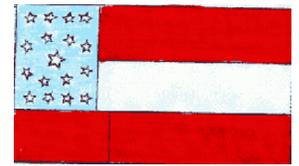




# The Vidette

## CALIFORNIA DIVISION

### Sons of Confederate Veterans



The J. P. Gillis Flag



Division Newsletter Issue 4. Published by Division Adjutant Vernon R. Padgett, 10 September 2002 [vp09@earthlink.net](mailto:vp09@earthlink.net)

## New Military Service Award for Descendents of Confederates: UDC

By Kathy Spit, California Division  
UDC Recorder of Military Service Awards

[I am pleased to feature this issue's lead story from  
our UDC Compatriot --Ed.]

The Southern Cross of Honor was the first military award offered to Confederate Veterans by The United Daughters of the Confederacy. The Athens Chapter, Athens, Georgia, bestowed the first Southern Cross upon Captain Alexander S. Erwin on April 26, 1900. Only a Confederate veteran could wear the Southern Cross of Honor, and it could only be bestowed through the United Daughters of the Confederacy in recognition of his honorable service, and his loyalty and devotion to the South.



**Southern Cross of Honor, front and back**

The crosses and medals currently offered by the United Daughters of the Confederacy are an outgrowth of the Southern Cross of Honor. These crosses and medals are awarded to veterans who have served or are serving in defense of America. They are

the most prized awards conferred by the UDC, and are the only civilian insignia that may be worn on a military uniform.



**World War I Cross-- note "1917-1918." WWII Cross of Military Service belonged to Mrs. Spit's father.**

The UDC California Division has been awarding crosses and medals to America's veterans since 1920. The Cross of Military Service recognizes veterans who served in the combat areas of WWI, WWII, Korean Conflict, and in the Vietnam Conflict.

The National Defense Medal recognizes those who served in the Armed Forces on active duty, but do not qualify for the Korean or Vietnam Cross of Military Service. It is also given to those who served on active duty during the Persian Gulf: Desert Shield/Desert Storm. For those who served in the military during peacetime, or are not eligible for a

Cross or a Medal, the UDC awards a Certificate of Appreciation for Military Service. These awards are given in accordance with the requirements below.



#### UDC Korea and Vietnam Crosses of Military Service

To be eligible for a UDC Cross, Medal or Certificate of Appreciation, you must be a *lineal (direct) descendant* of a Confederate soldier or sailor who served honorably, and, did not take the Oath of Allegiance prior to April 9, 1865, and must have served 90 days or longer on active duty, and, has been honorably discharged from one of the branches of military service recognized by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. These are the United States Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, and Merchant Marines.

Red Cross workers, students under the War Program, National Guard, and/or Reserves (unless called to active duty during eligible periods) are not eligible for a UDC Cross or Medal. They may be eligible for the Certificate of Appreciation.

The UDC realizes there are many veterans who served their country loyally and honorably who are not *lineal* descendants of a Confederate soldier or sailor, and as such, are not eligible for a UDC Cross or Medal. For these cases, the UDC has adopted the *Meritorious Service Award*, which will be available after November 2002.

This award will recognize *collateral descendants* who are veterans of a war or conflict. These include cousins, brothers, and uncles of direct Confederate ancestors. The first Meritorious Service Award will be presented to the UDC President General for the Memorial Building in Richmond, Virginia at the 2002 Annual UDC General Convention. California Division expects to receive the information for this

new award immediately after Convention.

If you are a veteran or are serving in the military now, and would like more information on the Military Service Awards offered by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, please contact me at:

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UDC California Division Recorder of Military  
Service Awards  
2041 Fifth Street  
La Verne, California 91750-4430  
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## California SCV Web Site Has New Look

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Check [www.scvcalifornia.net](http://www.scvcalifornia.net) for the revised and fresh-looking California SCV website. Thanks to Gary Waltrip, Commander Camp 1440, The Stainless Banner, San Jose, for putting his expertise to the service of the California SCV Division. See Gary's own site at [www.RebelGray.com](http://www.RebelGray.com). Thanks also to Adjutant John Kindred of Camp 302 San Diego for his outstanding service in the past in getting our web site up and running.



