



George Washington Chapter Newsletter in Alexandria, Virginia

Volume 25, Issue 2

Visit us online at www.gwsar.org

February, 2023

Medal for Heroism Awarded by the GW Chapter to Deputy Michael Spaeth

Our Compatriot, George Washington Chapter member and resident of Alexandria, Virginia, Houston Smith, was diagnosed with Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) and Hepatocellular carcinoma (cancer of the liver) in February 2022. He prepared a public appeal for special medical assistance in March 2022. Sheriff's Deputy Michael Spaeth, an Iraq and Afghanistan Campaign Army veteran, who previously received the Purple Heart and Bronze Star, answered the call.

Deputy Spaeth traveled at his own expense for requisite testing. He selflessly gave of himself and, with the medical team,

saved Compatriot Smith's life. In a heartfelt manner, Compatriot Smith described some of the emotions, "It's humbling and hard to put into words. Mike will never understand how much this meant to me and I know I will never be able to repay him or his family for the sacrifice that has been made." Compatriot Smith added, "I love this guy. He did the most selfless thing."

Deputy Michael Spaeth's act to save a life was a tremendous example of courage and is in the highest tradition of the Sons of the American Revolution. Deputy Michael Spaeth was awarded the Sons of the American Revolution Medal for Heroism.



GW Chapter member Houston Smith, Deputy Michael Spaeth and Public Safety Awards Committee Chairman, John Blair.



President's Corner

Compatriots:

February will be a very active month for the George Washington Chapter.



It will start with the Virginia Society's Annual Meeting in southwestern Virginia, which will include a brief step-out for our Chapter meeting. Every Chapter Compatriot is encouraged to attend the Annual Meeting in South Boston, which will focus on the Bannister Encampment and the Crossing of the Dan River; it is the best possible opportunity to learn about the SAR and its many facets and unique membership. Then, the spotlight will fall much closer to home. Following a commemorative grave-marking in Old Town Alexandria on February 18th, we're "pulling out the stops" for the joint SAR-DAR ceremony at the tomb of an unknown Revolutionary War soldier and George Washington Birthday Parade in Old Town on the 20th, all to be capped with the Chapter wreath-laying at George Washington's Tomb at Mount Vernon on the 22nd.

Then, looking just a bit ahead, the focus on our Revolutionary history will become laser-sharp on preparation for 2026 when the Nation will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. That will be the highlight, but it represents only a key step in a twenty-year stream of events, 1764-1784, that led to the formation of the United States. Accordingly, VASSAR is quick to point out we began the 250th commemoration several years ago and it is building to the symbolic Fourth of July in 2026.

Just as the Declaration of Independence did not spring forth on the Fourth of July 1776, our highlight commemoration in 2026 will not spring forth on its own without all of our members' thought and preparation. I wish we could put a count-down clock in

our Chapter website to remind us of the short time we have to honor the events leading up to the Declaration of Independence and to prepare for that significant commemoration.

By the time of your reading, VASSAR Secretary Tim Dioquino will have addressed our Chapter's Winter Planning Meeting to frame and encourage our Chapter's commemoration of the 250th and you will have heard my plea for a champion to come forward to chair the planning of our effort, the recording of Secretary Dioquino's presentation to the Annual Meeting workshop on January 20th will have been posted, and you may have had a chance to review the plethora of information about the Semiquincentennial on the web, noted as follows:

<https://www.america250.org/> (national level)

<https://america250sar.org/> (NSSAR; toolkits & planning)

<https://www.dar.org/national-society/america-250> (DAR)

The key point is that this is the time to start your own study and reflection on the events leading to the Declaration on July 4, 1776 and to contribute your ideas, time, talent, and treasure to how the Chapter should carry out a fitting and multi-faceted commemoration of the revolutionary ideas that led to the Declaration and the ultimate formation of our Country. Please be among those who step forward to lead this effort and contact me at pixarsar@gmail.com to tell me how you would like to participate in this effort; a leader to chair the effort would be most welcome.

In the early 1770s each of our Patriot forebears was in an unwitting countdown to revolution and Declaration; we have the advantage of being in a known countdown to commemorate their times and achievement.

