Recipient - 2011 Dr. George R. Tabor “Most Distinguished Camp” Award

Camp Cresset
Finley’s Brigade
Camp #1614
Havana, Florida

Camp Officers

Commander
Graham F. Smith

1st Lt. Commander
Marshall Carroll

2nd Lt. Commander
Bill Beckham

Adjutant/Sec.
Ellis Harvey

3rd Brigade Cmdr.
Jamey B. Creel

Chaplain
Kelly V. Crocker

Color Sergeant
Anthony Harvey

Past Commanders
Bill Beckham
Marshall Carroll

2012 Lee/Jackson Southern Heritage Event
The Grandest and Most Successful...Ever
Graham F. Smith

The evening of January 28, 2012 was absolutely phenomenal. Even though we anticipated grand things for the event, it far exceeded all expectations for a truly remarkable Southern experience. There was great Southern fellowship, fine Southern music and ambiance, excellent food, an inspirational speaker, an abundance of Southern items to bid on, and more than a plenty of Southern
friends to share our common heritage. Because of that, and I’m sure you noticed, the name of our Lee/Jackson celebration has changed and for a good reason. It is no longer just a banquet… it is a Grand Southern EVENT!

The doors opened promptly at 5:00 and guests started filing into the building. Upon entering the foyer they were greeted by the sweet strains of “The Bonnie Blue Flag” and other Southern tunes played by A Joyful Noise, a group of musicians from the Albany, Georgia area. The music beckoned each person into the elaborately decorated banquet hall for a “social hour” that lasted until 6:00. During this time, guests indulged their taste buds with hors d’oeuvres of Southern delicacies of pecan stuffed bacon wrapped dates, Charleston Cheese on crackers, and ice cold lemonade.

While socializing, everyone had the opportunity to meet and greet the SCV Commander-in-Chief Michael Givens. From what I could tell, Commander Givens made the rounds and talked, in his genteel Southern style, to almost everyone in attendance. And this year, as every year in the past, was larger than the year before. We had visitors this year from St. Augustine, Jacksonville and Tampa, to name a few.

When not engaged in socializing, guests were busy bidding on the silent auction items that were so plentiful and varied that there had to be something that appealed to almost everyone. This year’s auction included items the ladies were fighting over such as a Mort Kunstler print “Janie Corbin and Old Jack” a beautiful turquoise piece, handmade shawls, cameo necklaces, and other accessories for their period attire, while the gentlemen were carefully watching their bids for knives, books, a stained glass Bonnie Blue, an genuine alligator hide wallet, Confederate money, and such.

The social hour concluded and the program started at 6:00 with the opening ceremonies that included a tribute to Generals Lee and Jackson, an explanation of the Generals’ table, and an emotionally charged candle lighting ceremony by the Finley’s Brigade Honor Guard. The opening proceedings set the temperament for the rest of the evening and got everyone into a “Southern” frame of mind.

A delicious supper was served by one of our favorite caterers, Carrie Ann and Co. of Monticello. She served salad, a choice of baked herb chicken or cube steak in gravy, mixed vegetables, mashed potatoes, roll, choice of bread puddin’ or blueberry cobbler, and tea or water to drink. To me, the cube steak and the bread puddin’ sent my taste buds into orbit. As everyone finished their meal there was continued socializing and when necessary, bidders would increase the ante on their favorite silent auction items.

When the program resumed, CiC Givens presented a program titled “Robert E. Lee: Master of War, Servant of the Lord”. He spoke of how the great and noble military commander General Lee was humbled by, and ever conscious of, his Christianity and would inspire his men in the battlefield. Not only was Commander Givens’ talk educational and entertaining, it was very stirring.

After CiC Givens program concluded he was presented mementos of appreciation from our Camp by Confederate Rose Society President Libby Smith. He received two Wayne Grissett commemorative bottles of cane syrup, an engraved pen and pencil set, and a signed and personalized copy of compatriot Jim Parrish’s book From Wiregrass to Appomattox.

