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<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 04-30-2021	<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> Master of Military Studies (MMS) thesis	<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b> AY 2020-2021
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<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> Removal of Confederate Names from U.S. Military Bases	<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b> N/A
	<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b> N/A
	<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b> N/A

<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Jones, Kevin H. (Special Agent)	<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b> N/A
	<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b> N/A
	<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b> N/A

<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> USMC Command and Staff College Marine Corps University 2076 South Street Quantico, VA 22134-5068	<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b> N/A
--	--

<b>9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> N/A	<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>
	<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b> N/A

**12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT**  
Approved for public release, distribution unlimited.

**13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES**

**14. ABSTRACT**  
This paper explores the history of why some U.S. Army bases were named after Confederate soldiers and the negative and divisive impact of Confederate ideology. Ultimately, the rationale of why the treasonous Confederate names should be removed from military bases is explored.

**15. SUBJECT TERMS**  
Confederate; Removal; Bases; Ideology; CSA;

<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b>
<b>a. REPORT</b>	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b>	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b>			USMC Command and Staff College
Unclass	Unclass	Unclass	UU		<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code)</b> (703) 784-3330 (Admin Office)

MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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REMOVAL OF CONFEDERATE NAMES FROM U.S. MILITARY BASES  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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## Executive Summary

Title: The Importance of Removing Confederate Soldiers Names from U.S. Military Installations

Author: Kevin Jones, Special Agent, Naval Criminal Investigative Service

**Thesis:** The idolization of Confederate soldiers should not be endorsed by the U.S. government because it carries a dangerous ideology based on fear, racism, and hate that degrades the U.S. military's morals and ethics. Confederate soldiers committed treason and took up arms to kill U.S. soldiers because of their belief that slavery was ethical and worth fighting for to preserve. The Confederate ideology remains an inspiration of division and hatred.

**Discussion:** The U.S. public was divided in its opinion of whether Confederate soldiers should be honored as a way of pulling the U.S. together after the Civil War. Public discourse in the mid-1860s involved much emotion and turmoil regarding the right course of action for honoring Confederate soldiers. Confederate soldiers have since become idols for a segment of Americans who believe that the "lost cause" of the Confederate states needs to be honored by all. This belief has been shrouded in myths and misnomers that the Confederacy stood for a higher ethical belief other than its true motives of white supremacy, fear, and hate. Confederate zealots have caused heated and deadly encounters when the statues of their idols have been removed from public view. This type of belief is detrimental to a unified military, government, and country. Confederate zealots are emboldened because the U.S. government has legitimized Confederate ideology by naming bases, buildings, and streets on U.S. military installations after Confederate soldiers who killed U.S. Army soldiers and attempted to destroy the U.S.

**Conclusion:** By removing the names of Confederate soldiers from U.S. bases, a significant step will be made to remove the pagan idols of fear, hate, and prejudice. The Confederate ideology has seeped subconsciously into parts of mainstream thinking. A country cannot be fully unified with a portion believing that some of its citizens are less than human and that their lives are meaningless. By removing Confederate names from military installations, the government shows that it does not condone the Confederate ideology that pervaded the nation during the Jim Crow era when these bases were named. The removal of Confederate ideology from military installations should not be viewed as lost history, but as the progression of a united nation.

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The idolization of the soldiers of the Confederate States of America (CSA) is a danger to the cohesiveness of the U.S. military. The removal of Confederate names from military installations is long overdue and should be removed because of what the Confederacy stood for and symbolizes: slavery, segregation, treason, and the division of the U.S. Confederate soldiers took up arms to kill U.S. soldiers, and the ideology remains an inspiration of division and hatred.

To make this argument, this paper will review the historical record involving the naming of Confederate bases, the biographies of the Confederate generals for whom bases were named, and the origins and actions of the groups who pushed to whitewash Confederate history. The paper will also review contemporary studies and debates about Confederate symbology in the military. The author's intent is not to lend a voice to "cancel culture" which is the idea that anything that is somewhat offensive should be removed from society. The paper aims to shed light on the premise that having federal military bases named for Confederate soldiers threatens to perpetuate division in the military, which is counterproductive to having an efficient fighting force.

This paper will focus on the 10 Army bases currently named after CSA generals.<sup>1</sup> Several U.S. Navy vessels, roads, and buildings aboard DoD installations are also named after CSA generals; however, addressing their history lies beyond the scope of this paper. After gaining an understanding of the time, circumstances, and message given by naming military bases after Confederate soldiers, the importance of removing their names from the installations will become evident.

