



## The Iowa Compatriot

The Journal of the Iowa Society, Sons of the American Revolution

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*We the descendants of the heroes of the American Revolution, who by their sacrifice established the United States of America, reaffirm our faith in the principles of liberty and solemnly pledge to defend them against every foe.*

### World War II Veteran Becomes a New IASSAR Member

By Chris Moberg

The National SAR headquarters contacted the IASSAR indicating that Kenneth Wayne Gillpatrick from Oelwein, Iowa, was interested in joining the Iowa SAR. He is a 99-year-old World War II Army Veteran who



was stationed in Alaska during the war. Unfortunately, he did not have an email address or any proof documents and lives a long distance from any SAR members who could help him. On the evening of September 1, Iowa Registrar Stephen Stewart contacted his daughter, Dr. Melissa Stewart, about taking up this project. Dr. Stewart is the Vice Regent and former registrar of the Nathaniel Fellows Chapter of the DAR. By 2 PM the next day she had found all the necessary documentation that was needed to proceed with proving Ken Gillpatrick's descent from Patriot Benjamin Thurston. Thurston was born on October 21, 1746 in Newbury, Massachusetts. He was a Private under Captain Jonathan Poor in Colonel Samuel Gerrish's Regiment and took part in the first battle of the American Revolution: the Lexington Alarm. Benjamin Thurston died on December 11, 1807 and was buried in Newbury, Massachusetts. Dr. Stewart and Registrar Stewart sent the application as quickly as possible to National, and with expedited four-day processing, the application was approved by September 24. We are grateful to the Stewarts for their outstanding work in helping World War II Veteran Ken Gillpatrick become an Iowa SAR member!

*Ken Gillpatrick and Dr. Melissa Stewart, October 10, 2021*

### Veterans Day 2021: Reading Veteran Names at Glendale Cemetery

By Mike Rowley

In recent years, it has been a Veterans Day custom for members of the Iowa SAR to read aloud the names of veterans in local cemeteries and memorial parks. In 2020, veteran names were read in Woodland Cemetery in Des Moines, Iowa. In 2019, they were read in Charles Gabus Memorial Tree Park in Urbandale, Iowa. This year, at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month, the names of World War I veterans will be read by IASSAR members and guests at Glendale Cemetery in Des Moines, Iowa. All members are welcome to attend.

## University of Northern Iowa Homecoming Parade



The 2021 University of Northern Iowa Homecoming Parade was held on Main Street in Cedar Falls on Saturday, October 2. The theme was "Let the Good Times Roar" with a nod to the Roaring 1920s. There were 91 entries consisting of bands, vehicles with dignitaries, floats of various kinds, many with golf carts, and walking entries. SAR Member David Nation was a lone entry representing the Sons of the American Revolution, walking in position 70 carrying a Betsy Ross flag. Close by were two groups with flapper dancers who won ribbons from the parade judges. There was a reviewing stand about halfway down the street with an emcee who announced each entry. The following was the text of the SAR announcement:

"The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history, and teaching American history to future generations. It was founded in 1889 and members have ancestors who participated in or supported the American Revolutionary War. The SAR Color Guard has members who dress in authentic historic uniforms and carry the National Colors."

David received several compliments on the appearance of the uniform and one man asked if there was a local chapter of the SAR.

## Outstanding Cadet Recognition Program

By Doug Frazer



The Iowa Society, Sons of the American Revolution will again be offering ROTC / JROTC / Sea Cadet medals and certificates in the 2021- 2022 school year. Many units have participated in this award presentation in previous years. Detailed information about this recognition program is located at the national SAR website: <https://www.sar.org/rotc-jrotc-recognition-program-3/> (The Iowa Society, SAR at this time does not participate in the scholarship competition feature of the program.)

These awards honor cadets who exemplify the Citizen Soldier and the Minutemen of the Revolutionary War. One cadet is selected from each participating school each year. The award winner is selected by unit staff.

After the name of the cadet has been selected and the date, time, and location of the award ceremony is set, a certificate and medal will be mailed to the ROTC / JROTC / Sea Cadet unit. We often have an SAR member present the award if appropriate. For more information, contact Doug Frazer at [dlfrazer@yahoo.com](mailto:dlfrazer@yahoo.com).

## The Woodland Cemetery Project

By Mike Rowley

When I was single and in my early 20's just starting my work career, I complained to my uncle that it seemed all I did was work and then come home and watch TV. He was a complex man and a deep thinker. He responded with only five words: "We are what we do."

It got my attention. We are not always what we think we are, and we are not always what we say we are. But it is hard to deny that we are what we do. Not wanting to be the "TV watching guy," I decided to try to make at least a small difference whenever and wherever I went. In some ways, the Woodland Cemetery project is a result of that thought process.

