



TEXAS SOCIETY

MILITARY ORDER OF THE STARS AND BARS



Lone Star Dispatch

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February 2021

Winner of the 2020 Col. Walter H. Taylor Award - Best Society Newsletter in the MOS&B

COMMANDER'S CORNER

by Johnnie L. Holley



Compatriots:

As I write this, many of use in Texas are up to our bottoms in snow and ice. I have lived in Texas for 79 years and never seen this low a temperatures and as long a cold snap. I hope each of you weathered this event and are safe and warm.

The Chinese flu pandemic has affected all of us and the MOS&B. Many Chapters are not meeting and those that are having small turnouts. With the vaccine and "herd immunity" coming in, I hope we can soon get back to some type of normality. We must get back to meeting and having activities or we will lose members. We did well in Texas with renewals and I want to thank all of for your hard work and effort.

The political climate in Austin continues to be anti -Texan and anti -Southern. There are several monument removal efforts, canceling Confederate Heroes Day and numerous others dealing with plaques and historical markers. We need to call or write our representatives and STOP this insanity. Please contact your local reps and senators. Thankfully, there are a couple of pro heritage bills in the mill that we can and should support.

The National MOS&B is working on a cleanup and rewrite of our Constitution and By Laws. I am on the Constitutional committee and I will let you know more as we move ahead. This will all be voted on in July at the National Convention. Again, this year, we will have the Texas Convention at the same time as National, with the

Texas business meeting at 2:00 pm Saturday July 17. You must register for National to attend the Texas Convention. This what the membership voted on at Waco in 2019. The registration and information can be found on the Texas MOSB web page, txmosb.org.

Be safe and God Bless America and the South.

Respectfully,
Johnnie Holley
Commander.



TEXAS SOCIETY
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Lone Star Dispatch

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MILITARY ORDER OF THE STARS AND BARS

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TEXAS HEROES

THOMAS GREEN
1814 – 1864



Thomas Green was born in Amelia County, Virginia, January 8, 1814, and was graduated from the University of Nashville. He studied law under the tutelage of his father who was a justice of the Tennessee supreme court. Removing to Texas in 1835, he fought at San Jacinto in the War for Texas Taylor's command in the Mexican War as captain of the 1st Texas Rifles. In the interim he held office of clerk of the Texas supreme court from 1841 to 1861.

Tom Green entered the Confederate Army as colonel of the 5th Mounted Texas Volunteers which he led at the engagement of Valverde in New Mexico Territory. He subsequently distinguished himself at Galveston in January 1863, and under Gen Richard Taylor in Louisiana. He was promoted brigadier general from May 20, 1863. While commanding a brigade composed of the 4th, 5th, and 7th Texas cavalry, Gen. Taylor recommended him for promotion to major general, but action was not taken to this request by Richmond. While he was in the fight at Mansfield and Pleasant Hill during the Red River campaign, Gen Green was killed in action by a shell from one of the Federal gunboats at Blair's Landing, Louisiana, April 12, 1864. He is buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Austin, Texas.



Lieutenant Commander's Comments

Good Morning Compatriots,



Once again, we start a new year with more of a Yankee than a Texas Winter. The only good thing that I can say is that at least 2020 is over with. They say that hindsight is 2020, if so than let it mean that things are starting to get back to normal.

I want to see 2021 bring about a renewed interest and vigor in the MOS&B. Bill Elliott, our new Commander of the Colonel Richard B. Hubbard, Chapter 261 has already changed our Chapter's meeting dates from once a quarter to every other month. More activity means more chances for our members to meet and get energized.

Don't forget our State and National Convention that is coming up in July, let's all try to make it!

I would ask that each chapter take a look at our Website to make sure that our Chapter Officers are up to date. You can view it at: www.txmosb.org/chapters.php.

Here's wishing each and everyone of you a bright and prosperous 2021!

Joe Reynolds
Lieutenant Commander



TAPS

If any of you have ever been to a military funeral in which taps was played; this brings out a new meaning of it.

