

**MAJOR THOMAS J. KEY CAMP #1920  
SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS  
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS**

**Report of the  
112<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion  
Sons of Confederate Veterans  
Mobile, Alabama  
25-28 July 2007**

The 112<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion of the Sons of Confederate Veterans was held at the Battle House Hotel in downtown Mobile, Alabama. This historic hotel has been completely renovated and re-opened in January 2007. When I say historic that is exactly what I mean. Such Confederate notables as President Jefferson Davis, Generals P.G.T. Beauregard, Patrick Cleburne, William Hardee, Braxton Bragg, and Richard Taylor as well as Admirals Raphael Semmes and Franklin Buchanan all stayed at the hotel. Additional historic personalities who stayed at the Battle House were Confederate spy Belle Boyd, Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Fremantle of Her Majesties Coldstream Guards, Edwin Booth, Oscar Wilde, Teddy Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Millard Fillmore and Babe Ruth.

Upon my arrival I quickly registered and passed through the credentialing table. With 59 SCV members, the Key Cam was authorized 6 delegates or six votes as a camp. With the administrative duties completed I attended the SCV Historic Education Session on "Robert E. Lee: Master of War, Servant of the Lord", presented by my friend and fellow Citadel graduate Gene Hogan. Gene, who is the Lieutenant Commander of the South Carolina Division, gave an exceptionally fine talk on Marse Robert.

After a quick run through the vendor area I went to the General Executive Council (GEC) meeting at 3:00 p.m. This is the meeting with Commander-in-Chief Chris Sullivan and his entire staff. The session began with the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag, the Salute to the Confederate Flag, the reading of General Stephen D. Lee's Charge, and the invocation. SCV Executive Director Ben Sewell began the meeting by giving his report on membership. He did not report good news. He reported there are 3,110 Life Members, 53 Real Sons, and 25,394 regular members. He

reported that membership is down overall. He reported that one big problem is retention. In the last five years the SCV has lost about 8,500 members to non-renewal. That represents a substantial loss in income. A motion was made to send a letter to those 8,500 to request that they renew. It was suggested that each division commander review the list to vet out any undesirable people before the letters are sent. This tactic was used several years ago and resulted in 1,600 renewals. Based on current postage rates if there was a five percent renewal based on the letter the SCV would break even on expenses for the mailing. The motion was voted on and approved unanimously.

Executive Director Sewell reported that the annual audit was completed and passed. A copy of the audit will be available for review. He also presented the Fiscal Year 2007 Proposed Budget to the GEC. Since a dues increase is being proposed at this convention, the budget was done in three columns. The first column represented income based on the current \$20.00 annual dues. The second income column was based on a \$4.00 dues increase and the third column was based on an \$8.00 dues increase. If there is no increase in dues there will be an estimated \$100,000 deficit for FY 2007. With a \$4.00 per year dues increase that deficit will be \$27,000 for FY 2007. With an \$8.00 per year dues increase there will be a balanced budget. The GEC accepted the proposed budget and approved its presentation to the membership for approval. A copy of the proposed budget is attached. Director Sewell also reported income from the 2006 Combined Federal Campaign as \$28,800.

He then discussed the problem of international members and non-members receiving Confederate Veteran magazine. He reported that it costs \$7.20 to mail one copy of the magazine overseas. That means it costs the SCV more than the subscription cost covers so the SCV loses money. There are 10 international members who receive the magazine and Director Sewell stated that is not a problem for the SCV to absorb that loss without penalty to the member. However, there are 32 non-member international subscriptions at \$28.00 each while shipping alone for those 32 costs the SCV \$45.00 each. To resolve this problem the motion was made to raise the non-member international subscription rate to \$50.00. The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.

Another problem that affects the budget negatively is incorrect addresses on Confederate Veteran magazines. When

a compatriot moves and does not change his address with SCV Headquarters the post office forwards the magazine to the new address. The post office then charges SCV Headquarters \$1.99 for each forwarded magazine. As a possible solution the motion was made and passed unanimously to print address correction requested on the cover sheets of the magazine.

