

Camp Three Reveille

*A periodic publication of the Sons of the Union Veterans
Camp Nelson-Garfield Memorial Camp#3
(www.home.fuse.net/suvcw)*

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The Surrender of Forts Henry and Donelson, February 1862

On 4 Feb 1862, Union troops under General Ulysses S. Grant began landing north of Fort Henry, located on the east bank of the Tennessee River near the Kentucky-Tennessee state line. Additional troops were sent west of the river to take Fort Heinman.

On 5 Feb, Fort Heinman (begun but still unfinished) was found evacuated. Confederate Brigadier General Lloyd Tilghman had abandoned the fort to concentrate his forces at Fort Henry. His aim was to delay the Union forces as best he could to gain time for Fort Donelson, only ten miles away on the Cumberland River.

On 6 Feb, four ironclads under the command of Flag Officer Andrew Foote opened up with supporting fire for the Union troops moving against Fort Henry. Tilghman's confederates responded bravely and managed to inflict some damage on the Union ships. The ironclad *Cincinnati* was one of the ships struck by Confederate guns. The *Essex* took a shell to its boiler and was out of commission.

After only three hours of fighting, the Tilghman was forced to surrender after two of his guns had been rendered

unserviceable. The Union troops had not even arrived.

General Grant arrived at Fort Henry on 7 Feb and personally began reconnaissance of Fort Donelson. Delays and the movement of Foote's three remaining ironclads kept Grant from attacking until 13 Feb.

In the interim, Confederate commanders General Gideon Pillow and General John B. Floyd (a Kentuckian) were ordered to gather their troops at Fort Donelson. Another Kentuckian, General Simon Bolivar Buckner arrived on 11 Feb with more troops.

The South knew well of the vital importance of holding Fort Donelson. A loss here would give the Union the ability to strike at will deep into the south's heartland and the loss of the ability to move Confederate troops northward to threaten the Union in Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio.

By 12 Feb, the Union had its lines set around Fort Donelson and only awaited the naval support of Foote.

The fighting began on 13 Feb, Confederate General Floyd took over command and defense of Fort Donelson. The Union gunboat *Carondelet* began shelling Donelson. The Union center and left lines, arranged in a semi-circle, saw action. By night, no conclusion had been made but near zero temperatures and sleet/rain must have made troops on both sides miserable.

Foote's ironclads began their bombardment on 14 Feb. After heavy damage from Confederate guns, they were forced to

withdraw. Two of the ironclads, the *St. Louis* and the *Louisville* floated helplessly away with their steering mechanisms destroyed. Foote was wounded in the attack. The rest of the wooden Union fleet did not have the ability to face the well-placed Confederate guns on the bluff.

Grant's troops were unable to make any advance.

Realizing defeat in the face of victory, the Confederate generals decided to withdraw to Nashville.

Cold weather reigned as General Pillow's troops struck hard at the Union right on 15 Feb. A break in the lines there allowed the Confederates to push through and onward. Again, admitting defeat despite victory, Floyd ordered the troops back to the fort. Grant ordered an attack from the left but made no gain.

That night the Confederate generals conferred again. A defensible fort, fighting troops (with reinforcements on the way) and a two near victories would not deter them from surrender. Floyd and Pillow both fled by boat, leaving Buckner to hand over the vital Confederate fort to Grant.

Buckner, a friend of Grant's, had reason to expect favorable terms from the Union forces but would receive none. Grant would accept "no terms except unconditional and immediate surrender." Buckner accepted.

A considerable blow had been struck against the Confederacy. Kentucky was now lost and Tennessee was wide open. Two major rivers were now under total Union control. Hope for the Union bounded while despair was the word for the South.

After the surrender, General Grant received praise and promotion for his actions. Lincoln himself took notice and began eyeing the young general as a possible solution to the war that threatened his entire nation.

Adapted from The Civil War Day-by-Day: An Almanac 1861-1865 (E.B. Long)

Camp Meetings

Several of the Camp brothers attended a meeting with the Cincinnati Camp on 8 January to talk about the National Meeting that will be held in Cincinnati in 2003. Department of Ohio, General Lytle Camp #10 Commander Ray Nagel presided.

One of the plans is to visit the cemetery to honor some of the graves that Steve Clifford has uncovered and acquired headstones for in the past few years. It has been a great achievement for Steve and speaks well of the dedication he has towards preserving the memory of those who fought at so great a cost during the Civil War.

During the National Meeting, there will be a ceremony to honor one of the highest ranking officers that is buried in our area, General John W. Finnell.

All of the Camp Nelson-Garfield brothers thought well of the visit with our Ohio brothers and hope for future joint endeavors.

After the meeting an informal meeting was held for just the Camp Nelson-Garfield group. It was decided to create a number of new committees to explore future possibilities for our camp. The following is a list of new committees and their chairs:

- Camp luncheon for 2002, Chair Jim Kiger
- Raffle for Book and Sword, Chair Steve Clifford
- Genealogy Meeting, Chair Jim Kiger
- Mission Statement, Chair Bernie O'Bryan

Anyone wishing to serve on one of the committees should contact the chair.

The camp will be participating in History Day at Northern Kentucky University again this year. History Day is 9 Mar (Sat). We will sell raffle tickets to raise money for the organization.

