

Intelligence Service Europe

SCV Europe Camp #1612

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Commander's Letter

Hello to my compatriots and friends on both sides of the pond!

Many activities to preserve and remember our confederate heritage in Europe are on the way since the last two months.

This June every one of us have the possibility to visit the 150th Anniversary of the CSS Alabama's end in Cherbourg, France.

Next month there will be a reenactment near the graveside of Col. Heros von Borcke in Gizyn, Poland.

You see we have many activities to honor our confederate ancestors in the near future!

In this issue you will find some interesting articles about European Confederates and a truly confederate warship! I know it will fit your taste.



Commander Achim Bärnsch

EDITOR'S NOTE

This month of June we'll have a very important "European" event: the 150th Anniversary of the CSS Alabama's glorious end due to her sea battle against the Yankee ship the USS Kearsarge in the English Channel off Cherbourg, France. The contribution of associate member Ian Dewar, President of the 290 Foundation, so closely linked to the story of the Alabama from the beginning of the ship as Laird's hull number 290, has the commanding officer, Captain Raphael Semmes, telling the story of this heroic battle.

And there's more to come. Arrangements have been completed for June 19th, for a wreath-laying ceremonial in the English Channel and a similar commemoration the following day, June 20th, at the graves of seamen from both the CSS Alabama and USS Kearsarge who are buried in Cherbourg. Contact the Camp officers or Ian Dewar for full details.

Camp Angel Nancy Hitt reports about her efforts to ensure a great Confederate hero is remembered. Read about the fascinating account of a remarkable European-born man of incredible merit. He remains an honorable example to follow.

Our movies section will show you that a movie with a Confederate topic can be both boring and dissapointing, even if this was not the intention.

Next month of July we'll have the SCV National Reunion in Charleston, S.C. I've been asked by some friends in South Carolina if a member of our Camp will attend the reunion. This is not clear at this time; but if someone does decide to attend, there will be a very interesting report in our September issue.



Raphael Waldburg-Zeil, Editor



Another Honorable European Confederate is Remembered

My report about the search for the gravesite of Capt. William Antonio Ferring will be brief. Distance and the Mississippi River worked against me, but the goodwill of the fine people in Arkansas along with our editor's encouragement helped me to overcome these obstacles.

Guiglielmo Antonio Ferrini was born on June 15, 1823, either in Locarno, Switzerland or Milan, Italy. It appears he was going to prepare for the priesthood, but instead made his way to the States and ended up in Kentucky. His anglicized name became William Antonio Ferring.

Dr. Ferring received his medical degree from the medical college in Louisville, Kentucky. On October 30, 1845, he married Sarah Elizabeth Gailbreath. Her family owned a farm south of Louisville in a suburb now known as Okolona.

Dr. Ferring moved his family to the Mississippi River port town of Barfield, Arkansas. He practiced medicine and operated a general merchandise store in Barfield. He may have owned a large 300 acre farm in that area. Over the years due to flooding, much of Barfield has slowly been washed into the Mississippi River and now is just a crossroads. Today, Nucor which is a Japanese-owned steel company operates in the Barfield area and may be located on the former homestead of Dr. Ferring.

On July 4, 1861, William Antonio Ferring volunteered for the Confederate military service. He was 38 years old, a family man with six children, a medical doctor, and foreign-born. He entered as a 2nd Lt. in Capt. Elliott H. Fletcher, Jr.'s company attached to the 2nd Regiment of the Arkansas Volunteers. By January, 1862, this had become the 3rd Regiment Arkansas Confederate Infantry.

Following the death of Captain Fletcher at the battle of Shiloh, Lt. Ferring was promoted to Captain, but he was seriously wounded in the leg on the following day. This wound would haunt him for the rest of his life.

Captain Ferring was arrested by Union forces while at his home being treated for his injury. He was sent to various POW camps including Johnson's Island. In great pain due to his unhealed wound, he was sent on that terrifying sea voyage to Charleston Harbor, South Carolina, to become a member of the Immortal 600. This was the name given to the Confederate officers who were caged in front of Yankee artillery. His unhealed injured leg is likely the reason he was hospitalized and later paroled in Charleston.

After the War ended, Captain Ferring was elected County Clerk from 1866-68. He served at the court house in Osceola. At some point Captain Ferring had his leg amputated. He died at the young age of 49 years on September 7, 1872, leaving behind seven children and a widow.

Sarah Gailbreath Ferring returned to her father's Kentucky home with the two youngest children. Captain Ferring named his youngest child John Marmaduke Ferring, after the commanding officer he greatly respected.