## **I. HISTORY OF NAMING U.S. ARMY BASES**

The origins of the process of naming U.S. Army bases have changed in the past. No law exists to keep from changing the names now. The earliest recorded policy for naming military posts came from the War Department in 1832, which stated that the War Department would give the names to all-new military posts.<sup>2</sup> Though the responsibility of naming U.S. Army bases fell to the Secretary of War, it was commonplace for the Secretary to delegate the authority to division and installation commanders.<sup>3</sup> During the inter-war years, the Secretary of War would solicit recommendations for names of new posts from military personnel to include installation commanders, Chief of Staff, and Historical Section of the Army War College.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, unsolicited nominations would come from political figures and general public which also influenced the decision.<sup>5</sup> The criteria of how U.S. Army bases are named was set in a 17 July 1917, memo from Brigadier General Joseph Kuhn who suggested the military installations be named after leaders of the Civil War who were from the area the military installation was established.<sup>6</sup> General Kuhn provided names and alternates to the Chief of Staff who made the final selection.<sup>7</sup>

The process of naming bases did not always follow the suggested guidelines of the initial 19 camps in Southern states, only four were named for Confederate officers: Camp Lee (Robert E. Lee) in Virginia, Camp Beauregard (for P.G.T. Beauregard) in Louisiana, Camp Gordon (for John B. Gordon) in Georgia, and Camp Wheeler (for Joseph Wheeler) in Georgia. In general, the War Department tended to name camps in the south after Confederate officers.<sup>8</sup> Because of the location of the installations and when they were established, the selection process for each was conducted with its own individual process and story.<sup>9</sup> In brief, the eight camps established from 1940-1942 named after Confederate soldiers are:

**Camp Polk:** Established 1940 in Louisiana. The Historical Section recommended naming it after Leonidas Polk, who was an Episcopal bishop before joining the CSA.<sup>10</sup>

**A.P. Hill Military Reservation:** The Historical Section recommended three names but the first two were removed from the list during selection. The two names were removed due to another camp having the same surname as one of the selections, and the second selection was not from VA. This left A.P. Hill the honoree by default.<sup>11</sup>

**Camp Gordon:** Established in 1941 in Augusta, GA. John B. Gordon was selected by the Historical Section because he was from GA and noted by the General Staff's G-3 to be a "distinguished and popular native-born soldier and statesman of Georgia."<sup>12</sup>

**Camp Pickett:** Established in 1941 in Virginia. The historical Section selected George E. Pickett for his charge at Gettysburg and because he was born in VA.<sup>13</sup>

**Camp Rucker:** Established in 1941 in Alabama. The Historical Section nominations were not followed by General George Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff. General Marshall directed the camp to be named after Edmund Rucker; however, the Historical Section believed there were "more worthy and appropriate" selections than Rucker. No documents exist to justify the selection made by General Marshall. The Center for Military History noted that Senator J. Lister Hill of Alabama suggested the name of Rucker to General Marshall.<sup>14</sup>

**Camp Hood:** Established in 1942 in Texas. General John Hood was born in KY; however, most of his Army career was in Texas. Hood's name was submitted along with three other candidates by the Historical Section. The rationale for the selection was not recorded in the U.S. Army Center of Military History archive.<sup>15</sup>

**Camp Forrest:** Established in 1926 as Camp Peay, named after the Tennessee Governor Austin Peay. The camp was renamed in 1941 at the direction of General Marshall. General Marshall justified the change because the base was named after a politician without a distinguished military background. Nathan Bedford Forrest, who was native to Tennessee, was selected. Although it was known that Forrest was a founder of the Ku Klux Klan, the Historical Section and G-3 accepted the Forrest nomination. <sup>16</sup>

**Camp Van Dorn:** Established in 1942 in Mississippi. As a native to Mississippi, Earl Van Dorn was selected. No other justifications were listed for the selection from the Center of Military History archive. <sup>17</sup>

The specified memorialization criteria were changed through Army regulations several more times in 1946, 1958, 1972, 1981, and most recently in 2006.<sup>18</sup> The criteria can and should be amended again to disallow the names of Confederate generals.

#### **A. History of Namesakes**

The practice of naming an installation, building, street, or monument after a person from U.S. history has been done to preserve their legacy, ideology, or signify their accomplishments to their country. A namesake is defined as a person or thing named after another.<sup>19</sup> This process ensures that the legacy of the individual is immortalized and not forgotten by future generations. When a government chooses to name an installation or place, the process also validates the individual's crusade or mission. Governments worldwide use namesakes as a great honor that they bestow upon trailblazers or leaders who are respected or admired for their accomplishments and contributions. For example, in the US, state and local governments and the federal government have renamed many streets after the slain civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. promoting equal treatment of all U.S. citizens, regardless of race, color, ethnicity, or religion.

