

“The General’s Aide”

**Gen. Tom Green Camp #1613
Sons of Confederate Veterans**

May 2024

Commander’s Briefing Room

Special Dates of Interest:

May 3-5, 2024 - Battle of Jefferson Reenactment, Jefferson, Texas.

May 18, 2024 - Gen. Tom Green Camp Meeting, 7:00 pm at Ft. Concho LHSC.

May 27, 2024 - Memorial Day.

June 7-9, 2024 - Texas Division Reunion, San Antonio, Texas.

Greetings Compatriots

We have had the wonderful April showers and now comes the May flowers. Most of my flowers are coming from weeds. May is Military Appreciation month. So, Confederate Soldier equals military...we have an extension of Confederate Heritage month! Thank you yankees!



The busy month of April is behind us and ahead are the Division and National Reunions. The Texas Division Reunion will be in San Antonio June 7-9 and the National Reunion is in Charleston, S.C. July 16-20. If you are planning to attend either of the Reunions, let me know as we have Delegate positions available. The latest edition of the *Confederate Veteran* magazine contained the pro-

posed Constitution and Bylaws amendments to be considered at the National Reunion. There is also a proposal to increase annual dues from \$35.00 per capita to \$55.00 starting this August, our next fiscal year. I bet you wished you had gotten in on the 'Life Membership' deal they had April 1st!

If you have not heard, the Texas Division is in the process of creating a new website. They are in Phase 1 at this time. Check out the new look.

www.scvtexas.org

We had a great program last meeting presented by 2nd Brigade Commander Bob Hazlewood. His program was based on the book, "Truth of the War Conspiracy of 1861", by H W Johnstone.

See you at the meeting.



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Lou Conter, Last Survivor of USS Arizona from Pearl Harbor Attack, Dies at 102

Of the U.S. Navy warships lost or damaged during the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the hardest hit was by far the USS Arizona, which was struck by four armor-piercing bombs. One of those bombs blew up the ship’s magazine, causing an explosion which sank the Pennsylvania-class battleship and killed 1,177 sailors and Marines, hundreds of whom are still entombed there to this day.

was 20-year-old Lou Conter, a quartermaster who was standing on the Arizona’s quarterdeck at 7:55 a.m. when the first wave of 138 Japanese airplanes launched their surprise assault. Conter not only survived the explosion of the ship’s magazine, but he survived the attack on Pearl Harbor and the rest of World War II.

Conter died of congestive heart failure

Among the survivors of the explosion

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Sherman's Effects Auctioned

A Columbus, Ohio auctioneer, Adam Fleischer, was searching through artifacts of the invading Union General William T. Sherman's descendants' home when an assistant called him into the other room. Danielle Linn, rare book specialist, had discovered a handwritten inscription in the margins of another famous Ohioans' biography, where former President Ulysses S. Grant had described his decision to not pick Sherman for a particular command job because of Sherman's recent "failure" in another assignment. Sherman's inscription, "It was no failure at all", was underlined for emphasis.

There will be several items up for auction including Sherman's sword and military trunk and the Sherman family bible, which includes Sherman's personal inscriptions recording his sons' and wife's deaths, and eventually, Sherman's son's inscription recording the general's death, his rank insignia, the annotated copies of Grant's two-volume memoir and Sherman's personal map depicting his March to the Sea that was compiled after the Civil War was over. The auction will be in Columbus on May 14, 2024 at Fleischer's Auction, www.fleischersauctions.com.

This information was posted on military.com. You can find the article at: <https://www.military.com/daily>

[-news/2024/04/15/civil-war-general-william-t-shermans-military-sword-family-bible-and-other-personal-items-go-highest.html?ESRC=eb_240416.nl&utm_medium=email&utm_source=eb&utm_campaign=20240416](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/04/15/civil-war-general-william-t-shermans-military-sword-family-bible-and-other-personal-items-go-highest.html?ESRC=eb_240416.nl&utm_medium=email&utm_source=eb&utm_campaign=20240416).



