



# “Major’s Orders”

Major Benjamin F. Ficklin  
Chapter 310

Military Order of the  
Stars and Bars



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## Dates of Interest:

**January 19, 2025** - Texas Confederate Hero’s Day

**January 19** - Gen. Robert E. Lee Birthday

**January 21** - Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson Birthday

**February 22, 2025** - Maj. Ben Ficklin Quarterly Meeting

**February 28 - March 1, 2025** - MOS&B GEC Meeting.

**March 2025** - Texas Society SEC Meeting

**May 29 - June 1, 2025** - 88th Annual National General Convention

**June 20-21, 2025** - Texas Society Convention



2024 Texas Society Best Newsletter



## Lt. Commander’s Lowdown

Happy New Year to All! We begin another year, a year of hope for our country, to embrace its history and learn from it, not destroy it. Let one of your new year resolutions have you being involved and active in the Order promoting our Southern Heritage.

Our Chapter has completed its annual renewal process. We should achieve 100% retention of our current members and we have gained a new member by transfer, Leland Hamner.

We met during the Christmas at Old Ft. Concho event at the headquarters tent of Company “H”, 7th Texas Infantry. One of the orders of business was the election of Chapter officers. The following were elected for the 2025-

2026 term: David McMahan, Commander; James Putman, Adjutant; Steve Melton, Lt. Commander. Congratulations to these men and thank you for your time and service to the Order.

Our next quarterly Chapter meeting will be held Saturday, February 22, 2025, 10:00 am at Ft. Concho LHSC.

The next Texas Society SEC meeting is scheduled for March. The day is to be determined and should be available for the next edition of "Major's Orders".

With the new year at hand, it is the perfect time to consider attending the Order’s conventions. The 88th Annual National General Convention will be

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## Christmas at Old Ft. Concho

Ft. Concho was teaming with reenactors, students and shoppers the first weekend of December. Attendance was hampered slightly by the inclement weather but we showed up in force to support the fort with Southern charm. The Chapter held its quarterly meeting at the camp of Company “H”, 7th Texas Infantry. Cmdr. McMahan gave us a recap of events the Chapter had participated in. One order of business was the election of Chapter officers.

Cmdr. David McMahan, on the right, speaking to Kevin Wilson (L). Cris Bloyd is in the background.



# Chapter Birthdays & Service Anniversaries

## Birthdays

Jim Kerbow	January 14
James Farrar	January 22

## Service Anniversaries

Rod Smith	January 3	6 Yrs
David Johnson	January 16	6 Yrs
Charles Westbrook	January 16	6 Yrs
Arlie Sparkman	January 23	6 Yrs



## Wreaths Across America

Chapter members participated in the Wreaths Across America event at Belvedere Cemetery by placing wreaths upon the graves our veterans. This event is growing nationwide every year and allows us an

opportunity to engage with other cemeteries within our community.



(L-R) Charles Westbrook, C.A. Madgen (SAR) & Cmdr. David McMahon at Wreaths Across America



Brian Wedgeworth helping place wreaths at this years event

## Battles & Skirmishes

1862  
January 1 – January 10 1862 – *Jackson’s Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Raid, WV*

1863  
January 4 – January 17 1863 – *Arkansas River Expedition, AR*  
January 13 – January 19 1863 – *White River Expedition, AR*  
January 20 – January 22 1863 – *The Mud March,*

VA

1864  
January 29 – February 1 1864 – *Rosser’s West Virginia Raid, WV*

1865  
January 4 – January 16 1865 – *Terry’s Fort Fisher Expedition, NC*



# The Mud March

Despite disaster at Fredericksburg, US Army of the Potomac Commander Ambrose Burnside watched for an opportunity to reverse his fate into January. He found a glimmer of hope: in addition to the unseasonably warm weather, reports indicated that Federal actions in the Carolinas had forced Lee to send some of his army south. These circumstances seemed to offer the opportunity to strike at Lee. On January 20, 1863, the Army of the Potomac was on the move again.



The march became more difficult as it rained heavier over the course of the day. *Edwin Forbes, Special Collections Library, Pennsylvania State University*

The plan was simple: a lightning-fast dash to the west of Fredericksburg, where Burnside hoped to cross the Rappahannock River at Banks’ Ford placing his army directly in Lee’s rear. Additional troops would provide a decoy at the same river crossings across from Fredericksburg the Army of the Potomac had used one month before.