Captain Ferring's daughter, Lucy Seger Ferring Carney is buried with her husband and their two children at the Maple Grove Cemetery in Blytheville, Arkansas. This is the Carney plot where a new privately-purchased granite marker has been placed "in memory of" Capt. William A. Ferring. This marker was purchased by two great-granddaughters, Joanne Ferring Dearing and Lois Jean Ferring Morgan. They are granddaughters of John Marmaduke Ferring.

My best most helpful contact in Arkansas was Glenda Thompson, the President of the Mississippi Historical Society in Osceola. She never let me down and took the bull by the horns!

Unfortunately, Captain Ferring's marker has never been located. My belief and that of other family members is that Ferring was most likely buried on his family farm. That marker was likely washed into the Mississippi River due to repeated flooding or destroyed over time.

As some of you may know, the V.A. now requires that a Confederate descendant must make the application for the free V.A. marker. This new ruling will make it nearly impossible for our Confederate soldiers to obtain V.A. markers. I was able to obtain the necessary affidavit from Ferring's descendant, Mrs. Don Dearing giving me permission to order the marker on her behalf.

In October of 2013, I receive a letter from Noel Baumann at the V.A. who works for John S. Corsi stating that necessary documents were missing. I called Ms. Baumann on November 4th, 2013, and explained to her that many attempts had been made to find the gravesite of Captain Ferring.

She told me that I must send her a copy of his printed obituary from 1872 and proof that Barfield no longer existed. Now, if I had had such a written obituary back in 2012, I would not have had to search for his burial site! Newspapers were not in operation in that rural area of Arkansas right after the destruction of the War. I told her that I wanted her or Mr. Corsi to mail me those new requirements in writing. As of today, I have not heard from the V.A.!

We can look forward to a memorial service to be held for Captain Ferring at the Maple Grove Cemetery in Blytheville, Arkansas, on Sunday, October 12, 2014. It will be organized by Glenda Thompson and the volunteers with the Mississippi County Historical Society, the SCV and UDC. Details to follow.

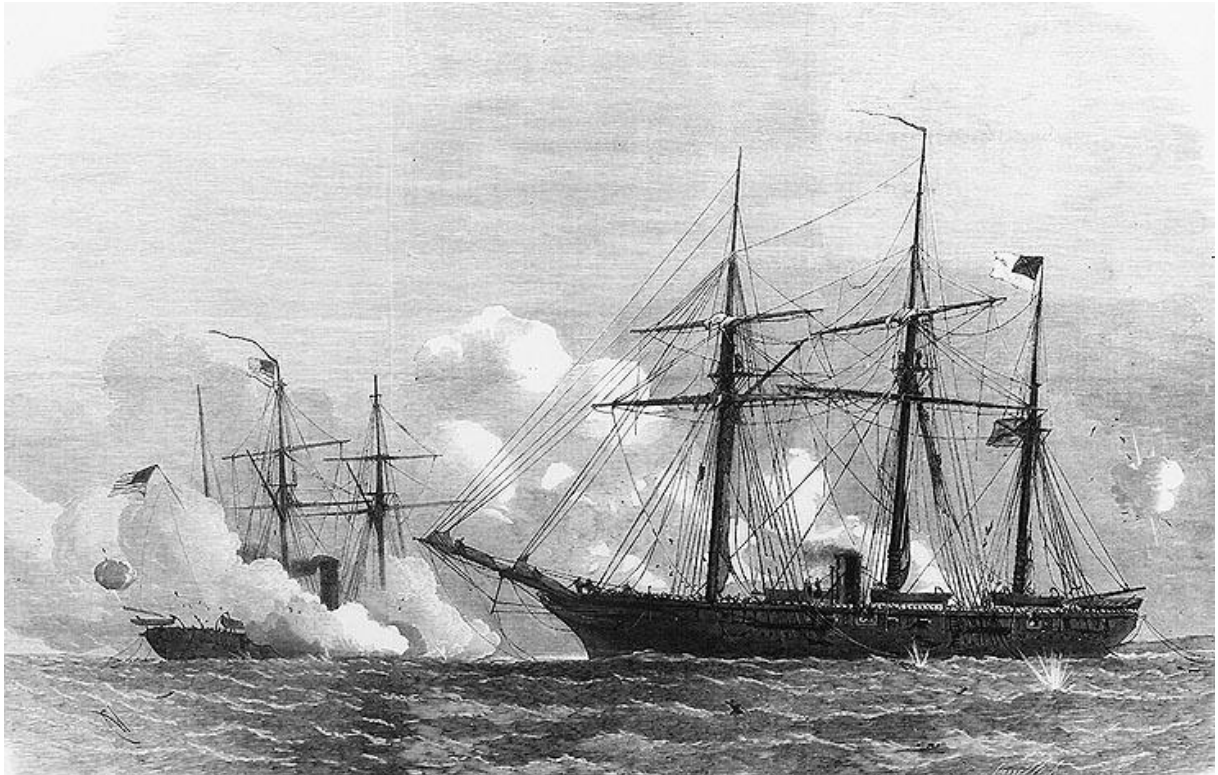
We will not forget our Confederate soldiers no matter where they are buried. We especially want to remember the services that were offered up by our European Confederates.



