



## George Washington Chapter Newsletter in Alexandria, Virginia

Volume 25, Issue 3

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March, 2023

# 291st Birthday Parade for General George Washington



Beginning with the U.S. Army  
Old Guard Fife & Drum Corps ...



... followed by  
The George  
Washington  
Chapter  
compatriots.



Left--Past GW Chapter  
President and now  
VASSAR President  
Ernie Coggins.



*G. Washington*

(Con't on Page 4)



# President's Corner

## *Compatriots:*

February was a banner month for our Chapter, first with a memorable Virginia Society Annual Meeting in South Boston, studded with awards to our Chapter and its impressive member cadre, and then with five Chapter events in six days, February 17th through 22nd.

VASSAR past-President Bruce Meyer endorsed the Halifax County site of the Annual Meeting in recognition of the remarkable work of the Southwest Virginia chapters, particularly the Dan River Chapter, in building recognition for the significance of General Nathaniel Greene's crossing of the Dan River on February 14, 1781, to which is attributed setting the stage for the victory at Yorktown later that year. The Meeting Friday, this February 10th, was marked by the dedication of the entry of two new Patriot names on a monument at the Halifax County Courthouse, and by a program in South Boston on Saturday the 11th to commemorate the actual crossing of the Dan River. The remarkable feature of both events was the very large number of enthusiastic local citizen attendees and officials, and the support and participation of several other local civic and history organizations. It was clear that the Dan River Chapter had done an exceptional job of bringing the history to life and weaving it into the fabric of the community.

The other noteworthy feature of the Annual Meeting was the prominence of the George Washington Chapter in the proceedings. Needless to say, the highlight was our own Chapter past-President Ernie Coggins being sworn in as the new VASSAR President. He made it plain that he will bring great energy and new ideas to the Virginia Society as a whole with his unique brand of leadership. And then, there is the very long list of awards the diligence and dedication of our Chapter



members brought, both during the awards made on Friday evening and during the meetings on Saturday.

First are the top awards represented by engraved acrylic standards awarded to our own Pete Farley, who has edited our Chapter Newsletter for more than six years, as Newsletter Editor of the Year for 2022, and to Jamie Callender as Webmaster of the Year for 2022. It should then be no surprise that the Chapter was awarded for the Best Website of the Year with a flag streamer. For his remarkable work on the Patriot Research System (PRS), Jamie Callender was again awarded the Lafayette Volunteer Service Medal on behalf of the National Society, represented literally by his own box full of Oak Leaf Clusters. Also re-awarded the Lafayette Volunteer Service Medal on behalf of the National Society were Greg Bodge with four Oak Leaf Clusters for his work with Veterans, and Craig Batten with three Oak Leaf Clusters for his statewide work geolocating Patriot gravesites. The Chapter also received streamers for its History Day Support, the Chapter Excellence Award, and the Chester E. May Award for sponsorship.

Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to Greg Bodge for his service as Chairman of the Operation Ancestor Search Committee, past-President Tom Roth for his service as VASSAR Historian, Chapter Registrar Rich Sherman for his service as Chairman of the Knight Essay Committee, past-President Dave Thomas for his service as Assistant VASSAR Registrar, and past-President Paul Walden for his service as Chairman of the Public Education Committee.

The winner of our Chapter JROTC award, Cadet Major Sonya Erickson, placed second in the State competition, for which she was awarded \$500 in prize money. In further recognition of her Cadet excellence, we invited Ms. Erickson to lead all of those assembled to pay respects at the Tomb of the Unknown Revolutionary War Soldier on February 20th in the Pledge of Allegiance

*(Continued next Page)*

## President's *(from Page 2)*

and to ride with the Chapter in the George Washington Birthday Parade the same day. Ms. Erickson will receive her Chapter award at our May meeting.

Public Service Committee Chairman John Blair's diligence was rewarded with the Public Service Contests streamer for awards made in all public service categories. The Chapter also received flag streamers for its participation in Youth Programs Contests, the Flag Retirement Program, and Flag Recognition Program, as well as participation in the Shenandoah River Bridges, William Preston Monument, and William Martin Commemorative Events. It is fair to say our Chapter was more than well recognized at the VASSAR Annual Meeting.