By renaming streets after Dr. King, the story of his legacy is immortalized. The question that must be asked is: what legacy was the government trying to preserve by immortalizing Confederate generals?

### **History of CSA Generals**

The CSA generals with military bases named after them are now more revered for their ideological beliefs vice their achievements during the Civil War. Many of the generals were extremely politically vocal in their stance for slavery and rebellious to their military authority. Most importantly, and all of them committed treason against the Union.

Fort Benning was established in Georgia in 1917 and was named after Confederate General Henry L. Benning. Benning was outspoken in his opinion about being pro-slavery and his negative, unsubstantiated beliefs about black Americans. Benning was so zealous in his beliefs that he gave a speech for the secession of Virginia from the Union in which he expressed his fear of blacks being “equal.”<sup>20</sup> Benning went on to convey his displeasure with the idea of black Americans being free, and he stated he would rather be “stricken with illness and starvation than see black Americans liberated.”<sup>21</sup> With Benning’s belief being so firmly rooted in advocating for slavery, and against blacks being treated as humans, it begs the question of why the U.S. would honor him by naming a base after him. In his own words, Benning advocated for Virginia to be separated from the Union.; however, a U.S. Army base carries his name as if he were a patriot or advocate of the U.S.

An example of the lingering effects of the ideology of Benning was displayed in the lynching of Private Felix Hall at Fort Benning in 1941.<sup>22</sup> It can be argued that Confederate ideology was accepted aboard Fort Benning due to the lack of investigation or adjudication.<sup>23</sup>

The lynching of Private Hall resulted in no arrest or serious inquiries into the murder.<sup>24</sup> The Army's mishandling of the lynching sent other black soldiers at Fort Benning the message that they are also not viewed as human. After the lynching of Private Hall until November 1942, eleven other black soldiers were killed in or around Army bases while on and off duty which resulted in only one conviction of the accused of manslaughter.<sup>25</sup>

Honoring CSA generals who were not only advocates for slavery but also had less than honorable military careers are a double insult to the institutions that are named after them. General Braxton Bragg, for example, was considered by most historians as the worst general in the Civil War and he lost almost every battle he commanded.<sup>26</sup> Bragg has been credited for making bad decisions that cost thousands of lives of his men. However, Fort Bragg was established in 1918 in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and today is a prominent Army base where elite U.S. soldiers are trained.<sup>27</sup> Fort Hood in Killeen, TX was established in 1942 and named after General John Bell Hood, who is credited with losing Atlanta, Georgia, during the Civil War which was pivotal to the fall of the Confederacy, along with other significant battles.<sup>28</sup> During the Civil War, General Hood wrote a letter to the then General of Union Army William Sherman, where he expressed his belief that blacks were inferior and that he would rather die than live with free blacks.<sup>29</sup> Fort A.P. Hill in Caroline County VA was established in 1941 and named after General Ambrose Powell Hill, who was arrested for insubordination several times during the Civil War while in command.<sup>30</sup> Those who arrested Hill included the lionized generals Stonewall Jackson and James Longstreet, whom Hill challenged to a duel.<sup>31</sup> Fort Gordon in Augusta, GA was established in 1941 and was named after John Gordon who was the head of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in Georgia. Brigadier General Albert Pike, the namesake of Camp Pike was the KKK's Chief Judicial Officer and Head of the Arkansas chapter.<sup>32</sup> General Nathan

Bedford Forrest, the namesake of Camp Forrest, was famous for the Fort Pillow massacre, where he executed 300 black Union soldiers that had surrendered, and he was the 1<sup>st</sup> Grand Wizard of the KKK. <sup>33</sup> These Confederate generals were best described by Retired General David Petraeus, on 09 June 2020, when he stated “It also happens that —Lee excepted — most of the Confederate generals for whom our bases are named were undistinguished, if not incompetent, battlefield commanders. “<sup>34</sup>

Besides their moral stances on race, the CSA generals all adamantly opposed the United States. One of the most overlooked reasons why CSA generals’ names and honor should be removed from U.S. military bases is the fact that they were traitors. According to the U.S. Constitution Article III, Section 3, Clause 1:

*Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying War against them, or in adhering to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort. No Person shall be convicted of Treason unless on the testimony of two Witnesses to the same overt Act, or on Confession in open Court.*<sup>35</sup>

Before committing treason, most of the CSA generals were in the Union Army and resigned from the Army to fight against the very military they were a part of. Military service is considered by most service members to be a family or brother/sisterhood which makes the act of treason a more reprehensible act.

