



## George Washington Chapter Newsletter in Alexandria, Virginia

Volume 25, Issue 9

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December, 2023

# Veterans Day at Mount Vernon November 11, 2023



*Photo credit: Tom Roth*

*Front Row (L-R) GW Chapter Color Guard Deputy Cmdr. Mark Jackson and Past National SAR Vice President General of the Mid-Atlantic District Pete Davenport. Second Row (L) GW Chapter Assistant Chaplain Paul McComb.*

*Mount Vernon, the historic home of George and Martha Washington, hosts events annually on Veterans Day and the George Washington Chapter of the Virginia SAR is proud to start the day there each year along with local DAR and C.A.R. compatriots to pay tribute to U. S. veterans.*

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# President's Corner

## *Compatriots:*



As our Chapter turns over leadership to a new team it is a good time to reflect on the accomplishments of the last year, look forward to the opportunities in the new year, and to express thanks. First then, great thanks to the membership for the tremendous support that made the year's accomplishments possible. The George Washington Chapter is no greater than its members, so if we had a great year it's thanks to the members.

We did have a great year. Perhaps most notably, we put the Chapter on sound financial footing for the future. We established the Chapter's Outreach and Education Endowment Fund. Through one major gift, the residual of another, and the generous member contributions of \$14,500 in the spring 30/30 Campaign, the Fund hit a high of \$56,100. With income-producing assets and its mandate for metered drawdown, the Fund should be able to produce support for the Chapter for the indefinite future. It has already provided substantial support in 2023 and planned for 2024. With future fund drives it could do even more. And then there was the small, but important step of the Board of Manager's October effort to accelerate the 2024 budget process to have a first-in-a-while balanced budget that considers all of the Chapter's expenses ready to go at the beginning of 2024.

In an effort to attract greater participation and to control meeting-attendance costs, we also tried a number of different meeting styles and venues in the face of higher costs and unavailability at Belle Haven Country Club. Our January, boxed-lunch meeting at Pohick Church had the greatest meeting attendance in several years. The May bar-be-cue meeting at Fort Hunt Park was also very popular and well attended. The March meeting at Gadsby's Tavern, was also well-attended -- in fact a little too well-attended in light of one new member's very large party; if and when we go back, we'll probably limit attendance to the main room. We tried other formulations, too. For the ease of getting to

Arlington National Cemetery in September, we met at the nearby Army-Navy Country Club. And then in October we gathered at the Montebello Condominium for a buffet lunch. That was also a recent first because it was an off-schedule joint meeting with the George Mason Chapter. Did you know that George Washington regularly dined with his close friends the Fairfaxes at their Mount Eagle estate now occupied by Montebello? We tried to hold our meetings in places dear to our namesake George Washington. Accordingly, we also conducted a tour meeting when we gathered at the George Washington National Masonic Memorial for a tour before lunch.

The year also marked great Committee progress. Many of our Chapter Committees have done their traditional and remarkable work, but several have renewed energy and focus. First, we now have an active Color Guard contingent. While we have several long-standing members who participate in events in Revolutionary War-era attire, a couple of relatively new members are now regularly outfitted in their Continental uniforms, both for our Chapter events and State Society Color Guard activities. Hopefully the new year will bring others like-minded! Thanks to the strong efforts of a cadre of members our Scouting and Youth Activities Committees have also taken on new life. Several members made Eagle Scout badges in history, law, and genealogy easier with very successful new workshops; those will expand in 2024. Stronger ties with the District Boy Scout leadership are yielding new opportunities. And Youth Activities is poised for a strong year with Rumbaugh Oration Contest and Knight Essay Contest participation. Finally we have our own America 250 Committee observing the drumbeat two and a half centuries ago that led to the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Our regular events are keyed to the events 250 years ago, with new observances coming on. Among those will be the partnerships we are building with the American Friends of Lafayette and the City of Alexandria to observe the 200th anniversary of General Lafayette's triumphal farewell tour of the United States. Steps this year have helped set the stage for a grand celebration in 2026. This year, the Army's world-renowned Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps marched as part of our formation in Alexandria's George Washington Birthday Parade. They have agreed to march again

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with us next year and, perhaps most important, in 2026. 2026 has the potential to be a banner year for our Chapter since our America 250 Committee has convinced the Birthday Committee to give the SAR, along with the DAR and C.A.R., top billing in 2026 as they did for the thousands of Masons who marched this year. With that in place, we have begun to coordinate with National and State SAR officers to bring a large number of SAR members from around the Country and State to march with us in 2026. The challenge number is in the thousands.