February went out with a "bang." On February 17th, we made a public service award to an exceptional officer of the Fairfax County Police Department, and on the 18th Gravemarking Chairman Paul Walden rendered honors to Patriot Philip Fendall with almost forty people in attendance on a cold Saturday morning. Monday the 20th brought a very well-attended commemoration of the service of the Unknown Revolutionary War Soldier interred at Alexandria's Old Presbyterian Meeting House, jointly held with the Kate Waller Barrett Chapter of the DAR as prelude to the annual George Washington

Birthday Parade. The Parade was exceptional this year for several reasons. The route was different, leading to the George Washington National Masonic Memorial with thousands of Masons marching to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the placement of the Memorial's cornerstone, and memorable for us because the U.S. Army Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps as well as nine other Chapters marched with us, and because our parade element ended with a patriotic float provided by the Sergeant Major John Champe Chapter. The fifth event was carried out on the rainy morning of Wednesday the 22nd when VASSAR President Ernie Coggins assisted in the placement of a live wreath at President Washington's Tomb on the occasion of his 291st birthday. Notable was the Honor Guard from our Chapter, past-President General Joe Dooley and Chancellor General Mike Elston.

Our Chapter is on an excellent path, but it is not time to sit on our laurels. All of our programs need continuing work and special attention is due to our youth programs and our effort to expand our Chapter Color Guard this year. Thanks to all of our great members for their accomplishments last year and all we will do this year.

*Fraternally,  
Rand Pixa, President  
George Washington Chapter*

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## From Scouting Committee Chairman, Marty Johnson

GW Chapter Member, Carlisle Bean, rescued an Eagle Light Box then restored it to excellent condition. GW Chapter and Scouting Committee Member, Thomas Whitaker, met Dr. William Turner, Scoutmaster of Troop 1113, and learned that his Troop needed an Eagle Light Box for their Court of Honor ceremonies. Dr. Turner and his Troop were very happy to receive the restored treasure that was once on its way to being discarded but will now light the path during many ceremonies to come. Troop 1113 is sponsored by St. Leo the Great Catholic Church in Fairfax, Virginia.



*Dr. William Turner and Carlisle Bean.*



# 291st Birthday Parade (con't from Page 1)



• Former GW President Tom Roth and Dale Corey.



Above--Richard Douglass and the Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps Drum Major.



Left-patriotic float provided by the Sergeant Major John Champe Chapter.

**Please see Page 11 for listing of Chapters attending.**



Color Guard





# VASSAR Annual Meeting

Berry Hill  
South Boston, VA

??? Can you find GW compatriots Joe Dooley, Richard Rankin, Dave Thomas, Rand Pixa, Mike Elston, Will Elston, Ernie Coggins, and Tom Roth hiding out in this picture?



Other State Officers being Sworn In by VPG Mid Atlantic District Pete Davenport (former VASSAR President). Note the gent 3rd from right.



A



B



C

(A) Ernie and Diane Coggins with the VASSAR First Lady's Necklace.\*

(B) The 103rd VASSAR President, Ernie Coggins being sworn in by the 97th VASSAR President and NSSAR Chancellor General Mike Elston. Ernie and Mike are the last 2 VASSAR Presidents who previously were GW Chapter President.

(C) The State President of the VA Children of the American Revolution, brought greetings on behalf of the V.S.C.A.R at the Installation Banquet.

\*See note on next page about the First Lady's Necklace\*



# VASSAR Annual (con't from previous page)



**Above**--GW Chapter President Rand Pixa receives the 2022 Newsletter Editor of the Year award for our own Pete Farley, along with its accompanying Chapter Streamer. **Below**--President Pixa is presented with the 2022 Webmaster of the Year award for Jamie Callender and its Chapter Streamer. The George Washington Chapter has won the top VASSAR website award for the past four years.



## The VASSAR First Lady Necklace

Mrs. Richard Sauner donated the necklace. Her husband, Richard Sauner, was GW President in 1984 and VASSAR President in 1990-91. Ms. Sauner passed away in January 1996.

The necklace is passed forward by each VASSAR First Lady. So, it is now in the possession of Diane Coggins.



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

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](mailto: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.



## March through the years with George Washington

- 1674** on the 1st--Patent including Mount Vernon land issued to John Washington.
- 1761** on the 14th--Washington takes legal possession of Mount Vernon.
- 1776** on the 11th--Washington forms the Life Guard.
- 1776** on the 17th--Washington leads Continental Army into Boston.
- 1781** on the 1st--Articles of Confederation go into effect.
- 1783** on the 15th--Washington delivers Newburgh address.
- 1785** on the 25th--Washington hosts Mount Vernon Conference.
- 1787** on the 28th--Washington agrees to serve as delegate at Constitutional Convention.
- 1789** on the 4th--The Constitution goes into effect.
- 1793** on the 4th--Washington takes oath for second term as president.



# SAR Law Enforcement Commendation Medal

Fairfax County, Virginia Police Department reports that Officer Patrick DiGirolamo sets an excellent example and inspires his fellow officers. His great commitment to law enforcement also challenges those around him to perform at an elevated level.

