

Deo adjuvanti non timindin (With God's help, we need not fear)

THE DIXON BLUE LIGHT NEWS



Lt. George E. Dixon Camp #1962
Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV)

www.scvcamp1962.org

Editor: Johnny Kicklighter Email: Johnnywkick@gmail.com



MARCH 2025

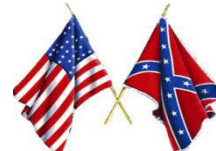


PROGRAM INFO FOR NEXT MTG, 21 March

PRESENTATION: Davis-Hayes Video (continued)

PRESENTER: Video

REFRESHMENTS: Phil Tate



CAMP MEETINGS

Meetings are open to the public and are, except as announced, held on the third Thursday evening of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the:

Shiloh Assembly of God Church
4035 Lebanon Avenue
Shiloh, Illinois 62221

We try to have an informative program with a speaker or film of interest at all meetings. Anyone with a Confederate ancestor or just having an interest in Civil War history is invited to attend.

Questions? Call John McKee, 618-491-9472

CAMP MISSION

The camp accepts its covenanted responsibility to maintain and preserve the Christian principles held by the Southern people that led them to their decision to defend the right of constitutional self-government. We strive to educate ourselves first and then the public to a fuller and more complete understanding of the true history of the period of the War Between the States. We seek to preserve the memory and honor of the noble Confederate soldiers, sailors, public servants, and loyal citizens.

CAMP MEMBERSHIP

Is available to all male (12 years or older) descendants of any veteran who served honorably in the Confederate military. Direct or collateral kinship to a qualifying veteran or civil servant must be documented for full membership. We will help with genealogical assistance for documentation. For those who have not yet proven their kinship or just have an active interest in what we are doing, we offer camp membership through our auxiliary, The Knights and Ladies of the Golden Circle.

WE CARE! PLEASE CALL JOHN OR MIKE AND KEEP US NEWS-INFORMED ... if you or a family member is ill, has an emergency, health or family issue, a family death, or needs assistance. Adjutant John McKee, 618-491-9472 Chaplain Mike Biekert, 618-972-8190

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT - Dues for the 2025-2026 Year

- National sets the fiscal year from 7/1/2025 through 6/30/2026.
- Make checks/Money Orders to "Lt. George E. Dixon Camp #1962, SCV". Please send or give to me by 6/20/2025 (Camp Meeting and first day of summer).
- Annual dues are composed of two parts: \$35 National + \$20 Camp = \$55 annual.
- If you have Life Membership, please pay the Camp \$20. If you wish not pay the camp, then you have only honorary camp status, meaning no newsletter, but you will still receive your dues card through the camp.
- Knights and Ladies of the Golden Circle: \$20.
- If you choose not to renew, please advise, and I will note you as resigned, not suspended. Those who have been dropped but wish to rejoin will have to pay \$55 plus \$5 reinstatement fee.
- If you have any questions or want to make arrangements, please contact me. If you delay contact me until after August 20, you might have to pay a reinstatement fee with your dues (National only). Dues notices will be sent by the end of March.

Deo Vindice, John M. McKee, Camp Adjutant.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Dunker Church-----	2
"The Best Were Beer Kegs"-----	3
Calendar of Events ~ Birthdays ~ Camp Dixon Staff-----	6



CAMP DIXON MEETING MINUTES

The February meeting was cancelled due to the weather.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Per our Constitution, we must elect officers for the coming year. Be prepared to offer nominations.



The Dunker Church at Antietam



The Dunker Church

The Battle of Antietam, fought September 17, 1862, was one of the bloodiest battles in the history of this nation. Yet, one of the most noted landmarks on this great field of combat is a house of worship associated with peace and love. Indeed, the Dunker Church ranks as perhaps one of the most famous churches in American military history. This historic structure began as a humble country house of worship constructed by local Dunker farmers in 1852. It was Mr. Samuel Mumma, owner of the nearby farm that bears his name, who donated land in 1851 for the Dunkers to build their church. During its early history, the congregation consisted of about half a dozen-farm families from the local area.

During The Battle

On the eve of the Battle of Antietam, the members of the Dunker congregation, as well as their neighbors in the surrounding community, received a portent of things to come. That Sunday, September 14, 1862, the sound of cannons booming at the Battle of South Mountain seven miles to the east was plainly heard as the Dunkers attended church. By September 16 Confederate infantry and artillery were positioned around the church in anticipation of the battle that was fought the next day.