All of that has been accomplished while we carried out grave-markings, JROTC events, and innumerable public service awards, further highlighted by our other signature events in the George Washington Birthday Wreath-layings, National Memorial Day Parade, Fourth of July March to the Tomb, Wreath-Laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Veterans Day Wreath-laying, participation in a large number of commemorations conducted by other Chapters, and soon Wreaths Across America.

We, together, have done a great deal to honor our Patriot ancestors and to instill understanding and pride in our Nation. Thank you for all you have done to make that possible and to set the stage for even greater things in the future.

*Fraternally,*

*Rand Pixa, President  
George Washington Chapter*

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## Assisted Living Veterans Honored



*Saturday, Nov 11, 2023, Grave Marking Cmte. Chair and former GW Chapter President Paul Walden participated in a ceremony honoring 14 veterans (below) residing at the Sunrise Assisted Living Facility in Alexandria Va.*

*Photo (L-R): USMC Ret. Col. Carol Joyce, DAR member Susan Hayward-Costa, Rev. Dr. Thomas Costa, and Paul Walden, GW SAR.*

*The 14 veterans honored were: Joseph Brown (Army, 32 years), Michael Cericola (Navy), William Cowdrey (U.S. Air Force, Captain), Sharon Fijalka (U.S. Coast Guard, Captain) Nancy Ford (Navy), Patrick Haas (Army), Steven Herrera (Army, Vietnam War veteran), Elton Howerton (Army), Edward Jedrzewski (Air Force), Stephen Luckey (Army), Fred Meader (Marine Corps), John Perrino (Army), Paul Corsillo (Army), Neil McDonald (Army Reserves).*





# Veterans Day at Mount Vernon (Con't from Page 1)



GW Chapter Compatriot and resident fifer at the Mount Vernon Estate Don Francisco plays the United States' national anthem as GW Chapter President and fellow retired U. S. veteran Rand Pixa salutes.

*"... the unparalleled perseverance (sic) of the Armies of the United States, through almost every possible suffering and discouragement, for the space of eight long years, was little short of a standing Miracle."*

*Washington's Farewell Address to the Army,  
2 November 1783*



Shown at right are the wreaths presented by the Virginia Society Children of the American Revolution (V.S.C.A.R.) and the George Washington Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution. The Kate Waller Barrett DAR Chapter also presented a wreath.



Photo credits this page: Tom Roth



# November Chapter Meeting, Election of 2024 Officers and Year End Awards

November 11, 2023, Belle Haven Country Club



*GW Chapter Past President and 2023 Nominating Committee Chairman Richard Rankin conducts the elections for next year's Chapter officers plus the new member of the Managers-at-Large.*

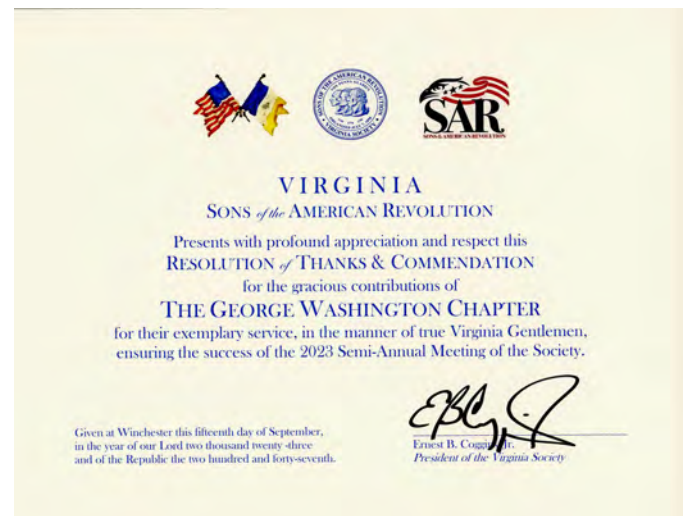


*2024 Chapter officers (L-R) Jaymie Cook (Secretary), Scott Walker (President), Scot Bryant (Vice President) and Rand Pixa (Manager-at-Large). Not present, Jonathan Coles (Treasurer).*



*GW Chapter President Rand Pixa hands Master-at-Arms Covert Beach the Chapter's 2022 John Blair Public Safety Award streamer to add to the Chapter's flag. The streamer was earned by presenting Public Service awards in all five categories.*

*See two additional Chapter awards at right.*



(Con't on Page 12)

# In Memory of Virgil "Pete" Farley

March 7, 1943 to November 7, 2023

George Washington Chapter member Pete Farley lost his battle with cancer in Williamsburg, Virginia last month at the age of 80 years old. He was inducted into the Chapter in November 2017 and two months later he was the Chapter Newsletter Editor. Pete's career and personal interests going back to high school focused upon printing. He entered a 4-year apprenticeship program through The International Typographical Union, becoming a skilled Journeyman Printer. After employment in various printing shops and newspapers in West Virginia and Virginia, he joined the print department at The Wall Street Journal in Silver Spring, Maryland in 1973 just as the days of hot metal typography were coming to an end due to the arrival of the computer era. Eventually, he started his own business as a consultant of Graphics and Printing and spent the last fifteen years of his career at the Defense Logistics Agency at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

From early childhood, Pete was an avid collector of baseball cards (and was one of the fortunate whose mother did not toss out his collection). His collection of cards and baseball memorabilia continued his entire life. He was a baseball super-fan and particularly loved the Yankees of the 1950s-60s.

