say, we surrendered to her without the firing of a gun. When

she reached a place within our lines, hundreds of our men gathered around her. Apparently, she was perfectly at home as she stood looking at us with wide-open eyes in which shone perfect trust and confidence.

The boys began to ply her with questions as to what her name was and where she came from, but she could give no satisfactory answer. One of the men asked her to whom she belonged, and she lisped: "Uncle Jim." Then we asked her who Uncle Jim was, and she pointed toward the Confederate lines, by which we knew that she must have strayed away from Uncle Jim and in some mysterious manner made her way through both picket lines into the Yankee army. Every man wanted to take her in his arms and kiss her, and how they did wish they had some candy or cakes to give her, but army rations afforded nothing of this kind.

Then some of the men thought of sugar, and each wanted to give her some, of which they had a plentiful supply. So we loaded her down with big lumps of the sweet stuff, and one boy happened to remember that he had a string of beads, which he brought and placed around her white neck. Another had a silk handkerchief, which he tied about her throat, while the other boys, not to be outdone, searched among the keepsakes which their sisters and sweethearts had sent them and found handkerchiefs and ribbons, which they tied on her small person.

One produced a rosette of red, white, and blue ribbon, which he pinned on her dress. Another found a small silk flag, and that also was pinned on her; all of which she enjoyed immensely and seemed to think it was all "in the play."

I saw tears come into eyes that had not been wet since they left their mothers, wives, and sweethearts in the far-away North.

Our captain took the child in his arms and, while he pressed her close to his heart, said: "Boys, I've got a little girl at home about the age of this little one. O God! I wonder if I shall ever see her again?"

At this every man removed his hat and stood silently at attention, but if you had asked them why they did so, they could not have told you. But I know now a little child can bring God mighty near you under such conditions.

And then the question was raised, what shall we do with her? for, obviously, we could not keep the child in such circumstances of impending danger. The problem was solved by one of the men removing the ramrod from his gun and tying a white handkerchief upon the end, then, after obtaining permission from the captain, he took the child and her gifts in his arms and started toward the Rebel lines. Bob Chambers, one of the biggest devils in our company, called to him to hold on a minute, he wanted to send "Uncle Jim" some coffee.

"I'll bet he hasn't had a good cup of coffee since the war began," he said ; so he filled a small bag with the precious grains and gave it to the little girl, saying: "Take this to your Uncle Jim."

The boys all shouted a good-by as they started for the Rebel lines, the little girl still holding high the flag of truce. As they neared the Confederate lines several men came forward to meet them, among whom was Uncle Jim, who was searching for his little girl in every direction.

Ed Avery, who was carrying the child, learned from Uncle Jim that the child's father had been killed at the battle of Chickamauga, and that her mother had since died, leaving the child to the care of Uncle Jim, who was waiting for a chance to send her to his home in the Southland. Tightly holding the baby in his arms and looking fondly at her. Uncle Jim said: "Boys, I am going to get permission to take her to my home, and maybe while I am gone this battle will come off. I hope it will, for damned if I feel like shooting at you fellows after this—at least, for some time to come." he added, with a twinkle in his dark gray eyes and a smile upon his weather-beaten features.

And as the gray-clad men around him grasped his meaning, a regular Rebel yell went up from each throat, which was echoed from the blue-clad lines as

they witnessed the dramatic scene, and both sounds blended into whispering echoes from the rugged sides of Lookout Mountain.



THE BATTLE OF SABINE PASS

by David Whitaker, DCS

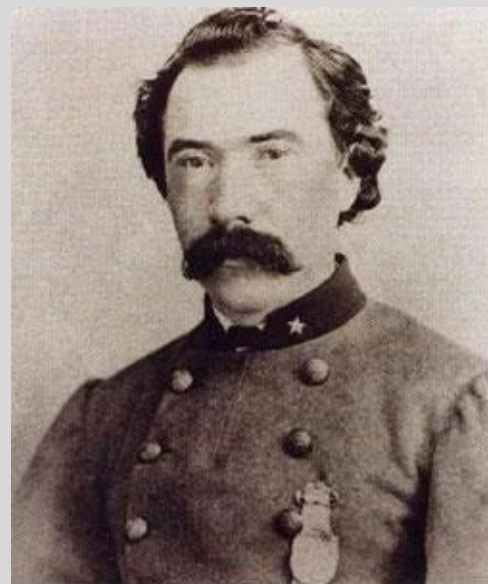
Galveston Island had been recaptured by the Confederates on Jan. 1, 1863, and thereafter the Federals hoped for revenge by capturing Sabine Pass, Beaumont, and Orange. They hoped to capture all the cotton, steamboats and schooners in port, as well as to burn railroad bridges and ferries on the rivers. Then they planned to attack Houston along the railroad to the west of Beaumont, and then starve Galveston Island into submission.

