



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



Recipient – 2011 and 2012 Dr. George R. Tabor “Most Distinguished Camp” Award

"To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we will commit the vindication of the cause for which we fought. To your strength will be given the defense of the Confederate soldier's good name, the guardianship of his history, the emulation of his virtues, the perpetuation of those principles which he loved and which you love also, and those ideals which made him glorious and which you also cherish."

Camp Officers

Commander

Graham F. Smith

1st Lt. Commander

Marshall Carroll

2nd Lt. Commander

Bill Beckham

Adjutant/Secretary

Ellis Harvey

3rd Brigade Commander/Chaplain

Kelly V. Crocker

Color Sergeant

Anthony Harvey

Color Guard Drill Instructor

Richard Witt

Past Commanders

Bill Beckham

Marshall Carroll

Doug Croley

Editor's Comments

David R. Cline

Greetings Compatriots! Finley's Brigade has been at it again. Members are doing so much to forward the charge that I do not have enough space to write about everything that is being done by the camp. Thank you to those which have submitted articles for the newsletter. I could not fit all the articles and pictures in this issue. Marshall, I will get your article in next month.

The camp started this month out with a bang by hosting the best Lee/Jackson Southern Heritage Event ever on February 2nd. The ladies and gentleman of the committee out did themselves. The new location at Mission San Luis was outstanding and the food was delicious. The guest speaker was David Chaltas. He did an outstanding presentation in the first person of General Robert E. Lee. The music of the South was played by Joyful Noise and as before they did a great job. The Finley's Brigade Color/Honor Guard got to show off the new Enfield rifles. It was an honor to be part of the event posting the

colors and standing guard at the entrance greeting the guests this year. The silent auction had the most items I had ever seen and the guest enjoyed winning their bids. The year's event was the grandest affair I have ever been to and I cannot wait to see what the committee comes up with next year.

The Finley's Brigade Color/Honor Guard was again requested this year to post the colors last weekend for the UDC at Natural Bridge. The Commander also had a recruiting booth set up at Natural Bridge this past weekend. I was there a few hours on Sunday and saw the Commander, Marshall Carroll, Kelly Crocker, and JR Miller in action. They were nonstop talking to guests about the SCV and the camp.

The rest of this issue shares a little more of what the camp members have been up to lately. I am proud to be a member of such an active camp.

Tallahassee Veterans Village

Graham F. Smith

We, Finley's Brigade, are committed to supporting the men and women of the Tallahassee Veterans Village. Like our ancestors, these people joined the military and made a commitment to defend their country from any and all enemies. These folks have come in to difficult times in their lives and need a little help getting their lives in order.

Therefore, to tell us how we can assist the residents of the village, we are honored to have Mr. Shawn Noles, Veterans Village Director, as our guest speaker at our March Camp meeting. Members of our camp have donated a few items already. However, Mr. Noles will give us information on how we can better serve those who have so willingly served us and our nation.

From what little we know, these veterans need the basic necessities in life. Some of the items we have already donated are toiletries (tooth paste, tooth brushes, soap, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, and etc), bathroom tissue, and men's and women's clothing. We will learn more about what is needed and how we can help. For more information on Tallahassee Veterans Village please go to the following link: <http://florida-veterans.org/tallahassee/>.

At Tuesday's meeting I ask that each member bring what they are able so that we, Finley's Brigade, can present Mr. Noles a token of our gratitude for the veterans who need our assistance here in Tallahassee. I'll see you Tuesday, March 12 at the Golden Corral restaurant at 6:00 for supper and fellowship and at 6:45 for the meeting. Y'all bring something for the Vets.

The Original "Finley's Brigade"

Kelly Crocker

When I talk to people about the Sons of Confederate Veterans, I tell them with pride, that I am a member of Finley's Brigade. We have long been a top caliber Camp, even before SCV HQ made it official by recognizing us as the "Most Distinguished Camp of the Year" for the last two years. All of us have a part in making our Camp, the "Best of the Best". I hope that we will continue to serve in a way that brings honor to our Camp's namesake.

Now, most of you know the biographical information on Jesse Johnson Finley. How he was born in Tennessee, was once mayor of Memphis, and how he practiced law. After moving to Jackson County, Florida, he continued his law career, served in the State Senate, and was elected as a judge in the Confederate court. In 1862, he resigned from

the court, and enlisted as a private in Company D of the 6th Florida Infantry Regiment. He was immediately elected Captain and in less than a month promoted to Colonel of the 6th. But, how and when did Finley's Brigade come to be?