## **II. ERA OF 1917**

To grasp a better understanding of why the U.S. bases were named after traitors, one must consider current events during the eras of 1917-1918 and 1940-1942. At the time that the bases were named after CSA generals following World War I and World War II, the U.S. public

was vastly different in beliefs and ideology than it is now. Today's standards cannot be applied to a period where social norms were vastly different. The Army bases named after CSA generals were established in two eras which coincided with the time frames that CSA monuments were being erected, which is depicted in Figure 1.<sup>36</sup> The correlation of the naming of the bases, and erecting monuments in 1917 was a ploy by white supremacists to promoting their ideology by combining it with historical figures to make people unaware of the true intent. The two organizations that cultivated and took charge of promoting the idea of erecting Confederate monuments and naming bases for Confederate soldiers during this era were the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and the KKK. Both organizations saw blacks having the right to vote as a threat to their way of life and sought imagery to instill fear and feed into their belief in white supremacy.

## America's Confederate symbols

In a report published in April 2016, the *Southern Poverty Law Center* (SPLC) -- a civil rights advocacy group -- found **1,503 symbols of the Confederacy** located on US public lands, mostly in the South

They include more than **700 monuments** and statues, and **109 public schools** named for Confederate military or political figures

### When they were built

- Monuments on courthouse grounds
- Monuments on other sites
- Schools

1861 - 1865  
Civil War

1866  
Formation of  
Ku Klux Klan

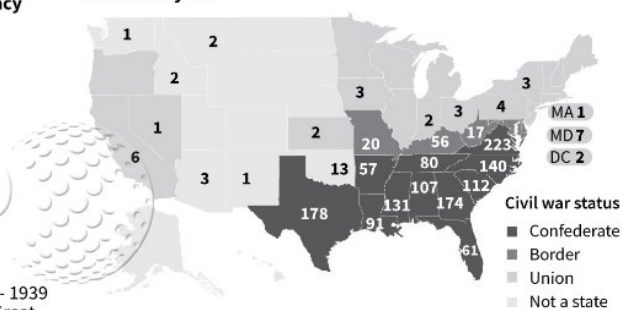
1930 - 1939  
The Great  
Depression

1954 - 1968  
Civil rights  
movement

Debate over what to do with these  
controversial **symbols of the  
pro-slavery Confederacy** has been  
simmering for years

1861 1870 1890 1910 1930 1950 1970 1990 2010

### Where they are



Source: Dedication of Confederate monuments timeline February 01, 2019  
"Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy"  
Southern Poverty Law Center

Figure 1: Timeline of establishment of Confederate monuments

Source: SPLC "Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy," Southern Poverty Law Center, February 01, 2019, <https://www.splcenter.org/20190201/whose-heritage-public-symbols-confederacy>

### A. United Daughters of the Confederacy

The UDC was established in 1894 and has been one of the main driving forces in promoting the “lost cause” and division in America. The UDC has sought ways to infuse its ideology into society without raising suspicion.<sup>37</sup> The organization has sought to spread its campaign of disinformation to future generations to ensure their beliefs are spread and considered legitimate. The goal of the UDC, as stated by Karen Cox, Assistant Professor and Director of Public History at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, is to “aspire to transform military defeat into a political and cultural victory, where states’ rights and white supremacy remain intact.”<sup>38</sup> The UDC believes that by placing Confederate soldiers’ portraits and Confederate battle flags in schools and naming schools after them, that a sense of legitimacy of the Confederacy would take root in future generations.<sup>39</sup> The organization is credited with erecting most of the monuments and memorials to Confederate soldiers. Today in the U.S. over 240 schools are named after Confederate soldiers.<sup>40</sup>

The UDC came to prominence in 1913, by endorsing the KKK and authoring the book “The Invisible Empire,” which glorified the KKK.<sup>41</sup> The UDC approves of the KKK, which was founded in 1865 by confederate veterans and whose first leader was Nathan Forrest.<sup>42</sup> The organization is credited with influencing Secretary of War Newton Baker to name Fort Benning after CSA General Henry Benning.<sup>43</sup> The group has been instrumental in rewriting history and providing its narrative of falsehoods, such as: claiming that the Civil War was not about slavery, downplaying the impact of slavery, and representing the love of the Confederacy as “heritage and not hate.”<sup>44</sup>