The principal Confederate defense force at Sabine Pass during the early months of the war had been Spaight's Texas Battalion. Another unit, Capt. F. H. Odlum's Co. F, of the 1st Texas Heavy Artillery, was sent to Sabine Pass in Dec., 1862. And the two units manned artillery aboard two old cottonclad gunboats, the Uncle Ben and Josiah Belle, which Confederates used to break the blockade on Jan. 21, 1863, by chasing two Union sail ships, the Morning Light and Velocity, for 30 miles at sea and capturing them during a battle. After that embarrassment to the Federal forces, Union Gen. Benjamin Butler of New Orleans was determined to capture Sabine Pass by sea, but he had to await the capture of Vicksburg before enough shallow draft gunboats were available. About Aug. 1, 1863, Gen. Butler began massing four gunboats and 19 troop transports at New Orleans in preparation for the battle.

Between March and August, 1863, Confederate engineers built the new Fort Griffin on this site. Co. B, the artillery company of Spaight's Battalion, was still assigned as gunners on the cottonclad Uncle Ben, whereas Capt. Odlum, Lt. Dick Dowling and their Davis Guards were transferred to the new Fort Griffin to man the four 32-pound, 6" guns and two

24-pound, 5" guns in the fort. Co. F was made up almost entirely of Irish immigrant longshoremen, of Houston and Galveston. Confederate engineers drove marker posts in the oyster reefs 1,200 yards distant from the fort to mark the guns' maximum range, and during the month of August, Lt. Dowling used a sunken schooner as a target as he honed his artillerymen's gunnery prowess to the peak of perfection.

Beginning in May, 1863, Gen. "Prince John" Magruder of Houston began a systematic reduction of Confederate forces at Sabine Pass, and at a time that he knew an attack at Sabine Pass was perhaps imminent. Several companies of Spaight's Battalion were transferred to Opelousas, La., where Gens. Nathaniel Banks and W. B. Franklin led an invasion up the Bayou Teche. Then Magruder sent Col. Griffin and his battalion from Galveston to Sabine Pass. When Comanche Indians began attacking the homes of Griffin's soldiers west of Fort Worth, the battalion threatened to desert or mutiny unless they were sent back to Tarrant County to subdue the Indians. Magruder foolishly sent 5 companies of Griffin's Battalion back to Fort Worth, and only Lt. Chasteen's Co. F was still in Beaumont awaiting a train. And when the sound of cannon fire at daylight on Sept. 8 was heard from the direction of Sabine Pass, Lt. Chasteen put his company aboard the steamer Roebuck and started for Sabine Pass.



By Sept. 7, Gen. Ben Butler's armada had arrived offshore from Sabine, and the steering lights of the vessels could be seen that night by the Confederates ashore. Lt. Frederick Crocker, who had successfully captured Sabine Pass a year earlier, commanded the gunboats Clifton, Sachem, Arizona, and Granite City, and altogether there were about 5,000 men aboard the 4 gunboats and the 19 troop transports that accompanied them. On the morning of Sept. 8, Confederate Capt. Odlum has gone aboard the gunboat Uncle Ben, after telling Lt. Dowling that he could spike the guns and retreat if he so chose. Lt. Dowling remained the only officer in the fort, so he asked Confederate Surgeon George H. Bailey and Confederate engineer Lt. Nicholas H. Smith each to take charge of a battery of two guns at the fort, although neither man had had any artillery experience.

At daylight on Sept. 8, the 4 Union gunboats entered the Pass and fired about 20 shells at the fort without receiving any return fire. Many of the rifled cannons on the Union gunboats had 9-inch bores and fired 135-pound shells to a distance of 3 miles. Because no return fire was forthcoming, Lt. Crocker became halfway assured that the fort was deserted. About mid-morning, the Uncle Ben steamed down past the fort. Crocker fired three more shells, all of which passed overhead of the Uncle Ben. The Uncle Ben then retreated into Sabine Lake, since its tiny popguns were only 4", 12-pound guns.