Pete maintained an avid interest in both history and ancestry. Over the years he was a devoted supporter of organizations such as The Friends of Mount Vernon, The Mosby Heritage Area Association, Civil War Trust, National Baseball Hall of Fame and the Society of American Baseball Research.

Pete was honored by Virginia SAR as the 2022 Newsletter Editor of the Year. He is survived by his devoted wife of 40 years, Carol Simpson Farley; son, Jeffrey C. Farley (Paula) of Virginia Beach, VA; daughter, Nanette Farley Lucas, of Tallahassee, FL; stepsons, John Reedy (Kari) of Ayden, NC, and Matthew Reedy (Julie) of Midlothian, VA; and seven grandchildren.

Additional information can be found here in his online obituary:

<https://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/29968751/virgil-c-farley>



*(L-R) "Pete" Farley receiving the 2022 Virginia SAR Newsletter Editor of the Year Award from GW Chapter President Rand Pixa, April 8, 2023.*





# Public Safety Award Presentations

November 1, 2023



*Fire Safety category: Units were dispatched to a building fire, found and successfully removed an unconscious adult who was treated and regained consciousness prior to leaving the scene for a hospital.*

*(L-R) Virginia SAR Historian and GW Chapter Past President Tom Roth, Fire and Rescue Services awardees: John Wallace (Tech. I), Brian Anderson (Tech. II), Paul Racco (Tech. II), Lt. Joshua Dempsey, Trevor Krohn (Tech. I), Ho Yin Ma (Tech. II), Capt. William Phillips, Mollie Bodmer (Tech. I), Lt. Mason Vines. GW Chapter Public Safety Awards Committee Chairman John Blair. (Unavailable for photo is Lauren Linkous (Tech. II).)*



*EMS category: EMS crews were dispatched to a female pregnant with twins. Delivery was imminent, with the first child in a breech presentation. EMS was able to mitigate the circumstances and deliver the first baby. The mother and unborn second child were then transferred to a hospital where the second child was successfully delivered.*

*(L-R) GW Chapter Past President and current Virginia SAR Assistant Registrar Dave Thomas, GW Chapter Past President and current Virginia SAR Historian Tom Roth, Sean Barkley (Tech. II), Eric Dombkowski (Tech. II), Dianna O'Donnell, Alex Ramey (Tech. I) and GW Chapter Public Safety Awards Committee Chairman John Blair. (Additional recipients who were unavailable for photo are Lt. Yasmin Ahmandy, Brian Smith (Tech I), Lt. Lucas Hart, and Richard Blank (Tech I).)*

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# Public Safety Award Presentations

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*Fire Safety category: Prince Wm. Co. Battalion Chief Jason Reese developed and implemented operations to provide emergency assistance to motorists stranded on I-95 related to the crippling snowstorm of January 3, 2022.*

*(L-R) GW Chapter Past President and current Virginia SAR Historian Tom Roth, GW Chapter Public Safety Awards Cmte. Chairman John Blair and Prince Wm. Co. Fire and Rescue Services Battalion Chief Jason Reese.*

## Eagle Scout Award Presentation to GW Chapter Member's Son



*(L-R) Tammy, Caden and George Washington Chapter Member Curtis Duncan are all smiles after Caden's advancement to the rank of Eagle Scout at the Eagle Court of Honor program held Sunday, November 19, 2023 at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Alexandria, Virginia.*



*(L-R) Caden Duncan (Troop 996) receives the SAR Certificate of Recognition from GW Chapter Secretary Scot Bryant. Sons of the American Revolution are proud to recognize and honor the patriotic leadership and service of outstanding Americans, especially among our youth.*



# Dues Reminder

Dear Compatriots: Even though our 2023 dues are paid through 12/31/2023 here is another cordial request to ***please*** pay your 2024 dues **ASAP** via the Virginia SAR website at: <https://www.virginiasar.org>.

