



George Washington Chapter Newsletter in Alexandria, Virginia

Volume 24, Issue 7

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October, 2022

Wreath Laying at Tomb of Unknown Soldier



Right: Front Row (L-R) President General Bruce Pickette; VASSAR 1st Vice President, Ernie Coggins. Second Row (L-R) George Washington Chapter President, Richard Rankin; Virginia Color Guard Vice Commander Brett Osborn.



SAR Officers Present (L-R) Richard Rankin (President GW Chapter), Dave Thomas (VASSAR Asst. Registrar, Past President GW Chapter), Mike Weyler (VASSAR 3rd VP, Past President Col. Wm. Grayson Chapter), Ernie Coggins (VASSAR 1st VP, Past President GW Chapter),



President General Bruce Pickette, Mike Elston (Chancellor General, Past President VASSAR and GW Chapter), Don Reynolds (Past President VASSAR and GW Chapter), Tom Roth (VASSAR Historian, Past President GW Chapter).

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President's Corner

Compatriots:

As summer slides into autumn, our active SAR program of multiple events this Autumn is upon us.

September has given us several spectacular events. On September 10th, NSSAR PG Bruce Pickette and his wife, Rita joined us for our Chapter Meeting. The PG presented his remarks and goals for his tenure.

Afterwards, we traveled to Arlington National Cemetery, for PG Pickette laying the national wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The VASSAR Color Guard provided the escort for this iconic event. On September 11th, many chapter members attended the 21st Anniversary of the 9/11 Attack on the Pentagon. The Pentagon Chapter, NSDAR hosted this Commemoration which included my presenting our chapter wreath and presenting remarks on behalf of the chapter. Ernie Coggins represented the VASSAR President during the event and offered remarks.

The VASSAR Semi-Annual Meeting was held at Colonial Williamsburg on Sept 16-18. On Friday afternoon, the General Membership Session opened and there were administrative specific workshops, one of which announced the new VASSAR Membership System (Member Clicks). This phased-in implementation will start October 1 with four chapters enrolling and expand into the new year with other chapters. Our chapter's Wild Apricot system may be one of the last chapter systems to migrate to Member Clicks later next year.

On Saturday morning, the meeting attendees traveled to the Yorktown Battlefield Visitor's Center for a plaque dedication jointly with the Virginia C.A.R. Later in the afternoon, the General Membership Meeting reconvened. One of the key actions was the approval of a



resolution to increase VASSAR annual membership dues from the current \$ 25.00 per member to \$ 30.00 per member, effective January 1, 2023.

During the Awards Ceremony, several chapter members received the following: Craig Batten, the Patriot Graves Preservation Medal; Richard Sherman, another Oak Leaf Cluster to his Liberty Medal; Richard Rankin, the Patriot Grave Marking Medal; Ernie Coggins, the Silver 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution Medal; and our chapter earned the Flag Retirement Certificate.

On September 21, John Blair presented the SAR Life Saving Award to Private First-Class, Andrew Arvelo of the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office. With this award, our chapter has now completed awards in all award categories. Accordingly, our chapter has met the requirements to be awarded the VASSAR John Blair Service Award Streamer. Congratulations to John and his committee!

Upcoming October events: on October 18-19 in Yorktown, the Yorktown Day Commemoration will convene. This National SAR event will be attended by PG Bruce Pickette and VASSAR President Bruce Meyer. VASSAR Color Guard will be supplemented by members of the French Army wearing period uniforms.

In October, we will be nominating our chapter officers for 2023; with their election in November. Also, we will be sending out our notices for the renewal of your 2023 membership dues and requesting your consideration of a generous donation to be put to good use in the new year.

On November 11, we will be honoring our veterans and placing a wreath at the Tomb of General Washington; and on December 17, we will be participating in Wreaths Across America by placing wreaths on the graves of veterans in the Alexandria National Cemetery. I encourage you to visit our chapter website, www.gwsar.org and our posted videos and images of past events.

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President's Corner *(from previous page)*

The July 4th March to the Tomb video is must see viewing.

While visiting our chapter website, please go to the "Events" tab to register for the upcoming chapter meetings; pay for your lunch on-line; or to make a donation to our many chapter activities—all with one easy click.

We very much appreciate your support and participation at our monthly chapter luncheons and multiple events.

*Fraternally,
Richard E. Rankin
President
George Washington Chapter*



Mike Elston, SAR Chancellor General and Richard Rankin, George Washington Chapter President, present VASSAR donation check to the Reverend Dr. Lynn Ronaldi, Rector of Pohick Church and Tony Harriman, Pohick Church Administrator. Donation applicable to Dr. William Brown epitaph. Dr. William Brown was a Revolutionary War Surgeon of the 2nd VA Regiment, who later became the Physician General of the Continental Army.



