THE DELTA GENERAL

SCV NEWSLETTER FOR **BRIG-GEN BENJAMIN GRUBB HUMPHREYS**
CAMP # 1625

INDIANOLA, MS.

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B. G. HUMPHREYS

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THIS ISSUE IS SPONSORED BY : "YOUR NAME COULD BE HERE"

YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR FIRST CAMP MEETING OF THE NEW YEAR.
JANUARY 19, 1994.
THE SPEAKER WILL BE

MR. BO MORGAN

MR MORGAN TEACHES HISTORY AT DELTA STATE; HE WILL SPEAK ON STONEWALL JACKSON OR DO A CONTRAST BETWEEN LEE AND JACKSON.

CELEBRATE THE BIRTHDAY OF GENERAL ROBERT E. LEE WITH YOUR FELLOW MEMBERS OF CAMP #1625 SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS.

During the December meeting the following were elected as your 1995 officers.

Officers
(Through December 31, 1995)

Commander
BRIG. GEN. Jack Ditto
Greenwood, MS

1st Lieutenant Commander
\Editor
Gary Shelton
Leland, MS

2nd Lieutenant Commander
Tommy McCaskill
Leland, MS

Adjutant/Treasurer
David Williford
Leland, MS

Quartermaster
Oliver McCaskill
Leland, MS

Color Sergeant
Dan McCaskill
Leland, MS

7. Historian
Gary Pierce
Greenwood, MS

CAMP NEWS

The camp officers meet on January 12, 1995.
We have some really interesting speakers lined up for the future months.

Our camp is now at 43 members, and Gen. Ditto has set "an obtainable goal" of totaling 55 members for our camp this year.

I need feedback from the camp. Would you rather have a smaller newsletter that comes more often or a larger one that comes quarterly.

BACK IN TIME

19, JANUARY 1807
General Robert E. Lee's Birthday

21, January 1834
Lieutenant General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's Birthday

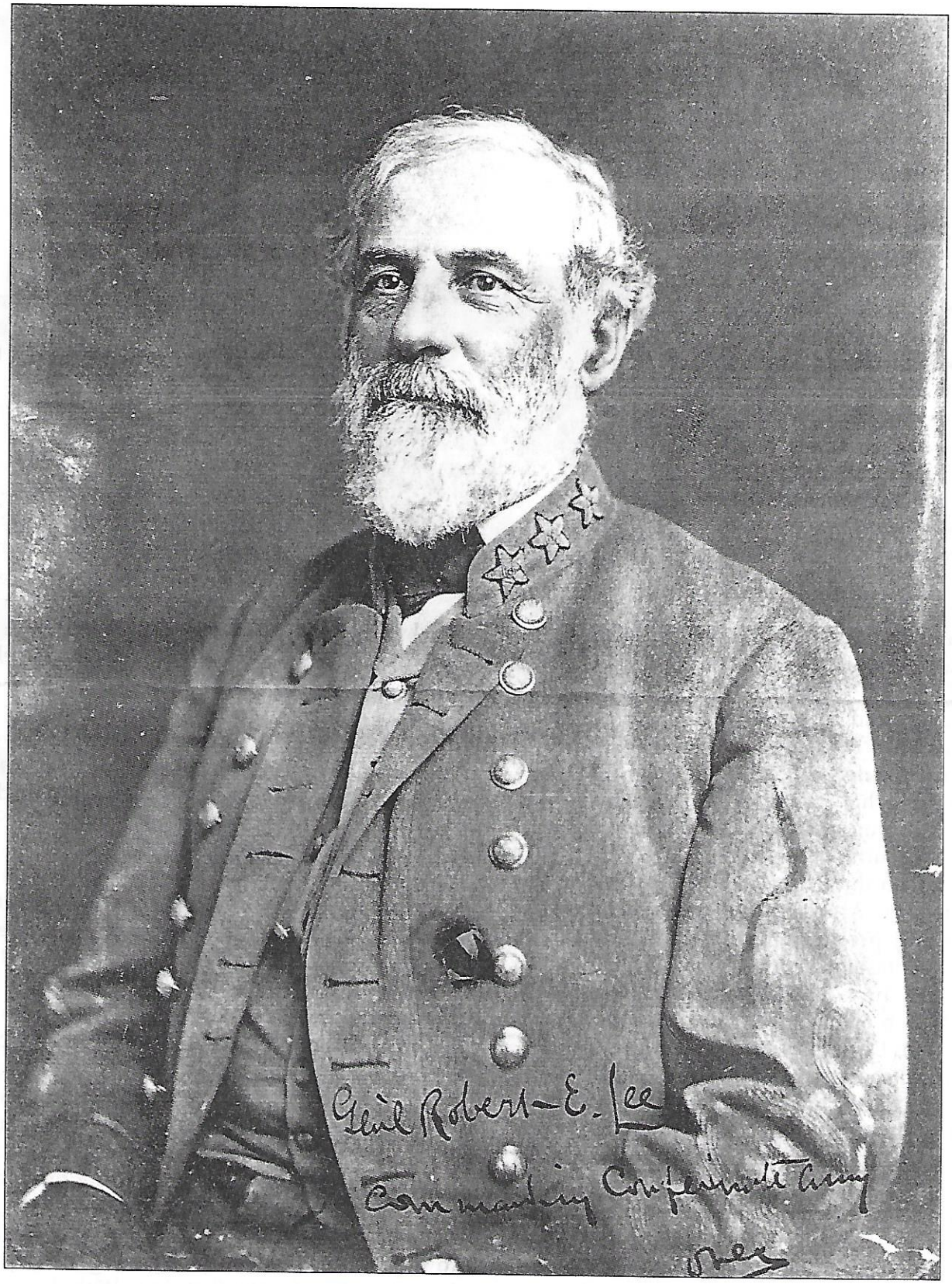
19, January 1861
Georgia secedes on a vote of 208-89 despite indications of Union support.