Officer DiGirolamo has been named the Fairfax County P. D.'s Mount Vernon station Officer of the Month twice, recently. He is uncompromising and proactive, resulting in numerous criminal arrests per month. Yet, when faced with a man who was extremely confrontational with other police officers last fall, Officer DiGirolamo maintained composure, spent a significant amount of time with the seemingly troubled man and was able to negotiate a peaceful surrender.

The following day, Officer DiGirolamo responded to a call that a one-year-old child

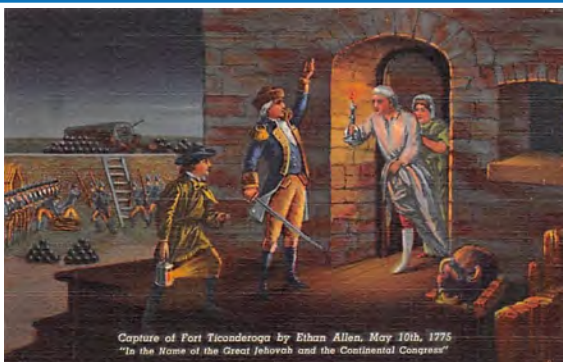
had drowned / was not breathing. Officer DiGirolamo performed CPR and the child's pulse was temporarily reestablished, giving the distraught family some more precious time with their child before its passing.

Not long afterward, department detectives had been searching for a wanted murder suspect that had put the community on edge. So, Officer DiGirolamo spearheaded an organized search with his squad to augment the pursuit of the dangerous suspect. Only hours later, they located a vehicle used in the crime. Ultimately, the suspect returned to the car, and he was apprehended.

Officer DiGirolamo has consistently performed Above and Beyond the Call of Duty and thereby was presented the SAR Law Enforcement Commendation Medal last month.



*Left--GW Chapter President, Rand Pixa, Officer Patrick DiGirolamo, Sergeant Scott Shafer, and GW Chapter Public Safety Awards Committee Chairman, John Blair.*





# Alexandria Police Law Enforcement Commendation Awards

Two City of Alexandria, Virginia Police Department detectives were presented the SAR Law Enforcement Commendation Award for their leadership roles in what turned into nearly a department-wide endeavor. Countless hours of surveillance and investigation that followed the initial 911 call resulted in a homicide arrest that also dismantled a drug trafficking organization in the greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Twenty-two defendants were arrested on charges including Homicide, Conspiracy to Commit Homicide, Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) and a variety of Drug Trafficking charges.



*Right--GW Chapter Public Safety Awards Chairman, John Blair, Alexandria Chief of Police, Don Hayes, Alexandria Assistant Police Chief, Easton McDonald, and GW Chapter Secretary, Scot Bryant. (Chief Hayes and Assistant Chief McDonald shown accepting the SAR medals on behalf of the undercover detectives.)*

Additionally, 375 search warrants were obtained and executed. Twenty-two handguns, cocaine plus over 150 pounds of marijuana, numerous vehicles used for drug trafficking/purchased with drug proceeds and over \$275,000 were seized. The detectives' (names withheld here) knowledge, experience and dedication were paramount to the successful outcomes. As one Alexandria Police Department supervisor phrased it during the presentation, *"These detectives and the Department took a lot of bad people off of the street."* Such dedication to the cause is within the highest traditions of SAR.



*Left--GW Chapter President Rand Pixa.*



## Crossing The Dan

VASSAR past-President Bruce Meyer endorsed the Halifax County site of the Annual Meeting in recognition of the remarkable work of the Southwest Virginia chapters, particularly the Dan River Chapter, in building recognition for the significance of General Nathaniel Greene's crossing of the Dan River on February 14, 1781, to which is attributed setting the stage for the victory at Yorktown later that year.



# Wreath Laying at Mount Vernon Tomb

*On the somewhat rainy morning of February 22nd, a stalwart group of George Washington compatriots solemnly dedicated a wreath to President Washington on the occasion of his 291st birthday at his Mount Vernon Tomb.*



*Above--Richard Douglass, Frank Weiss, past GWC President Richard Rankin, Don Francisco-fifer, Chancellor General Mike Elston, past VASSAR President Pete Davenport, past President-General Joe Dooley, VASSAR President Ernie Coggins-presenting, GWC President Rand Pixa, VASSAR Historian Tom Roth-master of ceremonies, GWC Secretary Scot Bryant.*



*Left--Pete Davenport (currently SAR Vice President General for the Mid-Atlantic District) and Joe Dooley, a GW Compatriot and Past President General of NSSAR.*