## Watch found on Hunley may reveal Dixon's past

Saturday 7 September 2002

BY BRUCE SMITH  
Associated Press

While scientists use high-tech computers to study the Confederate submarine H.L. Hunley, a simple pocket watch and chain could be crucial to unlocking the past of the vessel's commander.

The watch, the chain and a fob - a small piece of gold attached to the chain - were excavated earlier this year from a block of sediment removed from the sub.

"The fob is going to settle once and for all where George Dixon is from," said state Sen. Glenn McConnell, chairman of the South Carolina Hunley Commission. "Some have said he is from Kentucky. Some have said he is from different places, and somebody has even mentioned he might be from Ohio."

Dixon commanded the Hunley when it sank off Charleston in 1864 after downing the Union blockade ship Housatonic, becoming the first sub in history to sink an enemy warship. It was raised two years ago and brought to a conservation lab in North Charleston.

The watch recovered from the sediment was corroded shut, but researchers found a replica from Scotland.

"The replica we got out of Scotland has a Masonic dial on it. ... It was not exactly like Dixon's on the cover, but it was close," McConnell said. "Now the question is, was it (the Hunley watch) a Masonic watch or not?"

Researchers believe Lt. George Dixon was a Mason.

McConnell said the fob has markings indicating an exact chapter of the fraternal organization. "That chapter has been in continuous existence. Those records should be there," he said.

Hunley researchers won't yet say which chapter it is in order to give them a chance to review the records, McConnell said.

Scientists also hope to use computers to analyze a picture of a sub crewman, long thought to be Dixon.

The only picture of a crewman was a tintype provided by Sally Necessary, the great-granddaughter of Queenie Bennett, Dixon's sweetheart. Last year, historians concluded it was not Dixon because the tie, coat lapels, boots and furniture were from after the Civil War.

McConnell said scientists plan to use computers to determine whether the picture corresponds to Dixon's remains.

"It's a fairly easy thing for us to do to see if that face will fit or not," he said. "We need to resolve that question once and for all - is it, or is it not, George Dixon? If it is, we'll have our first face."

The commission recently asked the state Budget and Control Board to review competing proposals by Charleston, North Charleston and Mount Pleasant to build a Hunley museum.

A decision could be made by the end of October, but McConnell said the decision could simply be to delay any decision.

"People shouldn't ride on the conclusion it's going

to be one of the three," he said. "It could be we decide it will be none of the three."

A decision on how to best conserve the Hunley is at least a year away, and the commission could seek new museum proposals later.

"Knowing it will be a year before we even decide on a conservation process, we have a year more than I thought we had," McConnell said.

Learn more at the [Friends of the Hunley](#) web site

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## The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down

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by Peter Viney

[http://theband.hiof.no/articles/dixie\\_viney.html](http://theband.hiof.no/articles/dixie_viney.html)

**The choice of names is perfect for a story about the War, which was described as 'The War Between Brothers'-- Cain and Abel.**

This was the track that came to be seen as most typical of *The Band* album. Levon Helm sings the song in the persona of Virgil Caine, a Confederate ex-soldier who served on the Danville supply train until General Stoneman's Union cavalry tore up the tracks. The Richmond and Danville Rail Road was the main supply route into Petersburg where Lee's Army of Northern Virginia were holding their defensive line to protect Richmond.