Tomb of unknown (from Page 1)



VASSAR Color Guard with the President General: Ken Bonner (President Sgt. Major John Champe Chapter, Past Commander VASSAR Color Guard), Mike Weyler (VASSAR 3rd VP, Past President Col. Wm. Grayson Chapter), President General Pickette, Brett Osborn (VASSAR Vice-Color Guard Commander, Col. James Wood, II Chapter), Paul Christensen (Col. James Wood II Chapter), Richard Tyler (Col. James Wood II Chapter).



President General Bruce Pickette & VASSAR 1st Vice President, Ernie Coggins.



The Tomb is guarded 24/7 by soldiers of the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment, "The Old Guard". The Old Guard is the oldest active infantry unit in the military. In addition to protecting this sacred site, the soldiers of the Old Guard maintain reverence and silence.



21st Anniversary of 9/11 at Pentagon



On September 11th, many chapter members attended the 21st Anniversary of the 9/11 Attack on the Pentagon. The Pentagon Chapter, NSDAR hosted this Commemoration.

Left: GW Chapter President Richard Rankin.

Right: GW Compatriots Rand Pixa, GW Vice President, and former GW President Jay Henn.



Far left: Former GW President and 1st VASSAR Vice President Ernie Coggins brought greetings from VASSAR President.

Left: Former GW President and VASSAR Historian Tom Roth.

GW Chapter President Richard Rankin was one of only 2 SAR chapter presidents to be asked to bring greetings at this NSDAR event.

October GW Chapter Guest Speaker

Dr. Michael J. Crawford

Dr. Michael J. Crawford joined the Naval Historical Center in 1982 specifically to work on the book *Naval Documents of the American Revolution Volume 9*. From 1990 to 2008 he served as head of the Early History Branch. In 2008 the Naval Historical Center became the Naval History and Heritage Command and Dr. Crawford became Senior Historian, a post he held until his retirement in 2017. In addition to the role of Senior Historian, Dr. Crawford also served as Head of the Reference Branch and Deputy Director of Histories and Archives Division.

During his 35-year tenure with the Naval History and Heritage Command, Dr. Crawford wrote or co-authored 17 books including *Against All Odds: U.S. Sailors in the War of 1812* (2004), *Naval Documents of the American Revolution Volumes 9-12* (1964-2015), *The Naval War of 1812: A Documentary History* (1985-2002), *The Reestablishment of the Navy, 1787-1801: Historical Overview and Select Bibliography* (1995), *The World Cruise of the Great White Fleet: Honoring 100 Years of Global Partnerships and Security* (2008), and *The Spanish-American War: Historical Overview and Select Bibliography* (1998). He also wrote or assisted with 60 other items including book reviews, articles and encyclopedia chapters.

In addition to his 40+ public appearances, such as teaching events and interviews, he participated in over 30 panels and discussions on naval history, including the Needs and Opportunities Speaker Series and Naval History Workshop. Dr. Crawford also joined, and at times took a leadership role in, organizations such as the American Historical Association, Society for History in the Federal Government, and Society for Military History.

In 2017, Dr. Crawford retired from his distinguished career with the Naval History and Heritage Command.



"A citizen, first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

*Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee,
December 26, 1799.*

President	Richard Rankin: 703-538-5805
Vice President	Rand Pixa: 703-622-7001
Treasurer	Bill Wilson: 301-523-2690
Secretary	Scott Walker: 703-216-4798
Registrar	Richard Sherman: 301-654-6319

The George Washington Chapter was chartered in its present form on April 2, 1954. With over 250 members, it is Virginia's largest SAR chapter. Meetings customarily are held at 11:30 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month (June, July & August excepted) at the Belle Haven Country Club, 6023 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria, Virginia.

Immediate Past President:

Tom Roth: 703-739-8811

Ride Share: Members in need of a ride to a Chapter meeting or a Chapter-sponsored event may contact the Amenities Committee Chairman, Don Reynolds, at (703) 765-4947.

This newsletter is **temporarily** edited by **Pete Farley**. Inputs from Chapter officers, committee chairmen, and fellow Compatriots are always needed. Please send your inputs and comments to nyyno7@cox.net or call 703-585-3163.

Mount Vernon Grants Boy's Wish



Don Francisco, Mount Vernon's resident fifer (pictured, right), with Make-A-Wish Foundation recipient Nakeem.

