



“Major’s Orders”

Major Benjamin F. Ficklin Chapter 310

Military Order of the Stars and Bars



VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2024

Special Dates of Interest:

January 1, 2024 - New Year’s Day.

January Birthdays: 19th - Robert E. Lee, 21st -Thomas J. Jackson.

February 17, 2024 - Maj. Ben F. Ficklin Chapter 310 Meeting at Ft Concho LHSC, 9:30 am.

March 14-17, 2024 - GEC meeting at ‘The Lodge’ Pickwick State Park, Counce, Tenn.

March 22-23, 2024— Texas Society SEC meeting at College Station.

June 6-9, 2024— Texas Society Convention at the Hilton College Station Conference Center, College Station, Texas.

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Lt. Commander’s Lowdown

Happy New Year, Y’all. I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas. Well, we closed out this past year with a gathering at the “Christmas at Old Ft. Concho” annual



Students and teachers at Christmas at Old Ft. Concho with Santa Claus.

event. A few of our members participated at the “Wreath’s Across America” event held at the Belvedere Cemetery in San Angelo and several members attended the

Fairmount Cemetery’s Board of Directors meeting.

Now, we have a new year ahead of us, one full of promise. Our Chapter has finishing up with our ‘dues renewal’ process and we have done well. Twenty-four members have renewed their membership for the coming year, plus we have gained a new member.

Please note, our next Chapter meeting will be February 17, 2024 at the Ft. Concho LHSC. Coffee at 9:30 am, meeting starts at 10:00 am.

The month of March will bring the GEC & SEC meetings to us. We are in an election year for National Officers and the candidates are starting to state their cases. In the Texas Society, we will have Constitutional Amendments to content with. *Major’s Orders* will keep you informed to all that is happening, so stay tuned.



Update—Fairmount Cemetery

The Fairmount Cemetery Board of Directors held their December meeting on the 20th. There were eight Board members attending and in addition, the city’s Parks and Recreation department head Carl White attended. Also, present were eight concerned citizens that showed up to observe the meeting.

Vice President Donna Crisp opened the floor to public comments. At that time the board was posed with several ques-

tions from the concerned citizens. Opinions over the board’s new policy that only allows official US flags being displayed in the cemetery were voiced. Such a policy disallows the use of the Texas State flag, any other state flag, any Military Branch flag, any religious flag, The Medal of Honor flag, any organizational flag (police, firefighter, Vietnam Veterans, Shriners’ flag, Boy/Girl Scout flags, etc.), and any

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The CSS Albemarle

The CSS Albemarle, an ironclad ram, was one of the Confederacy's most successful ironclads. This vessel and its sister ship, the CSS Neuse, were designed to wrest control of North Carolina's sounds from the Federal forces that had dominated the region since early 1862. The Albemarle was a twin propeller ship



mounting two 6.4-inch Brooke rifles in an armored casemate. Construction of the new ironclad began in a cornfield at Edward's Ferry on the Roanoke River in January 1863. To ensure rapid completion of the Albemarle, the Confederate navy sent its chief build-

er (and designer of the ship) John L. Porter to oversee construction. Abandoned railroad rails were scrounged from across the state to be rolled into armor plates, and sawmills and a blacksmith shop were established on site. The work was aided by a newly developed drill that reduced the time for drilling holes in the armor plate from 20 minutes to 4 minutes.

In late 1863 Cdr. James Cooke was sent to take over Porter's supervision duties. Cooke, who would later command the Albemarle in action, became known as the "ironmonger captain" for his relentless efforts to gather iron of all sorts that could be rolled into plating. But despite all attempts to accelerate the vessel's construction, there were delays. The keel of the new ship was damaged during launching, requiring extensive repairs, and railroad delivery of iron from the foundries was exceedingly slow.

Robert F. Hoke was planning an infantry attack on the town of Plymouth near the mouth of the Roanoke and required the cooperation of the ironclad. Early on 17 April, as Hoke's infantry assaulted the outermost Union positions, the Albemarle started out. Workmen swarmed over its deck and casemate to fasten down the last layer of armor even as it

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Update—Fairmount Cemetery

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other historical flag of these united States.

The board was asked several questions posed by Charles Westbrook consisting of: How many Board members are veterans? Could you please explain the process by which new board members are chosen? Are all new board members required to file an application with the city clerk's office? He also questioned the allowance of other flags being displayed in the cemetery during the week before Veteran's Day, in direct violation with the new policy that allows "only official US flags" in the cemetery and who placed those flags there. Why were those flags not a violation of cemetery rules?