19, January 1862
Confederate forces are defeated at Mill Springs Kentucky leaving a gap in the Confederate line of defense in the Tennessee-Kentucky area. From this battle the north captures 10 cannons, 100 wagons, over 1000 horses and a large number of boats.

19, January 1863
The federal army is about to engage in its second attempt to gain control of Fredericksburg, Virginia.

19 January 1865
After much prodding from President Davis, General Robert E. Lee agrees to accept the position of general-in-chief of all the armies of the Confederacy

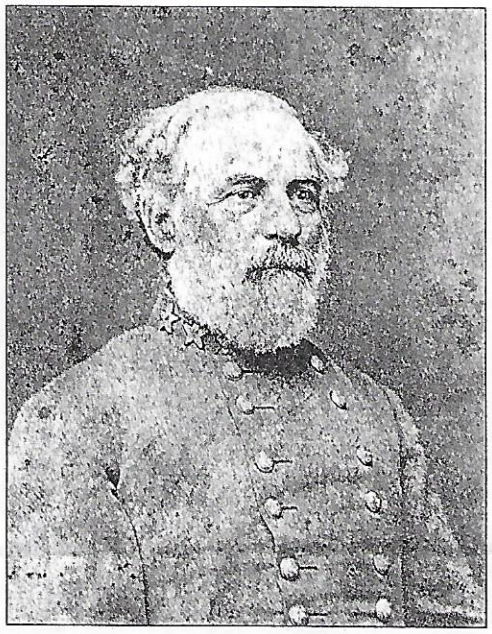
Sherman issues orders commanding the units of his army to begin their march into South Carolina. Heavy rains delay the march until early February, but some troop movement commences.



Richmond photographers Minnis and Cowell made this little-known 1862 portrait of General Robert E. Lee. (Courtesy of Mark Katz)

★ Robert Edward Lee ★

Robert Edward Lee, perhaps the best loved and most famous of American soldiers, was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia, on January 19, 1807, the son of General "Light Horse Harry" Lee of revolutionary war distinction. Young Lee entered the U.S. Military Academy in 1825 and quickly compiled an outstanding record. He ranked third academically after his first year, trailing only William H. Harford of Georgia and Charles Mason of New York. At graduation in 1829 Lee stood second among forty-five graduates and finished his full term at West Point without receiving a single demerit. Future Confederates who graduated with Lee included Joseph E. Johnston (thirteenth) and Theophilus H. Holmes (forty-fourth).



For more than three decades after graduation Lee served in the U.S. Army, starting as a 2d lieutenant of engineers and progressing through the ranks to colonel in this fashion: 1st lieutenant, September 21, 1836; captain, July 7, 1838; lieutenant colonel, 2d Cavalry, March 3, 1855; and colonel, 1st Cavalry, March 16, 1861. During his antebellum career Lee performed such disparate duties as flood control on the Mississippi at St. Louis, building Fort Carroll in Baltimore harbor, serving as superintendent at his alma mater, and commanding cavalry in Texas just before the Civil War.

The military experience that best prepared Lee for his future role came during the Mexican War. While serving on the staff of General Winfield Scott at Cerro Gordo and Churubusco, Captain Lee executed reconnaissances that opened the way to American victories. His energy and skill won for the captain three brevets during the war, to major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel. He also impressed Scott so thoroughly that the general-in-chief of the army later called Lee "the very best soldier that I ever saw in the field."