On April 30, Mount Vernon and the First Virginia Regiment, a Revolutionary War living history and reenactment group, hosted Nakeem (*last name withheld for privacy*), a 16-year-old Make-A-Wish Foundation recipient. Diagnosed with a respiratory disorder, Nakeem dreamed of participating in a Revolutionary War reenactment. And so, during Mount Vernon's popular Revolutionary War Weekend, he donned a custom-made uniform and joined the Continentals as a drummer. He also met "General Washington," toured the Mansion, checked out George Washington's headquarters tent (*on display that weekend courtesy of the Museum of the American Revolution*), and laid a wreath at the tomb of General Washington.

By signing the Declaration of Independence, the fifty-six Americans pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor. Nine died of wounds during the Revolutionary War. Five were captured or imprisoned. Wives and children were jailed, mistreated, or left penniless. Twelve signers' houses were burned to the ground. No signer defected. Their honor, like their nation remained intact.



October through the years with George Washington

- 1777** on the 4th--Battle of Germantown.
- 1781** on the 19th--Cornwallis surrenders to Washington at Yorktown.
- 1789** on the 3rd--Washington issues his first Thanksgiving Proclamation as President.
- 1792** on the 1st--Thomas Jefferson visits Mt. Vernon to convince Washington to consider a second term as president.
- 1792** on the 13th--Cornerstone of the White House is set; Washington is in Philadelphia.



VASSAR Semi-Annual Meeting Williamsburg



Above left: Richard Rankin receiving certificate for Richard Sherman who received yet another Oak Leaf Cluster to his Liberty Medal. Above right: Ernie Coggins was presented with the Silver 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution Medal by VASSAR President Bruce Meyer.



Left: Richard Rankin receiving the Patriot Grave Marking Medal from VASSAR President Bruce Meyer.

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VASSAR Semi-Annual *(from previous Page)*



Left: GW President Rankin receiving certificate for Flag Retirement. Above is 1st VASSAR VP and former GW President Ernie Coggins.



Above: George Washington President Richard Rankin receiving certificate from VASSAR President Bruce Meyer for Craig Batten who received the Patriot Graves Preservation Medal.

Right: George Washington Chapter Past President Tom Roth presented our Newsletter Editor Pete Farley with the Meritorious Service Medal and Certificate.

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Upcoming Events

Sept 29-Oct 1: NSSAR Fall Leadership Meeting

The Brown Hotel
Louisville, KY

Oct 7: 242nd Anniversary of the Battle of Kings Mountain

Kings Mountain National Military Park
2625 Park Road
Blacksburg, SC

Oct 7-9: Anniversary of the Battle of Point Pleasant

Point Pleasant, WV

Oct 8: Chapter Meeting

Belle Haven Country Club at 11:30 am
Michael Crawford, The Continental Navy, Part 1: The Origin of the Continental Navy

Oct 15: Joint Grave Marking, GWC & War of 1812 Society at 11:00 am

Flint Hill Cemetery, 2845 Chain Bridge Rd
Vienna (Oakton), VA

Oct 19: 241st Commemoration of the Battle of Yorktown at 10:30 am

Yorktown, VA

Oct 22: 248th Anniversary Muster of the Culpeper Minutemen at 11:00 am

Yowell Meadow Park
Culpeper, VA

Nov 11: Veterans Day Wreath Laying at General Washington's Tomb

Mount Vernon

Nov 12: Chapter Meeting

Belle Haven Country Club at 11:30 am
Michael Crawford, The Continental Navy, Part 2: The Naval Career of John Barry

Dec 3: 247th Commemoration of the Battle of Great Bridge at 11:00 am

Battlefield & Waterways Museum
1775 Historic Way, Chesapeake, VA

Dec. 10: Joint Chapter Meeting at 11:30 am
(George Washington & George Mason Chapters)

Army-Navy Club
Arlington, VA

Dec 17: Wreaths Across America

Alexandria National Cemetery

Jan 14, 2023: Chapter Meeting at 11:30 am Location TBD

Barbara Voulgaris, The Naval Battle of Valcour Island/Bay and the Contemporary Battle to Preserve Its Historic Artifacts.

Feb 9-12, 2023: VASSAR Annual Meeting,

Berry Hill Resort

South Boston, VA

Mar 11, 2023: Chapter Meeting at 11:30 am Location TBD

11:30 am



Note: Details for events are updated on the Chapter website at www.gwsar.org. Please remember that you must be logged in to view SAR members-only events in addition to public events.

