

Sons of Confederate Veterans Information Paper



The SCV is the direct heir to the United Confederate Veterans and the oldest hereditary organization for male descendants of Confederate soldiers. Organized in Richmond, Virginia in 1896, the SCV continues to serve as a historical, patriotic, and non-political organization dedicated to ensuring that a true history of the 1861-1865 is preserved. Membership in the Sons of Confederate Veterans is open to all male descendants of any veteran who served honorably in the Confederate armed forces. We have members of all races and backgrounds who are descendants of Confederate veterans. The SCV has long advocated against racism and hate and will not tolerate members who are racists, extremists, or supremacists to belong as members. A formal, written declaration of this policy was first published in 1989.

Recent events brought to the fore the issue of our soldiers' monuments and the names of military installations named for Confederate military personnel. Unfortunately, the goodwill engendered as part of the effort to bind the wounds of the war beginning with Union Army veteran President McKinley are now being rent asunder by historically ignorant and prejudiced people. Four separate acts of Congress from 1901 to 1958 gave implicit status to Confederate soldier as "American veterans".

The US DOD is unfortunately leading the movement on renaming installations. They are rationalizing the

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renaming for primary reasons: 1) Confederates were “traitors”, and , 2) Confederate soldiers fought for slavery. These reasons are totally incorrect.

Secession from the US meant that the South had formed a separate country. It had our own government, own currency, own Constitution, and own military forces. Like our Revolutionary War forefathers, they left the existing country to start a new one. As such. US military officers who left the US resigned their commissions which were accepted, thus, both morally and ethically separating their obligation to the US. A book used at the US Military Academy, West Point, by 19th Century legal scholar William Rawle, stated that Secession was legal. That is what cadets learned. Four of the eleven Confederate States resisted seceding until Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to invade and force the their sister States back into the Union. Their secession was clearly in response to an armed invasion rather than any concerns for the future of slavery. President Eisenhower expounded on this by writing in 1960, “ ...we need to understand that at the time of the War Between the States, the issue of Secession had remained unresolved for more than 70 years. Men of probity, character, public standing, and unquestioned loyalty, both North and South, had disagreed over this issue as a matter of principle from the day our Constitution was adopted.” Secession, not illegal in 1860, meant that those who went with the new nation could not

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be traitors. Chief Justice Salmon Chase advised President Johnson not to try Confederates for treason. His reason: the trial might prove that Secession was, in fact, completely legal. No Confederates were ever tried. None were ever convicted of treason.

Confederate soldiers did not fight for slavery. To say so demonstrates a total lack of understanding of the culture of the 1860's South. Just because racism in the North and South was prevalent, attributing those effects to the reasons for which the soldiers fought is a post hoc, ergo propter hoc analogy...a major logic fallacy. What did the Confederate soldiers fight for? Nationally renowned Civil War historian, descendant of a Union Army soldier, Dr. James M. McPherson's book , "For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War", clearly establishes that Confederates believed they were fighting for liberty. It is important to understand what motivated the soldiers, including their generals, was largely divorced from the broader political reasons for the war, just as they have been historically for many armies since ancient times.

In summary, Confederate soldiers, including their generals, were not "traitors", nor did they fight to preserve slavery. They fought to defend their Homeland from invasion, an honorable cause.

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