The final portion of Director Sewell's report concerned a proposal by Synopia Phones. It is a proposal to have Synopia cell phone programs made available to SCV members. The SCV would receive a four percent kickback on all memberships. The Synopia phones would feature the SCV logo on the face. The program will be briefed to the membership during the business meeting tomorrow and Synopia will have a display table in the vendor area where members can sign up for the service. Director Sewell strongly indorsed the program as a potential source of revenue.

With the completion of Director Sewell's report, C-I-C Sullivan called for the presentation by Dixie Broadcasting. Last year the GEC voted \$12,000 be given to DB for advertising the SCV. (Dixie Broadcasting flyer attached) Figures presented by the representative from DB indicated a substantial listener base and more advertising provided than was actually paid for by the SCV. DB was again asking for \$12,000 for the next year to continue the support. Conversation among the GEC resulted in a proposed expenditure this year of only \$6,000 based on the reduced budget experienced this year.

A discussion was begun by C-I-C Sullivan concerning the Rosen estate. Apparently when Mr. Rosen, an SCV member, died he left one million dollars to then SCV stipulating that \$200,000 was to go to the Heritage Defense Fund and \$800,000 to the General Fund. It appears that Mr. Rosen's children were disenfranchised and got nothing from the estate. Jeff Massey, an expelled SCV member and one of the coup conspirators from two years ago, contacted the Rosen children and said that the SCV was misusing the money and that they should file suit against the SCV. That suit never materialized but the threat was very real. It also seems that Mr. Rosen had a fantastic collection of relics and weapons from the War Between the States and the suggestion was made to purchase the collection from the children for a proposed SCV Confederate Museum. It would also placate the children. It has been estimated that the collection was valued at over \$500,000. Before doing anything else

regarding the collection it was determined that a trustworthy appraiser should evaluate the value of the collection and suggest a fair market value for an offer to buy. It was also stipulated in the endowment that the SCV provide perpetual care for a cemetery. I don't now for sure what connection there is between Mr. Rosen and this particular cemetery but the motion was made to invest \$150,000 and use the interest to cover the cost of the perpetual care. The motion was approved.

The next item was the discussion of the purchase of a one acre lot of land adjacent to Elm Springs, the International Headquarters of the SCV. The lot was for sale for \$22,900. There is a particular fund that would cover that cost and the motion was approved.

C-I-C Sullivan then brought up the issue of the Mechanized Cavalry wanting to use the SCV tax ID number. The Mechanized Cavalry is a group of SCV members that ride motorcycles and wear colors with the SCV logo on them. There has never been any official affiliation between the SCV and the Mechanized Cavalry. Based on that non-affiliation they are not authorized to use the tax ID number nor use the SCV logo on their jackets. It was directed by C-I-C Sullivan that Judge Advocate-in-Chief Burl McCoy write the leader of the Mechanized Cavalry and explain the situation and tell them they can not use the ID number or logo unless they affiliate officially. This could be completed by having the members charter a camp within the SCV. That way they could then use both the logo and the ID number.

The next issue brought before the GEC was from the Time and Place Committee. It concerned the 2010 SCV Reunion. Two camps were in the running for hosting that convention. One was the Secession Camp #4 in Charleston, South Carolina and the other was a newly formed camp in Anderson, South Carolina. Both camps had made presentations to the Time and Place Committee on their plans to host a convention. The committee however was in a stalemate so the decision was passed to the GEC to make. The discussion seemed to boil down to the cost of the hotel room, with Anderson being cheaper at \$85 compared to \$109 in Charleston. It seemed that the decision was made basically on that despite the fact that it will be harder and much more expensive to fly into Anderson than Charleston, that the convention site is three miles from the main hotel in Anderson requiring the

use of shuttle busses, and several hotels will be required because they are smaller than the hotels in Charleston. Had I been able to vote I would have voted for Charleston. The vote of the GEC simply means that the GEC will recommend Anderson to the membership for vote. Both sites will have a 20-minute time period to brief the membership before the vote during the business session.

At this point the GEC went into Executive Session meaning all non-GEC personnel had to leave the room. That was the last event scheduled for Wednesday 25 July so thus ended the first day.