*(Processing 2024 dues payments before the 2023 dues expire takes the GW Chapter and the Virginia SAR volunteers some time. Those keeping the books on behalf of all of us would sincerely appreciate your assistance by submitting your dues payments soon, no later than **December 15th.**)*

If you do not recall receiving the eMailed dues renewal invoice or if you need assistance accessing the website, contact Treasurer Scott Walker by eMail at this address: [scottwalker2363@gmail.com](mailto:scottwalker2363@gmail.com).

If you wish to pay your 2024 dues by check: The cost is \$125 for most members (\$75 for Life members).

***Please do not allow your SAR membership lapse...***

**Remit online at:**

<https://www.virginiasar.org>

**- Or -**

Make checks payable to:  
**George Washington Chapter, VASSAR**

and mail to...

**Scott Walker**  
**223 N. Royal Street Alexandria VA 22314**

*Thank you!*



***"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.

***Interim Editor:*** Scot Bryant. Submissions from Chapter officers, committee chairmen and fellow Compatriots are always needed. Please send submissions and comments to GW Chapter Secretary Scot Bryant at [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.



## December through the years with George Washington

- 1776** on the 25th--Washington crosses the Delaware River.
- 1776** on the 26th--Victory at the Battle of Trenton.
- 1783** on the 23rd--Washington resigns his military commission at Annapolis.
- 1791** on the 15th--Ratification of the Bill of Rights.
- 1792** on the 5th--Electoral college unanimously elects Washington to his second term as President.
- 1799** on the 14th--Death of George Washington.
- 1799** on the 18th--Funeral and burial of George Washington.



# Before You Go...

## An Interview with Outgoing Manager-at-Large, Jay Henn

At the end of every calendar year the most senior member of the Chapter's Board of Managers "retires" after having served their several years as a Chapter officer and then three additional years as a Manager-at-Large. Past GW Chapter President Jay Henn's term as a member of the Chapter's Board is about over, so we asked Jay if he'd mind sharing a few thoughts with us about his SAR tenure to date. Here is what he had to share...

**Editor:** Thanks for sitting down and sharing your thoughts, Jay. To start, how did you get involved with the SAR, and more specifically with the George Washington Chapter?

**Henn:** Well, I basically have three people to thank for that. The first was my mother, who – after all of us kids were out of the house – researched her genealogy, found a Patriot ancestor, and joined the DAR. The second is my wife Bonnie, a long-time member of the DAR, who alerted me to the many joint DAR-SAR activities that we could share if I joined. The third, and this explains the George Washington Chapter, is Mike Elston, who was just about to serve his term as Chapter President.

Now, Mike is very good at all things SAR, including recruiting. He and Bonnie had worked together on many C.A.R. activities, and when Mike found out I had agreed to join the SAR he stepped right up and essentially completed my entire application. Between my Mom's DAR papers and Mike's efforts I don't think I had to do anything other than write the check! Because of that, though, I'm totally useless when it comes to helping prospective members with their applications – but we have many qualified Chapter members who can fill that need.

I was officially inducted into the Chapter at the VASSAR Semi-Annual Meeting in 2013 in Alexandria. There's a great photo out there somewhere of me taking the oath, and right beside me is this other fellow waiting to be inducted. Turns out that it was Tom Roth, who has been an incredible resource to our Chapter, to VASSAR, and to National since the moment he joined. Took me a little longer to get involved in Chapter activities.

**Editor:** You mentioned that your mother first identified your Patriot ancestor. Tell us a little about him.

**Henn:** If I recall correctly, my mother identified multiple patriots, and she went in on Josiah Merriam, Jr., from Concord, MA who served at Ticonderoga and perhaps Saratoga. But, when Mike did my papers he thought that Josiah Merriam Sr. was more interesting, so that's who he used for me. "Merriam Senior" was also from Concord, a Sergeant in the Massachusetts militia who served both there and in Rhode Island. Another ancestor, Captain Jacob Brown - also in the Concord militia - "did good service on the day of the Concord fight" on April 19, 1775. I guess I'd better get started on some Supplementals!

**Editor:** You said that it took you a little longer to get involved in Chapter activities. How did you get started?

**Henn:** Because of Bonnie's association with the DAR and the C.A.R., I first volunteered to support Dwight Whitney in his presidential year as Chairman of the DAR/C.A.R. Relations Committee. My first official duty in that capacity was to bring greetings on behalf of the Chapter at the 90th Anniversary Celebration of the Kate Waller Barrett Chapter, NSDAR, with whom we've had a close working relationship for many years.

The other big event that year was the combined SAR/DAR/C.A.R. commemoration of the 240th Anniversary of the Bermuda Gunpowder Plot. I was honored to lead the Benediction at a dedication of a marker to St. George Tucker and Thomas Tudor Tucker, brothers and patriots, in Southampton Parish, Bermuda.