Nancy Hitt – 2014
hunleyhitt@gmail.com



CHERBOURG, JUNE 1864: THE ALABAMA'S LAST BATTLE

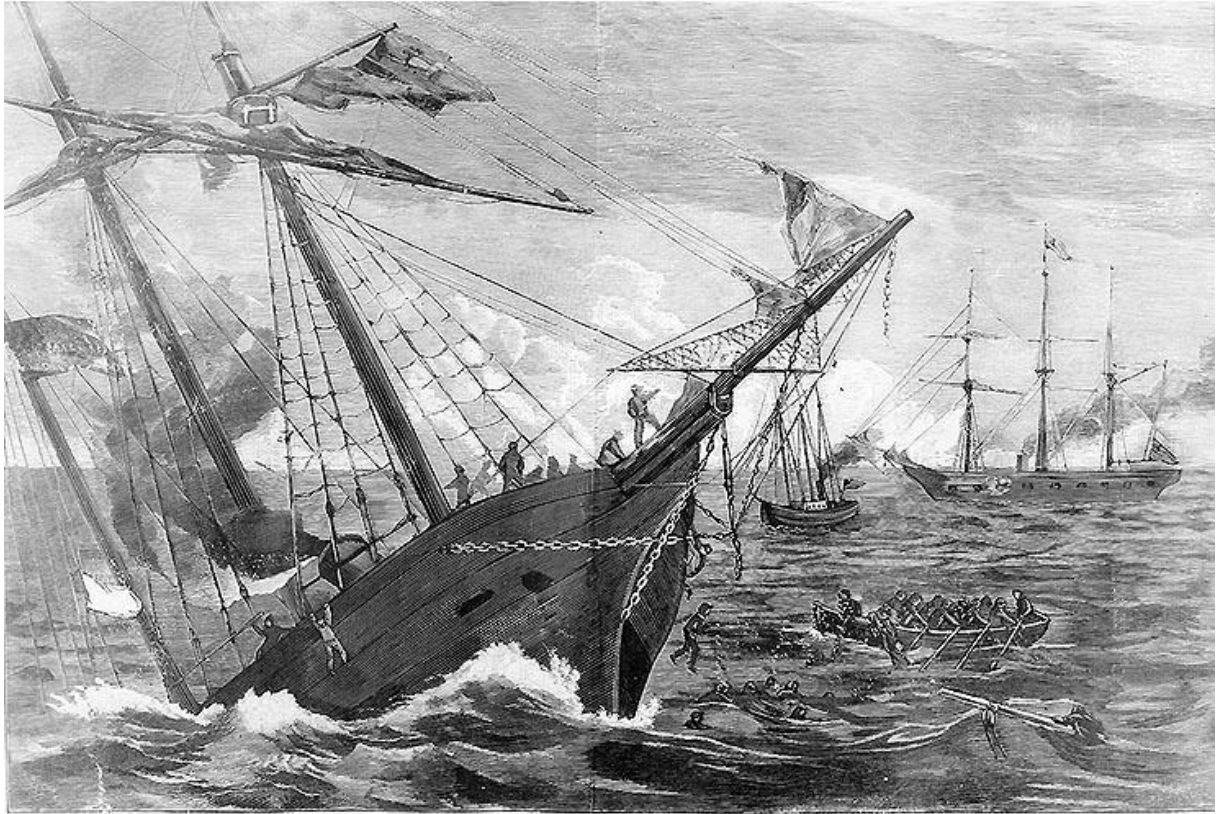


No account of the 'Battle of Cherbourg', that engagement between the Confederate cruiser CSS Alabama and USS Kearsarge, is more concise than the testimony of her Captain, Raphael Semmes, acknowledged by everyone who knew him for his honesty and sense of duty during a long record of naval service. It is absent of any of the many conjectures or hypothesis put forward at a later date, or by those who might have a reason to attempt to discredit a great ship, its Captain and crew.

