

# BIG RED

## Facts behind the flags

By Scott J. Dinkins  
News Editor

In the wake of the approval of "Big Red" by The Presidential Advisory committee, The Touchdown Cannon Crew will not be the only organization flying the flag as of 4 November. The committee, decided to give The Corps of Cadets a stamp of approval for an alternative flag for those who do not wish to fly the "rebel" flag.

For many years The Citadel and its "rebel" flag waving tradition at football games have been the target of much criticism and controversy from many individuals and organizations who say they are offended by the "rebel" flag. Cadet Sanford A. Key, who proposed the idea, and the committee hope this alternative will be gladly accepted by alumni, fans and the corps and be viewed as a return to "Citadel Heritage" as opposed to being a part of Confederate history.

There are many myths, legends and stories concerning "Big Red" and the "rebel" flag. The only history of "Big Red" correctly known is associated with The Citadel. Many people believe that the flag was used by the state as its battle flag, original state flag or by the various regiments of South Carolina that fought the Civil War. However, the Fort Jackson Museum, Charleston Museum, Confederate Relic Room in Columbia, Patriots Point Museum, or Colonel Hugh McLaurin S.C.N.G., a descendant of Cadet Captain J. M. Whildner, Co. A, who gave the order to fire on The Star of The West from Morris Island could not confirm any official use by the state of South Carolina in The Civil War. One the



## PAC approves new flag

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On September 18 the Presidential Advisory committee adopted a proposal by Cadet Sanford A. Key, Regimental Religious Officer, to purchase eighty "Big Red" flags to be flown by the Corps of Cadets on Parents' Day

at the football game against Samford. Cadet Key, a history major, says that he got the idea from doing research on Confederate Flags. He noted that "Big Red", an exact replica of the South Carolina state flag only with a red background, was used as The Citadel's battle flag during the Civil War.

The flags are currently being manufac-

tured by American Flagpoles and Flags and are priced at \$18.00 each which makes the total cost of the eighty flags total \$1440.00. The money for the flags will come from a fund that each battalion receives from a percentage of the profits from the Coke machines. The money received is left to the discretion of the Corps. The water fountains placed in each battalion were funded by this money two years ago.

Cadet Key stated that the company had to get legal verification to make the flag since it so closely represents the flag of South Carolina.

Cadet Key said he proposed his idea in a pre-Presidential Advisory Committee meeting to Clay Ludlum, regimental commander, then to Colonel Robert H. Burton, Jr., USA, Ret., Vice President for Administration. Final approval was given by Lt. General Claudius E. Watts, III, president of The Citadel.

Finally, Cadet Key stated that he hopes to have each company march into the stadium carrying a flag and that many cadets will purchase the flags from the gift shop prior to the game for \$10 each. Key also says that he has talked to many alumni and they appear to be very supportive of the idea. He says that "the Corps of Cadets battle flag's purpose is not to replace the flying of the Confederate Naval Jack or the American Flag but to offer another alternative and to re-establish part of our heritage as a Corps in The Civil War."

dier in charge of a detachment on The Star of The West, reported seeing a "red flag" flying above the group of soldiers (Citadel cadets) who later attacked them on the morning of 9 January 1861.

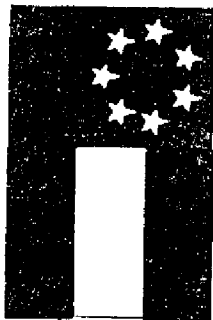
Another reference to "Big Red" is found in Oliver J. Bond's *Story of The Citadel*. Colonel Bond found reference to another "red flag" in the journal of Captain McGowan, Commander of The Star of The West. Like Lt.

Union vessel and on the cover of the pamphlet "The Boys Behind the Gun" which details The Citadel's history in the Civil War.

Another interesting fact is that "Big Red" was designed and flying a month before the current South Carolina state flag. The attack on The Star of the West, January 9, 1861, where "Big Red" flew was one month prior to the adoption of the blue state flag which came in February 1861.

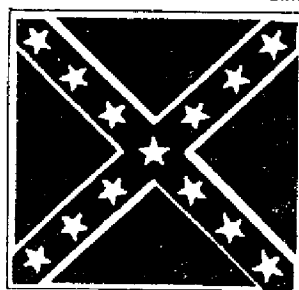
Another misunderstanding that many people have concerns what is commonly referred to as the Confederate Battle Flag or "rebel flag". The flag that cadets, alumni and fans fly as the "Confederate Flag" was never, and is not The Confederate Flag. Actually, The confederacy had the official flags adopted during the years 1861-65. The first flag, adopted on March 4, 1861, was known as "the

(see FACTS...continued on page 3)



Number one

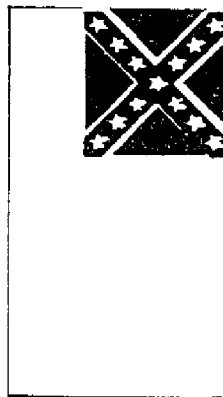
other hand, Mrs. Wilma Wates of the South Carolina State Archives in Columbia and a South Carolina Historian of Flags pointed out that Lt. Charles R. Woods, a Union sol-



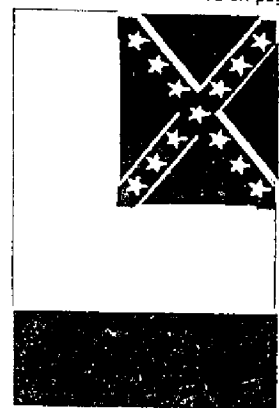
Number two

Woods, Captain McGowan reported seeing a red palmetto flag flying above Morris Island and the soldiers who fired on them.

The "Big Red" is pictured on the mural in Daniel Library showing the cadets fire on the



Number three



Number four

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(FACTS...continued from page 1)

adopted on March 4, 1861, was known as "the stars and bars" (#1) and was first raised over the state capitol of Montgomery, Alabama, meeting place of the Provisional Confederate Congress. The seven stars in the union at the upper left corner represented the states currently in The Confederacy. However, The Confederate National Flag at distance could not be distinguished from the northern flag. This led to a demand for a battle flag that could not be mistaken. Gen-

eral Beauregard submitted the winning design (#2). The Thirteen stars represented the States claimed by The Confederacy. This flag was sometimes called "The Southern Cross" and was never officially adopted by The Confederate Congress despite its popularity among southerners. The Secretary of The Confederate Navy unofficially declared it the "naval jack" and it flew on all confederate vessels.

The Second Confederate National Flag (#3) was adopted May 1, 1863 and replaced the first because of criticism that the latter re-

sembled the Union flag. This new flag had the disadvantage that it could be mistaken for a flag of truce or surrender because of its big white background. As a result, yet another flag was adopted on March 4, 1865, exactly four years after the first flag was adopted. This was the last Confederate flag (#4) and was the one surrendered at The Old Citadel at Marion Square and Appomattox Courthouse in April, 1865. This flag had a large area of red added to it and was seen by only a handful of people since its life-span was only a month long.