VASSAR Semi-Annual (from Page 9)

... and in Yorktown



On Saturday Morning at the VASSAR Semi Annual Meeting, we decamped to the Yorktown Visitor Center, where Will Elston (**2nd from left in below photo -- V.S.C.A.R. State President and GW Chapter Member**) along with VASSAR State President Bruce Meyer (**at far right in below photo**) presented a joint contribution of \$15,000 to upgrade the visitor center's audio-visual equipment.



Left is a copy of the temporary plaque to be installed.



These photos were taken at the presentation of the *Life Saving Award* to PFC Andrew Arvelo at the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office, Training Division at 14601 Lee Road, Chantilly, Virginia.

Left are Captain Jaime Popik, Sergeant Amy K. Lewis, PFC Arvelo and John Blair.

Right are GW Chapter President Richard Rankin, PFC Arvelo and John Blair.



Paul Jennings: Patriot and Abolitionist

Paul Jennings was born in 1799, in Orange County, Virginia, and was raised on an estate as a slave to one of the most famous men in America. This man's name was James Madison. Paul Jennings was first trained to be a footman for Madison and later became his personal valet. In this role, Jennings oversaw Madison's everyday routine.

For this reason, he was highly valuable to the Madison family. He was so valued that when James Madison was elected President in 1808, Paul Jennings accompanied him to the White House. For the next four years, he served as a dining room servant during the Madison administration. Little did he know that his life was about to change in a way he never could have predicted.

By August of 1814, the United States was embroiled in a second war against its old adversary, Great Britain. The War of 1812 had been a series of seesaw battles with neither side being able to gain a major advantage against the other. Unfortunately, the American army had been recently defeated at the battle of Bladensburg, and the British troops were closing in on Washington DC. President Madison was absent when the Brits entered the city and marched to the White House virtually unchallenged.

Before leaving, First Lady Dolley Madison had Jennings grab a famous portrait of George Washington and carry it to a nearby carriage. Less than an hour later, the White House was looted and burned. The painting of Washington remains the only object in the White House from before 1812.

For his part, Paul Jennings continued to serve President Madison throughout his two terms. When Madison's terms were over Jennings accompanied him back to his home in Montpelier, where he continued to serve Madison until the latter's death in 1836. Despite all he had done for her family, Dolley Madison sold Paul Jennings

to a local insurance agent. But Jennings would not be a slave for much longer. Just six months later, a Massachusetts senator (Daniel Webster) purchased Paul's freedom. Thus began a new chapter in the life of Paul Jennings. From this point on, Jennings became an abolitionist



and an ardent opponent of slavery. It wasn't long before he began to secretly coordinate escape routes for slaves. In what would become known as the "*Pearl Incident*", Jennings aided the escape of 77 slaves on a ship called the Pearl. Although they were initially successful one of the slaves betrayed the escapees, and all were recaptured (most were sold and never heard from again).

Although the operation was a failure, Paul Jennings used it to campaign for an end to slavery. Eventually some good came of it when the American Congress voted to end the US's role in the slave trade in the famous Compromise of 1850. Although slavery continued to exist for another decade, more and more of the American populace became anti-slavery, and the abolitionist movement gained momentum. For the rest of his life Jennings continued to advocate for the end of slavery. When the Civil War broke out, his three sons all enlisted and served in the Union Army.

At the end of the Civil War, Paul Jennings wrote and published a book called, *A Colored Man's Reminiscences of James Madison*. It was the first ever memoir of someone who lived in the White House, and in it Jennings wrote of Madison's presidency and the time he spent with the Madison family. It provided a unique glimpse into the life of one of America's founding fathers from a slave's point of view.

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Paul Jennings (from previous Page)

For the rest of his life Jennings lived in Washington DC, working at the newly established Pension Bureau for the Department of the Interior. He died in 1874 at the age of 75. Today Paul Jennings is remembered as one of the greatest contributors to the abolishment of slavery and the documentation of the Madison Administration.

He is an American to be held in high regard. -- *By John Haseltine*

September GW Chapter Meeting



NSSAR President General Bruce Pickette joined us for our Chapter Meeting. The President General presented his remarks and goals for his tenure. Above right: GW Chapter President Richard Rankin presents PG Pickette with the Houdon George Washington Bust following his remarks.

Below: NSSAR President General Pickette honored former GW Chapter President Ernie Coggins and current GW Chapter President Richard Rankin with pins marking their appointments as Aides-de-Camp to the President General, in recognition of their personal services to him and his Lady in connection with transportation and organization of their visit to Arlington and Alexandria.