" Sir, I have the honour to inform you, that, in accordance with my intention as previously announced to you, I steamed out of the harbour of Cherbourg between nine and ten o'clock on the morning of the 19th of June, for the purpose of engaging the enemy's steamer Kearsarge, which had been lying off, and on the port, for several days previously. After clearing the harbor, we descried the enemy, with his head off shore, at the distance of about seven miles. We were three quarters of an hour in coming up with him. I had previously pivotted my guns to starboard, and made all preparations for engaging the enemy on that side. When within about a mile and a quarter of the enemy, he suddenly wheeled, and, bringing his head in shore, presented his starboard battery to me. By this time, we were distant about one mile from each other, when I opened on him with solid shot, to which he replied in a few minutes, and the action became active on both sides. The enemy now pressed his ship under a full head of steam, and to prevent our passing each other too speedily, and to keep our respective broadsides bearing, it became necessary to fight in a circle; the two ships steaming around a common centre, and preserving a distance from each other of from three quarters to half a mile. When we got within good shell range, we opened up on him with shell. Some ten or fifteen minutes after the commencement of the action, our spanker-gaff was shot away, and our ensign came down by the run. This was immediately replaced by another at the mizzen-masthead.

The firing now became very hot, and the enemy's shot, and shell soon began to tell upon our hull, knocking down, killing, and disabling a number of men, at the same time, in different parts of the ship. Perceiving that our shell, though apparently exploding against the enemy's sides, were doing him but little damage, I returned to solid-shot firing, and from this time onward alternated with shot, and shell.

After the lapse of about one hour and ten minutes, our ship was ascertained to be in a sinking condition, the enemy's shell having exploded in our side, and between decks, opening large apertures through which water rushed with great rapidity. For some few minutes I had hopes of being able to reach the French coast, for which I gave the ship all steam, and set such of the fore-and-aft sails as were available. The ship filled so rapidly, however, that before we had made much progress, the fires were extinguished in the furnaces, and we were evidently on the point of sinking. I now hauled down my colors, to prevent the further destruction of life, and dispatched a boat to inform the enemy of our condition. Although we were now but 400 yards from each other, the enemy fired upon me five times after my colours had been struck. It is charitable to suppose that a ship of war of a Christian nation could not have done this, intentionally. We now directed all our exertions toward saving the wounded, and such of the boys of the ship as were unable to swim. These were dispatched in my quarter-boats, the only boats remaining to me; the waist-boats having been torn to pieces. Some twenty minutes after my furnace-fires had been extinguished, and when the ship was on the point of settling, every man, in obedience to a previous order which had been given the crew, jumped overboard, and endeavoured to save himself. There was no appearance of any boat coming to me from the enemy, until after my ship went down. Fortunately, however, the steam-yacht Deerhound, owned by a gentleman of Lancashire, a Mr John Lancaster who was himself on board, steamed up in the midst of my drowning men and rescued a number of both Officers and men from the water. I was fortunate enough myself thus to escape to the shelter of the neutral flag, together with about forty others all told. About this time, the Kearsarge sent one, and then, tardily, another boat. Accompanying, you will find lists of the killed and wounded, and of those who were picked up by the Deerhound; the remainder, there is reason to hope, were picked up by her enemy and a couple of French pilot boats, which were also fortunately near the scene of action. At the end of the engagement, it was discovered by those of our officers who went alongside of the enemy's ship, with the wounded, that her mid-ship section, on both sides, was thoroughly iron-coated; this having been done with chains, constructed for the purpose, placed perpendicularly, from the rail to the water's edge, the whole covered over by a thin outer planking, which gave no indication of the armour beneath. This planking had been ripped off, in every direction, by our shot and shell, the chain broken, and indented in many places, and forced partly into the ship's side. She was effectually guarded, however, in this section, from penetration. The enemy was much damaged, in other parts, but to what extent it is now impossible to say. It is believed he is badly crippled. My officers and men behaved steadily and gallantly, and though they have lost their ship, they have not lost honor. Where all behaved so well, it would be invidious to particularize, but I cannot deny myself the pleasure of saying that Mr. Kell, my first lieutenant, deserves great credit for the fine condition in which the ship went into action, with regard to her battery, magazine and shell-rooms, and that he rendered me great assistance, by his coolness, and judgement, as the fight proceeded. The enemy was heavier than myself, both in ship, battery, and crew; but I did not know until the action was over, that she was also ironclad. Our total loss in killed and wounded, is 30, to wit: 9 killed, and 21 wounded."