I have always had an interest in history, perhaps from spending a great deal of time with grandparents. I also have always considered cemeteries interesting places. Many of my relatives and ancestors were veterans. Walking with my wife, children, and dog in the cemeteries over the years, it seemed we always left with more questions than answers. For example, who was that man or that woman? How many veterans are in this cemetery? Why are some marked and others are not?

I identified what I thought were "problems." No one knows how many veterans are in Woodland Cemetery. Many of the veteran graves were unmarked and, in some ways, forgotten. There is an old saying that there are three phases of death. The first is when life leaves the body, the second is when your body is interred to its final resting place, and the third and last is when your name is spoken for the last time. The veterans in Woodland Cemetery were from the War of 1812, Mexican-American War, Civil War, Indian Wars, Spanish-American War, WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and even more modern service. Some have been unmarked for over 150 years and in most cases their family is no longer nearby. Finally, there were no funds to solve the problems.

I came up with my "solutions:" Research and document veterans in Woodland Cemetery, mark their graves, get VA stones, install the stones with volunteer labor and supplies, and share the information with others. Bob Niffenegger, an 87-year-old retired Des Moines firefighter, Tim (my oldest son), and I began work. We started by searching old newspapers, burial records, age-appropriate gravestones, and County biography books for veterans buried in Woodland Cemetery. Search topics included Memorial Day, Woodland Cemetery, Civil War veterans, War of 1812, Mexican War, Spanish-American war, pension information, etc. Document resources included:

- GAR records
- "American Patriotism or 'Memoirs of Common Men'" published in Des Moines in 1869
- "List of Ex-Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines Living in Iowa" published in 1886
- City of Des Moines Park and Recreation Cemetery Interment Search at <https://cemeterysearch.dsm.city/> to confirm cemetery, block, and lot numbers
- [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com) to see if the veterans were listed and if the listing included a picture of a headstone
- <https://www.fold3.com/> to find muster in and out dates
- Obituaries in the Des Moines Register at <https://www.newspapers.com/>
- Regiment Roster if the veteran's infantry or cavalry number is known
- Google search of individuals by name, residence, or county

The process of marking a veteran grave has many steps:

1. Use original proofs rather than transcripts of proofs
2. Provide a color photograph of the grave showing that there is no stone present
3. Fill out the VA application
4. Find descendants using [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) and ask them about their desires for grave marking
5. Get signatures on the VA form and approval from the cemetery officials
6. Make copies of the application and documentation for your records, cemetery records, VA, and our organization
7. Mail the application and one set of documentation to the VA for review and approval
8. Update a progress sheet (your own system of keeping track) to exactly where in the process each veteran request is at
9. Schedule delivery if approved and notified of shipment
10. Contact cemetery officials after delivery so that they can mark and map sites of the graves
11. Purchase materials; ink, paper, rock, sand, cement, and pack tools
12. Contact the volunteer team to schedule installation
13. Install and photograph
14. Post information on the [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com) website
15. Notify descendants if possible
16. Update your progress sheet
17. Send veteran biographies to Wreaths Across America and Woodland Cemetery volunteers to post on social media if needed
18. Have a public ceremony when possible.

From January 1, 2020 to the present, we have installed 169 veteran stones. Most of these stones are in Woodland Cemetery, but some are in Glendale, Laurel Hills, and other cemeteries. We have identified 1,280

veterans buried in Woodland Cemetery and made sure that there is a veteran flag holder on each grave. We could use input from anyone that knows of family or friends that are veterans and are buried in Woodland Cemetery to continue to make the list as complete as possible.

Kristine Bartley has put together 71 amazing video biographies and placed QR codes on each of those graves for visitors to Woodland Cemetery to access with their cell phones. As you might expect, we discovered some fascinating stories during the research:

- William Case was a victim of grave robbery by a Drake University Medical School professor. The medical school closed in 1913.
- We identified 24 graves of Confederate veterans
- Veterans of Company M, 7th U.S. Volunteers were made up entirely of black men (except for their captain) from Des Moines who served in the Spanish-American War. They were known as the "Immunes," as it was erroneously thought they would have a natural immunity to the tropical diseases.
- Esther Allen was a Civil War nurse and later a Des Moines Physician. Her stone was denied by the VA, so we made one for her.
- Elisha Wishart was the first Des Moines Police officer killed in the line of duty. His murderer served less than two years before being pardoned by the Governor of Iowa.
- Henry Furry was a Civil War veteran who served 29 years in Anamosa, Iowa for the axe murder of his brother-in-law. He died a week before the Governor of Iowa was to pardon him.
- Captain E. T. Banks was one of first black officers in Iowa National Guard

Countless other stories of human interest are waiting to be rediscovered at the Woodland Cemetery.

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*Let us remember our obligation to our forefathers, who gave us our Constitution,  
The Bill of Rights, an independent Supreme Court, and a nation of free men.*