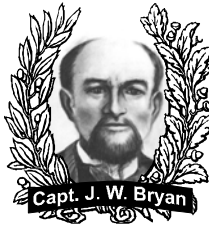


# THE CALCASIEU GREYS



Capt. James W. Bryan  
Camp 1390  
Sons of Confederate Veterans  
Lake Charles, Louisiana



Lt. Isaac Ryan  
Chapter 205  
Military Order of the  
Stars and Bars



**April 2005**

*Winner of the 1992-95 Dr. Paul Jon Miller National Newsletter Award*  
*Winner of the 1997 Harvey Hutchinson State Newsletter Award*  
<http://www.geocities.com/scv1390>

## Next Meeting

The next meeting of Captain James W. Bryan Camp 1390 will be at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 12, at the Southwest Louisiana Genealogy Library, 411 Pujos St. in Lake Charles. The program will be on the only War Between the States battle to occur in Southwest Louisiana, The Battle of Calcasieu Pass. It occurred on May 6, 1864 on what is now Monkey Island in Cameron.

In 1864 it was just a sharp bend in the Calcasieu River, the island being formed when the Calcasieu River Ship Channel was created in the 20th Century, to straighten out the river and get ships more directly to the Port of Lake Charles. In the battle, two Union blockading gunboats anchored in the river were attacked by about 350 Confederates with four pieces of light artillery.

## Notice of Special Convention

Section 79-11-199 (1) (b) of the Mississippi Nonprofit Corporation Act provides that a nonprofit corporation with members shall hold a special meeting of the members if the holders of at least five percent (5%) of the voting power sign, date and deliver to any corporate officer one or more written demands for the meeting describing the purpose or purposes for which it is to be held.

Having received over 2000 such requests from members as of 16 March 2005, I hereby declare that a special convention shall be held and it will be convened at the following time and place:

Location: Cabarrus Arena, Event Center B, Concord, North Carolina

Time: Saturday, April 23, 2005 at 10:00AM

This will be a one-day business-only convention for the purpose of considering amendments to the SCV Constitution to limit the number of past commanders-in-chief on the General Executive Council (GEC) to the immediate past three; and to remove the commander of the Military Order of the Stars and Bars (MOSB) from the board, since he is no longer required to be a member of the SCV. For a registration form and the proposed amendments, go to the SCV home page, [www.scv.org](http://www.scv.org).

Registration and credentials tables will be open Friday, April 22 from noon until 10:00PM at Hampton Inn, 9850 Weddington Road, Concord. The hotel is at

exit 49 off of Interstate 85. The phone number of the hotel is 704-979-5600. The registration and credentials tables will reopen at the Event Center B, Cabarrus Arena at 7:00AM on Saturday, April 23.

Directions to convention site: Cabarrus Arena, 4751 Highway 49 North, Concord, NC. Concord is just north of Charlotte, NC. From Charlotte, take I-85 north to Exit 48 (I-485). Turn right on I-485, travel to NC Hwy 49. Turn left on Hwy 49, continue east through Harrisburg - cross under US 601 and follow NC Hwy 49 for 3.2 miles. The Arena will be on the left. More information at [www.cabarrusarena.com](http://www.cabarrusarena.com)

Denne A. Sweeney  
Commander-in-Chief

## Niblett's Bluff Park To Open WBTS Museum

The Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau board of directors approved a \$5,000 tourism grant for Niblett's Bluff Park at its regular meeting Thursday.

Shelley Johnson, executive director, said this was one of the best grant applications she has seen for the Tourism Enhancement/Development Zone grant for promoting tourism in Calcasieu Parish.

She said the Niblett's Bluff Park Authority is also putting up \$15,400 for a total of \$20,400 to purchase an adjoining property and church facility to be used as a wedding chapel and house a museum to showcase artifacts from the War Between the States and the timber industry of the Niblett's Bluff area in West Calcasieu.

The park is the site of a Confederate fort with some of the best preserved wartime breastworks in the state. Part of an old railroad tram is still visible today and the Niblett's Bluff Park Authority is also preserving that.

Before the War Between the States and the coming of the Texas and New Orleans railroad, Niblett's Bluff was a river port on Louisiana side of the Sabine River.

During the war, the Confederates built high breastworks in preparation for battle. Captain George W. O'Brian's Company E, 11th Battalion (Spaight's) Texas Volunteers, built the military fortifications. Among the other units known to have been stationed there is the 1st (Buchel's) Texas Cavalry.