It is also useful to recall the content of John Lancaster's letter to the Times with subjoined extract from the log kept on board the *Deerhound*. Lancaster's account in reality differed little if any from Semmes; but his observations do confirm the unequal status of both combatants.

'Sunday, June 19, 9 A.M. - Got up steam and proceeded out of Cherbourg harbor. 10:30. - Observed the Alabama steaming out of the harbor toward the Federal steamer Kearsarge. 11:10. - The Alabama commenced firing with her starboard battery, the distance between the contending vessels being about one mile. The Kearsarge immediately replied with her starboard guns; a very sharp, spirited firing was then kept up, shot being sometimes varied by shells. In the manoeuvring both vessels made seven complete circles at a distance of from a quarter to a half a mile. At 12 a slight intermission was observed in the Alabama's firing, the Alabama making head sail and shaping her course for the land, distant about nine miles. At 12:30 observed the Alabama to be disabled and in a sinking state. We immediately made toward her, and on passing the Kearsarge were requested to assist in saving the Alabama's crew. At 12:50 when within a distance of 200 yards, the Alabama sank. We then lowered our two boats, and, with the assistance of the Alabama's whale boat and dingy, succeeded in saving about forty men, including Capt. Semmes and thirteen officers. At 1 P.M. we steered for Southampton.'

Many other accounts been written about the CSS Alabama's final encounter with the USS Kearsarge and arguments persist arguments as to why the battle ended as it did, in the sinking of the Confederate ship. We now know that the Kearsarge's hull had extra armoured protection from a blanket of heavy iron chain and that many of the shots fired from Alabama's guns fell short as a result of depleted powder; but there remains one *'what if'* factor that still generates much discussion and speculation

to this day? This of course is the third shot fired from the Alabama's forward 7-inch (178 mm) Blakely pivot rifle in the early stages of the battle. The 56 pound rifled shell is known to have struck a support beam, before lodging firmly in the Kearsarge's vulnerable stern post, its impact binding the ship's rudder badly.

The Alabama's shot however, failed to explode. Had it done so, the outcome of the battle might have been completely different. The resulting explosion would almost certainly have seriously disabled Kearsarge's steering and rendered her more vulnerable to attack, or at best, caused sufficient damage to sink the Union's warship, and ended the contest there and then.

All this was one hundred and fifty years ago this coming June. To commemorate this momentous occasion in the naval history of the American Civil War, the 290 Foundation has organised two immediate events with a third planned at a later date! In co-operation with the American Civil War Round Table (UK), 290 member Len Ellison in company with others and escorted by Lieutenant Colonel Jean Claude Hamel (Ret'd)., will lay flowers on behalf of the 290 Foundation, on the graves of two Alabama sailors and that of the single seaman from the Kearsarge in the cemetery at Cherbourg. Additionally, on Sunday June 22nd the long awaited unveiling of our commemorative plaque will take place in Angra dos Heroisma on Terceira in the Azores, overlooking the bay where the Alabama received her commission into the Confederate Navy. Finally, a small dinner is planned to remember the service of the Hon. John Lancaster MP., for his part in saving Captain Semmes and many of the Alabama's crew on that fateful day. This will be held at a venue in England closely associated with Lancaster and further details will be made soonest.

In co-operation with the GA Civil War Commission and the John McIntosh Kell, SCV Camp #107, we will be sponsoring the dedication of an 'interpretative sign' to John McIntosh Kell, CSN in Griffin GA., where this redoubtable member of the Alabama crew is buried. SCV Lt. CiC Charles Kelly Barrow and his wife Cassie Barrow, Honourable Members of the 290 Foundation will lay flowers on our behalf.