**Editor:** After that, what Chapter offices have you held?

**Henn:** There's a phrase that you don't hear as much as you used to that describes our typical  
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progression in Chapter leadership positions - “walking the chairs” - and that’s what I did: Secretary, Treasurer (two years, actually), Vice President, President, and now three years as a Manager-at-Large.

Interestingly enough, and probably not too common, I held a National office before I ever held a Chapter office. During 2015-2016 Mike Elston was serving as Vice President General of the International District, and he needed a Secretary to provide a second signature for various District-level documents. At that time I lived very near to Mike, and so he drafted me to serve as Secretary.

**Editor:** What was the highlight of your Presidential Year?

**Henn:** Hah! I’m not sure you’d call it a highlight, but I served as President during the first COVID year. We had an excellent January meeting at the Mount Vernon Inn and a great turnout at the VASSAR Annual Meeting in Richmond in February. I had put together a wonderful agenda (if I say so myself!) for the March meeting at Belle Haven, including some international visitors, when the quarantine changed our plans.

Thanks to great support from all of my officers and Committee Chairmen we pivoted fairly quickly to virtual meetings (I think we missed the March and April meetings), and virtual attendance has been an integral part of our meetings since then.

**Editor:** Let’s pick a different year, then. Were there some events during your tenure as a Chapter officer that you would consider highlights?

**Henn:** Oh, gosh, many! With all the opportunities and events that the Chapter provides – not to mention other SAR Chapters in Northern Virginia: marching down the Bowling Green at Mount Vernon; watching our Presidents General place a Wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns; honoring our deserving students, Scouts and First Responders...very difficult to pick one or two. I would say, though, I think my favorite year was 2019 - partly thanks to Dave Thomas, who was a wonderful President and partner that year. Two

events stand out: the first was the celebration of the Chapter’s 65th Anniversary in April; the second was the Gold Good Citizenship Gala that we sponsored for Gen. Gordon Sullivan at Belle Haven in November on behalf of VASSAR. In between those two events I was humbled to lead the first Pledge of Allegiance for our newest citizens at the naturalization ceremony on July 4th at Mount Vernon. That was a busy, busy, year... and let me take this opportunity to remind our current leadership that next year will be our Chapter’s 70th. Just a word to the wise.

Our National Congress in Boston – 2016, I think – was also very memorable, and an opportunity for me to re-visit many of the places where my Patriot ancestors lived and fought.

**Editor:** Based on your decade with SAR and the George Washington Chapter, what words of wisdom would you pass along to current and prospective members?

**Henn:** Well, perhaps another saying that I’ve heard a lot, and it is absolutely true: “You get out what you put in.” I think without exception I hear this sentiment expressed by those Chapter members who have served as Officers, those who have served as Committee Chairs, and even those who attend our various Chapter meetings and events. The more you participate, the more you appreciate and enjoy the benefits of being a member of the SAR – no matter what Chapter you happen to be in.

I appreciate that our membership is composed of busy individuals who have many competing interests and activities, but I would encourage each and every one of you to dedicate as much time to Chapter activities as you can – if only to attend a Chapter meeting or event. Also, I would strongly suggest that you try to attend a State Society event, or an event sponsored by another SAR Chapter. I think your time will be well spent.

**Editor:** Is there anything else you’d like to share with our readers?

**Henn:** Well, I can’t sign off without acknowledging many, many Chapter members (Con’t next page)



over the years who have made the SAR a very memorable part of my life. I've mentioned Mike, Dwight, Dave and Tom, but I'd also like to recognize the other members of my first Board of Managers – Scott Wagoner, Greg Bodge, Paul Walden, Ernie Coggins – as well as some of the other dedicated Chairmen and contributors throughout my years: Jack Pitzer, Jamie Callender, Rich Sherman, Don Reynolds, Jack Coulter, Edgar Bates, Craig Batten, Covert Beach, Marty Johnson, Jeff McCoy, and the incomparable John Blair. My thanks also to additional Past Presidents who continue to support the Chapter including Larry Lisle (our other “man in North Carolina”), Dick Kusserow, Dave Walker, Kenan Torrans, and Paul Briggs. These men, and many others, shaped my SAR experience and I am most grateful for it.

Unfortunately, time passes, and this has been a difficult year for Virginia SAR, so in memory I

must also pay tribute to Don Baldwin (past Chapter and VASSAR President), Wayne Rouse (long-time VASSAR Secretary), Gene Thomas (beloved VASSAR Chaplain and George Mason Chapter compatriot) and Pete Farley (Chapter Newsletter Editor). They are missed.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the other members of the current Board: Tom Roth, Richard Rankin, Rand Pixa, Bill Wilson, Scott Walker, and Scot Bryant. I have seen new energy, new ideas, and new faces - not to mention the very welcome resurgence of a Chapter Color Guard - and I am very optimistic about the future of the George Washington Chapter. To all of you: please support them, and your Chapter, with your time and treasure (often one and the same). You will be well rewarded.