There were not battles at the fort, but an epidemic of measles broke out among the defenders in May 1863 and about 30 men died and were buried at the site.

The Niblett's Bluff Bible Church was built in 1911 and dedicated as a congregational church. It is located approximately seven miles west of Vinton, and about 1000 feet from the Sabine River. There is also a cemetery adjoining the church property, which contains gravesites dating back to the 1800s, and also adjoins the park property.

## **Niblett's Bluff in the Official Records**

Here is a copy of the order from Maj. Gen. J. Bankhead Magruder to fortify Niblett's Bluff. It is found in the Official Records, Series 1, Vol. 26, Part II, page 101:

Headquarters Texas, &C.,

Houston, July 2, 1863.

Lieut. Col. C.G. Forshey,  
Chief Consulting Engineer:

In obedience to Special Orders, No. 164, from these headquarters, dated June 18 ultimo, you will organize a party of one assistant engineer and such hands of labor as you may require, and proceed to the Sabine River, at the terminus of the Texas and New Orleans Railroad. You will make such reconnaissance of the approaches to the river opposite and near to the terminus of that road, and especially at or near Niblett's Bluff, as will enable you to judge what works may be necessary for the protection of the road from the approaches and attacks of the enemy, should he be disposed to siege or break it, or to invade the State of Texas in that direction.

You will locate and plan and lay out upon the ground such works as you would recommend, and report the same, with diagrams and full information, to these headquarters.

You will then proceed to examine the systems of roads and the ferries used in travel from Louisiana into Texas, as well as the bluffs and fords of the Sabine River at and near Burr's Ferry and Sabine Town, and in like manner make your reconnaissance of the kinds of fortifications and the extent of the same as may seem necessary to resist the approaches of the enemy designing an invasion of the State of Louisiana.

You will lay out and locate such works, with such topographic details as may be embraced in a reconnaissance, keeping in view the necessity of protecting such forces as may be charged with the defense, and for a period against a siege; and works capable of containing and quartering comfortably 5,000 men would not be too great.

You will use your best judgment as to the mode of defending the important passes, if any there be, tetes-de-pont at the ferries, or advance works beyond the same. But it will probably be found expedient to locate the main works with bastions, &c., at a distance of several miles from the river, on the Texas side.

You will call upon quartermasters for forage and the temporary use of such tools and implements as you may require for the prompt and thorough execution of these instructions.

I am, &c.,

J. Bankhead Magruder,  
Major-General, Commanding

## **C-In-C Sweeney Announces Appointment**

The Commander-in-Chief is pleased to announce the appointment of Greg Manning of the Texas Division to the very important Recruiting and Retention Committee. This committee is arguably the most important committee in the SCV, as very few committees play such a key role in the long-term growth of the organization.

Compatriot Manning has long been a key player in the Texas Division, and brings formidable skills to the table. A member of the SCV since 1996, he has served in numerous camp offices for the Major Robert M. White Camp 1250 in Temple, Texas. Additionally, he has served his Division as the Chief of Staff and Adjutant, and currently serves as the elected 2nd Division Commander of the Texas Division. Because of his hard work and strong ethics, Greg is one of the most respected members of the Texas Division.

A retired military officer, Greg has shown tremendous organizational capability in serving as the chief recruiter for the Texas Division. Under Greg's watch, a very well-organized Recruiting Officer Training program for the SCV has been developed for the Texas Division, and is under consideration for use by the National Organization. His skills in organization and training will be a strong asset to the committee and the SCV.

Compatriot Manning can be reached by email at his address of [greg.manning@us.army.mil](mailto:greg.manning@us.army.mil) or [txdivscv@earthlink.net](mailto:txdivscv@earthlink.net).

## **PORT HUDSON**

The Longest Siege in  
American Military History  
By Michael Dan Jones

At about 11 p.m. March 14, 1863 on the Mississippi River at the Confederate bastion of Port Hudson, Louisiana, a rocket flashed, a bonfire on the west bank flared and a tremendous bombardment of heavy artillery erupted when Union Admiral David G. Farragut's fleet of seven warships was discovered trying pass the powerful Southern fortifications.