Day two of the convention, Thursday 26 July, officially marked the beginning of the 112<sup>th</sup> Convention. Opening ceremonies began with the posting of the colors followed by greetings. The greetings were brought by the President of the Mobile Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the President General of the Order of the Confederate Rose, and the President of the Children of the Confederacy. The Order of the Confederate Rose is a ladies auxiliary organization for women who do not have a Confederate ancestor and are, therefore, not eligible for membership in the United Daughters of the Confederacy. After greetings had been given, Commander-in-Chief Chris Sullivan made his opening remarks and introduced two Real Sons who were in attendance. That ended the opening ceremonies and all non-SCV personnel were asked to leave the room for the beginning of Business Session I.

Business Session I began with the motion to accept the Rules of Order as printed in the official convention program. The motion was seconded, voted on, and passed unanimously. The Adjutant-in-Chief called the roll for the General Staff. He then announced that, as of the opening of the session, 109 camps had registered and that qualified as a quorum. The first order of business was a briefing presented by a Mr. Alex Kopus (?) from a company called Synopia. He explained that this was a mobile cellular phone program being entered into with the SCV. There are numerous programs and plans available tailored to SCV members. The benefit to the SCV for having members sign-up is that Synopia sends anywhere from three to eight percent of the proceeds back to the SCV. That way every time you make a phone call on your Synopia cellular phone you are helping

the SCV. A copy of the flyer concerning the programs available is attached to this report.

Once Mr. Kopus had left the hall C-I-C Sullivan called on SCV Executive Director Ben Sewell to present his report. Director Sewell stated that the tax return for the year 2006 has been completed and submitted. Copies of the tax return are available on line if anyone wants to examine it. He also stated that the annual audit of SCV records and files was completed as required with no discrepancies noted. He then talked about the new requirement for camps to file an E-Form beginning in 2008. This is an electronic filing done in February each year. This is a requirement of the IRS for the camps to retain their 501c.3 status as tax exempt organizations. It is very easy unless the camp has over \$25,000 income for a year. We certainly don't need to worry about that for a few years. Finally Director Sewell went over the membership numbers that he had presented in the General Executive Council meeting.

The membership numbers present a very real problem for the SCV. Overall from 2002 to 2006 the SCV lost close to 30,000 members. In the past the new member increase offset and surpassed the number of lost members. But that is not the case any more. New member applications have dropped from 400 a month to about 250 a month. We are losing money. We overspent our budget in 2006 by covering it with endowment money. We can not keep doing that. Postal rates for Confederate Veteran magazine had gone from forty to fifty cents per issue. We are facing a serious budget problem and that is the basis for the proposed dues increase. He indicated that dues paid in advance will not be assessed any additional fee. Any dues postmarked before July 25 at the old rate would be accepted. Any dues increase would take effect as soon as it is passed. He presented the budget proposal based on column one, the "no increase" column, for approval. The motion was made to accept, it was seconded, voted on, and passed unanimously.

Commander-in-Chief Sullivan then gave an update on the lawsuit situation. Even though we won the law suit levied against Past Commander-in-Chief Denne Sweeney, the court said that the SCV had to pay the court costs of the bad guys. The SCV appealed the ruling but the Appeals Court upheld the decision. Unbelievable!! We have filed to have the case reheard based on new evidence that was previously unavailable. Hopes of winning are not high as the Appeals

Court generally does not overturn itself but we are trying anyway. We won the Brooks Fund case as well as the Beauvoir Case with no stipulations. The good news is that we have prevailed in court but the downside is that it cost us a lot of money and that really hurt us.

C-I-C Sullivan then went on and recognized Director Sewell for doing an outstanding job over the last year. He also recognized the Adjutant-in-Chief and the Chief-of-Staff for all of their hard work over the last year.