Thank you, and I salute you all.

**Editor:** Thank you, Jay.



*Jay Henn and Tom Roth inductions at the 2013 Virginia SAR Semi-Annual Meeting.*



*2016 Officers swearing in (L-R) Ernie Coggins, Jay Henn (Secretary), Paul Walden and Greg Bodge.*



*Jay Henn as Master of Ceremonies for the annual July 4th March to the Tomb and Wreath Laying at Mount Vernon in 2019.*



# Major Joseph Eggleston Grave Marking and Commemoration of Public Service

Historic Grub Hill Church, Amelia, Va.



*George Washington Chapter Past President Tom Roth delivered a wreath and respects at the grave of Major Eggleston, November 5, 2023.*

*The event was presented by the Richmond, Va. SAR Chapter in cooperation with Christ Episcopal Church (Amelia, Va.), The Amelia County American Revolution 250 Committee and The Amelia County Historical Society.*

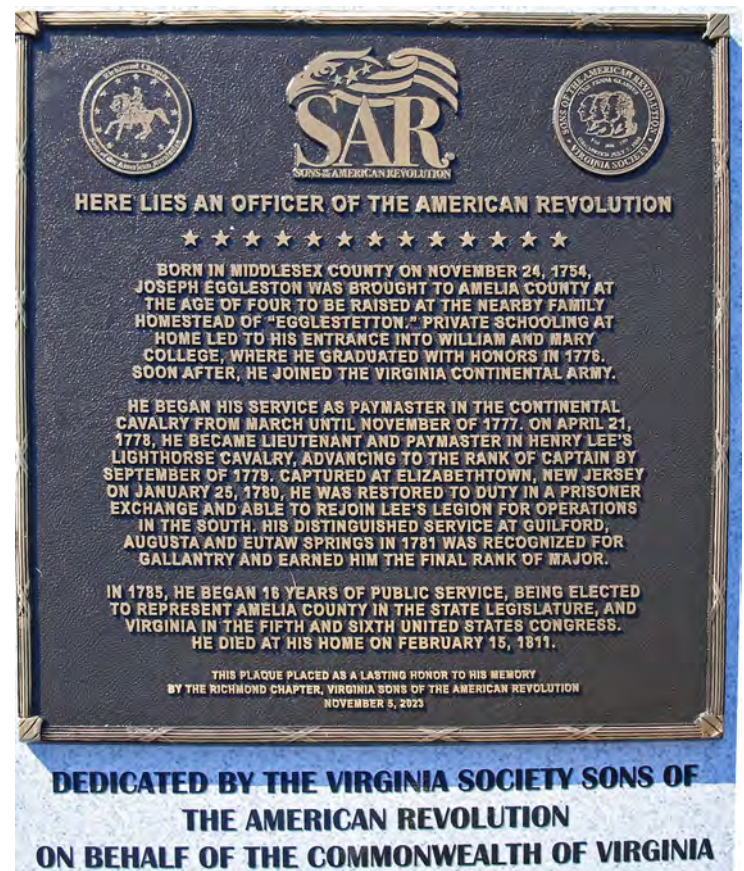
*(Photo credit: Beau Robertson, Richmond Chapter, Virginia SAR.)*

In part, the inscription on the plaque shows that he attended the College of William & Mary where he graduated with honors in 1776. Soon after, he joined the Virginia Continental Army.

He became Lieutenant and Paymaster in Henry Lee's Lighthorse Cavalry, advancing to the rank of Captain by September of 1779. Captured at Elizabethtown, New Jersey January 25, 1780, he was restored to duty in a prisoner exchange and able to rejoin Lee's Legion for operations in the South. His distinguished service at Guilford, Augusta and Eutaw Springs in 1781 was recognized for gallantry and earned him the final rank of Major.

In 1785, he began 16 years of public service, being elected to represent Amelia County in the State Legislature, and Virginia in the Fifth and Sixth United States Congress.

He had been born in Middlesex County November 24, 1754. He died at his home February 15, 1811.