Web Site Back Up and Running

Bryan Greene, Senior Vice Commander and Signals Officer, has been working hard in the past few months to get the camp web site up to date. There you'll find copies of our past newsletters, links to the state and national departments, copies of some of President Abraham Lincoln's more important letters and speeches, and a scanned copy of the original charter for our camp. If you have ideas for other information that might be useful to the site, please contact Brother Bryan at bcgreene@fuse.net. If you just want to take a look at the site, please aim your web browser at www.home.fuse.net/sucvw

Your Dues are Overdue

Have you sent in your dues yet? Annual dues of \$21 are payable on 1 January. It is important to get these sent in to Martin Greene, Treasurer, as soon as possible as he must pay the camp dues to the state who then pay dues to the national level. Please mail to:

Sons of the Union Veterans
Attn: Martin Greene
35 Sweetbriar Avenue
Florence, KY 41042

Thank you for your prompt attention.

Upcoming Events

12 Feb (Tue) 7p *Bernie O'Bryan will speak at Trinity Episcopal Church to the Kenton County History Society about the Spanish American War*

19 Feb (Tue) 7p *Camp Three meeting at Independence Branch Library. Greg*

Rhodes, published baseball historian, will talk about Civil War Era baseball in Cincinnati.

9 Mar (Sat) All day *NKU History Day. A full day of historical lectures and events centering on Kentucky's past. Camp Brothers will staff a booth at the event and host a raffle for a civil war history book.*

20 Mar (Wed) 7p *Camp Three meeting at LaRosa's near the Library in Independence. (Take I-275 to Hwy 16 South. LaRosa's is about 6.5 miles south on the right.) This will be a formal camp meeting. Tim Downey, State Commander, has been invited to attend.*

23 Apr (Tue) 7p *Camp Three meeting at the Independence Branch Library. Russell Dickson will present a living history of Union General Bull Nelson, a Maysville native, who led the Army of Kentucky Volunteers until he was killed by Confederate General Jefferson C. Davis in Louisville.*

27/28 Apr (Sat/Sun) *Sons of Veterans Reserve (SVR) 2nd Annual Spring Memorial meeting in Chattanooga, TN. Highlights of this event are a Civil War interpreted train ride from Chattanooga to Lafayette, GA, special visits to Civil War sites, and a Civil War evening ball. Special rates are available for a hotel.*

4 Jun (Tue) 7p *A discussion of Confederates in the Attic (Tony Horwitz) at the Kenton County Public Library, Independence Branch. This book talks about the many re-enactors who carry on the history of the Civil War and the war's current impact. Books can be reserved in advance by calling 859-363-0200.*

8-10 Aug (Thu-Sat) *121st Annual National Encampment at Springfield, IL at Springfield Renaissance Hotel. Visits will be made to Lincoln's Tomb in Oak Ridge Cemetery.*

24 Sep (Tue) 7p *Camp Three meeting (tentative) at the Independence Branch Library. This will be a formal meeting.*

Steve Working On General's Grave

Steve Clifford, Graves Registration Officer, has been working for several months now on getting a headstone for a general's grave that was previously unknown. General John W. Finnell is the only Union general that Steve is aware of in Kenton County.

General Finnell was Adjutant General for the State of Kentucky. He did not participate in any battles, but fought hard on the paper war managing the army's affairs here in Kentucky.

It's harder to get a gravestone for higher ranking officers, but Steve is hopeful to have a stone this year. The plan is to have it in place by August 2003 for the national meeting to be held in Cincinnati. "This will be the feather in our cap," says Steve.

Did you know?

Union Brigadier General Edward H. Hobson considered his greatest feat to be the 1863 capture of Confederate Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan. Taken near Lisbon, Ohio, on July 26, 1863, the Confederate leader was hustled to the Ohio State Prison, but his stay was brief. He escaped on November 26.

Eleven months after being taken prisoner, Morgan and his men captured a body of Federal troops at Cynthiana, Kentucky. Their commander was Edward H. Hobson.

Taken from Civil War Curiosities: Strange Stories, Oddities, Events, and Coincidences (Webb Garrison)

Camp Leaders

- Martin Greene, *Camp Commander/Treasurer*
- Bryan Greene, *Senior Vice Commander/Signals Officer*

- Ross J. Amos, *Junior Vice Commander*
- Bernie O'Bryan, *Chaplain/State Secretary*
- Steve Clifford, *Secretary/Camp Council/State Council/State Graves Registration Officer/State Monument Registration Officer*
- Earl Nichols, *Graves Registration Officer/Historian*
- Jim Kiger, *Camp Council/State Junior Vice Commander*
- Luke Clifford, *Camp Guard*
- JC Morgan, *Newsletter Editor*

Want to Join?

Membership in the Sons of the Union Veterans is very affordable and entitles you to attend all state and national meetings. Regular Camp meetings are held every month except during the summer. Plus you get a complimentary subscription (US postage mostly paid) to the *Camp Three Reveille*.

To join, simply fill out this short application:

Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____
Email _____

And send \$30 (first year membership and enrollment fee) to:

SUVCW Membership
C/O Martin Greene
PO Box 6721
Florence, KY 41022-6721

If you're already a member, feel free to pass this along to a friend.

Want to Get Published?

The *Reveille* is always looking for information about events or articles of interest to Camp members. If you have something you think would be good and fitting to print, contact JC Morgan at (859) 431-5415 or email-wise at jcmorganky@yahoo.com

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