Here is something Every American should know. Until I read this, I didn't know, but I checked it out and it's true:

We in the United States have all heard the haunting song, 'Taps...' It's the song that gives us the lump in our throats and usually tears in our eyes.

But, do you know the story behind the song? If not, I think you will be interested to find out about its humble beginnings.

Reportedly, it all began in 1862 during the Civil War, when Union Army Captain Robert Elli was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land.

During the night, Captain Elli heard the moans of a soldier who lay severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention. Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment.

When the Captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead.

The Captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial, despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted.

The Captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral.

The request was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate.

But, out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him only one musician.

The Captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform.

This wish was granted.

The haunting melody, we now know as 'Taps' used at military funerals was born.

The words are:
Day is done.
Gone the sun.
From the lakes
From the hills.
From the sky.
All is well.

Safely rest.
God is nigh.
Fading light.
Dims the sight.

And a star.
Gems the sky.
Gleaming bright.
From afar.
Drawing nigh.
Falls the night.
Thanks and praise.

For our days.
Neath the sun
Neath the stars.
Neath the sky
As we go.
This we know.
God is nigh

I too have felt the chills while listening to 'Taps' but I have never seen all the words to the song until now. I didn't even know there was more than one verse. I also never knew the story behind the song and I didn't know if you had either so I thought I'd pass it along.

I now have an even deeper respect for the song than I did before.



REQUEST FOR ARTICLES
for upcoming Editions of the
Lone Star Dispatch

Please consider writing or submitting an article that can be included in future issues of the Lone Star Dispatch. Send your articles to the attention of our Editor Joe Reynolds, whose email is

Joe.Reynolds@txmosb.org

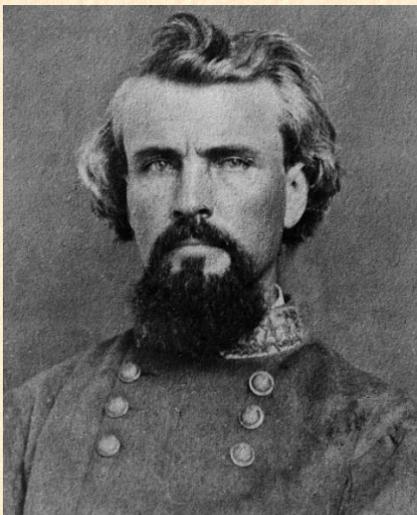
The preferred submittal is one in which the articles are in MS Word format and that all pictures are in jpeg format as this makes it easier to format to the proper scale within this publication.

Note that references and footnotes are requested to support where the original information is acquired as it is up to the article writer to provide such material.

If there are any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thanks.



NATHAN BEDFORD FORREST



General Forrest was by many accounts the best Cavalryman on either side in the War. He also has been accused of allowing a massacre of Black troops at the infamous battle of Fort Pillow and of being a founder of the KKK.

The following article is from an 1875 issue of a Memphis newspaper and presents a different and perhaps truer picture of this man:

On July 5, 1875 a convention and BBQ was held by the Independent Order of Pole-Bearers Association at the fairgrounds of Memphis, five miles east of the city. An invitation to speak was conveyed to General Nathan Bedford Forrest, one of the city's most prominent citizens, and one of the foremost cavalry commanders in the late War Between the States. This was the first invitation granted to a white man to speak at this gathering. The invitation's purpose, one of the leaders said, was to extend "peace, joy, and union," and following a brief welcoming address a Miss Lou Lewis, daughter of an officer of the Pole-Bearers, brought forward flowers and assurances that she conveyed them as a token of good will. After Miss Lewis handed him the flowers, General Forrest responded with a short speech that, in the contemporary pages of the Memphis Appeal, "evinces Forrest's racial open-mindedness that seemed to have been growing in him..."

