

# CONFEDERATE GAZETTE



## Confederate Gazette

*Is a monthly publication  
of the Major Robert M.  
White Camp #1250  
Sons of Confederate  
Veterans  
Temple, Texas*

Web Site:

[www.rootsweb.com/~tx1250](http://www.rootsweb.com/~tx1250)

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Camp #1250  
Sons of Confederate Veterans  
Temple, Texas

*Annual Event at the Hilton in Temple*

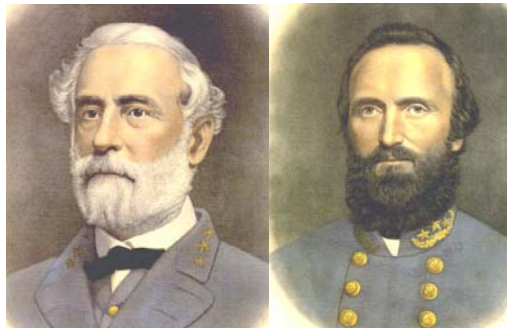
## 18<sup>TH</sup> LEE-JACKSON DINNER SCHEDULED

The Major Robert M. White Camp #1250 will hold its 18<sup>th</sup> annual Lee-Jackson Dinner on Saturday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at the Hilton Garden Inn in Temple, at South 31<sup>st</sup> Street and Scott Blvd.

The event will kick off at 7:00 PM and will feature Honorary Camp member Brad Johnson speaking. Johnson's talk is entitled, "Lee After the War."

At this year's event Texas Division Commander

Ron Strybos will attend and swear in the new Camp officers for 2006.



The new Camp officers were elected at the December Camp meeting. Officers include: James

Kinnear as Commander, Chris Ellis as 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Commander, Rocky Sprott as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Commander, and returning for his third year as Adjutant will be Richard Sutton.

This year's dinner meeting will be the eighteenth celebration of Robert E. Lee's birthday. The first observance was in 1989 in Hillsboro. For the first several years the camp held its Lee dinner in conjunction with the SCV camp in Hillsboro.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Camp History Being Written

A history of the Major Robert M. White Camp #1250 is being written by Camp member John C. Perry. Perry asks for Camp members and friends to submit to him any photos, write-ups, or any other items that would be pertinent to the Camp's history.

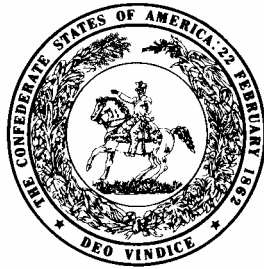
Perry started the effort in November and is up to over 10,000 words. He has traced the Camp's history back to 1898 when the first SCV Camp in Temple was established. Most of the original SCV records

are gone, but Perry has pieced together some interesting facts. For instance, in 1918 the SCV camp in Temple was the largest in Texas and the second largest in the entire country. The original camp folded sometime during the Depression years.

Perry also traces the Camp's 1960's reformation. Some of those records are still available so the history will include information about the SCV in Temple in the 1960s.

The reformation of the current version of the Camp in 1988 is covered and there is a year by year summary up to the current date.

Again, Perry needs additional input. His primary source for information and photos is the *Confederate Gazette*. If an event or photo didn't make it in the *Gazette*, then it is unlikely it will be in the history, so please send to Perry any and all items you may have.



# CONFEDERATE PROFILE REBEL INSURANCE SALESMAN

This Irish Born  
Confederate was  
the Inventor of the  
Coal Torpedo

**T**his native of Ireland, ended up in St. Louis when the War Between the States broke out. He sided with the Confederacy and came up with one of the most unusual weapons developed during the war.

Thomas Edgeworth Courtenay was born in Belfast, Ireland on April 19, 1822. He came to America at age 18 and began working with his brother in river commerce along the Mississippi. They traded supplies for cotton from Southern plantations along the Mississippi River. Courtenay also had an insurance office in St. Louis and in Baltimore, Maryland. He briefly served as the county sheriff in St. Louis.

By the time the war broke out both Courtenay's river trade and insurance businesses were thriving. He continued with the insurance business during the war, but also offered his services to the Confederacy. He became a Confederate secret agent working for General Sterling Price. He was authorized to recruit up to twenty men to sabotage Union operations in and around St. Louis. As an experienced insurance agent who sold policies to cover transportation losses, he likely came up with the idea of what the Federals called, "Rebel Incendiaries." Courtenay and his men would hollow out

wood, which was intended to be used to power both steamboats and locomotives, and fill the wood with gunpowder. The goal was to have the wood explode when it was fed into the boiler of either a steamboat or locomotive. Courtenay and his men contin-



*Thomas Edgeworth  
Courtenay*

ued this effort into late 1864.

Courtenay wasn't satisfied with just the wood incendiaries, but also came up with the idea of the "coal torpedo." With the same approach as their wooden cousins' clumps of coal would be hallowed out and filled with powder. The "loaded" coal would then be planted in the coal storage areas of Union ironclads. Although at that time most civilian steamboats and locomotives burned wood for power, the Union ironclads were designed to

burn coal.