Upon the secession of Virginia Lee became briefly the commander of all military forces of his native state. On May 14, 1861, he was commissioned as brigadier general in the Regular Army of the Confederate States; precisely one month later he became a full general. For nearly one year General Lee labored in relative obscurity and without notable success. His attempt to impose order on fractious Southern generals in mountainous western Virginia around Cheat Mountain resulted in disappointment and failure. In a mission to the South Carolina coast during the war's first winter, Lee contributed to planning defensive positions that later proved their worth, but he had no opportunity for substantive command. The next spring Lee filled the thankless post of military advisor to Jefferson Davis. He quietly engineered some significant results while in that job despite the president's obsession with managing even the smallest details of matters that caught his fancy.

The opportunity to exercise an important command came to Lee on June 1, 1862, when General Joseph E. Johnston fell wounded at Seven Pines. The association between Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia that began that day lasted for nearly three years and turned both the man and the organization into legend. Three weeks later the general put his army into action for the first time. With the audacity

Another Minnis & Cowell portrait, probably also made in 1862. (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill)

Late in the war Lee sat for his only portrait without a vest. (William A. Turner Collection)

that marked his command style throughout the war, Lee assailed the Federal army besieging Richmond. In the Seven Days' Campaign, June 25–July 1, despite dreadful problems with controlling his far-flung units, poor staff arrangements, and breakdowns by subordinate officers, Lee hurled the enemy from the gates of his country's capital. By late August he had moved north to the plains of Manassas, where he collaborated with "Stonewall" Jackson on a fabulous flanking initiative that bemused and routed Union General John Pope. During the Second Battle of Manassas, August 29–30, Lee engaged in the same sort of personal reconnaissance to the front of friendly lines that had made him famous in Mexico—and came back with the mark of a Northern sharpshooter's bullet on his face as vivid evidence of a close call.

When Lee led his army across the Potomac into Maryland early in September 1862, he climaxed an astonishing metamorphosis in the military situation that stood the war on its ear. Near the end of June Federals had swarmed around the outskirts of Richmond; barely more than two months later Lee was threatening the Northern capital city. While Lee's decision to raid into Maryland cannot rationally be gainsaid, his operational determination to stand at Sharpsburg, when the campaign faced its difficult climax there, is hard to defend. The army's valor on the field on September 17 won a tenuous draw, which was all that could have been expected. Lee ended the 1862 campaigns with an easy defensive victory at Fredericksburg in December that ranks as the most lopsided major campaign in the Virginia theater.

General Lee's leadership style became apparent early during his tenure in command. He divided his army into corps groups months before such arrangements had any basis in Confederate law, and before the ranks of lieutenant general existed. When the Congress caught up with his system in November 1862, Lee gave formal commands and ranks to Jackson and James Longstreet. After Jackson's death the army operated with three infantry corps. This structure allowed Lee to employ a *laissez faire* system that produced his greatest successes, particularly when Jackson operated at his freewheeling best, but that later led to some disappointments. Lee's personal style also became a recognizable part of the army's environment. Only weeks after he assumed command Lee wrote of a querulous Georgia colonel eager to press some grievance against another officer, "Why

give our enemies the advantage & pleasure of our differences?...He can do his duty, though others may do wrong." The commanding general had ample opportunity to apply his calm and poised code of duty in an army full of contentious officers, including several of exalted rank.

Junior officers and enlisted men soon began to recognize in Lee a symbol of what seemed to them to be the virtues of their country. A physician called in to treat the general during the winter after Fredericksburg wrote home to his children, "I know you would all love him if you saw him, but with a deep quiet admiration which would find expression in a desire to imitate his actions and arrive at his excellencies...." The effect of this admiration on the fortunes of the army extended through most of its history and became especially important late in the war.

The first campaign in 1863 resulted in what must be considered Lee's greatest battle; it was also "Stonewall" Jackson's last. In the thickets around Chancellorsville in early May the two Virginians, using fewer than half as many men as Union Major General Joseph Hooker had available, routed a Northern host. After Jackson's remarkable flank march and surprise attack on the far Union right on May 2 and his subsequent mortal wounding, Lee sealed the great victory by pressing his enemy against the river. When news of rear-guard trouble near Fredericksburg reached him, Lee went to that quarter himself to rectify the situation. "The word soon went down the line 'All is right, Uncle Robert is here, we will whip them,'" wrote a North Carolina major. "There was no cheering, the men leaned on their muskets and looked at him...as tho' a God were passing by."