Fraternally,
Rand Pixa, President
George Washington Chapter

Modern Day Heroes

On 04 September 2022 at approximately 0200 Officer Kellie Medeiros and Sergeant Aloysius Asonglefac responded to a call where the subject with a gun was threatening to shoot people. The Officers identified the subject running up to a vehicle on a nearby road. Sgt. Asonglefac yelled the command to stop. The subject ran from them, and a foot chase ensued entering a parking lot where he disappeared between parked cars. As Officers Mederios and Asonglefac entered the parking lot where they last saw the subject, he emerged, within 15 yards, and pointed a black handgun at them. They drew their firearms while yelling commands. The subject lowered his weapon and began to run. In a split-second decision, they each decided not to shoot him. They both ran after him, and he was arrested after he threw away the weapon. He surrendered in a prone position.

Officer Mederios and Sergeant Asonglefac showed great restraint and heroism while facing an armed subject. They continued to pursue him on foot even after he had pointed a gun at them. They knew the danger they were in but continued forward, despite being at risk, to protect the citizens of Alexandria. Were it not for their heroic actions, the subject might have killed someone that night. Their action that night is in the highest traditions of the Alexandria City Police Department. They were awarded the SAR Medal for Heroism at the Alexandria Police Department, January 17, 2023.



(L-R) Dennis Andreas (Alexandria Police Department Acting Assistant Chief), John Blair (GW Public Safety Awards Chairman), Officer Kellie Medeiros, Sergeant Aloysius Asonglefac, Tom Roth (GW Manager at Large) and Scot Bryant (GW Secretary).



January Chapter Meeting



Clockwise from above left -- GW President Rand Pixa presents former GW President Richard Rankin with the Presidential Gavel; the Meritorious Service Medal and Certificate; the Presidential Award with pin.



Left -- GW Registrar Rich Sherman, new GW member Joel Scott Arthur and GW President Rand Pixa.



Guest Speaker Compatriot Dick Hamly gave a presentation on "The History of Pohick Church" and GW Vice President Bill Wilson presented a Houdon bust of our namesake.

VASSAR Liability and Black Powder Insurance

In June 2022, the VASSAR President authorized a special insurance committee to be appointed to address the liability insurance issue. The Chairman is the VASSAR CG Commander and includes two Compatriots who are licensed insurance agents.

The VASSAR Insurance Committee initiated a search to find an insurance company which would agree to underwrite third party liability coverage (for both bodily injury and property damage) for VASSAR, the entity, and the activities of our VASSAR Color Guard members who conduct the firing of blank cartridges using black powder at VASSAR or non-VASSAR sanctioned events.

As we learned, several other state societies have retained Lockton (an insurance broker) to arrange liability coverage for their State Society's Color Guard activities. Our choice was to select Lockton, as our broker. Our insurance underwriter, Acceptance Indemnity Insurance Company, is A.M. Best rated as A- (rated Excellent).

An early encouraging sign in the negotiation process was the fact that the insurance underwriter actually knew the difference between a musket and a rifle! We quickly structured a policy for black powder firings which applied to all VASSAR members in good standing; coverage extended to VASSAR and non-

VASSAR firing events in Virginia or outside Virginia (the coverage travels with you); the elimination of policy deductibles; and that the Deposit Premium would be based on the initial listing of estimated VASSAR events for the policy year and audited at end of policy year.

The negotiation also addressed two other important issues: first, sometimes non-VASSAR members from other state societies request to participate in a VASSAR CG musket firings. However, the VASSAR insurance coverage does not extend to non-VASSAR members, such as DAR, CAR, or non-VASSAR re-enactors. One option is to decline any offers to participate (due to zero coverage), or request the non-VASSAR member to present a written and valid Certificate of Insurance (COI) from an insurance company confirming their coverage extends to the specific member(s) within 48 hours prior to an event.

The second and even larger issue related to the policy exclusion called the Explosives Exclusion, for which many insurance companies assume a very broad interpretation. Our insurance company confirmed their narrow interpretation: namely that the exclusion does not apply to black powder firings of blank cartridges. The insurance company confirmed their Explosives Exclusion is intended to apply to fireworks, TNT or C-4.

(Continued on Page 8)



New GW Chapter Member

Joel Scott Arthur grew up in an Army family; he was born in October 1968 in Mineral Wells, TX while his father was serving as an Air Cavalry, Cobra gunship pilot in Vietnam. His family was transferred to New Jersey a few years later, then to Germany. Around the age of 12, his family returned to the States, his mother remarrying.

His stepfather, a now retired Army LTC and West Point graduate, relocated to Alexandria, VA after being transferred to the Pentagon.