*Below--Don Francisco (Resident Fifer at Mt. Vernon), Pete Davenport, Joe Dooley and Mike Elston (NSSAR Chancellor General).*





# Upcoming Events

**Mar 11--Saturday: 10:00 am**  
**Commemoration of the Battle of Guilford**  
**Courthouse**

Guilford CH National Military Park  
2332 New Garden Road  
Greensboro, 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 12--Sunday: 3:00 pm**  
**Commemoration of the 250th**  
**Anniversary of the Virginia Committees**  
**of Correspondence**

Grayson Tomb  
2338 West Longview Drive  
Woodbridge, VA

*(Semiquincentennial Event)*

**Mar 16--Thursday: 10:30 am**  
**Wreath Laying and Commemoration of**  
**the Birth of James Madison**

Montpelier Estate  
Montpelier, VA

**Mar 17--Friday: 10:00 am**  
**Public Safety Awards--Prince William**  
**PWCPD Central District Station**  
5036 Davis Ford Road  
Woodbridge, VA

*George Washington*

**Apr 8--Saturday: Chapter Meeting**

**10:30 am: Tour GW Nat'l Masonic**  
**Memorial**

**12:45pm: Luncheon at Executive Diner**  
Alexandria, VA

**Apr 22--Saturday: 10:00 am**  
**James Monroe Birthplace**  
**Commemoration**

4460 James Monroe Highway  
Route 205  
Colonial Beach, VA 22443

**Apr 28--Friday: 11:00 am**  
**James Monroe Birthday Observance**

President Monroe's Tomb  
Hollywood Cemetery  
Richmond, VA

**May 13--Saturday: 11:30 am**  
**Chapter Meeting**

Pavilion C, Fort Hunt Park  
8999 Fort Hunt Road  
Alexandria, VA

*Meeting and catered barbecue for*  
*Chapter families*

**May 29--Monday: 12:45 pm**  
**Memorial Day Parade**

The National Mall  
Washington, DC

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## Chapters Attending Washington Parade

GW Chapter--24 attendees  
James Wood II--5 attendees  
Fairfax Resolves--1 attendee  
William Grayson--3 attendees  
George Mason--4 attendees  
John Champe--3 attendees  
Fielding Lewis--1 attendee  
Norfolk--1 attendee  
VanZandt (TX)--1 attendee  
Rappahannock--1 attendee

**Total marchers in uniform were 18**



**For up to date George Washington Chapter events, please see**  
**<https://www.gwsar.org/Events> (log in for all events and details) or email**  
**[billwilsongwvp@comcast.net](mailto:billwilsongwvp@comcast.net). Please see the VASSAR calendar for upcoming**  
**statewide SAR events: <https://vssar.memberclicks.net/calendar>**



# George Washington Chapter Conducts Grave Marking Ceremony for Philip Richard Fendall

On February 18, 2023 the George Washington Chapter honored the memory of Patriot Philip Richard Fendall by dedicating a memorial marker in the garden of his home, the Lee-Fendall House in Old Town Alexandria. The actual location of Fendall's grave is unknown but believed to be in either of two places in Alexandria. The Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Historic Resources graciously funded the marker as well. Patriot Fendall was born in Charles County, Maryland in 1734 and was related to the famed Lee family of Virginia. During the Revolution, he served in public service positions including Clerk of Charles County, election to the Convention from Charles County, and serving on the Committee of Observation for Charles County. In 1784, he bought a lot from Revolutionary hero, and his cousin, Light Horse Harry Lee and constructed his home on Oronoco Street. He was a business partner of George Washington in the creation of the Potomac Canal Company and Washington was a visitor to the house. Due to this close connection, it was decided to dedicate the monument on Washington's birthday weekend.

In addition to SAR participants, the Rev. Thomas Costa served as Chaplain and Dina Farouny-Webber, Program Manager for the Lee Fendall House Museum and Garden, talked on the history of the house and Patriot Fendall. VASSAR Second Vice President Michael Weyler officially dedicated the marker.

SAR Virginia Society and its following Chapters presented wreaths: George Washington, Col. James Wood II, Sgt. Maj. John Champe, Col. William Grayson, George Mason, and Fairfax Resolves. Additionally, the Virginia DAR District V Director, Nancy Hill, presented a wreath along with the Anna Maria Fitzhugh and Kate Waller Barrett Chapters. The VASSAR Color Guard added dignity to the ceremony by posting colors and standing guard during the ceremony.

*Right--  
VASSAR 2nd  
VP Michael  
Weyler  
dedicates the  
marker.*



*Gravemarking Chairman  
Paul Walden, Rev. Costa and  
Chapter President Rand Pixa  
start the ceremony.*



*Color Guard in formation.*