Jesse Johnson Finley

Men from Florida served throughout the war on many fronts, in the CS Army, CS Navy, Marines, and Militia. The majority of Floridians served in either the Army of Northern Virginia (ANV) or the Army of Tennessee (AOT). The 2nd, 5th, and 8th Florida Infantry Regiments were quickly brigaded together in the ANV. They were later joined by the 9th, 10th, and 11th Infantry Regiments, with all six comprising the Florida Brigade in the ANV. However, Florida regiments in the AOT were not brigaded together until late in 1863, and were often parceled out to brigades from other states. Florida units served together at times but

were never under a single command, or a General from Florida, until November of 1863. Florida units in the Army of Tennessee were: the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 6th, and 7th Infantry Regiments, and the 1st Cavalry Regiment.

In October of 1863, AOT Commander, General Braxton Bragg, set out to reorganize the units under his command. The primary reason was to weed out officers who had been trying to get him sacked. The other reason was to streamline the commands of the shrinking Army of Tennessee. One of the changes that the General made was the consolidation of all Florida troops in the AOT, which created the Florida Brigade. The next decision that had to be made was; which one of the six Colonels in the brigade would become its commander? In the General's order he stipulated that the Florida Brigade would be commanded by the senior Colonel, until a General could be confirmed by Congress. Colonel William Scott Dilworth of Monticello was the senior Colonel, but he was on furlough at this time. Col. J.J. Finley was next in line and assumed temporary command of the new brigade. There was a lot of political wrangling going on for the promotion to General for this new brigade. General Simon B. Buckner had recommended both Colonels Troup Maxwell and Jesse Finley, while giving priority to Maxwell. Major General John C. Breckenridge had recommended Colonel Dilworth. Florida Governor John Milton appealed to President Davis to promote Col. Finley. In reality, Col Finley was the only one in the running, since, President Davis liked General Bragg, and General Bragg liked Colonel Finley. Colonel Jesse Finley was promoted to Brigadier General on November 16, 1863.

The new structure of the Florida units and its Commander set well with the Florida troops. They now had their own brigade with their

own General. The men respected and admired General Finley. The Florida Brigade soon became known as Finley's Brigade, and would keep that name until the end of the war, and then some. Finley's Brigade first fought together at Missionary Ridge, in late November of 1863. They performed bravely and received accolades from Generals Bragg, Breckenridge, and Bate.

The Army of Tennessee spent the first months of 1864, wintering near Dalton, Georgia. During this time, General Bragg stepped down as AOT Commander and was replaced with General Joseph E. Johnston. General Johnston first priority was to build-up the morale of his worn down army. He made sure that the men were paid, clothed, and fed. Brigadier General Finley took part in this effort also. What supplies he could not obtain through the Confederate Army; he appealed directly to Governor Milton for help. General Finley also sent troops to Florida to pick-up supplies donated by faithful Floridians.

Soldiers' letters from this time at Dalton tell us a little about General Finley. Washington Ives wrote "on Christmas Eve a crowd gathered around the General's tent as the Florida Brigade Band serenaded their commander. The band played "My Old Kentucky Home" and called for the General who responded with a short and appropriate speech. The band then, at Gen'l F's request played Dixie, Marseille, and a waltz known by the band as the 'Lovely Waltz'". Another letter by John Inglis recalls the General's participation in the famed snowball fight of March 22, 1864. It seems that Gen'l Finley led the Floridians and Kentuckians in attack on Stewart's Division. Inglis wrote that General Finley was at the head of his troops leading "with the enthusiasm of a School Boy". General Finley is also mentioned in the book "The Great Revival in the Southern Armies" where Reverend J. J. Hutchinson states "I preached

to Gen. Finley's Brigade, where the General and his staff were present, and he united audibly with our prayers."

By May the Confederate Army were engaged by the federals in what we now call the Atlanta Campaign. Early in the campaign, at Resaca, the General was twice wounded. The first came as an artillery shell impacted a tree near the Floridians line, sending splinters flying in every direction. John Hill reported "That one of these fragments struck General Finley in the face. He passed his hand over his face and saw blood, and remarked: 'This is the first blood that I have lost in this war.'" The next day another yankee artillery round severed a heavy limb from a tree near Finley's headquarters; in falling the limb crashed down on the General's shoulder. General Finley refused treatment for two days, until he was compelled to see the surgeon. A quick examination revealed that he had a broken collar bone and he was sent home to convalesce. General Finley rejoined his brigade in August 1864 at Jonesboro, Georgia. On August 31, 1864 the General was wounded again. In the War Between the States, most Brigadier Generals led from the front, and General Finley was no exception. In an attempt to rally the Florida boys at Jonesboro, an enemy round hit the General's foot and killed his mount. It has been written that 'the General declined to be sent to the rear until all of his wounded were embarked, and that in doing so, he narrowly escaped capture.' Jesse J. Finley would never lead the Florida Brigade again, although he did continue to serve with General Cobb in Georgia. It is interesting that in his absence, the brigade was still known as Finley's Brigade. Even, Sam Watkins, author of "Company Aytch" refers to the Florida Brigade as 'Finney's Floridians' in his account of the Battle of Franklin in December, 1864.