Auctioneer (Lt. Commander) Marshall Carroll conducted a very successful auction of signed and numbered pieces of exquisite War Between the States art the camp had specially procured for the event. “General Lee is Near” and “Kings of Kernstown” by John Paul Strain. Compatriot Ashley Pollette of the Dr. Theophilus West Camp #1346 in Marianna donated, for our benefit, a beautiful framed print titled “General Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson Winchester, Virginia, May 25, 1862” by Mort Künstler.

The evening concluded with each guest taking a battle flag from the big bow on the back of each chair and waving it while the band “Joyful Noise” played a robust rendition of “Dixie”. As guests filed out I heard several either singing or
humming the sweet tune.

We have received numerous comments and accolades since the event. Below are only a few of the numerous comments we have received so far.

*I don't think I can say that I have ever had a better time at an SCV event than I did at y'alls. You folks wrote the book on hospitality and I certainly do appreciate your efforts. Thank you for all you have done for me.*

Michael Givens
CiC, SCV

*It was a great evening! The band was good, very tasty food, great company and again guest speaker Michael Givens delivered a very meaningful message.*

*It was a great event and I was proud to be part of it.*

*It was so beautiful, good food, great speaker and wonderful friends. Who could ask for more.*

*Twas wonderful for sure.*

*Great event!!! It was the best one I have attended.*

*This was one of the best yet. I loved what CIC said about Finley’s at the beginning of his talk - being at the best camp in the US and the world!*

**Welcome Returning and New Members**

Welcome back to Finley’s Brigade Mark Rominger (wearing cap in center of picture). Compatriot Rominger originally joined the SCV on the record of his Great-Great Uncle, William Thomas Rominger of the 1st Regiment, North Carolina Junior Reserves. The unit was formed in mid-1864 of mostly 17yr olds.

Mark is the past President of the Natural Bridge Historical Society, a Citizen Support Organization and during his term was very instrumental in persuading the State of Florida to purchase and preserve a large tract of privately owned property where the Battle of Natural Bridge was fought. In the picture, Mark explains the fortifications and lines of battle at Natural Bridge to CiC Givens, Finley’s members, and guests.
Welcome to Finley’s Brigade Ashby Wayne Cline, Jr. (picture at left) Compatriot Cline joins us on the record of his Great-Great Grandfather, Private William Cline of the 58th Virginia Militia. He and his father were named for the great Confederate cavalry commander Colonel Turner Ashby. Compatriot Cline was inducted into Finley’s Brigade in the presence of CiC Givens who read the certificate that bears his signature.

CiC Givens Tours the Natural Bridge Battlefield

On Saturday January 28, 2012 several members of Finley’s Brigade were fortunate enough to join with Commander in Chief Michael Givens on his tour of Natural Bridge Battlefield. The tour was hosted by Compatriot Mark Rominger past President of the Natural Bridge Historical Society. Mr. Rominger has been very instrumental in the expansion of the battle field properties. We were joined at the park by Finley’s Brigade member Lawson Gerrell. Compatriot Gerrell’s family members have agreed to convey an additional eighty acres of family land to the Florida Park Service thereby doubling the size of the park. This land and the recently acquired Rakestraw property was all once owned by Compatriot Gerrell’s ancestor Jim French. Mr. French gave land to the United Daughters of the Confederacy to erect the monument that stands there today. Jim French was the son of James French a Confederate soldier who has a marker in the Confederate section of the Old City Cemetery in Tallahassee.

Graves Committee Reports

Report #1

Finley’s Brigade Graves Committee is off and running in 2012!!! We have had three workdays this year and have more to come. We have also put in countless hours documenting the final resting places of Confederates buried in Leon and Gadsden County. We have added 75+ Veterans to the SCV Florida Division list of Confederates for Leon County alone. The additions for Gadsden County are approaching another 75. Once we feel comfortable with our list, we will be asking for help to get GPS coordinates for each gravesite.
One thing that has been revealing in our research is the appalling condition of our ancestors’ gravesites. We have discovered three that are in very bad shape here in Leon County. I was shocked to discover that 2 of these are on City of Tallahassee property, with one of those being in the Old City Cemetery.