Farragut had hoped he could pass the enemy garrison before his ships were discovered on the moonless night. But alert pickets of Maj. Gen. Franklin Gardner's command detected the movement in the river and alerted the gray-clad gunners on the east bank, as the bonfires illuminated the Yankee vessels.

While Farragut had 95 heavy guns, his wooden ships were very vulnerable to the Confederate batteries.

"Heavy shells were falling fast and thick. It seemed as if the whole heavens were ablaze with thunder and lightning," a witness said.

The artillery duel continued until about 2 a.m. and when it was over, only two Yankee ships managed to pass, including Farragut's flagship, Hartford.

Farragut had lashed his ships together by twos to make the dangerous passage, except for one ship.

That one was the U.S.S. Mississippi which was destroyed by its own crew when it went aground on a mudflat. In all, Union forces lost 121 men killed and wounded.

That night battle on the river marked the beginning of one of the most momentous sieges in military history.

Port Hudson was the southern anchor of the South's control of the Mississippi River. About 150 miles to the north, at Vicksburg, Miss., the "Confederate Gibraltar," Gen. Ulysses S. Grant was maneuvering against the northern anchor.

As long as the Confederacy controlled that stretch of the river, the South benefited from the vast reserves of supplies and manpower in the Trans-Mississippi.

For the North, gaining unfettered control of the river would divide the Confederacy in two, deny those war supplies to the South, and reopen the river the mid-western commerce.

The terrain along the east bank of the Mississippi River was perfect for the defenders. It was laced with natural ravines which were incorporated into the defensive perimeter by Confederate engineers.

Earthworks were constructed that were virtually impregnable. Such names for the Confederate strong points along the four-and-a-half mile defensive line as Fort Desperate, the Priest Cap, Slaughter's Field and the Citadel have become forever etched in the pages of the history of the War for Southern Independence.

The Confederate garrison of roughly 6,800 troops from Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and a detachment from Texas faced 30,000 Mid-Westerners and New Englanders under the command of Union Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks, who was one of many of Lincoln's political generals.

Banks had made a faint toward Port Hudson on March 14 as Farragut's ill-fated river passage was attempted.

In April, Banks' 19th Corps campaigned west of Port Hudson driving the Confederate Army of Western Louisiana from Bayou Teche and then captured Alexandria in the middle of the state.

The Northern invaders then turned and attacked Port Hudson from the north, south and east. The Yankee fleet sealed off the Confederate garrison and the 48-day siege officially began May 23, 1863.

Gardner had been ordered to evacuate, but was trapped inside Port Hudson before he could carry out the order.

The scorching Louisiana summer made the siege a particularly grueling ordeal for both sides. The heat and insects took a heavy toll of the besieging Mid-Westerners, New Yorkers and New Englanders.

Banks made his first fatal assault on the garrison May 27, 1863 but poor communications made the attack an exercise in futility.

The assault was supposed to be launched at the same time all along the line to prevent the Confederates from shifting troops around.

However vague orders, the difficult terrain and uncoordinated subordinates resulted in the attack was carried out in piecemeal fashion that was easily turned back at every point by the defenders.

On the north end of the line, the Confederates handily turned back assaults on Commissary Hill and Fort Desperate and along the Telegraph Road.

A delay in the attack on the south end enabled the Southerners to redeploy forces there in time to repulse the federal attack across the aptly named Slaughter's Field and against the Priest Cap.

The attack on May 27 was also momentous because it marked the first large-scale use of black Union troops in the war.

Although the Northern press used the event for propaganda purposes, the black troops, belonging to the First and Third Louisiana Native Guards, suffered heavy casualties when they advanced across open ground against the strongly fortified position held by the 39th Mississippi Infantry.

The day was a disaster for the North. The invaders lost almost 2,000 killed and wounded while the Confederates lost fewer than 275 casualties.

Regrouping, Banks ordered a relentless bombardment of the defensive line and sharpshooters for both sides made Port Hudson an extremely dangerous place.

The Yankees received reinforcements June 13, and Banks demanded Gardner's surrender. However the New York born Confederate commander replied, "My duty requires me to defend this position, and therefore I decline."

Banks next move was a massive artillery barrage and he ordered another massive assault on the morning of June 14.

The invaders primary target was the Priest Cap in the middle of the Confederate line. The blue-coated infantry set out at 4 a.m. against the strong position but the Southern defenders repulsed assault after assault.

The ground was littered with hundreds of dead and wounded Mid-Westerners, New Yorkers and New Englanders.