### Robbie Robertson

*I went from Toronto to the Mississippi Delta, and ... I liked the way people talked, I liked the way they moved. I liked being in a place that had rhythm in the air. I thought 'No wonder they invented rock 'n' roll here. Everything sounds like music. ... and I got to come into this world, a cold outsider - cold literally from Canada ... and because I didn't take it for granted, it made me write something like [The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down](#). These old men would say, 'Yeah, but never mind Robbie. One of these days the South is going to rise again.' I didn't take it as a joke.*

### Ralph Gleason

*Nothing I have read ... has brought home the overwhelming human sense of history that this song does. The only thing I can relate it to at all is 'The Red*

*Badge of Courage'. It's a remarkable song, the rhythmic structure, the voice of Levon and the bass line with the drum accents and then the heavy close harmony of Levon, Richard and Rick in the theme, make it seem impossible that this isn't some traditional material handed down from father to son straight from that winter of 1865 to today. It has that ring of truth and the whole aura of authenticity. [2]*

### **Ed Ward**

*"Virgil Kane is the name and I served on the Danville train," sings Levon in **The Night they Drove Old Dixie Down**. Looking at the cover photos, you'd be willing to believe that this song dates from the time in which it was set, the last days of the War. [4]*

### **Jonathan Taplin**

It was May and they'd just finished it the night before. They said it'd come out fast and hard and clean. It was just the most moving experience I'd had for, God, I don't know how long. Because for me, being a Northern liberal kid who'd been involved in the Civil Rights movement and had a whole attitude towards the South, well I loved the music but I didn't understand where white Southerners were coming from. And to have it all in just three and a half minutes, the sense of dignity and place and tradition, all those things ... well, the next day after I'd recovered, I went to Robbie and asked him, "How did that come out of you?" And he just said that being with Levon so long in his life and being in that place at that time ... it was so inside him that he wanted to write the song right at Levon, to let him know how much those things meant to him. [5]

### **David Powell**

In the closing days of the war, Major General George Stoneman, commander of the East Tennessee district, sent a division of Union troops across the rugged Blue Ridge Mountains into northwest North

Carolina and southwest Virginia. Their orders were not to fight battles but to punish and demoralize the Southern civilians. Stoneman, having served under Sherman in the Georgia campaign, had learned Sherman's methods of "total war"-- targeting civilians in order to destroy the enemy's will to resist.

Stoneman's cavalry were still exacting revenge on the Southern civilians at the time General Robert E. Lee was surrendering at Appomattox. Stoneman's forces plundered & destroyed tons of supplies, including food stocks & grain, along with miles of railroad supply tracks. They assisted in capturing President Jefferson Davis.

After the war, Stoneman remained in the regular army until he retired in 1871, at the rank of colonel. He moved to California and lived on a large estate called "Los Robles" near Los Angeles. As a Democrat, he held several public offices and was Governor of the state from 1883 to 1887.

Where the borders of Tennessee, North Carolina & Virginia meet, his name lives in infamy. The exploits of his plundering cavalry troops in the last days of a defeated Confederacy are still a part of local legend. I feel that Robbie Robertson succeeded in capturing this sentiment accurately in the song. [8]

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### **Original Lyrics by J. Robbie Robertson**

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Virgil Caine is the name and I served on the  
Danville train  
'Till Stoneman's cavalry came and tore up the tracks  
again  
In the winter of '65, we were hungry, just barely  
alive  
By May the tenth, Richmond had fell, it's a time I  
remember oh so well



**Richmond, May 1865**

The night they drove Old Dixie down and the bells were ringing  
They went La-la-la la-la-la, la-la-la la-la-la, la-la-la-la  
The night they drove Old Dixie down and the people were singin',

Back with my wife in Tennessee, when one day she called to me  
"Virgil, quick, come see, there goes Robert E. Lee!"  
Now I don't mind choppin' wood, and I don't care if the money's no good  
Ya take what ya need and ya leave the rest  
But they should never have taken the very best

The night they drove old Dixie down and the bells were ringing  
The night they drove old Dixie down and all the people were singin', they went  
Na-na-na na-na-na, na-na-na na-na-na, na-na-na-na

Like my father before me, I will work the land  
And like my brother before me, who took a rebel stand

He was just eighteen, proud and brave  
But a Yankee laid him in his grave  
I swear by the mud below my feet  
You can't raise a Caine back up when he's in defeat

The night they drove old Dixie down and the bells were ringing  
The night they drove old Dixie down and all the people were singin', they went  
Na-na-na na-na-na, na-na-na na-na-na, na-na-na-na