The UDC heavily promoted CSA monuments to be established all over the U.S., particularly in the south. These monuments were funded publicly and privately and placed in

public places of distinction for two reasons.<sup>45</sup> The first reason was to make sure everyone saw the monument and either felt pride and a connection to the monument or fear of the terror of the Confederacy. The second was to validate that the Confederate “cause” was noble and should be respected.<sup>46</sup>

## **B. SILENT SAM**

An example to best illustrate how CSA namesakes seamlessly were woven into the pro-slavery ideology and white supremacy was the dedication of the “Silent Sam” statue at the University of North Carolina (UNC). The Silent Sam monument was established in 1913 at UNC, under the guise of a tribute to UNC students who fought in the Civil War.<sup>47</sup> The statue is a bronze statue of a Confederate soldier atop a pedestal meant to be a representation of the UNC students who served in the Civil War. Its construction was spearheaded by the UDC, which set a goal of having a CSA monument at a Southern university.<sup>48</sup> The single largest donor to the project was Julian Carr, who was a former Confederate soldier and UNC alumnus. During the unveiling of the statute, Carr gave a speech that “unambiguously urged his audience to devote themselves to white supremacy.”<sup>49</sup> Carr bragged during this same speech that previously, in the near vicinity of where the statue was placed, he had beaten a black woman with a horsewhip so many times that her clothes wore torn and in shreds.<sup>50</sup> The UDC had not sold the idea of Silent Sam to UNC as a monument to honor and remind people of “white supremacy,” even though the dedication speech laid bare their true intent. Instead of UNC seeing the monument for what it was, the school turned a blind eye and hung on to the premise of the monument representing history. In this and other ways, the UDC has been subtle at mixing their ideology with history to get people to buy into their ideology regardless of their education level.

## **C. President Woodrow Wilson**

Woodrow Wilson was the 28th President of the United States from 1913-1921, which occurred during the “Jim Crow” era.<sup>51</sup> Wilson was an advocate of the UDC and the KKK. He even went as far as to show the egregiously offensive movie that praised the Klan, *The Birth of a Nation*, in the White House.<sup>52</sup> As President, he imposed his racist ideology on the government and military by implementing segregation in the federal government workplace.<sup>53</sup> Under the guidance of Wilson, his ideals of hate and unfair discrimination drove a wedge in American society and gave legitimacy to like-minded individuals. During his presidency, Fort Lee, Camp Beauregard, Fort Benning, Fort Gordon, Fort Braxton, Camp Pike, and Camp Wheeler were named after CSA generals. Though Wilson did not serve in the Civil War, he was influenced by Confederate ideology.

#### **D. Red Summer of 1919**

As the bases were named after CSA generals and CSA monuments were being constructed across the U.S, Americans felt the deadly ramifications of this boost to Confederate ideology. During the infamous “Red Summer” of 1919, blacks were attacked and killed in mass numbers in over 60 U.S. cities.<sup>54</sup> The Red Summer was propelled by fears of the 380,000 black U.S. soldiers returning from WWI after demonstrating their loyalty to the nation expecting civil rights.<sup>55</sup> The expectation of the black soldiers created racial tensions that led to at least 13 soldiers being lynched and scores of black civilians being shot and lynched.<sup>56</sup> The famed author and civil rights leader James Weldon named the following months the Red Summer due to the amount of blood of black Americans that was spilled in the streets.<sup>57</sup> The Washington Post described the events as “a rolling series of race wars that might be described as neo-Confederate offensive.”<sup>58</sup>

### **III. CONFEDERATE MYTHS**

Some of those who oppose the removal of CSA names from military bases have adopted common myths about the Confederacy which are used to defend their support of the Confederacy and its ideology. These myths are sometimes referred to as the “lost cause,” which has a cult-like following and centers around the argument that the Confederacy was heroic in its defeat of defending their states’ rights and their constitutional rights.<sup>59</sup> The myths commonly perpetuated are as follows: The Civil War was not about slavery, Confederates fought for States rights, supporting the Confederacy is harmless, removal of Confederate symbols is “cancel culture,” and the Confederacy was not about white supremacy.<sup>60</sup> These theories have evolved over time and have resonated with individuals to the point that, over 150 years after the end of the Civil War, zealots are still willing to kill for the lost cause.<sup>61</sup> This truth was represented most notably in the 2017 Charlottesville terror attack when a zealot drove his vehicle into a crowd to protest the removal of a Confederate statute.<sup>62</sup> The dangers of the “lost cause” Confederate zealots were clear again on 06 January 2021, during the storming of the U.S. Capitol while Congress was in session. Before the storming of the Capitol, the zealots-built gallows with nooses, reminiscent of practices of the KKK.<sup>63</sup> During the Capitol insurrection, several Confederate flags were observed in the crowd, and one of the zealots proudly walked through the Capitol with his Confederate flag in honor of the lost cause.<sup>64</sup> The belief that endorsing the Confederate lost cause theory is harmless is dangerous and has cost lives over the years. Zealots are emboldened to idolize CSA generals when they see U.S. military installations bearing the names of their idols of the lost cause myths.