Annotations written by William T. Sherman can be seen in the margins of a copy of Ulysses S. Grant's memoir. The book is among the Sherman-related artifacts that will be auctioned in Columbus on May 14, 2024. (cleveland.com/Andrew Tobias/TNS)

"Blue" Only At Shiloh 162nd

Shiloh National Military Park commemorated the 162nd anniversary of the battle of Shiloh, April 6-7, 2024. The event hosted living history demonstrations featuring artillery, infantry and cavalry, book signings by two authors, and period music performed by Steve and Lisa Ball.

"2024 is the 162nd anniversary of the Battle of Shiloh. The Shiloh battle anniversary activities will be our first signature event for 2024, and our first large scale living history demonstrations since 2018. We invite everyone to come out to the park and remember the epic battle and the Americans who fought here in 1862," said Park Superintendent Catherine Bregaw.

On Saturday and Sunday, April 6-7, Shiloh will present living history demonstrations on the battlefield with reenactors **garbed in Union blue**.

Editor's note: Yes, you read that correctly. The 162nd Battle of Shiloh only had "blue" uniforms on the field. If you read the statement made by the park superintendent, she said, "...remember the epic battle and the Americans who fought here..."

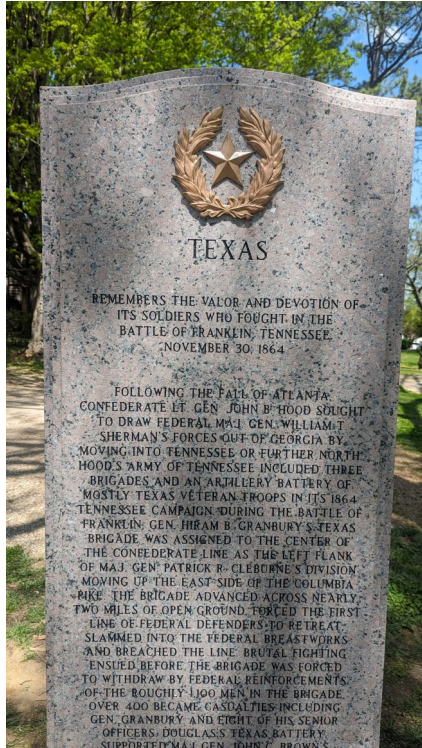
That would indicate that Americans wore "blue", so Southerners are not Americans as they wore grey. It is interesting that the website continues to display Confederates in their pictures.



Bob Hazlewood, 2nd Brigade Commander, during his program about "Truth of the War Conspiracy of 1861."

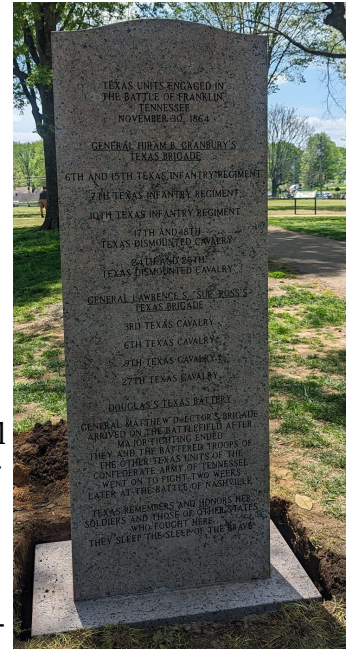
Texans Honored at the Battle of Franklin

On May 13, 2024, we will dedicate and unveil the new granite monument to the Texas troops who fought at the Battle of Franklin. Texans were in the ranks of Gen. Hiram Granbury's Brigade and suffered ghastly casualties at Franklin. Granbury was among the killed. One of the Confederate flags captured that day was from his brigade. Texans were also in Gen. Lawrence Ross' cavalry brigade, and they fought east of the Harpeth River. Also, present were artillerists in Douglas' Texas Battery,



which moved up Columbia Pike in support of Gen. Frank Cheatham's Corps. There will be a short ceremony at 3 pm. More importantly, the monument, which sits on ground east of Columbia Pike, not far from Carter House, will be available for all to see each and every day and long into the future. It marks the "high water" mark of the Texas troops on that fateful day. A counterassault composed of Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, and Tennessee troops soon pushed the shattered Texans back outside the main line of Federal earthworks.

