



The Iowa Compatriot

The Journal of the Iowa Society, Sons of the American Revolution Nov. 15, 2022

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.

Iowa SAR Award Ceremony

On October 26th, 2022, the Iowa SAR held an in-person award ceremony at the Urbandale Public Library in Urbandale, Iowa. At the meeting, Doug Frazer received the State Meritorious Service Medal. This medal is awarded to an SAR member who has rendered long, faithful, and meritorious service to their state society. Doug has served in nearly every office for both the chapter and the state, including president, newsletter editor, ROTC/JROTC chair, secretary, treasurer, historian, Knight Essay chair, Eagle Scout chair, and many other positions. While he recently retired from being Treasurer, he continues in many other roles.



Mike Rowley presents Doug Frazer with a State Meritorious Service Medal

The next award was presented to Claudia Frazer. The Daughters of Liberty Medal depicts Sybil Ludington riding a galloping horse, commemorating her heroic ride of April 26, 1777, to warn of the approach of British forces and symbolizing the contribution of the many women who aided in the struggle for American independence. Each time an SAR member comes home and shares that they have taken on yet another responsibility for the Iowa SAR, there is often a spouse who must make sacrifices to enable him to do so. We thank Claudia Frazer for all of the support that she has provided over the years to make it possible for Doug Frazer to do all that he does for the Iowa SAR.



Mike Rowley presents Claudia Frazer with a Daughters of Liberty Medal

Next, Stephen Stewart received a District Silver Roger Sherman Medal. Stephen has done an outstanding job as registrar over the last three and a half years, and continues to provide assistance and training.



Chris Moberg and Mike Rowley present Stephen Stewart a District Silver Roger Sherman Medal

Don Corrigan received a Chapter Bronze Roger Sherman Medal. Don most recently served as 1st V.P. of the Iowa SAR. Don has participated in many events and served in many roles over the years.



Mike Rowley presents Don Corrigan with a Chapter Bronze Roger Sherman Medal

Bob Niffenegger received the Service to Veterans Medal. Bob has helped research, document, and install over 200 VA gravestones for unmarked veteran graves in Des Moines. These veterans are from War of 1812 to WWI. He has also designed, invented, financed, assembled and installed better flag stake holders for over 300 veteran graves.



Mike Rowley presents Bob Niffenegger with a Service to Veterans Medal

President Chris Moberg received a Bronze Good Citizenship Medal in recognition of his community leadership in the areas of church, school, scouts, and hereditary societies.



Mike Rowley presents Chris Moberg with a Bronze Good Citizenship Medal

To close out the program, Stephen Stewart and Doug Frazer each received Liberty awards. Oak leaf clusters are awarded for every set of 10 first line sponsorships on new applications. The Silver Liberty Medal is awarded for 100 or more first line sponsorships on new applications.



Mike Rowley presents Stephen Stewart and Doug Frazer with Liberty awards

Helping Veterans Discover Their Family History

By Randy Lyon



On October 28th, 2022, I presented Loras Finn of Dubuque with a thumb drive containing Loras' family history, ready for further research and sharing with family members. (Note: He built the flag display mounted on his house).

As part of flag certificate presentations, I have been asking whether the certificate recipient or spouse has served in the United States military. If they have, I offer to help them begin a family history that they can use on any computer. Collecting their parents' and grandparents' names and dates of birth and/or death is all that is required. A family history reaching back to 1776 is developed from the material and returned to the veteran. I'm being assisted by SAR members Larry Hoelscher and Dennis Geesaman, both of Dubuque.

I developed the idea after learning of Operation Ancestor Search (OAS), which is a free, national genealogy training program for Wounded Warriors and Veterans started by the SAR. I've contacted our local VA Center to begin an OAS program in Dubuque. OAS, done at the facility, provides participants with the knowledge and tools that allow them to conduct their own genealogy research as they recover from their injuries.

A Veterans Home facility such as the VA Hospital or a State Department of Veteran Affairs facility is contacted by an SAR state or chapter to explain and establish the program. SAR volunteers meet with the veterans who want to participate, usually in a room where computers are available at the facility (library or lounge). The veteran is given access to Ancestry.com and has a free account and password provided by the SAR committee.

The program has proven so successful that Ancestry.com became a major national sponsor of OAS, contributing a \$180,000 grant over three years, renewable for another three years after the initial period.