The worst one so far is on plantation property. We have been in contact with the Plantation Manager, and he has been very cooperative. We have had two very productive workdays at this cemetery. It took these two days just to clear the brush so we could get to the graves of Confederate Veteran John Anders and his wife Hester Cromartie Anders. We will be making a few more trips to this cemetery in the near future. We have a lot of concrete work to do on this one.

The Veteran in the Old City Cemetery whose marker needs immediate attention is Captain E. C. Harbert. He and his family had a nice obelisk until vandals turned it over and shattered the grave top of Captain Harbert’s son in law. We are working on a lifting device to assist with this project. In this same cemetery we plan to upright the obelisk of Governor Thomas Brown’s daughter, which has been vandalized.

The third work project is for Confederate Allen Scott of Company C, 5th Florida. He and his family are buried on city property, deep in the woods. We will be up righting headstones and repairing damage done by grave robbers. We are considering building a knee-wall or fence around this plot.

We have set three new headstones in Wakulla County and we are gathering information for ordering four more. We will be busy this year but, there is so much work to be done. Like my old preacher used to say about being busy, “I would rather burn out, that rust out”.

Kelly

Report #2

On the second Saturday of January several members of Finley’s Brigade set VA markers for three Confederate Veterans. The three veterans, along with other veterans, are buried in the very well maintained Hall Family Cemetery located very near the Leon/Wakulla county line and just about hollowing distance from the St. Marks River. Much of the surrounding property is still owned by the Hall’s descendants and their family members. The Hall family was living on this land before the war. Descendant and Compatriot Lawson Gerrell was on hand to unlock gates and provide much interesting history. An interesting point is that the road leading into the property is very possibly the same road that the Yankees used to get to Natural Bridge to take a whipping. It is a safe bet than the departure on that road was quicker that the arrival.

Those Southern heroes that the camp had the honor of setting grave markers were:
  Daniel B. Coleman, Capt. Co. I, 1st Fla Inf.
  John Coleman, Pvt. Co I, 5th Fla Inf.
  (A stone for Matthew Burns is pending)

At some time in the near future the Camp will hold a dedication ceremony for these men. Plan to be there and hear about the lives of these good men and maybe meet some of their family.

With the enthusiasm of the committee and the numerous projects that Chairman Crocker has lined up we will make great progress this year in preserving the resting place of many of our great men that wore gray.

Welcome Larry Driggers III

Congratulations Larry and Christina Driggers on the birth of Larry Driggers, III. The little Confederate was born February 3 at 10:03am. He weighed 8 lbs 12oz and was 21 ¼ in long. Per the proud Daddy, “his “ancestry has already been established” for his pending membership into Finley’s Brigade, Camp 1614, Sons of Confederate Veterans.

February 14 Camp Meeting
This month’s meeting is dedicated to Compatriot Bill Beckham’s ancestor, Col Robert F. Beckham. The guest speaker for our February Camp meeting will be our own Camp 1614 Compatriot Rip O’Steen. Rip and his wife Carol are renowned authorities on silver place settings and serving pieces. Rip will speak on the silver used during the War Between the States era and explain how it got the name “coin silver.”

Our meetings are always held at the Golden Corral restaurant on North Monroe Street across from Lake Ella. The program will start promptly at 6:45 so be sure to arrive early to enjoy a fine meal and socialize before the meeting starts.

**Schedule of Upcoming Events**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 14</td>
<td>Regular Camp meeting at the Golden Corral restaurant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 17,18,19</td>
<td>Battle of Olustee weekend. Mechanized Cavalry will ride in the parade on Saturday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>Battle of Olustee Parade in Lake City, Fl.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>Sesquicentennial Celebration of moving the Confederate Capitol to Richmond, Va. Monument Avenue Richmond, Virginia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 3,4</td>
<td>Battle of Natural Bridge Leon County, Fl. We will have a SCV recruiting station on Friday and Sunday. Finley’s Brigade Color Guard will participate in the memorial service on Sunday.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 13</td>
<td>Regular Camp meeting at the Golden Corral restaurant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 7</td>
<td>Cemetery work day at Soldiers Cemetery in Quincy, Fl.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 10</td>
<td>Regular Camp meeting at the Golden Corral restaurant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 26</td>
<td>Confederate Memorial Day</td>
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**Camp Cresset**

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