As the sun set on January 20, all had gone according to plan. The army had moved into place swiftly, and the morale of the rank and file lifted. Lee had not yet shifted his forces, and Burnside estimated that the quick march had put the Army of the Potomac 48 hours ahead of the Confederates. Around 7 pm that evening, however, it began to rain with a force that increased every hour. The rain continued all night and into the morning of January 21. Federal camps and roads turned to mud pits overnight. The poor condition of the roads caused delays and officers scrambled to figure out a way to continue the operation. The following letter

from General Daniel Woodbury from his position at Banks’ Ford to General Burnside indicates an increasing concern about the campaign:

*HEADQUARTERS ENGINEER BRIGADE,  
Near Banks’ Ford, January 21, 1863.  
Major-General BURNSIDE,  
Commanding Army of the Potomac:*

*Since seeing you, I have looked over into the enemy’s country, and cannot positively make out any signs of re-enforcements; still, there can be no doubt as to the enemy’s knowledge of our location and intentions. Our camp-fires last night presented to Lieutenant Cassin, aide-de-camp, 3 miles from this place, the appearance of a large sea of fire. Our smoke to-day covers the country, and reaches far beyond the opposite banks. Before the rain began, we had every prospect of being able to throw three bridges over at daylight. The rain has prevented surprise, and changed our condition entirely.*

*It seems to me the part of prudence to abandon the present effort, not only because the enemy must be aware of our intention, but because the roads are everywhere impassable. As the enemy, doubtless, has some guns in position on the opposite side, he will not be so dependent upon the condition of the road; besides, he has a plank road coming up to the probable field of battle. All my men are tired out by their night work, and cannot give to the fatigue parties that energetic attention necessary to efficiency. We can, I have no doubt, be ready to build our bridges at daylight to-morrow morning; hardly before. We could build two this afternoon, but if we could build a dozen this afternoon, I think it would be better to abandon the enterprise.*

*Respectfully,  
D. P. WOODBURY,  
Brigadier-General of Volunteers.*

Despite the weariness of the troops, the Army of the Potomac was, at least in theory, within striking distance of the river crossing. Burnside, obstinate, ordered the army to march on even as the rain continued to fall in sheets upon his men. The march proved to be beyond miserable. The flow of men,

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# Pictures from Ft. Concho



Darrell Rhea, Lee Hise & Cmdr. David McMahon



Participants portraying Company “H”, 7th Texas Infantry



Our newest member, Leland Hamner, checking for email orders from General Lee



WE MADE THE NEWS!!!

Chapter #310 at Ft. Concho: (L-R) David Johnson, Kevin Wilson, Darrell Rhea (seated), Steve Melton, Cmdr. David McMahon, Adj. James Putman, ‘the invisible man’, Jim Kerbow & Lee Hise.



More pictures on the back page.

## Lt. Commander’s Lowdown

(con’t)

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held on May 29 - June 1, 2025 in LA (That's Lower Alabama for us Southern Folks). The Brig. Gen. St. John Richardson Liddell Chapter #271 will be bringing it to us from the Graham Creek Nature Preserve in Foley, Alabama. More information and the registration form can

be found at: <https://mosbhq.org/conventions.html>

The Texas Society Convention will be June 20-21, 2025 in Bryan, Texas. More information about the Convention will be coming soon. Y'all have a safe New Year.



## The Mud March

*(Continued from page 3)*

animals, and wagons turned roads into soup. Regiments were forced to stop and rest every 100 yards just from the effort of walking through the mud. Wagons and cannon sank to their axles and were abandoned as not even the efforts of a dozen horses could move them.

As the miserable day came to an end, a poor omen appeared on the banks of the Rappahannock opposite the site Burnside had planned to cross: campfires of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia.

On the morning of January 22, it became clear that Burnside had again lost a race to Robert E. Lee. Confederates yelled jeers and insults across the river at the miserable US troops. The campaign was over. The Mud March, as this infamous movement would become known, was not.

War correspondent William Swinton wrote of the deteriorating conditions the army faced: *The ground had gone from bad to worse, and now*

(con’t)

*showed such a spectacle as might be presented by the elemental wrecks of another Deluge. An indescribable chaos of pontoons, vehicles, and artillery encumbered all the roads-supply wagons upset by the road-side, guns stalled in the mud, ammunition-trains mired by the way, and hundreds of horses and mules buried in the liquid muck. The army, in fact, was embargoed: it was no longer a question of how to go forward-it was a question of how to get back.*

Burnside ordered the army to return to their original camps on January 22. The retreat began on the 23rd. Fortunately for the Federal troopers, the rain slowed significantly. Unfortunately, they had to return using the same roads they had destroyed during their advance. It would take some men until the 26 before they made it to their original camps on Stafford Heights.

Exhausted, the Army of the Potomac hit rock bottom after the Mud March. So, too, did its commander, Ambrose Burnside.

From nps.gov



Supply wagons and pontoon bridging material, both critical for sustaining an army on the move, were lost in the mud. *Edwin Forbes, Special Collections Library, Pennsylvania State University*



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MOS&B National website: [www.mosbhq.org](http://www.mosbhq.org)

Texas Society website: [www.txmosb.org](http://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.*