#### **A. Lost Cause Myth**

The lost cause myth is synonymous with the equally deadly myth that the South needs to be “protected” from an unknown entity, which drives fear and hate.<sup>65</sup> The South needing

protection is the rallying cry of the KKK, which they have used to legitimize their terroristic behavior. This is observed in the quote from President Wilson's book "The History of the American People" which was used at the beginning of the film Birth of a Nation: "The white men were roused by a mere instinct of self-preservation until at last there had sprung into existence a great KKK a veritable empire of the South to protect the Southern country." <sup>66</sup> By stoking fear and portraying Black Americans as savage criminals, the KKK paints itself as heroic and noble in the cause. <sup>67</sup>

Fear is defined as a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc.; whether the threat is real or imagined. <sup>68</sup> When people are afraid, they make drastic decisions because they believe they are in danger, whether the fear is real or just perceived. The Klan's theory was based on the fear that black Americans were going to band together and exact their revenge on whites for years of oppression. <sup>69</sup> Over one-hundred-fifty years after the end of slavery, no great "reckoning" has occurred, because the idea was based on an unrealistic fear that was perpetuated by fearful men who were probably self-conscious about their treatment of black Americans. This unsubstantiated fear is still believed today by those who cling to their Confederate flags for identity, and the zealots who are willing to demonstrate, intimidate, or kill to "protect their heritage" of Confederate statues or imagery. <sup>70</sup>

### **B. Myth: The Civil War Was Not Fought Over Slavery**

The myth that Confederate ideology was not firmly rooted in the endorsement of slavery and white supremacy must be expelled. The foundation of what the Confederacy was and stood for was stated by Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens in 1861 when he addressed the Confederacy with his "Cornerstone Speech." <sup>71</sup> Leaving no room for ambiguity Stephens described the foundation and cornerstone of the Confederacy as white supremacy and black

subordination.<sup>72</sup> Stephens went on to state that the Confederate government was the first government in the world to come to this “great truth,” and described it as natural and normal.<sup>73</sup> Before the Civil War, Southern states wrote a Declaration to secede from the government of the U.S. which explained their reason for dissolving their association with the U.S. Each of the seceding states expressed their resentment with the U.S. government over Southern rights to continue using slaves from Africa.<sup>74</sup> Most of the secession letters accused the U.S. government of being hypocritical because Northern states also benefited from slave labor and the Southern states felt that they had a right to continue in the practice and use of slaves.<sup>75</sup> The reason for secession was that Southern states wanted to continue to practice the owning of slaves.

### **C. Myth: Confederate Soldiers Stood for More than the Civil War**

Many of the CSA generals were veterans of the Mexican American War of 1846 and the American Indian wars. Though many CSA generals had prior military accomplishments, they are most famously known for their role in secession from the U.S. and leading the Confederacy to kill Union troops. To remove a CSA soldier’s other life accomplishments from his involvement in the Civil War is an impossible task. To draw an analogy, the University of Southern California would be unlikely to name a dormitory after Orenthal James Simpson (O.J. Simpson). Though O.J. was a Heisman trophy-winning running back that scored the game-winning touchdown in the “greatest football game of 20<sup>th</sup> century,” all his football acumen has been overshadowed by his 1994 double murder trial.<sup>76</sup>

The U.S. Army has attempted to divorce these individuals’ legacies from the causes they promoted. In a 2015 interview, the Army’s top spokesperson Brig. Gen. Malcolm Frost, stated, “Accordingly, these historic names represent individuals, not causes or ideologies, it should be noted that the naming occurred in the spirit of reconciliation, not division.”<sup>77</sup> He then continued

“The Army has a tradition of naming installations and streets after historical figures of military significance, including former Union and Confederate general officers.”<sup>78</sup> As previously discussed, this statement ignores the lack of significance of military accomplishment of most CSA generals, and that Confederate ideology divides the nation rather than helps it reconcile.