During most of the day, Lt. Dowling kept all of his men out of sight in the "bomb proofs" under the fort, although each gun had been primed and loaded, and a good supply of powder, sewed up in flannel pockets, and cannon balls lay stashed beside each battery. During that time, only Dowling remained above ground with his spy glass, or small telescope, and about 2:30 PM, he saw black smoke pour out of the invaders' smokestacks as the Union gunboats steamed forward toward the fort. Dowling then ordered his men above ground, and the aim of each of the six Confederate guns was pinpointed on the 1,200-yard markers in the oyster reefs.

For some reason, the Sachem led the advance up the Louisiana channel on the east side of the oyster reefs, and the Clifton was a little behind in the Texas channel. The lead gunboats continued to fire at the fort, but Dowling allowed no return fire as long as the boats were out of range. As soon as the Sachem passed the 1,200-yard marker, the fire of all six guns were concentrated on the Louisiana channel until a cannon ball pierced the Sachem's steam drum. Immediately the Sachem was shrouded in a cloud of steam as many crewmen and soldiers, some of them burned to the bone, jumped overboard, and the Sachem, a hopeless wreck, soon ran aground on the Louisiana shore.

After that, all Confederate guns were aimed at the Clifton in the Texas channel, which very soon suffered a similar experience and went aground on the Texas shore, its steam drum also billowing clouds of steam under pressure. Again many crewmen and soldiers were cooked to the bone. One Rebel cannon ball went bouncing down the Clifton's deck and cut off the head of the Clifton's starboard gunner. The gunner's head was later found floating in the Pass. As soon as the two gunboats blew up and went aground, the rest of the Union fleet suddenly became very homesick for New Orleans. In their haste to turn around and gallop home, the gunboats Arizona and Granite City ran aground and had to be pulled off the mud flat. The transports Suffolk and Continental collided while fleeing but sustained very little damage. To lighten their loads, the feet of 200 horses and mules were tied together before they were thrown overboard. Altogether, 200,000 rations, 50 wagons, artillery pieces, many kegs of gunpowder, and barrels of corn meal and flour were thrown overboard during the fleet's mad scramble for New Orleans.

As soon as Lt. Crocker raised a white flag on the Clifton, Lt. Dowling had another terrible dilemma. He had only 47 Confederates in the fort, who luckily had not sustained a single scratch, but were worn out from the reloading and firing of 135 cannon balls during the 40 minute battle, always without the minimal precaution of scrubbing out the cannon

barrels. Two Confederate guns were hit and knocked out during the battle. Dowling had to run down to the Clifton and accept Lt. Crocker's sword and surrender. But he dared not expose the fact that there were only 47 men to accept the surrender of 350 prisoners, who might easily have overpowered their captors. Luckily, though, the Uncle Ben soon steamed back into the Pass and towed the disabled Sachem back to the Texas shore. In command on the Uncle Ben was Lt. Niles H. Smith, thus meaning that two different men named Lt. N. H. Smith played a part in the victory. About 4 PM, the steamboat Roebuck arrived from Beaumont, carrying Lt. Joe Chasteen and the Confederates of Co. F, Griffin's Battalion, and the additional Confederates on hand made it possible to secure the capture of so many prisoners.

The next day, about 50 or more dead soldiers and sailors, which included 22 liberated slaves, whose names are unknown, were buried at Mesquite Point on Sabine Lake. During the battle, the Confederate "heroines of Sabine Pass," Kate Dorman and Sarah Vosburg, drove a buggy down to the fort and delivered coffee, doughnuts and a gallon of whiskey to the weary and grimy soldiers.

The Confederates at Sabine Pass hardly had time to savor and appreciate their victory, but others quickly did, as the story of the "Alamo in reverse" battle was carried back to Houston and Galveston, and eventually back to the Confederate Congress in Richmond, Va., who quickly ordered that a special Davis Guard medal be cast for each of the men in the fort. The battle had saved Upper Texas from Union occupation until the end of the war and allowed East Texas to continue shipping cotton through the blockade and to act as the bread basket for all the Confederates fighting in Louisiana.