This is another step in the reclamation of the Franklin battlefield. There is more to come!



Antoinette Polk to the Rescue by Norm Dasinger, Jr.

Her paternal great uncle was James K. Polk, the 11th President of the United States. The Episcopal Bishop of Louisiana and future Confederate Gen. Leonidas Polk was her father's brother. She was descended from William Penn, the founder of the state of Pennsylvania, and General "Mad" Anthony Wayne was also one of her uncles.

Antoinette Van Leer Polk was born in 1847. Her home was Ashwood Hall, located outside of Columbia, Tennessee. The mansion was built for Leonidas Polk in 1837, but in 1847 he sold it to Rebecca Van Leer, who married Leonidas' brother Andrew Jackson Polk. They were Antoinette's parents. Andrew spent \$35,000 on an expansion of the house, and in doing so made it one of the grandest mansions in all of Tennessee.

In April 1863, Antoinette was



away from home visiting family and, upon her return to Ashwood, she was informed that Union forces of Wilder's Lightning Brigade were in transit and headed toward her father's house. Antoinette knew that elements of the Confederate cavalry were staying at Ashwood, and they had no knowledge of their impending capture by Wilder's men. She made a split-second decision and, even though she was miles from home, decided to personally warn the Ashwood soldiers. This would not be an easy task because multiple fences, hedgerows, walls, and barricades would have to be surmounted in order reach her destination. But for Miss Polk, this was not a problem.

As proof, someone with knowledge of her exploit later wrote: "There was no more superb equestrienne in the valley of Ten-

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Antoinette Van Leer Polk, Baroness de Charette

Lou Conter

(Continued from page 1)

more than eight decades later on April 1, 2024, at his home in Grass Valley, California, at age 102.

Conter was born Sept. 13, 1921 in Ojibwa, Wisconsin, enlisting in the Navy when he turned 18 in 1939. After three months of boot camp in San Diego, he was sent to the USS Arizona as a regular deckhand on the forward port side of the ship. After making Seaman 2nd Class, he was transferred to the quartermaster division. The attack on Pearl Harbor occurred just



Lou Conter was a 20 years old quartermaster aboard the battleship Arizona during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. His military legacy can still be felt today. (U.S. Navy)

over a year later.

"The first planes came over at five minutes 'til eight, as the color guard was ready to play colors," Conter told the Library of Congress Veterans History Project. "We took a few bomb hits and the captain [Franklin Van Valkenburgh] came up immediately and said to secure the quarterdeck."

Within minutes of the attack, both Capt. Van Valkenburgh and Adm. Isaac C. Kidd were on the bridge with other members of the quarterdeck crew. The ship had been cleared of its lines and gangplanks and was ready to get underway. But after two enemy hits, a Japanese bomb penetrated the Arizona's deck and blew up the ship's magazine, which held one million pounds of gunpowder. The explosion lifted the more than 35,000-ton battleship some 30-40 feet out of the water and ignited a fire from the mainmast forward.

"Guys were running out of the fire and trying to jump over the sides," Conter recalled. "Oil all over the sea was burning... our senior officer ordered all us survivors to take them in and even render them

unconscious if we had to, and lay them down on the deck so they wouldn't jump over the side and kill themselves."

Conter began helping his fellow crew members and preparing to move casualties to the hospital, but water began flowing over the deck as the Arizona started to sink. It wasn't long before he was ordered to abandon ship. Once in the lifeboats, the sailors began pulling bodies out of the water and fighting fires. That work continued until the following Tuesday; the Navy was forced to call off the diving operation five days later.

Conter was one of 335 sailors and Marines to survive the attack, and was the last living survivor. Some 2,341 service members died on Dec. 7, 1941.