"Ladies and Gentlemen — I accept the flowers as a memento of reconciliation between the white and colored races of the southern states. I accept it more particularly as it comes from a colored lady, for if there is any one on God's earth who loves the ladies I believe it is myself (Immense applause and laughter)... I came here with the jeers of some white people, who think that I am doing wrong. I believe I can exert some influence, and do much to assist the people in strengthening fraternal relations, and shall do all in my power to elevate every man, — to depress none. (Applause.) I want to elevate you to take positions in law offices, in stores, on farms, and wherever you are capable of going. I have not said anything about politics today. I don't propose to say anything about politics. You have a right to elect whom you please; vote for the man you think best, and I think, when that is done, you and I are freemen. Do as you consider right and honest in electing men for office. I did not come here to make you a long speech, although invited to do so by you. I am not much of a speaker, and my business prevented me from preparing myself. I came to meet you as friends and welcome you to the white people. I want you to come nearer to us. When I can serve you, I will do

so. We have but one flag, one country; let us stand together. We may differ in color, but not in sentiment... Many things have been said about me which are wrong, and which white and black persons here, who stood by me through the war, can contradict... Go to work, be industrious, live honestly and act truly, and when you are oppressed, I'll come to your relief. I thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for this opportunity you have afforded me to be with you, and to assure you that I am with you in heart and in hand. (Prolonged applause.) Whereupon N. B. Forrest again thanked Miss Lewis for the bouquet and then gave her a kiss on the cheek."

Such a kiss was unheard of in the society of those days, in 1875, but it showed a token of respect and friendship between the general and the black community and did much to promote harmony among the citizens of Memphis.

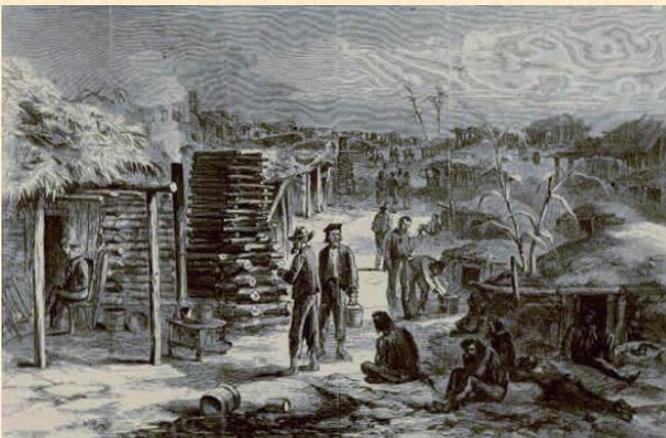
NOTE: The Independent Order of Pole-Bearers Association was a forerunner of the NAACP.

Submitted by Gary M. Loudermilk



CAMP FORD

By Karen Kay Esberger



Camp Ford was located four miles northeast of Tyler, Texas in the northeast corner of Texas. Early in the War Between the States, April, 1862, it was established as a training facility, a muster point for

troops from that part of the state. Early in 1863, it became a stop-over point for Yankee prisoners being taken to the exchange depot in Shreveport, LA. The first prisoners arrived in August, 1863. It came to be the Confederacy's largest POW camp west of the Mississippi River.

An interesting memoir was written by a man who had been imprisoned there. Each prisoner could "preempt" a site on which to construct a shelter. Then he contracted with two fellow prisoners to build him a 12' x 10' "mansion" with a "good stone fireplace and a substantial chimney." Chimneys there were built of stacks of clay and oak with mud chinking.

As of October, 1863, the prison grounds had not been stockaded, and approaching winter led to some prisoners being allowed to go beyond the limits to fell trees for more cabins. Unfortunately a Rebel guard shot a Yankee who was barely inside the designated prison grounds, and the Yankees threatened to rise up, kill all the guards, and ransack Tyler. Only local militia guarded the camp, and those 38 men were overwhelmed with the arrival of more than 500 new prisoners from Morganza, Louisiana.