Commander-in-Chief Sullivan then gave one of the best talks I have ever heard about the SCV and its future. It was very moving and stirred the entire audience. There were many other people I heard say that it was the best speech they had ever heard also. One point he made was to expand the quote made by Winston Churchill who said, "The west is the hope of the world and the United States is the hope of the west." C-I-C Sullivan added that "The South is the hope of the United States." He said "Some fights aren't worth fighting even if you win but some fights are worth fighting even if you lose." He said the SCV must be a visionary organization. As an example he stated how nice it would have been had the SCV begun a fund during the Centennial that would give us funds today to take advantage of the Sesqui-Centennial. Unfortunately that didn't happen. Yet in fifty years will be the Bi-Centennial and should we be visionary enough to put aside money now that will grow to help the SCV in 2060? Our job is to remember the past and preserve the past but we need to be a future organization. The Sesqui-Centennial is coming up in 2010 and we need to take that opportunity to get our story out. We also have to remember that our enemies will be using the same event to attack us in even greater force. Based on that premise, he is going to put together a Sesqui-Centennial Committee to help chart our course. His presentation brought a tremendous standing ovation and was well worth it.

Compatriot Evan McMichael was called to the stage to receive an honor. Evan is twelve years old and the newest Life Member of the SCV. He is the son of Chuck McMichael, the Army of Trans-Mississippi Councilman.

Now came the fight. The dues increase proposal was brought forward. The motion was made to increase national SCV dues by \$8.00 per year. The motion was seconded and discussion was called for. Any dues increase in any organization has

proponents and opponents and the SCV is no exception. Much to everyone's surprise Compatriot Jeff O'Neil of the Wade Hampton Camp in Columbia, South Carolina took the floor and proposed a substitute amendment that would raise the dues by \$10.00 per year. That motion was seconded, voted on, and passed. His basis was that dire straits that the SCV budget is currently in. He stated we needed to give the SCV the tools to do what needed to be done. Of course there was much controversy pro and con and the debate lasted almost two hours. Many good points were made by both sides. Then the Alabama Division Commander (I don't recall his name) made the motion that the \$10.00 increase be approved but the effective date would be after the 2008 convention, basically putting the increase off for one year. Regrettably the motion was seconded, voted on, and passed by a narrow margin. As the Key Camp representative I voted against the motion for one basic reason. On our current budget (see the proposed budget mentioned earlier) based on no increase we give us a \$100,000 deficit at the end of Fiscal year 2007. That will cut deeply into many programs. Putting off a dues increase will just hurt us more in the long run.

The issue of a dues increase was the final item of business and C-I-C Sullivan closed Business Session I. From the Grand Hall I proceeded to the SCV Awards Luncheon. After a delicious lunch the chairman of the Awards Committee announced all the types of awards presented and with each award he asked for those recipients present to stand for recognition. At the conclusion of the awards ceremony we were treated to a delightful presentation. Mr. John Lancaster, a visitor from England, spoke briefly about a family connection with the CSS Alabama. When the CSS Alabama was sunk in battle off Cherbourg, France, many members of the crew survived and were in the water. That included Admiral Raphael Semmes. Mr. Lancaster's great grandfather had a boat nearby and he went to the rescue of the crew before the Yankees could pick them up and make them prisoners of war. Mr. Lancaster's great grandfather took the crew to England and they were eventually able to return home. Our main speaker for the luncheon was the great grandson of Admiral Raphael Semmes, whose life was saved by Mr. Lancaster's great grandfather. While the two men were familiar with each other this was the first time they had ever met in person. What a neat story. Mr. Semmes then gave a brief presentation about Admiral Semmes.

Following the luncheon I moved to the Cathedral of Immaculate Conception for the SVC Memorial Service. As usual it was a very moving service followed by a representative of each Army Department reading the names of Compatriots in his Army that have passed away since the 2006 New Orleans Convention. In addition to the Memorial Service the priest conducted the Requiem Ceremonial for the remains of the unidentified Confederate sailor recovered from the CSS Alabama. The funeral for this sailor will take place on Saturday July 28.

The Memorial Service and Requiem were the last official events for the day. The Oratory Contest that evening I was not able to make but they are always one of the best parts of the convention. So ended day two, officially. I was invited by the South Carolina Division to go with them to dinner that evening at Ed's Seafood Shack. A great time was had by all. There were probably 50 to 60 compatriots and wives there and at the end of the meal we all stood and sang "Dixie". When we finished the entire rest of the restaurant began to cheer.

Day three of the convention began very early at 6:45 with the Robert E. Lee Memorial Breakfast, hoping for a great talk on my favorite hero. I had a delicious breakfast and then the speaker was introduced. He was an instructor at a local college and gave an interesting presentation but really nothing new. It was still very enjoyable and I'm glad I went.