The night they drove old Dixie down and all the bells were ringing  
The night they drove old Dixie down and the people were singin', they went  
Na-na-na na-na-na, na-na-na na-na-na, na-na-na-na



*On May 10, 1865, President Jefferson Davis was captured near Irwinville, Georgia.*

In 1969, the paean for the departed Old South seemed radically conservative to Americans. However, Robbie had subtlety and detailed historical knowledge on his side [33], that gave the song a contemporary anti-war dimension with quotable lines like *They should never have taken the very best*, with its immediate application to Vietnam, and the careful placing of Virgil's home, *'Back with my wife in Tennessee'*. Confederate Tennessee conjured up sympathetic images of sturdy self-reliant farmers, rather than pictures of wealthy slaveholders in white-pillared mansions among the cotton fields further south. East Tennessee – and the Appalachian mountains in general – were not major slave-holding areas. Levon Helm's home in Arkansas is in the hinterland of Memphis, Tennessee. You'd look across the river at West Tennessee.



### Greil Marcus

It is hard for me to comprehend how any Northerner, raised on a very different war than Virgil Kane's, could listen to this song without finding himself changed. You can't get out from under the singer's truth—not the whole truth, simply his truth—and the little autobiography closes the gap between us. The performance leaves behind a feeling that for all our oppositions, every American still shares this old event, because to this day, none of us has escaped its impact. What we share is an ability to respond to a story like this one.[35]

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## Life Membership

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Many members choose to join as Life Members. Apply for Life Membership by completing the application, available on the SCV.org national website, and soon to be posted on our California Division site at SCVCalifornia.net. Fee is \$300 if you are 59 or younger; \$200 for those aged 60 to 69, and

\$100 for those aged 70 and older. Mail the check and form to HQ. Life Members are assigned to Camp 2 and are also listed on local Camp rosters with "LM" instead of an expiration date. Division and Camp dues still need to be paid annually.

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## THE FORGOTTEN BATTLE OF FORT PILLOW

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On April 12th, 1864, at a little insignificant fort, several hundred black union soldiers fought a hopeless battle against a Confederate general who was destined to become the first grand wizard of the KKK. This battle had a domino effect, trickling down the long road of history. Today, it is just a footnote in most history books.

No other event of the civil war has such a profound impact on the twentieth century, especially on the American culture and our way of thinking.

**-excerpt from the documentary**

In the latter part of the Civil War, Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest attacked Fort Pillow with 1,500 troops. At that time, the fort was defended by 550 Union soldiers, half of whom were black.



After gaining the advantage, Forrest demanded total surrender. The Unionists refused and the ensuing Confederate assault resulted in very heavy Federal casualties, especially among the brave, yet fated, African-American soldiers. The explosive controversy whether it was a massacre continues to this day.

Director and SCV Compatriot Stan Armstrong effectively uses footage of the historic fort, battle

scenes with Civil War re-enactors and mixes in a number of expert interviews to make an very informative documentary of this little known, yet significant event in American history.



**SCV Member Stan Armstrong (right) directing The Forgotten Battle of Fort Pillow**

For order information on The Forgotten Battle of Fort Pillow, e-mail [desertrosefilms@www.hotmail.com](mailto:desertrosefilms@www.hotmail.com)

Watch the Desert Rose Production site for updates and changes at [www.desertrosefilms.7p.com](http://www.desertrosefilms.7p.com)

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## SCV Logo Credit Card

Confederate flag logo, with soldier image, VISA. I have three applications left—contact me at [vp09@earthlink.net](mailto:vp09@earthlink.net) APR 12.65%. --Ed.

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## ATM Adjutant Calls for Visits to Oklahoma Confederate Pension Records Site

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Dave Easterling writes: "Visit the pension index for Confederate Veterans from Oklahoma. Our hit rate is getting real low and the State Library (who maintains the index) is threatening to drop it due to low use. Could everyone take a minute to go to the site so the count will increase? Some of you may find it useful.

<http://www.odl.state.ok.us/oar/docs/pension.pdf>

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