Golda Foster-McMahon addressed the board to determine how they were able to conduct business when the Board did not have a 'quorum' of members at all but two meetings prior to today's meeting per the City of San Angelo's website for the cemetery. She asked if all of the Board's members had completed the required "Open Meetings Act" class.

The board was also asked if any member knew what was an official flag of the United States. The explanation given was based on Title 4 USC, Sec 1. Which clearly says a flag representing the United States of America is proportional with a ratio of 1:1.9. In simple terms, a flag that is 3 feet in its 'hoist' must be 5.7 feet in its 'fly.' The flag with the popular 3'x5' dimensions is not a representation of the United States of America. It is the representation of the 'executive branch' of government of the United States, not of the Country itself. That is how Title 4 USC, Section 1, is written. The board was encouraged to reconsider the language of their policy because of its vagueness of language, not to mention how it excludes many citizens and citizen groups. Time will tell if the Board has the "we are in charge, go sit in the corner and be quiet" mentality or not.

A big "Thank you" to the following: Charles Westbrook, Mike Taylor, Golda Foster-McMahon, David McMahon, Ewell Loudermilk, Brian Wedgeworth, King Walker and Steve Melton.



Wreaths Across America

Wreaths Across America is a National event where volunteers place wreaths on the graves of our veterans. This event happened in San Angelo on December 16th at the Belvedere Memorial Park Cemetery. Several members attended this year’s event with members of the new SAR Daniel Wood Chapter 22. There was a brief ceremony



Compatriot David Johnson(R) with fellow Ft. Concho unit member Adam Martinez(L).



Compatriot Charles Westbrook honoring JM Israel, CSA.

presented by our military representing all branches of service and included veterans listed as MIA/POW.



The CSS Albemarle

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steamed downriver. While under way the engines broke down, necessitating several hours of repairs. Finally, the ship reached Plymouth early on the morning of 19 Apr. 1864. Waiting for it were the USS Miami and Southfield, the most powerful of several wooden gunboats at Plymouth. Chains had been strung between the two ships in an attempt to ensnare the Albemarle and batter it with their combined fire. But Cooke recognized the trap and avoided it. He then made for the Southfield, plunging the ironclad’s armored bow deep into the wooden vessel and sinking it so quickly that the ram almost followed the victim. The Miami, along with the other Union gunboats, soon withdrew after shot and shell from its 6.4-inch rifles and 9-inch smooth-bore guns glanced harmlessly off the Albemarle’s four inches of iron plating. With the opposing fleet dispersed, the Albemarle bombarded the last remaining strongholds in Plymouth, helping force a federal surrender.



Commander James Wallace Cooke, CSN, 19th-century engraving. Courtesy Naval History and Heritage Command # NH 63719

Hoke next focused his attention on New Bern. The ironclad Neuse had run aground en route to New Bern, and so the Albemarle was called upon to provide naval support for the operation. On 5 May it steamed out of Plymouth, but as the rebel ironclad reached Albemarle Sound, 7 Federal gunboats mounting a total of 55 guns attacked. The massed artillery of the fleet failed to penetrate the armor, but the Albemarle’s smokestack was nearly destroyed and the muzzle of one gun was shot away. In the melee the Albemarle itself was rammed by one of the wooden gunboats. Its steering gear was damaged, and, because of the mangled smokestack, it was necessary to feed bacon, lard, and butter into the boilers to keep up steam pressure. Despite having damaged each of the Federal ships, Cooke had no choice but to limp back to Plymouth. The Albemarle was repaired and remained at its mooring until 27 Oct. 1864, when it was sunk by a torpedo in a daring raid led by Lt. William Cushing. With their ironclad gone, the Confederate forces evacuated Plymouth on 31 October. In March 1865 the Union navy raised the ship and towed it to Norfolk, Va., the following month. The Albemarle remained an officially commissioned U.S. Navy ship until 15 Oct. 1867, when it was sold at auction to J. N. Leonard and Company for \$3,200.





2024 TEXAS FALL MUSTER

April 20, 2024 - Mexia, TX.