During the battle of Antietam, the church was the focal point of a number of Union attacks against the Confederate left flank. Most after action reports by commanders of both sides, including Union General Hooker and Confederate Stonewall Jackson, make references to the church.

At battles end the Confederates used the church as a temporary medical aid station. A sketch by well-known Civil War artist Alfred Waud depicts a truce between the opposing sides being held in front of the church on September 18, to exchange wounded and bury the dead. At least one account states that after the battle the Union Army used the Dunker Church as an embalming station. One tradition persists that Lincoln may have visited the site during his visit to the Army of the Potomac in October 1862.

As for the old church, it was heavily battle scarred with hundreds of marks from bullets in its whitewashed walls. Likewise, artillery had caused severe damage to the roof and walls. By 1864 the Church was repaired, rededicated and regular services were held there until the turn of the century.



Truce at the Dunker Church after the battle

After the War

The congregation built a new church in the town of Sharpsburg. Souvenir hunters took bricks from the walls of the church and a lack of adequate maintenance weakened the old structure. In 1921 a violent storm swept through the area, flattening the church.



The destroyed Dunker Church

Dunker Church was destroyed by a windstorm in 1921.

The land and church ruins were put up for sale and purchased by Sharpsburg resident Elmer G. Boyer. He salvaged most of the undamaged material of the building and in turn sold the property. The new property owner built a home on the foundation of the old church and in the 1930's operated a gas station and souvenir shop on

the site. This structure was removed in 1951 when the property was purchased by the Washington County Historical Society. They in turn donated the site, then just a foundation, to the National Park Service. The Church was restored for the 100th Anniversary of the Battle in 1962 on the original foundation with as much original materials as possible and now stands as a beacon of peace on the battlefield.



The Dunker Church today.

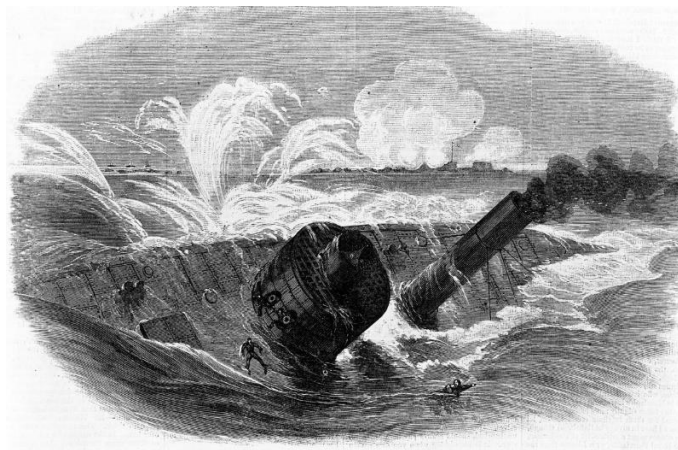
A visit to Dunker Church today is like a step back in time. Take a seat inside and contemplate the sacrifice of the people of 1862. Note the simplicity of the church with its plain windows, crude wooden benches on which you may have sat for hours during the services in bygone years, and the simple table at the front where the elders of the church would have read from the old Bible.

Courtesy National Park Service



"The Best Were Beer Kegs"

The Use of Torpedoes in the 1865 Mobile Campaign



Destruction of the USS Monitor "Tecumseh" By a Rebel Torpedo, in Mobile Bay, August 5, 1864

During the Civil War, the Confederate Navy never came close to matching the strength of the Union Navy. However, Confederate ingenuity helped narrow this disparity at times. The South developed ironclad warships and commerce raiders to mitigate the Union's naval power. Historian James McPherson argues in *Drawn with the Sword* that the Confederate development of explosive naval submerged mines (referred to as "torpedoes" at

the time) “turned out to be the Confederacy’s most potent naval weapon.” The Confederates used torpedoes in waterways to sink or damage 43 Union vessels. These torpedoes were most effective in Mobile Bay.

“Our torpedoes were very rude,” recalled Mobile’s Confederate commander, Maj. Gen. Dabney H. Maury. “The best were beer kegs loaded with gunpowder and exploded by sensitive primers.” A vessel passing over them would trigger an explosion that could blow a hole through its hull, sinking her. Maury contended, “But for the torpedoes, Farragut’s fleet would have embarrassed the defense. But they could only use their guns of the greatest range because all of them who ventured close in were sunk.