Within a short time, Lt. Dick Dowling was promoted to major in command of all Houston recruitment. But despite his great victory at Sabine Pass, the outcome of the Great War had to be decided on the fields of Virginia. Each of the Davis Guards could only watch in horror and disgust as General Lee surrendered all

Confederate forces at Appomattox Court House. But there was still another disaster which soon faced the Davis Guard soldiers. During the great yellow fever epidemic of 1867, which killed 3,000 people in Harris and Galveston counties, the beloved Dick Dowling and about half of his Sabine Pass veterans fell victim to the "yellowjack," after having survived the agonies of gunpowder and exploding shells at the battle at Sabine Pass.



LAST CAMP MEETING

Although our last meeting consisted of less members than I hoped for, we still had a good time, there were also some decisions that needed to be made and I think we made the right ones. The beans and

cornbread were great and made the meeting complete.

We decided to not hold our normal Christmas Dinner at our December meeting. With COVID and not knowing how many will be at the meeting we just decided to not go all out.

We also voted to cut back on the number of Christmas Baskets that we will be giving out this year. We are going to just give out one basket, more details will come in an email prior to our next meeting



BATTLE OF FORT FISHER



After the failed Bermuda Hundred Campaign, Major General Benjamin Butler and his Army of the James were assigned to an amphibious expedition against Fort Fisher. Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant had originally designated one of Butler's subordinates, Major General Godfrey Weitzel, to lead the expedition, but Butler, as the commander of the Department of Virginia and North Carolina, demanded that he lead the troops himself and Grant acquiesced. Units for the expedition were selected from the Army of the James and included the 2nd Division of the XXIV Corps and the 3rd Division from the XXV Corps, along with two battalions of heavy artillery and engineers. Colonel Cyrus B. Comstock from Grant's staff went along to serve as chief engineer. The Union naval expedition under

Rear Admiral David D. Porter comprised the largest Union fleet of the war, nearly 60 warships along with the transports to carry the army troops.

Butler also planned to bring the USS Louisiana, which had been packed with 200 tons of powder and disguised as a blockade runner, down to Fort Fisher, run it aground about a hundred yards from the fort's seawall, and blow it up, hoping the explosion would demolish the fort as well. Although many in the Union high command (including Grant and Gideon Wells) doubted the plan would work, it was approved by Lincoln. The final Union plan was for the ships to gather at Hampton Roads, where the army troops would board the transports. Because the monitors used in the attack had to be towed to Fort Fisher, the navy would leave with a twelve-hour head start over the transports. The warships would refuel at Beaufort, then meet the transports at Fort Fisher, when the Louisiana would be detonated, and the troops landed under the fire of the warships.

Fort Fisher, on Confederate Point, nicknamed the "Gibraltar of the Confederacy", was a formidable target commanding the Cape Fear River. It encompassed 14,500 ft.² and was surrounded by a 10-foot parapet and a network of bombproofs, most of which were 30 feet high. Many obstructions were laid around it, including land mines (called torpedoes in this era), abatis, and deep ditches. There were more than 50 heavy cannons, including 15 Columbiads and a 150-pounder Armstrong gun, behind a 60-foot mound of earth near the sea, named the Mound Battery. The fort's garrison of 1,400 men was commanded by Colonel William Lamb. Additional reinforcements were available from General Braxton Bragg at Sugar Loaf, 4 miles away. This force consisted of Major General Robert F. Hoke's division from the Army of Northern Virginia, which arrived on December 23.

The Union forces prepared to leave Hampton Roads on December 10, but a winter storm hit the fleet for three days, preventing the fleet's departure until the 14th. The transports carrying Butler's force arrived at Fort Fisher first, since the navy took longer to refuel

at Beaufort than expected. When Porter's ships arrived on the 19th, another storm hit the fleet, causing some ships to scatter and forcing the army transports to return to Beaufort. After the storm subsided on the 23rd, Porter decided to start the attack without Butler, ordering the Louisiana to be blown up that night. Near midnight, the ship was towed close to the fort's seawall and set on fire. However, the Louisiana was farther out to sea than the navy thought, perhaps as far as a mile offshore; as a result, Fort Fisher was undamaged by the blast.