Surrounding planters quickly provided slaves to build a 16-foot high stockade. It was built in ten days and enclosed more than three acres. The residents of Tyler were greatly relieved. Included was a good spring with its creek. So the prisoners had access to both bathing and drinking water. In later years, many men still praised the taste and quality of water available in Camp Ford. The Yankees appointed a "commissioner of aqueducts" to regulate use of the water and at what points it could be used.

Until the spring of 1864, the prisoners lived relatively comfortably. They built their own shelters, as indicated above, planted gardens of vegetables, vines and flowers. They were provided beef to slaughter. Besides food, parts of the animals were used to make combs and beautiful carved sets of checkers and chessmen. They were allowed to keep their own money so they could buy produce from the surrounding farmers. There was very little sickness.

However, worn out clothes and shoes were not replaced.

The prisoners published their own newspaper, "The Old Flag," edited by Capt. William May of the 23rd Connecticut and put on concerts which were also attended by surrounding Texas residents. A band and singing clubs presented those concerts. Prison crafts flourished, including basket-weaving, table mats, and drinking cups of ash wood.

Ashes were used to manufacture soap. They even built arm chairs and banjos from ash and hickory. Holly wood was used for goblets. Potters used the reddish clay, i.e. local subsoil, to form bowls, plates, coffee cups and smoking pipes. Chairs were said to be built in many patterns--- Gothic, rustic, cane-backed, willow-woven, grapevine wrought and oak-ribbed. More exertive activities included gymnastics, ball games & wrestling.

This prison camp filled quickly after the Red River campaign in Louisiana where Lt. General Richard Taylor and Major General John George Walker ended Yankee General Nathaniel Banks campaign to move into Texas through its eastern border. The Commandant was ordered to expand Camp Ford which quickly became nearly eleven acres in size.

Overcrowding led to loss of trees, diseases, and ruined gardens. The few shared tools caused long waits to use even an ax. Men dug holes and covered them with brush or dug caves in the creek bank for shelter. However, a prisoner exchange and a shipment of tools that October provided more comfort for the remaining prisoners, including tools, clothing and other "camp equipage." So the last winter there became relatively comfortable, but monotonous. Besides men, the camp was guarded by bloodhounds. These dogs, said to have "wolf-like yelps" and "long hyena-howls," could track men through swamps, as well as woods, and made the prisoners' blood run cold. The best hounds were not allowed to track game, such as deer and foxes, because such scents would distract them during a real pursuit. The best were trained only on human trails and were kept chained to prevent their hunting game.

Their sense of smell was certainly legendary. Units providing guard varied during the War. After the local militia, mentioned above, various Texas Regiments were sent to guard the camp. Later in the War, coverage returned to Texas Reserve Corps and Home Guard troops.

Camp Ford was one of the healthiest of POW camps because of its good water and a large number of Yankee officers to provide a functioning system of internal discipline. Their commanding officer was a Colonel who had graduated West Point. Most of the fatalities occurred in the crowding of the summer, 1864. A great number of those were new recruits, as opposed to veteran Federal regiments who suffered no deaths at the Camp. The overall death rate was less than 7 percent.

Karen Kay Esberger, Ph.D., R.N., is a retired nurse who is now President of Daffan-Latimer 37, the Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy in Ellis County. For further information, see www.txudc.org



THE BATTLE OF LAVACA TEXAS AND MASONIC LODGE #36

By David Hudgins



Lavaca, or Port Lavaca as it is now known, is located on Matagorda Bay in deep South Texas. It is located

about as far from the Civil War fighting that was taking place in the other southern states as anyone could get and still be in the Confederacy.

There were no plantations, forts, or slaves in this area. To protect the fishing and small port town, Captain Daniel Shea had organized a small, poorly equipped home guard unit, consisting mainly of older men unfit for service in the Confederate army. Because several members from the home guard were sick with yellow fever, members from the Lavaca Masonic Lodge #36 volunteered to take their place. Who would want to capture this out of the way fishing community? There would be no real advantage gained.