Confederate Reunion Grounds State Park

1738 FM 2705 - Mexia, TX 76667

504.957.6316

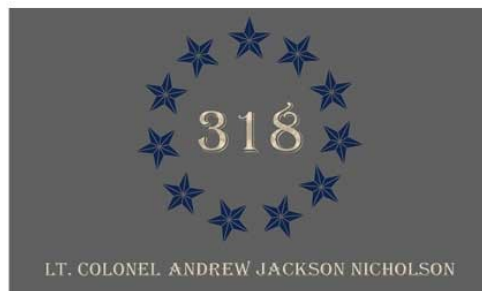


On the edge of the Navasota River, Confederate Reunion Grounds State Historic Site commemorates a place where Confederate Civil War veterans and families reunited from 1889–1946. Today, it remains a gathering place for special events and family reunions, and features an 1902 dance pavilion, Civil War-era cannon, and ruins of structures from the “Roaring ‘20s” and Mexia Oil Boom.

1. Bring your own picnic blankets and chairs
2. Bring all your fun stuff like Horseshoes, Cornhole Boards & Baseball bats & balls
3. Food is catered through Mexican & BBQ food trucks, and an ice cream truck. (open to all members, their families, and prospective members)
4. All MOSB chapters are welcome!
5. Event time is 9am-4pm

For more information, contact Michael Gonzales @ 504.957.6316

Sponsored by
Chapter 318 - Texas MOSB
Lt. Colonel Andrew Jackson Nicholson



National Office Candidates

At this year’s National Convention we will be electing new officers for the next two years. At this time, the following have announced their candidacy for their respective office.

Thomas B. Rhodes III Announces Candidacy for MOS&B Commander General.

Terry R. Phillips Announces Candidacy for MOS&B Lt. Commander General.

David P. McMahan Announces Candidacy for ATM Commander General.

Larry 'Joe' Reynolds Announces Candidacy for ATM Councilor.

Taylor Conner Announces Candidacy for ATM Councilor.

David Edwards Announces Candidacy for ANV Commander General.

Christopher Heuer Announces Candidacy for AOT Commander General.

Stephen Barbaree Announces Candidacy for AOT Councilor.

James Stanley 'Stan' Howell Announces Candidacy for AOT Councilor.

Each candidate’s profile has been emailed through the MOS&B’s Constant Contact system. If you have not received an email on the candidates, contact Lt. Commander David McMahan at: dmctx.mosbtx@gmail.com.

The Military Order of the Stars and Bars 87th Annual General Convention will be held at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel, in Springfield, Missouri, May 16-19, 2024. You can register online on the MOS&B website: <https://main.mosbihq.org/convention/>, here you will see links to registration and documents. May 5, 2024 is the cutoff deadline for registration. Hotel accommodations are going fast, if you are thinking of going, get your hotel reservations, now.



Christmas at Old Ft. Concho

The weather was great for this year’s Christmas at Old Ft. Concho. Participation was high for the reenactors covering the pioneer family, the wild west, In-

There was a pony ride for the kids and the ever popular train with those wonderful annoying bells. We even had Santa there.



Dad watches while his daughters learns how to wash clothes, the old fashion way.

dians, Confederate times, Fort times and even WW II. Friday began the event with numerous schools parading their children around the parade field giving them an opportunity to experience the times of our past and being educated about our great past. Attendance from the public was very good and they experienced the live fire of cannon and muskets.



Santa, Bill McElyea, with young pioneer ladies. These young ladies were a constant supply of fresh baked cookies.





MAJOR BENJAMIN F. FICKLIN
CHAPTER #310, TEXAS SOCIETY
COMMANDER DAVID P. MCMAHON
ADJUTANT JAMES G. PUTMAN
EDITOR STEVE MELTON

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Maj. Benjamin F. Ficklin Chapter 310 website: www.txmosb.org/310/index.html

MOS&B National website: www.militaryorderofthestarsandbars.org

Texas Society website: www.txmosb.org

Military Order of the Stars and Bars Pledge

We, the posterity of the Officer Corps and civil officials of the Confederacy, do pledge ourselves to commemorate and honor the service of leadership these men rendered in the cause of the fundamental American principles of self-determination and states' rights and to perpetuate the true history of their deeds for the edification of ourselves, our society and for generations yet unborn.



Wreaths Across America



(L-R) Brian Wedgeworth(SAR), Steve Melton (MOSB), C.A. Maegen(SAR), Charles Westbrook (MOSB & SAR), David McMahon (MOSB & SAR) and Travis Monday(SAR).

In memory of Steve Parnell. A great friend and Confederate mentor. You will be missed greatly.
SM