Lee's second venture north of the Potomac River resulted in disaster at Gettysburg in July 1863. The causes of the reverse will be argued forever to the complete satisfaction of no one, but the Southern defeat certainly counted among its salient contributors the crippling absence of Major General "Jeb" Stuart and his cavalry, Lieutenant General Richard S. Ewell's equivocation (Lee later said that he would have won had Jackson been present), Longstreet's stubbornly bad attitude, and Lee's own determination to strike hard against the enemy even after his good options had expired. After the army returned to Virginia, Lee sent Longstreet away with a sizable body of troops to help in the Western theater. Lee maneuvered the remaining portion of his army skillfully in campaigns

A slight variant of the previous portrait, showing only a rearrangement of the bow tie. (Library of Congress)

around Bristoe Station and Mine Run during the fall of 1863, with low-key defensive success for results.

When Longstreet's troops returned from a miserable campaign in Tennessee, Lee held a welcoming review for them in late April 1864. Brigadier General E. P. Alexander, a sharp-eyed observer not at all given to romantic rushes, wrote that on seeing Lee, "we shout & cry & wave our battleflags.... The effect was that of a military sacrament, in which we pledge anew our lives." Some of the troops in the admiring throng were called upon for precisely that sacrifice a few days later when they joined Lee in the Wilderness as his army's life hung in the balance. The Army of Northern Virginia tangled with the Army of the Potomac, newly under the direction of Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant, in the Wilderness of Spotsylvania May 5 and 6, 1864. Longstreet's troops arrived early on the second day just in time to thwart a tremendous Federal onslaught. The Texas brigade that had become famous under Hood sent Lee to the rear when he tried to lead them into the breach. Again at Spotsylvania Court House a few days later the general three times attempted personally to lead troops in desperate assaults. He was losing the means to wage aggressive war, and in consequence felt a great frustration. The fighting at Spotsylvania from May 8 to May 21 inaugurated a new kind of warfare that featured continuous contact. Grant, unable to handle Lee in the open field, settled into a war of attrition after absorbing brutal losses at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania. On June 3 at Cold Harbor Lee's men butchered Grant's in a brief and ghastly repulse that came to typify military futility. In resisting Grant's drive from the Rapidan to the James, Lee inflicted during a period of one month as many casualties on his enemy as his own army had men in its ranks.

Grant cleverly stole a march on Lee in mid-June, crossing the James toward Petersburg in such secrecy that the Confederates lagged far behind. Lee did not believe the reports coming in from south of the river, where at one moment a wildly visionary General P. G. T. Beauregard pleaded in vain for the help that he genuinely needed, but then caromed to wildly optimistic hopes based on impossible schemes. By the time Lee reacted to the serious threat at Petersburg, he nearly was too late. The savage bloodletting that had enervated the Federal army during May left it unresponsive to the opportunity, and Lee's men squirmed through a rapidly closing door to save Petersburg.

The siege of Petersburg and Richmond that followed for the next nine months presaged the static warfare of the early twentieth century. The Battle of the Crater at the end of July and a series of struggles for control of the railroads highlighted operations during the rest of 1864 and early 1865, but most of the long siege was given over to dreary and intermittently deadly little battles over trenchlines. Grant stretched his left and Lee stretched his right. The war of stretching and attrition eventually, inevitably, produced results for the side with the big battalions. Near the end Lee held his army together in part by virtue of his personality and character. "You are the country to these men," one of his officers told Lee late in the war. "They have fought for you.... Their devotion to you and faith in you have been the only things which have held this army together."

The stretched lines snapped at the beginning of April after Lee's last offensive gesture on March 25 at Fort Stedman. At Five Forks and Sayler's Creek the Army of Northern Virginia lost most of its pathetic remaining strength, and Lee surrendered it on April 9 at Appomattox Court House. By then he was almost as much a legend to his foemen as to his soldiers. At the end of the month a Federal officer still could hardly believe that Lee no longer stood in his path. "He was like a ghost to children," the officer wrote home, "something that haunted us so long...."

Robert E. Lee devoted the next five years remaining to him to education of young men in an effort to rebuild his beloved Virginia and the South, serving as president of Washington College. There he imparted to both students and interested onlookers what a modern professor at the institution has aptly called "the Lee legacy of spirituality, courtesy, self-denial, self-control, [and] self-sacrifice...." He died on the college campus on October 12, 1870, and was buried there.

Robert K. Krick

Freeman, Douglas Southall, ed., *Lee's Dispatches* (New York, 1915).

Freeman, Douglas Southall, *R. E. Lee* (New York, 1934–35).

Lee, Robert E., Jr., *Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee* (New York, 1924).

Lee's only known wartime photo mounted on Traveler, taken in Petersburg in the fall of 1864. (Courtesy of Dementi Studio, Richmond, Va.)

Lee's only full seated portrait in uniform, by Brady in April 1865. (University of Texas at Austin)