On October 31, 1862, two Federal gunboats arrived and demanded the surrender of Lavaca. When the answer "No" was received, the gunboats started firing over 250 cannon rounds into the homes and businesses of Lavaca. Luckily most of the women, children, sick and elderly were evacuated before the bombardment began. The men from the Masonic Lodge #36 fought like veteran soldiers. The women risked their lives to supply food and coffee to their men. Captain Shea and his men were able to stop the Federals from making landfall. After a few hours the Union gunboats left the bay. One of the men from the lodge who was manning a port gun later stated, "This will be the last time a Northern fleet would slip into a Southern harbor." His name was Edgar C. Singer, a 6'3" gunsmith, originally from Ohio and the nephew of Isaac Singer, inventor of the first commercial sewing machine. Within days, Singer started experimenting with small charges of gunpowder in a water filled barrel. He quickly learned the power of the underwater bombs.

Needing help to finance his invention, Singer turned to his lodge. The leader of the lodge, Dr. John Fretwell, liked what he saw and became Singer's partner. Singer and Fretwell designed a cylinder shaped, watertight metal canister of gunpowder with a spring-loaded detonating rod. The two men decided to demonstrate their bomb or torpedo, as it was known at that time, to Captain Shea. An old boat hull

in the bay was chosen as the target. When the torpedo detonated, the boat was demolished.

Captain Shea was so impressed that he ordered Singer to report to CSA General John Magruder in Houston. By the time Singer and Fretwell arrived, General Magruder was involved in plans to retake Galveston Island from the Federals. When he was told why the two men were there to see him, he was skeptical of the idea. However, he ordered for the men to receive 25 pounds of gunpowder for a demonstration.

On December 31, 1862, General Magruder launched an attack on the island and reclaimed Galveston for the Confederacy. He was now ready to see this new gadget device. The demonstration was held in Houston's Buffalo Bayou. Singer and Fretwell submerged the torpedo about two feet under water and then had an old boat towed across the area. When the boat hit the detonating rod, the boat was blown apart. General Magruder was very impressed and ordered the two men to report to Major General Dabney H. Maury who was commanding the Gulf District in Mobile, Alabama.

After a demonstration there and approval from the War Department in Richmond, Singer and Fretwell were sent back to Lavaca to start building torpedoes. The two men knew that they would need help. Once again they turned to the Masonic Lodge for assistance. The Masons who volunteered were James Jones, a jeweler; William Longnecker, a livery stable owner; merchants John Braman and Robert Dunn; C. E. Frary, a Canadian carpenter; David Bradbury, a contractor; and general store owner B. A. "Gus" Whitney. Confederate Secretary of War James Seddon authorized Singer, now a captain, to form a company attached to the Bureau of Engineers to provide a special torpedo service. Captain Singer organized this unit as "Singer's Submarine Corps." Compensation would be 50 percent of the value of all ships and property or other Federal property destroyed.

Singer and Fretwell soon returned to Mobile to start placing these new underwater torpedoes (mines) in

the bay. While there, they met three other Masons James McClintock, Baxter Watson, and Horace Hunley. These men had built two experimental submarines in the last two years. Known as Pioneer I and II, both had been lost. The five men became very good friends and formed a group known as “Singer’s Secret Service Corps.” The group decided to finance a new larger submarine, later to be known as the CSS H. L. Hunley.

In the late spring of 1863, the war turned against the Confederacy. Vicksburg was under siege and about to fall. Fretwell and Hunley were sent to Yazoo City, Mississippi to start placing torpedoes in the Yazoo River. The Yazoo River runs into Vicksburg and would be an easy route for Union gunboats. Soon after July 4, 1863, when Vicksburg surrendered, the Union ironclad “Baron DeKalb” headed up the Yazoo River where it came in contact with a torpedo. It quickly sank to the bottom of the river. Fretwell and Hunley returned to Mobile just in time to see the new nine-man submarine launching. After several test runs and a demonstration of its ability to go under a barge while pulling explosives and blowing up the barge, it was ready. By July 31, 1863, General P. G. T. Beauregard ordered the new submarine, the H. L. Hunley, be shipped to Charleston, South Carolina. While the Hunley was in Charleston conducting test runs, it accidentally sank twice. The first time it killed five of the nine man crew. The second time all nine crew members including Captain H. L. Hunley died.