In November of 1863 he submitted the plans for the "coal torpedo" to President Jefferson Davis. The Confederate Congress approved the plan in March of 1864, although Courtenay was prohibited from attacking civilian vessels and vessels under a flag of truce. His target was to be exclusively Union war vessels.

The plan was to purchase a coal barge, seed it with the torpedoes, and then sale the coal to the Union Navy. The plan never really materialized, although the *USS The Greyhound*, which at the time was carrying Union General Benjamin Butler, was likely sunk by a coal torpedo as well as the Union gunboat, *Chenango*.

On April 27, 1865 the steamer *Sultana* was about seven miles out of Memphis when its boiler exploded. The ship was carrying about 2,300 passengers many of them former Union POWs who were returning home. There has been some supposition that the *Sultana's* explosion was the result of a coal torpedo, but it is only speculation. About 1,700 people perished in the sinking of the *Sultana*.

The coal torpedo plans were captured early on in the operation and Courtenay and his compatriots became wanted men. Because of Courtenay's fugi-

*(Continued on page 4)*



By: *George Ballentine*

## Commander's Call

I hope everyone had a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. As 2006 begins, my days as your Camp Commander are drawing to a close. The past two years have been a challenge and I think that we did some good. I had several goals to accomplish when I decided to run for Camp Commander and, with your help, I have achieved them. One was to get a camp awards program started and at this year's Lee-Jackson Dinner we will be presenting camp awards for the second year. Shortly, we will have two muskets for use by compatriots who want to participate in grave dedications. They are ordered and should arrive soon. The camp store is going strong and growing month by month. It has become a major fund raiser for our camp.

I would like to thank everyone in the camp for their support over the past two years. Without that support I would not have been able to accomplish much. An excellent example is the successful hosting of the Texas Division Reunion in June 2005. That only came about because of teamwork. Our Confederate Heritage and History Month activities are getting better each year and we are participating in more and more Confederate grave dedications.

I had a good group of camp officers to work with. They were a great asset when it came to making commitments for our camp to support other camps. The new year will bring a new slate of camp officers. They are a fine group and I hope that you will give them the same support that you gave me. After they are sworn in at the Lee-Jackson Dinner I know that they will hit the ground running. I hope each of you will take a moment and let them know that you are there to help them, if needed. Our camp has always been one of the most active in the Texas Division, and I fully expect to see that continue.

Our annual Lee-Jackson Dinner is scheduled for Saturday, January 14th at the Hilton Garden Inn in Temple. If you have not let Commander-elect James Kinnear know your menu choices and number attending, please give him a call as soon as possible. He can be reached at 254-541-6691. He needs to give the Hilton a meal count 72 hours before the event. I look forward to seeing all of you there.

As 2006 begins, I would like to ask everyone to think about their duty to their camp and how they can increase that support in the coming year. A camp is only as strong as the sum of the individual members. Consider what General Lee said to his youngest son: "Do your

## Camp Schedule

### January 14, 2006

Fort Worth Stock Show Parade, Downtown Fort Worth, 10:00 AM. Request period attire

### January 14, 2006

18<sup>th</sup> Annual Lee-Jackson Dinner, Hilton Hotel in Temple, 7:00 PM. Requested attire is period dress or formal or cocktail.

### February 14, 2006

Camp's monthly meeting at the Cotton Patch Cafe in Temple Mall, 7:00 PM. Speaker: TBA

### March 14, 2006

Camp's monthly meeting at the Cotton Patch Cafe in Temple Mall, 7:00 PM. Speaker: TBA

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duty in all things. You cannot do more. You should never wish to do less."

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## Lee-Jackson Dinner Set For Hilton

*(Continued from page 1)*

Since 1992 the annual event has been held in Temple. In 1998, the event was renamed the "Lee-Jackson" Dinner to not only honor Robert E. Lee, but also to honor Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson.

Many SCV Camps hold Lee or Lee-Jackson Dinners in the month of January. Robert E. Lee was born on January 19, 1807 and Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson was born on January 21, 1824.

Next Camp Meeting:  
January 14<sup>th</sup>  
7:00 P.M. at  
Hilton Garden Inn,  
Temple, TX  
Speaker:  
Brad Johnson  
"Lee After the War"

## Confederate Profile

(Continued from page 2)

ative status, President Davis authorized Courtenay to go flee to England. There



*A coal torpedo that was found on the desk of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, after Davis fled Richmond.*

he worked to purchase supplies for the Confederacy and to help raise funds.

He remained in Europe until the war was over. He tried to sale his torpedo to several European countries, but found no interest.

When he returned to America in 1867 he had lost all his businesses, although he opened a branch office of an English insurance company. Courtenay experienced health problems and died at the age of 53 near Winchester, Va. on September 3, 1875. He is buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Baltimore.

### *Camp Christmas Party in Little River*

About 40 people attended the Camp's 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Christmas Party, Southern Style at Bliss Hall in Little River.

The event featured some good old Texas Barbeque and a Silent Auction to raise funds for the Camp.



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**Next Meeting:**  
**January 14th**  
**Hilton Hotel**  
**Temple**  
**7:00 PM**