At the age of 18, Scott moved to Brooklyn, NY, beginning a period of further travels to augment those of his youth; he has moved some 20 times throughout his life. He spent several years traveling the East Coast with a local Northern Virginia contractor as a commercial carpenter, building many restaurants and other places of business.

Scott studied briefly at San Francisco City College in the 90's, then later graduated from the IS Security courses he attended in New York. He's been with Virginia Hospital Center for 15 years, currently as a Systems Engineer - Microsoft. He is thankful and fortunate that his early computer hobby became his career. Scott is an active mountain biker, enjoys camping and being outdoors.

Scott's Patriot, Jonathan Eddy, served for the British in the French and Indian War and for the American Patriots in the American Revolution. After the French and Indian War he settled in Nova Scotia as a New England Planter, becoming a member of the General Assembly of Nova Scotia. During the American Revolutionary War, he was strongly supportive of the rebellion against the Crown. He encouraged the residents of Nova Scotia to join in open revolt against King George III and England and he organized an attempt to besiege and storm Fort Cumberland in central Nova Scotia in November 1776. Despite several assaults by Eddy's militia forces, they were unable to take the fort, and he and his forces retreated to Massachusetts, his place of birth. The following year he led the successful defense of Machias, Maine against a British amphibious assault. After the war he established the community now known as Eddington, Maine in 1784, where he died in 1804.



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

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

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|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>President</i> | <i>Rand Pixa: 703-622-7001</i> |
| <i>Vice President</i> | <i>Bill Wilson: 301-523-2690</i> |
| <i>Treasurer</i> | <i>Scott Walker: 703-216-4798</i> |
| <i>Secretary</i> | <i>Scot Bryant: 703-922-4431</i> |
| <i>Registrar</i> | <i>Richard Sherman: 301-654-6319</i> |

The George Washington Chapter was chartered in its present form April 2, 1954. With over 250 members, it is Virginia's largest SAR chapter.

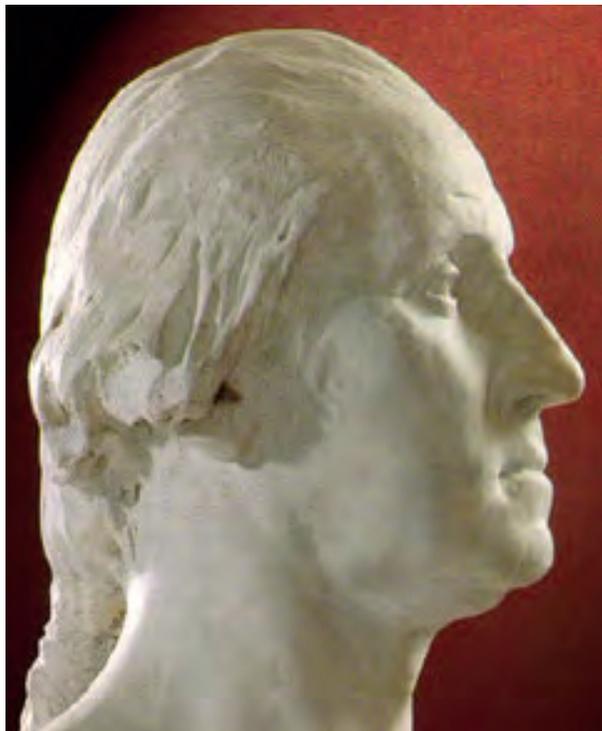
Meetings customarily are held at 11:30 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month (June, July & August excepted).

Immediate Past President:
Richard Rankin: 703-538-5805

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 sbryant.sarmail@gmail.com

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.



February through the years with George Washington

1731/32 on the 11th--Birth of Washington (old-style calendar).

1732 on the 22nd--Birth of Washington (new-style calendar).

1789 on the 4th--Electoral College unanimously elects Washington first president.

1792 on the 20th--Washington signs legislation creating U.S. Post Office.

President's Day is February 20th and on that date we observe the 291st Birthday of General George Washington.

Black Powder Insurance *(con't from Page 5)*

From an administrative standpoint, Lockton is structured to service their accounts on a real-time basis. Any requests for VASSAR to provide a host event sponsor a Certificate of Insurance (COI) evidencing VASSAR insurance coverage, must be submitted to Lockton within 3 business days prior to the sponsored event. Also, Lockton provides a 1-888 claims reporting number for real-time claims/incident notification.

We will continue our commitment to loss control programs within our chapters minimizing risks. We will seek more favorable renewal insurance coverage terms in June. For now, Lockton has shown to be a supportive risk advisor to our insurance needs and the VASSAR mission.