After the War, J. J. Finley returned to Florida where he had a long career in public service. He served in the Florida Legislature and in the Courtroom. He lived in Lake City and later in Gainesville, Florida where he has an elementary school named for him. The General and his family are buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Gainesville.

The Bible tells us that “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches”, and I believe that “Finley’s Brigade” is a good one.

Y’all think about it,

McCrea Cemetery – Plains, GA

Kelly Crocker

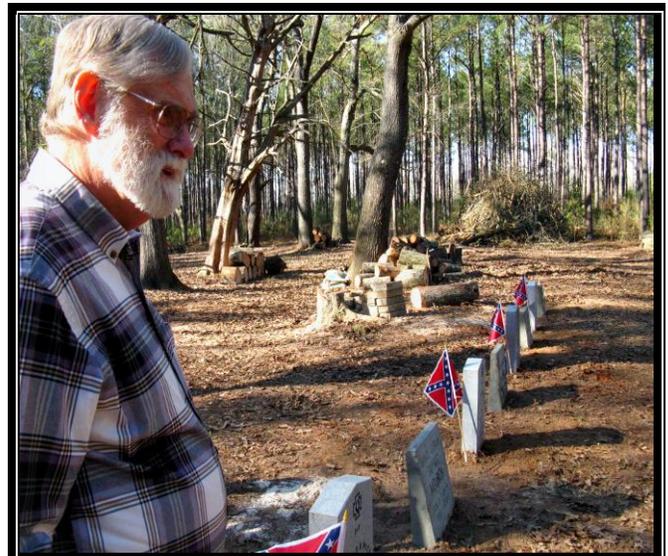
On Saturday, February the 9th, men from Finley’s Brigade travelled to Plains, Georgia for a cemetery work day. Our main purpose for the day was to assist the family of Compatriot David Brinkley in cleaning up the McCrea Cemetery and setting headstones for his Confederate ancestors. When we arrived we were greeted by David and his cousins George Gerbert and Charles McCrea. They asked us to focus on the removal of several trees first, and then set the stones. The men of Finley’s proceeded to fell, cut-up, and stacked-up approximately thirty trees.

Then we set Veterans Headstones for four Confederate Soldiers, all who were members of the 11th Georgia Artillery, and all from the same family. We also set headstones made by Compatriot Lawson Gerrell for the wives of these men. The first stones set were for Archibald and Nancy McCrea, the Great-Great Grandparents of David Brinkley. Archibald joined the Sumter Flying Artillery at the age of 61!!! We also set stones for William D.C. Brinkley and his wife Margaret McCrea, who are the Great Grandparents of David. Other stones we set were for William W. and Sarah McCrea and Hilliard V. and

Mary F. McCrea, who are uncles and aunts of David. Interestingly, William W. McCrea had enlisted February 9, 1863, 150 years ago to the day that he received a headstone.



Michael Wiltshire and James Harrell



David and the family markers

After the work was done we were treated to lunch by the McCrea/Brinkley family. After lunch the family held a very nice memorial back at the cemetery. The local SCV Camp provided the Honor Guard. Those who participated in the work-day were: David Brinkley and daughter Beth, Graham Smith, Marshall Carroll, Lamar Cox, Mike Grissom, Larry Thomas, Michael Wiltshire, Kelly Crocker, and West Camp member James Harrell. I had worried about asking men to travel that far to work. But, when I asked Marshall Carroll, he said "If we are marking Confederates, it don't matter how far it is." That has become my new favorite saying.