By 8:30 a.m. C-I-C Sullivan opened Business Session II. The primary purpose of the session was to discuss and vote on four proposed amendments to the SCV Constitution. The first proposed amendment removed the veto power of the accused relative to the site of the hearing. The amendment was read, the motion was made to accept, there was no discussion, the vote was taken and the amendment passed unanimously.

The second proposed amendment clarified the procedures and appeals for a member subject to discipline. The amendment was read and the motion was made to accept. Discussion ensued that basically modified the verbiage so that "They" at the beginning was changed to "The camp or division". The other change was to strike the words "in a Division" from

the second to last sentence. Call for vote was made and the amendment passed as changed.

The third proposed amendment concerned cadet dues. This amendment was to change the dues from an annual \$10.00 fee and make it a one time only and upon application payment. The basis for the amendment was that the cadets don't get anything as cadets so why should they pay \$10.00 a year. The amendment was read and the motion made to approve. Discussion followed with the chairman of the Youth Committee reporting that the cadets do get a certificate upon membership and, starting about six months ago, they are receiving a Cadet Newsletter from International Headquarters. That newsletter goes to all cadets over four years of age. The vote was called for, the vote taken, and the amendment failed to pass. Cadet dues will remain a one-time \$10.00 payment.

The fourth and last proposed amendment concerned anyone with a felony conviction being barred from membership in the SCV. The amendment was read and the motion made to accept the amendment. Discussion followed but was very short in duration. Compatriot Ted Brooke, the author of the proposed amendment, took the floor and withdrew the amendment. Since the amendment had already been read and a motion made to accept, that option was not available. Compatriot Brooke then made a motion to table the amendment indefinitely. That motion was voted on and passed unanimously.

The last item of business, and a rather contentious one, was the Time and Place Committee recommendation for the 2010 National Reunion. Remember from the GEC meeting on Day One, the Time and Place Committee recommended Charleston, South Carolina for the 2010 Convention. When the GEC voted on the issue they recommended Anderson, South Carolina. Due to the conflicting recommendations, C-I-C Sullivan gave both sides twenty minutes to present to the convention their arguments for their particular city. I will say both camps gave excellent presentations. The camp from Anderson went first and indicated that there was one historic home and a historic church that would be tours for the convention. They also stated that room rates for the convention hotel would be \$76.00 per night. The big problem, other than nothing to see or do in Anderson, was that the hotel is three miles from the convention center where the convention will be held. Charleston on the other hand has so much to see and do (like the H. L. Hunley submarine) and the host

hotel is next door to the convention center where the convention will be held. The room rate at the host hotel is \$139.00 per suite per night. Other hotels, all within half a mile of the convention center, had rooms as low as \$56.00 per night. While room rate was a hot topic, the final decision was based on the flag. In Anderson the camp had written permission that Confederate flags could be hung in the windows of hotel rooms. The hotel (Hilton) in Charleston said there was a corporate policy against altering the outside appearance of the hotel so officially flags could not be put in windows. They did say that they would not enforce the rule unless they received complaints. That particular point was what turned people against Charleston. The cry was "Go where our flags are welcome." The final vote was in favor of Anderson, South Carolina so that is where the 2010 National Convention will be held.

Commander-in-Chief Sullivan then made an announcement to remind all compatriots that SCVNews.org was the sanctioned official SCV way of getting short information out quickly from Headquarters. All compatriots should be on the e-mail list to receive SCV News. To enroll go to the SCV website (scv.org) and click on the "Services" pull-down menu and then click on "Join an E-mail" and fill out the short application. It will be well worth your time.

C-I-C Sullivan called for resolutions and the chairman of the Resolutions Committee" came forward. He said two resolutions were submitted to the committee and one was approved and the other was rejected. The approved resolution, composed by Compatriot Kelly Barrow was to declare 2008 "The Year of Davis". The resolution was voted on and passed unanimously.