On August 5, 1864, during the Battle of Mobile Bay, the ironclad monitor USS Tecumseh became the first victim of Confederate torpedoes. The Tecumseh sank to the bottom of the shipping channel, killing more than ninety sailors.

To defend the city of Mobile, the Confederates littered the water approaches with torpedoes. On Sunday, March 26, 1865, Union Maj. Gen. E.R.S Canby’s land forces began their siege of Spanish Fort, Alabama, located on Mobile Bay’s eastern shore. Early in the siege, Confederate gunboats Nashville and Morgan, operating on the Blakeley River, inflicted heavy casualties on Canby’s besieging ground forces. Adm. Henry K. Thatcher’s formidable 36-

vessel fleet could not advance up the river to drive them off. Shallow waters, obstructions, and the removal of countless torpedoes slowed his progress toward Canby’s forces.

On Tuesday, March 28, Thatcher sent five gunboats, including four river monitors, up the Blakeley River. Around sunset, the gunboats were about a mile and a half from Spanish Fort when a sudden shock and a massive splash of water signaled disaster—the Milwaukee had struck a torpedo on her port side and sank in about ten feet of water within three minutes. Though all sailors survived the explosion, the powerful gunboat was lost.

The following day, Wednesday, March 29, 1865, at 2 p.m., a torpedo exploded under the bow of the monitor Osage. The ironclad sank rapidly, leaving only her turret, smokestack, and the U.S. flag at its masthead visible. Five sailors were killed, and twelve were wounded. On Saturday, April 1, the tinclad Rodolph, commanded by acting master N. M. Dyer, crossed the Blakeley Bar. At 2:40 p.m., a torpedo exploded under her starboard bow, sinking her in twelve feet of water. The blast killed four of her crew and wounded seven.

Thatcher’s fleet continually swept the channel to fish out torpedoes, but the Confederates countered by placing more torpedoes, often equipped with drags that allowed them to drift with the current just below the surface, hidden by the muddy water. The destructive power of these submerged mines left an impression on Thatcher’s naval forces.

On April 8, after a two-week siege, Canby’s numerically superior land forces attacked the northern flank of Spanish Fort, gaining a lodgment and preparing to capture the entire fort and its garrison the following morning. However, Thatcher’s inability to advance his gunboats up the Blakeley River to the rear of Spanish Fort allowed most of the Confederate garrison to escape. In just five days, the fleet had lost three gunboats to torpedoes, which heightened their caution.

A few months after the war, the captain of the USS Albatross declared that “the Confederate torpedoes are the greatest invention of the age and will render forts and batteries unnecessary as harbor defenses.” In total, Confederate torpedoes sank 10 Union vessels in Mobile Bay, causing the deaths of more than 120 sailors. Nowhere else during the war did torpedoes achieve such remarkable results as in Mobile Bay, Alabama.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL	MAY	JUNE
1 April Fools' Day	1 National Day of Prayer	14 Flag Day
9 Winston Churchill Day	4 Star Wars Day	15 Father's Day
9 Bataan Day	8 VE Day	19 CAMP MEETING
13 Palm Sunday	11 Mother's Day	20 Summer Solstice
17 CAMP MEETING	15 CAMP MEETING	24 St. John the Baptist Birth
20 Easter	22 Memorial (Decoration) Day	25 New Moon



MARCH BIRTHDAYS



7	JIM MOOSE	(Mascoutah, IL)
30	JANE NOVARA	(Creal Springs, IL)



CAMP DIXON STAFF

Commander	John Douglas Stanton	618-610-6464	spqrkaiser2@gmail.com
Advisor to the Commander	Johnny Kicklighter	618-698-0053	johnnywkick@gmail.com
Adjutant	John McKee	618-491-9472	history_ferret@yahoo.com
Cardmaster	Barbara Lumma	618-498-2563	jimandbarb62@gmail.com
Chaplain	Walter Michael Biekert	618-972-8190	
Program Chairman	John McKee	618-491-9472	history_ferret@yahoo.com
Newsletter Editor	Johnny Kicklighter	618-698-0053	johnnywkick@gmail.com
Sgt of Arms	Stephen Dean Wilson	314-497-0798	steverdean@yahoo.com
Asst Sgt of Arms	Eric Jan Funkhouser	618-233-6148	funkhousereric1995@yahoo.com