# November 2023 Chapter Meeting (Con't from Page 5)



*GW Chapter President Rand Pixa presents Committee Chairman Marty Johnson with the Roger Sherman Award for his outstanding service to the Chapter this year.*



*GW Chapter President Rand Pixa presents a Bronze Meritorious Service Award to Chapter Treasurer Scott Walker for his Above and Beyond service to the Chapter in 2023.*



*GW Chapter President Rand Pixa presented Chapter Secretary Scot Bryant with the Chapter's Dr. James Craik Award in support of the Grave Marking program and also a Bronze Meritorious Service Award in recognition of notable service.*



*GW Chapter President Rand Pixa presented the Bronze Meritorious Service Medal to GW Chapter Manager at Large and Historian and Virginia SAR State Historian Tom Roth for his many contributions and multifaceted support to the Chapter this year.*

*We the People*

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# November 2023 Chapter Meeting

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The November 11, 2023 Chapter Meeting's Guest Speaker was Chuck Schwam (right). He is the Executive Director of American Friends of Lafayette, shown here receiving a replica of the Houdin Bust of George Washington from GW Chapter President Rand Pixa (left) as a token of the Chapter's appreciation for his fascinating presentation not only describing the Marquis de Lafayette's contributions to the colonists' revolution against the British but also Lafayette's extraordinary and enduring friendship with General Washington.



Photo credit: Tom Roth

GW Chapter Chaplain, Past President and Virginia SAR Past President Dr. Donald Reynolds (center) closes out the monthly meeting with the Benediction. Flanking Dr. Reynolds are (L-R) Past Chapter President Richard Rankin, Past Chapter President Emeritus the Honorable David Walker and 2024 Chapter Secretary-elect Jaymie Cook.



# America 250 Drumbeat: The Boston Tea Party

December 16, 1773

Submitted by the GW Chapter America 250 Committee

In the tapestry of American history, there exists a singular event that echoes through time, a resounding moment of truth, inscribed in the annals of courage and resistance—the Boston Tea Party. The year was 1773, a tempestuous time in the heart of Boston, where the seeds of revolution lay dormant, awaiting their chance to bloom. It has been estimated that the American colonists consumed approximately 1.2 million pounds of tea each year. Britain realized that they could make money by imposing a tea tax onto the American colonies. This set the stage for the insidious Tea Act of 1773 which granted the British East India Company a monopolistic grip on the American colonies' tea trade and was rightfully regarded by the colonists as taxation without

representation. While a quiet years, the Tea Act was the ignited a rebellion of fire and



rebellion had simmered for catalyst, the spark that finally spirit.

In the veil of a moonless night, Samuel Cooper, who is buried in the guise of Native Americans, voyage. Three British ships, the the Beaver, were targeted. Three British tea were sent plummeting Harbor, a solemn rite of protest

a group of colonists including in Alexandria, Virginia, cloaked embarked on a clandestine Dartmouth, the Eleanor, and hundred forty-two chests of into the icy waters of Boston against the oppressive hand of the British Empire.

The repercussions were swift and severe. The British government retaliated with the Coercive Acts, known across the colonies as the Intolerable Acts. These draconian measures curtailed colonial autonomy and civil liberties, further driving the colonies to the precipice of rebellion. The Boston Tea Party had transformed defiance into open revolt.

But the true power of this act of defiance was its unifying force. Diverse colonies, each with its own concerns and interests, found common ground in the wake of the Boston Tea Party. Voices from different corners of the land came together, coalescing in the First Continental Congress of 1774.

The Boston Tea Party is a legacy of resilience, the courage to stand tall in the face of oppression. It was an early embodiment of the principles that would be woven into the tapestry of the Declaration of Independence and would light the flames of the American Revolutionary War. In the end, the Boston Tea Party, with its audacious act of protest, its role in pushing the colonies closer to independence, and its legacy of unity and freedom, is a timeless narrative of defiance, etched into the soul of America, a testament to the indomitable spirit of its people.



# James Robinson: The Last Patriot

By: John Haseltine

James Robinson was born in the colony of Maryland on March 21, 1753. He grew up as a slave of a plantation owner named, Francis De Shields. Little did he know, his time as a slave would ultimately put him on the front lines of heavy combat. And his performance would help secure a country's Independence.

In 1775, De Shields had James Robinson enlist in the Continental Army. He was promised emancipation for his service. He enlisted in a Virginia Light Regiment under the command of the Marquis de Lafayette. Robinson saw combat at the Battle of Brandywine Creek, where his regiment successfully covered the Continental Army's retreat. After that, he participated in several skirmishes against Loyalist and Native tribes that were allied to the British. However, Robinson's defining moment would come in what was the climax of the American Revolution, the Siege of Yorktown.

In the month of September 1781, the American and French armies had successfully trapped the British army under the command of Charles Cornwallis at the port city of Yorktown, Virginia. In order to force Cornwallis to surrender, the Americans and French needed to capture the redoubts and fortifications outside that overlooked his position. If these were taken, Cornwallis would be dangerously exposed to artillery and sniper fire.