The following morning (December 23), the Union navy moved closer to shore and began a bombardment of the fort, hoping to damage the earthworks and forcing the garrison to surrender. Despite firing close to 10,000 shells that day, only minor damage was caused, with four seacoast gun carriages disabled, one light artillery caisson destroyed, and 23 casualties in the garrison. Meanwhile, there were 45 Union casualties from exploding guns aboard ships, and the Confederates were able to score direct hits on three ships.

The transports carrying the Union soldiers arrived that evening. Initially, Butler thought that by exploding the Louisiana and starting the bombardment without the army, Porter had given the Confederates warning that the Union assault was coming and would therefore have time to contest the landings. However he was convinced to land a reconnaissance party to determine if an attack was still feasible. The landings started Christmas morning, with Brig. Gen. Adelbert Ames' division the first to be ashore, while the navy continued bombarding the fort. The Union troops captured a battery protecting the beach north of Fort Fisher, and accepted the surrender of the 4th and 8th North Carolina Junior Reserve battalions, which had been cut off by the Union landings. After setting up a defensive line, Ames sent the brigade of N. Martin Curtis towards the fort to see if it could be attacked. Curtis found the land wall lightly defended and was prepared to attack, but was prevented from doing so by Ames. Butler was convinced that the fort was undamaged and too strong for an assault; he had also

received word that Hoke's division was a few miles north of the fort, and another storm was forming in the area. All this convinced him to halt the landings and order the troops on the beach to return to the ships; the entire Union fleet then returned to Hampton Roads.

The fiasco at Fort Fisher, specifically Butler's disobedience of his direct orders—orders which Butler failed to communicate either to Porter or to Weitzel—gave Grant an excuse to relieve Butler, replacing him in command of the Army of the James by Major General Edward Ord. President Abraham Lincoln, recently reelected, no longer needed to keep the prominent Republican in the Army and he was relieved on January 8, 1865. To Butler's further embarrassment, Fort Fisher fell one week later when Major General Alfred H. Terry led a second assault against the Confederate stronghold; while defending his decision to break off the attack before the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, Butler had deemed the fort impregnable.

Confederate losses amounted to five killed and mortally wounded, fifty-six wounded, and six hundred captured, while the damage caused by the bombardment was quickly repaired. Blockade runners continued using the port, the next ships to arrive did so the very night the Union fleet withdrew. Although Whiting and Lamb were convinced that the Union force would shortly return, Bragg withdrew Hoke's Division back to Wilmington and started making plans to recapture New Bern.



BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES & OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

December 19th – Michael Mars

December 21st – Rodney & Mary Ann Brock

December 6th – This day in 1889 President Jefferson Davis died. President Davis is buried in New Orleans, Louisiana. In 1893 he was interred in Richmond, Virginia.

December 6th – This day in 1833 Colonel John S. Mosby was born.

December 20th – This day in 1860 South Carolina secedes from the union



BATTLES FOUGHT DURING THE MONTH OF DECEMBER



Battle of Prairie Grove - Prairie Arkansas

7 December 1862 - General Thomas C. Hindman verses General James G. Blunt. Casualties: 1317 Confederate, 1251 Union!

Battle of Fredericksburg - Fredericksburg Virginia

13 December 1862 - General Robert E. Lee verses General Ambrose E. Burnside. Casualties: 5309 Confederate, 12,653 Union!

Battle of Nashville - Nashville Tennessee

15-16 December 1864 - General John Bell Hood verses General George H. Thomas. Casualties: 5962 Confederate, 3061 Union!

Battle of Holly Springs - Holly Springs Mississippi

20 December 1862 - General Earl Van Dorn verses General Ulysses S. Grant. Casualties: {Unknown} Confederate, 1,000 Union!

Battle of Chickasaw Bluffs - Bayou Mississippi

28-29 December 1862 - General Joseph E. Johnston verses General William T. Sherman. Casualties: 207 Confederate, 1776 Union!

Battle of Stone River - Murfreesboro Tennessee

31 December 1862 - 2 January 1863 - General Braxton Bragg verses General William S. Rosecrans. Casualties: 11,739 Confederate, 12,906 Union!



**MERRY CHRISTMAS &
HAPPY NEW YEAR!**



FROM THE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

OF THE

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Opinions expressed by individual writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect official positions of the 1st Lt. David Richard Reynolds Camp #2270. Letters and articles may be submitted to: Joe.Reynolds@davidrreynolds.org (Cutoff for articles is 20th of the month)