Olustee or Bust

**Mike Grissom
MEC CAV #1470**

It was 40 degrees and the sky was gray when I pulled my Harley Davidson into the parking lot of the Waffle House at I-10 and U.S. 90 east. I could see my MEC CAV compatriot 1LT Kelly Crocker sitting near the window. After a quick breakfast and cup of coffee, I said "Kelly, you ready for this cold ride that's ahead of us"? He smiled and replied "yeeeh, them boys at Olustee were probably laying in a ditch cold and shivering on a morning just like this." That statement made me stop and think that this short 80 mile motorcycle ride we were about to undertake was absolutely nothing in comparison to what those Confederate soldiers had to endure. Just what happened at the Battle of Olustee? I didn't rightly know when we rode onto Interstate 10, but I made myself a promise to find out.

First, did you know that the Battle of Olustee was the largest War Between the States battle ever fought in Florida? The battle commenced on February 20, 1864 and consisted of Union General Truman Seymour's approximately 5,500 Union soldiers against Confederate General Joseph

Finegan's approximately 5000 Confederate defenders of the South. By the time the smoke cleared, Seymour's Union army had



sustained roughly 40% casualties. This was the greatest loss in percentage of a total force experienced by the Union during the entire War Between the States. The bodies of thousands of men, both killed and wounded, littered the battle field.

Upon our arrival in Lake City, we didn't exactly know where to go as the location and time for meeting the other MEC CAV riders had been changed. While standing in the parking lot getting directions from a law enforcement officer, we suddenly heard the sound of rumbling motorcycle engines coming our way. As I looked up all I could see was the beautiful sight of Confederate Battle Flags waving proudly in the wind over

top of 20-25 motorcycles. Lt Crocker and I jumped on our bikes and fell into the precession with the group. After arriving at the staging area, there was plenty of time to meet and greet the other MEC CAV riders. I was finally about to put a face with the names I had read in the newsletters.



There were approximately 35 MEC CAV riders, not including passengers who participated in the parade. Hundreds of men, women, and children lined the streets waving and enjoying the parade. Each time the line of bikes would stop, we would hand out small Confederate Flags to anyone who wanted one, but mostly to children. After the parade was over, Kelly and I visited a graveyard where 155 Unknown Confederate Soldiers lay at rest. Before we left I had the privilege of meeting many MEC CAV members from

the great State of Georgia. One was Bobby Bradford from the Gilmer Light Guard Camp #89 in ElliJay, Georgia, which is about 400 miles from Lake City, FL. He asked me how many riders were here from Finley's Brigade, I said just 2. I said, "Some more were coming but I guess they changed their minds because of the cold weather." He smiled and said, "Well, it was 28 degrees with frost on the ground when I left Ellijay about 7am Friday morning." I thanked him for enduring the weather and making that 400 mile trip to honor the men who fought and died at Olustee almost 148 years ago to the day. I was proud that Lt. Crocker and I were not deterred from making this ride just because it was a little on the cool side. Just think, if we would have stayed home that morning, we would have missed out on seeing all those precious children's smiling faces when we handed them a Confederate Flag.

We paid tribute to Finley Brigade Camp #1614 and the SCV Mechanized Cavalry. We honor our brave men who died at the Battle of Olustee, for they are worthy to be valued and remembered.

The MEC CAV rides in the cold & we ride like you would with Forrest!

Until next time...

Adopt a Road Committee

JR Miller

Down by the River Finley's Brigade held its first clean-up day on Feb. 23 2013. The weather held off for the workers to conduct their volunteer community service. I am here to report that only four members showed up, those being Graham Smith, Marshal Carroll, Kelly Crocker, and myself. Cleaning up 2 miles of right of way roadway (actually 4 miles total) was a chore. I am glad to report that this small Spartan crew picked up 245 pounds of trash. The garbage was mostly

composed of drained beer bottles with the caps still on and flip-top cigarette packs.

I think we were all shocked at the amount of trash since we had heard that there was not much trash out on the roadside.

Our meetings are always held on the second Tuesday of each and every month 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 (6:00) to enjoy a fine meal and fellowship before the meeting starts.

I hope to see all y'all there!

2620 Sarawood Lane
Tallahassee, Florida 32309

Upcoming events

For times, locations, and details for the following events please contact Commander Smith at GFSmith@embargmail.com or 877-9183 or go to the Camp web site at FinleysBrigadeSCV.Com

March 12 – Finley’s Brigade monthly camp meeting

March 16 - Confederate Heritage Rally 2013 Jefferson David Dedication Biloxi, Miss.

March 30 – Clean-up day at Soldier Cemetery in Quincy

April 6 – Finley’s Brigade Memorial Day at Soldiers Cemetery in Quincy. Stay tuned for more details...it’s going to be really **BIG** and we need you there.

April 9 – Finley’s Brigade monthly camp meeting