On February 17, 1864, the Hunley was ready for service with Lieutenant George Dixon as the skipper. She sank the Union ship, The Housantonic, and became the first submarine in the world to sink an enemy ship. However, the Hunley did not return to port. It is believed that the concussion knocked the crew unconscious, and they died from lack of oxygen. The Hunley was not found and recovered until 1995.

After overseeing torpedo operations on several rivers and coastal bays, Singer was rushed to Richmond, Virginia to oversee operations on the James River

which led into Richmond. Singer designed drift mines for floating down the James River. In Mobile Bay, Union Admiral David Farragut decided to rush the bay, even knowing that there were over 100 torpedoes in the water with his famous statement, “Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead.” One of his larger iron ships, the Tuumseh, hit a torpedo, rolled on its side and went under the water in less than a minute.



A crew was sent to Shreveport to mine the water ways there, but it was too late. The Confederacy had been cut in half and could not survive. The war was soon over. The Singer Secret Service Corps had done everything in its power to help the Confederacy. It had sunk numerous Union boats and protected ports from being overrun. But at the end of the war these middle-aged Masons walked into a Union office in Lavaca where all this had started and simply signed parole papers.

In November of 2012, Mayor Jack Whitlow of Port Lavaca believed this story was about to be lost to history. The Mayor proclaimed a “Lavaca Masonic Lodge Day” celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Lavaca, the Masons from Lavaca Lodge #36, and their accomplishments. There was a plaque installed to honor the Lodge and a big fireworks show. In a time when most politicians shy away from honoring Confederate men and women, the Mayor, City Council, and citizens of Lavaca were not intimidated to stand up for their heroes.

David Hudgins of Waxahachie, Texas is a member of the Ellis County Museum Board of Directors and co-founder of the Ellis County Veterans Appreciation Committee. He also serves as Chaplin of the O. M. Roberts Camp #178, Sons of Confederate Veterans.



2021 TEXAS SOCIETY ELECTIONS

Gentlemen, the time is fast approaching for the election of Commander and Lieutenant Commander of the Texas Society, Military Order of the Stars and Bars.

Our next election will be held at the 84th Annual Convention in College Station, Texas on July 17th, 2021. There are only one more Newsletter that will be published between now and election day, so if you have any desire to run for either office, why not let the society know your intention by running a short article in the Lone Star Dispatch.

If you will let me know which office you wish to run for and furnish me a short ad or bio, I will place an ad in the May Newsletter, which is before the election date.

The Texas Society needs strong leaders, decide now to Make a Difference!



UPCOMING EVENTS

**MILITARY ORDER OF THE STARS AND
BARS**

84TH ANNUAL GENERAL CONVENTION

July 15-17, 2021
College Station, Texas



Hilton Hotel College Station and Conference Center
801 University Drive East
College Station, TX 77840
(979) 693-7500

You can find all the information and the registration form on our website: <http://www.txmosb.org>. Look under Conventions for all of the information and forms!



I cannot trust a man to control others who cannot control himself.

General Robert E. Lee



Texas Society Leadership

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Lt. Commander

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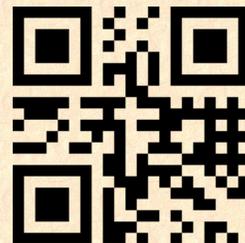
MILITARY ORDER OF THE STARS AND BARS

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.



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Opinions expressed by individual writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Texas Society, Military Order of the Stars and Bars. Letters and articles may be submitted to:
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 (Cutoff for articles is 15th of the month)