The Virginia Light Regiment was among those assigned to assault redoubt 10 on the British perimeter. These assaults were led by Lafayette and Alexander Hamilton. The attack began on October 14, at 6 PM. James Robinson and his regiment were among the very first to charge the redoubts. As soon as they reached the position, they pulled out axes and chopped their way through the abatis (wooden barricade). Robinson was the first man to enter the redoubt. He then personally killed three British soldiers in hand-to-hand combat. Within just thirty minutes of fighting, redoubt 10 was captured.

The loss of the redoubts ultimately led to the surrender of Cornwallis's army. Just five days later, the British army officially surrendered to the Continental Army. Their defeat at Yorktown was the final nail in the coffin for the British in their attempt to quell the American Revolution. A year and a half later, they signed the Treaty of Paris, and granted the United States their independence.

For his courage and valor at the Siege of Yorktown, James Robinson was personally commended by the Marquis de Lafayette. The latter personally awarded Robinson a Gold Medal of Valor. Upon his return to Maryland, Robinson expected to be granted his freedom due to his distinguished service. However, he discovered that his master (Francis De Shields) had passed away before his arrival. One of De Shield's sons decided to sell Robinson to a new plantation owner down in the deep south.

For the next three decades, Robinson worked for a farmer named, Calvin Smith. By 1812, he was working on a farm down in Louisiana. Then, just as he was beginning to despair that he would never be free, another war broke out between the United States and Great Britain. James Robinson was approached by a man named Andrew Jackson who offered to free all slaves who enlisted in his army. Despite having doubts, Robinson agreed to enlist one more time.

For the next three years, Robinson served in the American army during the War of 1812. Like the Revolution before, he would once again distinguish himself on the battlefield. In the waning days of the conflict, the British Army launched an invasion of Louisiana and converged on the city of New Orleans. To counter this, Jackson pulled together a ragtag army of regulars, militiamen, marines, Choctaw warriors, and even French pirates.

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# James Robinson: The Last Patriot

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On January 8, 1815, the two armies met. In one of the most spectacular engagements of the War of 1812, Jackson's army shattered the attacking British as they charged his fortifications. During the battle, James Robinson personally killed six enemy soldiers with his rifle and bayonet. When it was over, the British retreated after suffering more than 2,000 casualties. The Americans suffered just over 60.

For a second time, James Robinson had distinguished himself on the battlefield. And for a second time, he was denied his freedom. Jackson reneged on his promise and returned Robinson to his owner (Robinson would never forgive him). For another 15 years, he remained a slave before finally obtaining his freedom in 1830. Robinson then became an ordained minister and moved to the state of Ohio. Eventually he and his family moved to Detroit, Michigan, where he wrote a book that narrated his life. Robinson continued to live in Detroit until his death on March 27, 1868, at the great age of 115. He is believed by some to be the last living veteran of the American Revolution.

For more than 151 years, the service and story of James Robinson were forgotten by the American people. It wasn't until 2019, that the Michigan's chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution finally decided to give him a long overdue ceremony. After locating his grave and long forgotten documents that detailed his service, the SAR and the American Legion built a military headstone for the deceased Robinson. On June 22, they replaced the headstone and conducted a 21-gun salute in his honor. Although he never lived to experience it, James Robinson finally received the recognition for all that he did for the United States of America.

## Sources:

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# Upcoming Events

## **Dec 2: Saturday, 11:00 AM Celebration of the Battle of Great Bridge**

Great Bridge Battlefield and Waterways Museum,  
1775 Historic Way, Chesapeake, VA

## **Dec 9: Saturday, 11:30 AM Joint Chapter Meeting (George Washington + George Mason Chapters)**

Mount Vernon Country Club,  
5111 Old Mill Road, Alexandria, VA 22309

Installation of 2024 Chapter officers by Virginia SAR President and GW Chapter Compatriot, Ernie Coggins.

Guest Speaker: Rev. Thomas Costa presents  
Christmastime in Colonial America.

## **Dec 16: Saturday, 9:30 AM**

### **National Wreaths Across America Day**

Alexandria National Cemetery  
1450 Wilkes Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

## 2024

## **Jan 13, 2024: Saturday, 11:30 AM Chapter Meeting**

Montebello Condominiums Community Center,  
5905 Mt. Eagle Drive, Alexandria, VA 22303

## **Fri Feb 9 - Sat Feb 10: 11:00 AM Virginia SAR Annual Meeting. (Online workshops prior.)**

Omni Richmond Hotel, 100 South 12th Street,  
Richmond, VA 23219



**Note: Details for "Events" are updated on the Chapter website at:**  
<https://gwsar.org/>

**\*Please remember that you must be logged in to view SAR members-only events in addition to the public events.**

**Please see the Virginia SAR calendar for upcoming, statewide SAR events:**  
<https://vssar.memberclicks.net/calendar>