#### **D. Myth: Confederate Ideology is Not Divisive**

The Confederate ideology is detrimental to the U.S. military as an effective fighting force. In 1916, the Confederate ideology of segregation was a determining factor in WWI for the U.S. Army to send the 15<sup>th</sup> New York (Colored) Infantry Regiment to fight under French command as the 369<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment (Harlem Hell fighters).<sup>79</sup> The 369<sup>th</sup> is credited for spending 191 days on the front line against German forces and was highly decorated for combat by the French military.<sup>80</sup> The divisive mentality has persisted over the years, which has led to extremism that has breached the military.<sup>81</sup> The phrase that a “few bad apples spoil the bunch” can be used to describe the Confederate zealots. Extremism in the military rose significantly during the election of President Barack Obama, which saw the emergence of groups such as the 3% (Three percenters) along with other right-wing groups.<sup>82</sup> This segment of American society clings to misguided ideologies and poses a danger to the solidarity of the U.S. military.<sup>83</sup> A quote in the Bible simplifies why it is imperative to unify the nation:

*And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.*<sup>84</sup>

Confederate ideology is divisive and is counterproductive to an efficient government.

### **E. Myth: General Lee Was Kind, Noble, and Against Slavery**

Confederate ideology has romanticized an inaccurate version of General Lee as a heroic noble gentleman who was a devoted Christian who abhorred slavery. Lee owned over 200 slaves that he inherited from his mother, Ann Lee, and his father-in-law, George Custis.<sup>85</sup> As described by historian Elizabeth Brown Pryor, “Lee ruptured the Washington and Custis tradition of respecting slave families” by hiring them off to other plantations and his slaves regarded him as “the worst man I ever see.”<sup>86</sup> Lee was known for enjoying watching his slaves stripped, beaten, and then having their lacerations washed with brine (saltwater).<sup>87</sup> During the Civil War Lee condoned the capture of free blacks and took them as slaves, massacred black Union soldiers who tried to surrender, and had black women and children shot as they tried to escape during the April 20, 1864 seizure of Plymouth, NC.<sup>88</sup> General Lee is honored with 223 monuments in the U.S. which are the most monuments dedicated to any Confederate leader.<sup>89</sup> General Lee was brutal in his dealings with blacks and to hold him up as a patron saint of nobility is grossly inaccurate.

### **IV. IMPACT OF CONFEDERATE IDEOLOGY**

Confederate ideology is just as dangerous today as it has been in the past. In 1948 disgruntled white Southern Democrats formed a political party known as the State’s Rights Democratic Party better known as the “Dixiecrats.”<sup>90</sup> The Dixiecrats used the Confederate battle flag as their banner and promoted that the party stood to oppose the elimination of segregation, civil rights, and social equality.<sup>91</sup> In 1956, to demonstrate opposition to desegregation (Brown v. Board of Education) Georgia adopted a new state flag which incorporated the Confederate battle flag into the design.<sup>92</sup> Mississippi did not change its state flag until 2020 in light of the George Floyd protest.<sup>93</sup>

Confederate ideology continues to inspire racial violence and mass murder. On June 17, 2015, 21-year-old Dylann Roof killed nine black Americans.<sup>94</sup> The massacre took place at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC during an evening Bible study. Before opening fire on the unarmed church attenders, Roof stated that African Americans were “taking over the country.”<sup>95</sup> An investigation into the massacre revealed that before 17 June, Roof had conducted a road trip tour in his home state of SC to Sullivan’s Island (an island where an estimated 40% of African slaves were brought), four former plantations, a museum devoted to Confederacy, and two cemeteries where slaves and Confederate soldiers were buried.<sup>96</sup> Subsequent photographs of Roof’s tour were published wherein he is seen holding a Confederate flag and a pistol.<sup>97</sup> Congress has realized the impact of Confederate ideology and has introduced H.RES 103- C “Condemning the bigotry that was displayed and voiced during the January 6th siege of the United States Capitol, the prominent role played by White supremacists and domestic terrorists in planning and leading the siege, and the elected officials who encouraged them.”<sup>98</sup> H.RES 103 goes to state:

*Whereas the Confederate battle flag, wielded by Southern Dixiecrats to inflict terror, represents the “Lost Cause” myth, segregationists, and White nationalism, and continues to represent terrorism, violence, and the oppression of Black people;*