Richard E. Rankin
Past President, George Washington Chapter
VASSAR Insurance Committee, Insurance Advisor

"I hope all members of the VASSAR CG and Chapter Presidents have read this article" —
Chris Melhuish, VASSAR Color Guard
Commander and VASSAR Insurance Committee
Chairman



As noted in the award presentations during the November 2022 membership meeting, past President, Richard Rankin, presented the NSSAR Lydia Darragh Medal to his sister, Julie Ann Rankin Fulmer, for her assistance in documenting his legacy back to the Revolution. Here he is presenting the award to his sister in person, in December. Julie Fulmer is a twenty year DAR member of the Octorara Chapter, located in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

"The liberty enjoyed by the People of these States, of worshipping Almighty God agreeable to their Consciences, is not only among the choicest of their Blessings, but also of their Rights . . ."



--George Washington to the Society of Quakers, October 13, 1789

Peter Salem--Hero of Bunker Hill Submitted by Compatriot John Haseltine

Peter Salem was born on October 1, 1750. He grew up as a slave in Farmington, Massachusetts for most of his young life. Much of his early life has been lost to history. However, as an adult he would go on to become one of America's greatest Patriots.

By April of 1775, the Patriot (American) army under the command of George Washington, had begun to lay siege to Boston. By June of that year, their commanders learned that the British were intending to seize several unoccupied hills around the city in order to gain control of Boston Harbor. To counter this, the Patriots decided to occupy two hills located on the Charlestown Peninsula. One was called Breed's Hill (where most of the Patriot army was stationed); the other was Bunker Hill. By June of 1775, the fortifications were completed and more than 1,200 Patriots under the commands of William Prescott and Israel Putnam were stationed on Bunker and Breed's hills. Upon learning of the Patriot army's fortifications on the Charlestown Peninsula, 3,000+ British soldiers (under the command of Sir William Howe) marched out of Boston and prepared to launch an assault on the two hills.

For his part, Peter Salem was placed in the 5th Massachusetts Regiment under the command of Colonel John Nixon. Although, he had previously seen combat at the battles of Lexington and Concord, this one would be the most important. It was a battle that would help to decide the course of the American Revolution.

At the dawn of June 17, 1775, the British began their assault on the Patriot lines. After a quick bombardment from their ships in the harbor, the British infantry began to advance in column formation through the smoke up towards the entrenchments. They were expecting an easy victory against fresh militia men who had not seen combat. What they did not know was that the Patriots had a nasty surprise waiting for them.

William Prescott had ordered his men to hold fire until the British were within 100 yards of their line (his order was, "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes"). As soon as the Redcoats had gotten past the range, the Patriots rose from their trenches and fired directly into the former's faces. The



Redcoats found themselves caught in the open with no cover and were easily mowed down by withering musket fire. After just a few minutes, the first British assault was beaten back with heavy casualties.

Although stunned at the turn of events, General Howe quickly ordered a second attack on the Patriot line. This time the British targeted a different portion of the trenches. However, this attack was also beaten back after the Patriots once again waited for the British to get in close before firing at point blank range. Despite the mounting casualties, General Howe was still determined to take the hills and ordered a third assault. By now, the Patriot army was running low on ammunition and many of them began to retreat. The line finally broke when the British charged with fixed bayonets (which most of the Patriots did not have). Even then however, the latter continued to make the redcoats pay for every inch of the hill and organized a fighting retreat.

Peter Salem was among those who stayed behind to cover the retreat. During the battle he spotted an officer who was leading the redcoats into the trenches. Salem quickly aimed his rifle at the officer and fired. His shot hit the man directly in the head, killing him almost instantly. This officer was later revealed to be Major John Pitcairn (who had commanded the British at Lexington and Concord). His death momentarily slowed down the British advance and bought precious time for the Patriots to evacuate most of their wounded. Salem was among their last men to leave the fortification at Breed's Hill.

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Hero of Bunker Hill *(con't from previous page)*

After a short rearguard action on Bunker Hill, the last of the Patriot forces successfully retreated from the Charlestown Peninsula. After two hours of heavy fighting, the battle of Bunker Hill was over. The British had successfully driven the Patriots from the field and won the battle. However, their army had suffered horrific losses. It is estimated that the British suffered at least 1,054 casualties (including many officers) compared to just 450 Patriot losses. Ultimately their victory at Bunker hill was short-lived. Due to their high losses the British found themselves unable to continue holding their positions. General Howe eventually ordered an evacuation of Boston. Thus ended the first military campaign of the American Revolution.