Banks gave up the attempt by noon, after suffering 203 killed, 1,401 wounded and 188 missing out of the 6,000 Yankee attackers.

The Confederates had 3,750 men defending the Priest Cap and their casualties were comparatively few, including 22 killed and 25 wounded.

The ordeal continued in the miserable heat and nightmarish landscape made even more hideous by the death and battle scarred ground.

Inside Confederate lines, the food situation was becoming critical and the Southerners were reduced to eating rats and mules.

The Union besiegers continued digging ever closer to the Confederate trenches, and were also busy digging a tunnel under the defenders which they hoped to set off in a tremendous explosion.

However events at Vicksburg sealed Port Hudson's fate. The larger garrison surrendered July 4, making Port Hudson's position untenable.

When Gardner learned of the surrender of Vicksburg on July 7, he asked Banks to negotiate terms for ending the siege. On July 9, the Confederates grounded arms, thus ending the longest true siege in American military history.

Besides carrying out one of the most valiant defenses of the war, the Confederates tied up nearly 40,000 Union soldiers for two months. Southern casualties amounted to 750 killed and wounded, while another 250 died of disease.

For the North, victory came at a tremendous price. The federals lost nearly 10,000 men from battle death, dead of disease (including sun stroke) and wounded.

Today, the Mississippi River, which changed course in the 19th Century, is nowhere to be seen. The northern end of the Confederate battle lines are well preserved in Port Hudson State Commemorative Area.

However, the south end of the battlefield has been drastically altered due to industrial and residential developments.

The Port Hudson battlefield was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1974 by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The commemorative park has the six miles of walking trails winding around and through original trenches and fortifications. There is an outstanding interpretive center with displays of historic artifacts from the siege, photographs of participants, an audio-visual program and a computerized databank of every man in the garrison.

Port Hudson State Commemorative Area is located on U.S. Highway 61, 15 miles north of Baton Rouge.

For Port Hudson Battlefield News, check out this Web site:  
<http://www.porthudson.fcpages.com/porthudson.htm>.

## **Confederates From Bourbon Kingdom To Be Honored**

Compatriot Pierluigi Rossi of Camp 1390 reports there will be a memorial service May 7 and 8 at Civitella del Tronto, located on the mountain east of Rome, Italy, for the former Bourbon soldiers who fought for the Confederacy. After the rape of the Bourbon Kingdom in 1860, and forcible annexation to Italy, Joseph Chandler, U.S. Consul in Naples, on request by Chatham Roberdeau Wheat, the former Bourbon soldiers, estimated to be about 500, were sent to New Orleans on the American ships Charles & Jane, Utile, Elisabetta and Olyphant. They were enlisted in Louisiana military units, such as Ferri Salvatore, Company I, 10th Louisiana Infantry, who was paroled at Appomattox, April 10, 1865.

Others include Foni Evaristo of

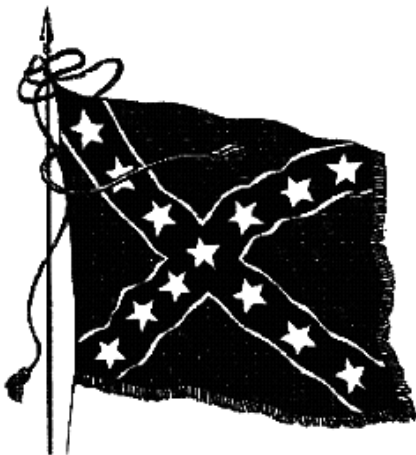
Company E, Ogden's Louisiana Cavalry, paroled at Gainsville, Alabama on May 12, 1865.

At the ceremony, the Confederate Stars and Bars and battleflag will fly beside the Bourbon Flag. Attending the ceremony will be Prince Charles, heir to the Bourbon crown. Anyone visiting Italy at that time is most welcome.

For more information contact Compatriot Rossi by email, [pierrossi@hotmail.com](mailto:pierrossi@hotmail.com).

Compatriot Rossi says the kingdom was invaded without any declaration of war. Villages were burned and the invading army applied the utmost brutality. In comparison Sherman's march to Savannah and Sheridan in the Valley would be considered charitable. Between 1861 and 1870, 79,615 people were summarily executed. Churches were burned and priests executed without trial.

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**FLY THE  
FLAG!**



**The South's Defenders**