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 has a provision for creating a committee to address the removal and renaming of DoD assets named after CSA generals. Republican Bobby Rush sponsored H.R.672 REFUSE Confederate Principles Act, which is a bill that directs the Department of the Interior to establish, within the National Park Service, to award grants to states and other entities to remove Confederate monuments, statues, and memorials. The bill was passed after the death of George Floyd and other unarmed black Americans by

police officers in 2020.<sup>99</sup> Congress recognized the divisiveness that Confederate ideology perpetuates in the U.S., and addressing the situation is a step in making sure that mentality does not present itself in the DoD. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin has prioritized recognizing the danger of Confederate ideology contaminating the U.S. military.<sup>100</sup> Secretary Austin, upon assumption of duties in January 2020, implemented a “stand down” for discussions on far-right extremism following the insurrection of 06 January 2021, when active duty and prior military members were identified inside the Capitol. Secretary Austin’s actions show that he understands that division in the military is counterproductive to the effectiveness of a strong military.

#### **A. CSA General Names Should be Removed from Military Installations**

The removal of CSA generals’ names from military installations allows the U.S. to distance itself from past negative ideologies that tore the country apart. The most famous and revered of all CSA generals, Robert E. Lee, believed that monuments of CSA generals would eventually degrade relations between the U.S. and Confederate supporters.<sup>101</sup> Lee thought that the U.S. needed to heal as a nation after the Civil War and the building of monuments of CSA generals would feed the division of the nation rather than create unity. With the previously addressed atrocities of the 06 January insurrection, massacre in Charleston, and Charlottesville history has proven Lee to be correct.

Removing CSA monuments and names does not change U.S. history but does change how CSA generals are revered. The Civil War should be studied as a part of U.S. history and in museums. The strategy of Robert E. Lee should be examined just as Adolf Hitler is; however, neither should be glorified. The U.S. is the only world power that openly honors individuals who openly fought against their country and are worshipped as heroes. Benedict Arnold rose to the rank of Major General and served with distinction in the Revolutionary War; however, it

would be considered an insult to honor him by naming a military installation, vessel, or street after him.<sup>102</sup> From 1933-1945 several roads were named after Adolf Hitler throughout the world; however, after 1945, the roads were renamed and no longer carry Hitler's name and legacy.<sup>103</sup> The various roads were renamed at the end of WWII presumably to prevent further idolization of Hitler or promote his ideologies. The continued use of CSA generals' names for U.S. Army bases conveys that the U.S. government along with a percentage of the population still condones the belief the Confederacy fought to uphold.

## V. CONCLUSION

Renaming Army installations is a daunting task. However, the benefits of not passing down a legacy of hate to future generations of Americans are worth the cost. By not removing the CSA generals' names from DoD installations, the U.S. government is allowing groups like the UDC to whitewash history and promote their narrative of what history and future should be. On the issue of renaming bases, The New York Times author Jamie Malanowski stated,

*“Changing the names of these bases would not mean that we can't still respect the service of those Confederate leaders; nor would it mean that we are imposing our notions of morality on people of a long-distant era. What it would mean is that we're upholding our own convictions.”<sup>104</sup>*

Providing a clear message of unification is paramount to the military having cohesiveness. Division within the military is detrimental to the effectiveness of the military and the nation the military swore to protect. The U.S. military has made tremendous strides towards racial equality and increasing diversity. However, the challenge of racism still hinders the military from being as capable as it can be. Blacks enlist in the U.S. military at a higher rate than

any other ethnicity in the U.S., at 19%, and asking members to serve aboard bases named after people who fought to keep their ancestors to be treated as property is hypocritical. It is impossible to unify a nation's military and at the same time promote and condone the separatist views of the Confederacy that sought to destroy the U.S.A. By showing indifference, the government contributes to the issue.

As described by Edmond Burke, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil was that good men should do nothing."<sup>105</sup> Naming bases after unsuccessful generals who believed slavery was morally good to the point that they commanded an Army to kill U.S. soldiers is ludicrous. A similar act was committed by Nidal Hasan on November 05, 2009, when he killed 13 people and injured 30 others aboard Fort Hood.<sup>106</sup> The acts of Hasan were deplorable not just because he killed people for his beliefs, but his act was even more heinous because he was in the Army and killed his fellow Army brothers and sisters. When understanding what the Confederacy fought and stood for, the necessity of removing Confederates' names from places of honor is evident. The removal of Confederate ideology from military installations should not be viewed as lost history, but as the progression of a united nation. As with desegregation and other social issues in the past, the military must lead the way.

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