Peter Salem's valor and courage during the battle were widely recognized by his fellow comrades. He would go on to fight in the battles of Saratoga and Stony Point. He eventually received an honorable discharge in 1779. He then returned to Farmington and lived the rest of his life as a free man. He eventually married and moved to Leicester, Massachusetts where he worked as a cane

weaver. He passed away on August 16, 1816, at the age of 66. In 1882, the town of Farmington erected a monument in his honor.

Although there have been many well-known individuals who fought bravely for American independence, there are many more who have been largely forgotten by the general populace. Peter Salem is one of those people. Like so many before and after, he fought for a country that did not see him as equal and did not receive much recognition until many years after his death. Today, Salem is remembered as one America's bravest heroes of the Revolution. His courage and valor clearly deserve to always be remembered.

<https://aaregistry.org/story/peter-salem-an-original-patriot/>

<https://nmaahc.si.edu/blog/peter-salem-and-battle-bunker-hill>

<http://www.revolutionarywarjournal.com/peter-salem/>

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/salem-peter-ca-1750-1816/>



Upcoming Events

Feb 9-12, VASSAR Annual Meeting
Berry Hill Resort
South Boston, VA

(includes Chapter February meeting)

Feb 10--Friday: 5:00 pm--Crossing the Banister Commemoration

Sponsored by Dan River Chapter in conjunction with the annual meeting
Halifax, VA

Feb 11--Saturday: 10:00 am--Crossing the Dan Commemoration

Sponsored by Dan River Chapter in conjunction with the annual meeting
Halifax, VA

**Feb 18--Saturday: 11:00 am
Grave Dedication and Marking for Phillip Fendall**

Lee-Fendall House
614 Oronoco Street
Alexandria, VA

**Feb 20--Monday: 9:00 am
Commemoration at Tomb of Unknown Revolutionary War Soldier**

Old Presbyterian Meeting House
Alexandria, VA

**Feb 20--Monday: Muster 11:00 am
George Washington Birthday Parade**
Alexandria, VA

(Jack Evans Chapter Medal for first-time participants)

**Feb 22--Wednesday: 9:00 am
Wreath Laying in Honor of George Washington's 291st Birthday**
Tomb of George Washington
Mount Vernon, VA



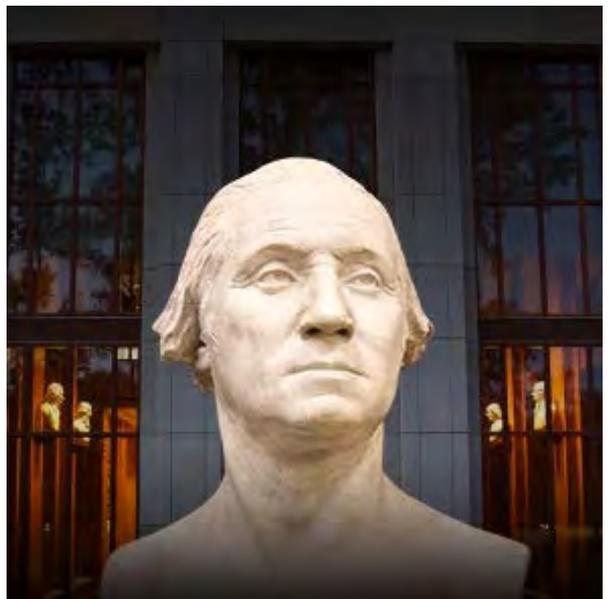
**Feb 22--Wednesday: 10:00 am
Commemoration of George Washington**
Washington's HQ
Winchester, VA

Feb 24-Mar 4: Virginia History Day (District Five), final judging March 4
West Springfield High School
Springfield, VA

**Feb 25--Saturday: 10:00 am
247th Commemoration of the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge**
Moore's Creek Battleground
40 Patriots Hall Drive
Currie, NC

**Mar 11--Saturday 11:30 am
Chapter Meeting
Gadsby's Tavern**
138 North Royal Street
Old Town Alexandria, VA
Presentation by VASSAR Color Guard

**Mar 11--Saturday: 10:00 am
Commemoration of the Battle of Guilford Courthouse**
Guilford CH National Military Park
2332 New Garden Road, Greensboro, NC



Note: Contact for George Washington Chapter Events: email billwilsongwvp@comcast.net