The author of the second resolution, the disapproved one from the committee, rose and asked to submit the resolution from the floor. That required a vote to suspend Rule Number Three of the Standing Rules of Order. That was voted on and approved. The compatriot read the resolution from the floor and it caused quite a stir. It proclaimed that the SCV felt disgust at the state legislatures of states that have made apologies for slavery. On the surface the resolution seemed okay but the committee chairman took the floor to explain that the resolution literally called the state legislators "cowards" and other derogatory names and it was totally inappropriate for a resolution from the SCV to use language of that manner. It would do nothing but turn those

legislators against us in the future. Finally, someone made the motion to table to resolution indefinitely, which in essence killed the resolution. The call for vote was made and the resolution, thank goodness, was tabled.

At this time Joe Ringhoffer, the Chairman of the convention, got up to give the details on the funeral of the unidentified CSS Alabama sailor. Archeological excavation of the CSS Alabama, sunk in 1864 off Cherbourg, France, was being conducted when the divers found the human remains. The remains were brought up and given to the U.S. Navy for disposition. The SCV contacted the navy and were given permission to inter the remains of the sailor in Magnolia Cemetery in Mobile, Alabama. The funeral would take place on Saturday of the convention. The plans called for the remains to lay in state at the Admiral Raphael Semmes home from \*;00 until 9:30 a.m. Admiral Semmes was the commander of the CSS Alabama. The funeral procession would then form at the Semmes monument on Government Street and would step off at 10:00 a.m. for the march to the cemetery about two miles away. The actual funeral would commence at 12:00 noon. All compatriots and guests were invited to participate in any portion of the event.

Past Commander-in-Chief Ron Wilson was called on to give a report on the Sam Davis Youth Camp. He stated that the camp has been a resounding success for the six iterations that have run. The seventh camp was to start the week after the convention and was being held in South Carolina. That iteration was sold out. The camp gives young people the true Southern history of the war. It is one of our best heritage tools.

Past C-I-C Wilson also gave a plug for the Southern Mercury magazine stating that the magazine was based on three corner stones the same as the Confederate government. Those corner stones are freedom, the church, and a limited government.

Commander-in-Chief Sullivan called for any additional business for the convention. There was no response. He declared that all business to be brought before the convention had been resolved and declared that the business sessions were closed. In addition C-I-C Sullivan announced that the Departments had agreed to postpone or reschedule the Department meetings so that the entire Saturday morning was free of commitments. These cancellations meant that all convention business was completed and allowed all

compatriots the opportunity to attend the funeral for the unidentified sailor from the CSS Alabama. The convention was adjourned.

From the Great Hall I proceeded to the H. L. Hunley Luncheon. This was another great meal and was followed by a tremendously interesting presentation on the H. L. Hunley. The update was presented by South Carolina Division Commander and Hunley Commission member Randy Burbage. The slide show had numerous previously unpublished photos of the Hunley and her artifacts. It was awesome.

At 5:00 p.m. Army of the Trans-Mississippi Commander Chuck Norred held the ATM Department meeting. It was a short meeting (perhaps 30 minutes) where he basically said look at the new ATM website. The editor of the ATM newsletter asked all division commanders to submit items to him for the newsletter that comes out three or four times a year.

Day three of the convention consisted solely of the funeral. While I did not personally participate in the procession to the cemetery, I did participate in the funeral service itself. While the funeral attracted a very substantial crowd it could not compare to the funeral of the crew of the H.L. Hunley submarine. It was still a very moving, respectful, and appropriate ceremony to lay the remains. The Confederate portion of Magnolia Cemetery was very beautiful with a large Confederate monument in the center of the area. Several remarks were made by various dignitaries, salutes were fired by both Confederate infantry reenactors and Confederate artillery reenactors. The ceremony itself was performed by the Catholic priest who conducted the SCV Memorial Service and was a member of the Raphael Semmes Camp #11. Overall it was a very moving ceremony and I am extremely grateful to have been able to attend.

That being the last major event of the convention I will close my report by saying that the 112<sup>th</sup> SCV Annual Reunion was perhaps one of the very best I have ever attended. We accomplished a lot, we had great fun, I spent too much money at the vendors, and I am definitely looking forward to Concord, North Carolina for the 113<sup>th</sup> Annual reunion from 16 through 19 July 2008. I have already registered.

Respectfully Submitted,

James L. Speicher  
Commander