Conter continued serving in the Navy after Pearl Harbor. He became a naval aviator, piloting PB-1 Flying Boats for Patrol Bombing Squadron 11, a "Black Cat" unit, hunting Japanese submarines at night while painted black. He flew 200 missions in the Pacific Theater where he was shot down twice, both time rowing to safety aboard a raft. After the war, he joined the reserve and went home to California.

During the Korean War, Conter reentered active duty, serving as an air intelligence officer and flying missions from the Essex-class aircraft carrier USS Bonhomme Richard between May and December 1951. When he returned to the United States, he was sent to work in special operations for the National Intelligence Department. There, he established the Navy's first Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape, or SERE, training program and became the service's first SERE officer.

Conter would start SERE schools across the United States and in Germany, training aviators who would use the training in the Vietnam War. He eventually retired in 1967 as a lieutenant commander, having served 28 years in the Navy. He became the last survivor of the USS Arizona after Ken Potts died in April 2023 at age 102.

That same year, at age 101, Conter told the Wall Street Journal he would have liked to go visit the USS Arizona Memorial one last time. He hadn't been since 2019, but his doctor forbade him from taking the nine-hour flight; during that visit, he noted how much he enjoyed visiting his shipmates. Though many consider him and every member of the Arizona's crew as heroes, Conter refused to use that label.

"I consider the heroes the ones that gave their lives, that never came home to their families," he said. "They're the real heroes."



2024 Confederate Memorial/San Jacinto Day

Gen. Tom Green Camp 1613 members joined with the Tom Green County Historical Commission to honor our Confederate Veterans and the Veterans of the Texas Revolution at Fairmount Cemetery on Sat-

vice while TGCHC President, Golda McMahon lead the program for the two Texan Veterans.

Members included David Johnson, Brian Wedgeworth, Charles Westbrook, Rod Smith, David McMahon & Steve Melton. Howard Horton of the Ft. Concho unit also participated in the firing line.



Charles Westbrook, Howard Horton, David Johnson, Steve Melton, Rod Smith, David McMahon & TGCHC Pres. Golda McMahon. (L-R)

urday, April 27, 2024. Camp member Charles Westbrook presided over the Confederate Memorial ser-



Parnell Memorial



There was a large turnout from across the region to honor Steve Parnell's last wish. Camp members Ray



Harold Johnston made a Co. H, 7th Texas Infantry flag that all participants signed and he presented the flag to Tre Parnell.

Johnson and Harold Johnston orchestrated a wonderful Memorial for Steve Parnell at Ft. Chadbourne on March 30, 2024. The Parnell family was very appreciative and grateful for all the love and affection from those in attendance.





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Gen. Tom Green Camp #1613 Texas Division, 2nd Brigade Sons of Confederate Veterans

To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we will commit the vindication of the cause for which we fought. To your strength will be given the defense of the Confederate soldier's good name, the guardianship of his history, the emulation of his virtues, the perpetuation of those principles which he loved and which you love also, and those ideals which made him glorious and which you also cherish."

Lt. General Stephen Dill Lee, Commander General,
United Confederate Veterans,
New Orleans, Louisiana, April 25, 1906

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Antoinette Polk

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nessee . . . she had a thoroughbred horse trained to her bidding leaping the fences like a reindeer in time to come out on the pike just in front of the [Yankee] troopers some four miles from home. They took after her but her foaming steed was so fleet of foot that she got away from them in the twinkling of an eye and saved her friends from capture."

Confederate Gen. Nathan B. Forrest, while stationed in Columbia in the summer of 1863, heard of Antoinette's heroic effort and presented her in recognition with one of the battle flags he captured from Union Col. Abel Streight's command, which had surrendered to Forrest near Cedar Bluff, Alabama, on May 3, 1863.

After the Civil War, Andrew J. Polk moved to Italy, and his

daughter became the finest female fox hunter in all of Europe, winning several such contests in multiple countries. Antoinette married a French baron—Gen. Charles-Marie Charette, a commander of the Papal Zouves.

Ashwood burned in 1874, and Antoinette died in 1919 in Brittany, France.



Ashwood Hall