Thank you for allowing me to post this short article in your newsletter. I truly believe that the Battle of Cherbourg and its combatants will always be remembered as one of the most important events of the Civil War, certainly the conflict at sea! I hope and believe that the commemorations we have put in place will be a focal point for the future on the many of that past, who believed their cause was just and were willing to make the greatest sacrifice for that belief. **Remember the Alabama!**

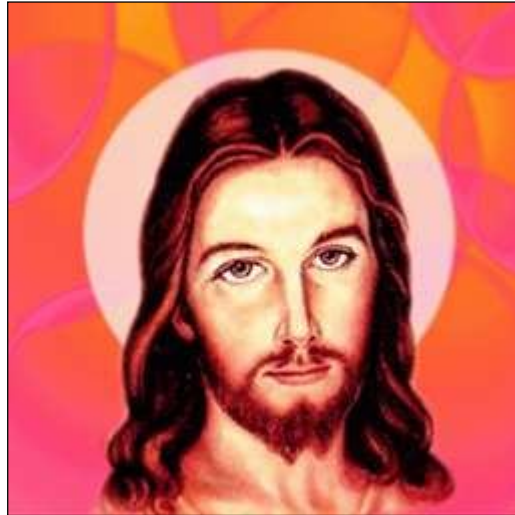
Ian Dewar

President, 290 Foundation (BVI) Inc., associate member SCV Europe Camp 1612



THE PREACHER'S CORNER

A STORY OF LOVE



There was a blind girl who hated herself because she was blind. She hated everyone, except her loving boyfriend. He was always there for her. She told her boyfriend, "If I could only see the world, I will marry you."

One day, someone donated a pair of eyes to her. When the bandages came off, she was able to see everything, including her boyfriend.

He asked her, "Now that you can see the world, will you marry me?" The girl looked at her boyfriend and saw that he was blind. The sight of his closed eyelids shocked her.

She hadn't expected that. The thought of looking at them the rest of her life led her to refuse to marry him.

Her boyfriend left her in tears and days later wrote a note to her saying: "**Take good care of your eyes, my dear, for before they were yours, they were mine.**"

This is how the human brain often works when our status changes. Only a very few remember what life was like before, and who was always by their side in the most painful situations.

Life Is a Gift

Today before you say an unkind word – Think of someone who can't speak.

Before you complain about the taste of your food - Think of someone who has nothing to eat.

Before you complain about your husband or wife - Think of someone who's crying out to GOD for a companion.

Today before you complain about life – Think of someone who went too early to heaven. Before you complain about your children – Think of someone who desires children but they're barren.

Before you argue about your dirty house someone didn't clean or sweep –Think of the people who are living in the streets.

Before whining about the distance you drive – Think of someone who walks the same distance with their feet.

And when you are tired and complain about your job – Think of the unemployed, the disabled, and those who wish they had your job.

But before you think of pointing the finger or condemning another - Remember that not one of us is without sin and we all answer to one MAKER.

And when depressing thoughts seem to get you down – Put a smile on your face and thank GOD you're alive and still around.

And before you think of signing out – Please think of sending this to at least ten people including the one who sent it to you.



EDUCATIONAL MOVIES

I CRUDELI (Italy, 1967) (aka THE HELLBENDERS, USA)



Plot synopsis: An Italian-Spanish co-produced European “western” by director Sergio Corbucci (Spanish title: “Los Despiadados” meaning The Merciless). 1865: the “Civil War” has ended, but not for Major Jonas (Joseph Cotten), introduced as a no-surrender Confederate who wants to continue the fight by reorganizing Confederate troops in the Southwest with the support of a large sum of stolen money. He devises an elaborate ruse to allow his small party to travel with minimal scrutiny through Union occupied territory, for the money is hidden in a coffin said to contain the body of his dead son. Jonas’ other sons travel with him along with a hired “widow”. They proceed to what they hope to be a new start to fight for Southern Independence. However, while en route, they face severe, ongoing strife among themselves and successive threats from Yankee soldiers, cowboys, and Indian bands on the warpath. Along with a lot of bloodshed and brutalities the secret money trail will lead to nowhere and the movie ends with Jonas dead.

Analysis: The whole story development remains only on the surface with the main characters and their motivations being pretty dull. The acting is likewise flat, even Joseph Cotten, casted to give an “American flair” to the movie, cannot save the day (this procedure is found in similar European-made westerns, casting stars like Stewart Granger, Telly Savalas and Lex Barker because their names looked well in the movie poster).

The basic conflicts are clear after the initial scenes. The story survives with much violence and action scenes and since there is no further development of the characters, the ending could have occurred in the first half of the screentime.



No surrender: Major Jonas and his men

Scenically the background is also pretty poor. As most Italian “westerns” this movie was filmed entirely in Spain, thus do not expect the locations to look like the Sonora desert. Also the movie is rife with mistakes in weapons, etc. All in all, not really a movie we would recommend here, but it is always good to be aware of what has been filmed about Confederate “motivations”, even in an Italo-western of the 1960’s.



Actor Joseph Cotten, definitely wasted in the role of Major Jonas



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