Something for Everyone's Appetite

By Randy Lyon



A recent email from President Moberg had an especially timely topic. Originally sent out by Scott Giltner, Chairman of the Veterans Committee of the NSSAR, it contained a wonderful idea for Veterans Day: a 102-page accounting of different restaurants across the United States offering free meals to those who can show proof of their military service.

I printed the information and had it spiral bound. Larry Hoelscher and I took the document to the Veteran's Freedom Center in Dubuque and presented it to Adam Bauer, who "passed the word" and left it on a table in the cafeteria for veterans to copy.

Traveling with compatriots to an event such as this is a wonderful experience. It is also a great opportunity for new members to see the society in action.

Victory has a Thousand Fathers...

By Randy Lyon

The quote “Victory has a thousand fathers...” has been attributed to a Chinese proverb, John F. Kennedy, and a relative of Mussolini. This goes to prove my point; a great idea is truly something wonderful!

The idea of a mentoring program seeped into my consciousness after seeing a district Zoom presentation where the idea of making flag and outstanding citizenship presentations was explained. The SAR was the first of the ancestry-based groups I had joined which offered something to do! President Moberg continued to present ideas. Color Guard Commander Mike Rowley was quick to pick up on my interest and offered a uniform for my use. Nurtured by such leadership, I quickly moved up Maslow’s hierarchy (check it out) and continue to grow.

Then I managed to encourage several people to join, and I had my own opportunity. In working with Larry Hoelscher and Dennis Geesaman (two new members), I have attempted to repeat the mentoring I have received. We’ve had many cups of coffee generating ideas (shared also with the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, in which we are also members). I’ve also shared with them opportunities to participate. Dennis joined us for a recent honors program. Both Dennis and Larry were involved in a recent Outstanding Citizenship presentation. Larry accompanied me to the Dubuque Veteran’s Freedom Center to share with them a 102-page booklet of places vets could dine free of charge on Veterans Day. The booklet, emailed to me by Chris Moberg (who recognized a great idea), was copied, bound, and given to the Center. They were both part of the Jean Marie Cardinal Memorial dedication in May.

This mentorship has already borne fruit. Made aware of our many awards for others, Larry is exploring one for a soon-to-be Eagle Scout as well as another one for an emergency response team member who saved the life of his son having a heart attack. Dennis has already shown me a wonderful Memorial Day project for us, along with the SUVCW.

Watching others latch onto a great idea (much like what I enjoyed as a former school teacher) may be the biggest joy of membership after all.



Larry Hoelscher (far left) and Dennis Geesaman (far right) join Randy Lyon in presenting an Outstanding Citizenship award to J.R., the farm manager at Convivium Urban Farmstead in Dubuque

Plaque Dedication at the Massing of the Colors in Des Moines

By Mike Rowley

Many, perhaps most, Iowans are not familiar with the direct links that Iowa has with the American Revolution. Since Iowa would not become a state until 1846, or 70 years after the start of the Revolutionary War, this lack of connection is not surprising. Perhaps the link to the American Revolution most people know about is that the official logo of the Iowa National Guard is a Minute Man.



A few years ago, a young sculptor named Ross Pollard of Blue Earth, Minnesota, made an offer to present a gift to the people of Iowa with no strings attached. He wished only that his work, if accepted, “be available for all to view without cost” and “that it be displayed in a place that honors all of our military and their families that have served and sacrificed.” It was decided that, since there were 42 patriots that fought in the Revolutionary War who later chose Iowa as their final home, this would be the subject of his sculpture.

As a result, we have a beautiful bronze plaque with the names of the 42 veteran patriots who were buried in Iowa. While all of these patriots are special and fought to give us the liberties we still enjoy today, one particular name on the plaque stands out. This patriot had to fight for freedom, before, during and after 1776. His name was Cato Meed and he was a man of color. We know from a newspaper article in 1776 that 13 year old Cato fled from slavery to freedom. He would later serve in the 4th Connecticut Regiment. Sometime before 1840, Cato was in Iowa territory. In 1846, Cato Meed died near Montrose, Iowa. He is the only known Revolutionary War patriot of color to be buried west of the Mississippi River.

On Saturday, November 5th, 2022, the plaque was presented to the Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center during the Massing of the Colors Ceremony. To the best of my knowledge, there is no other monument or plaque in any military or history museum that honors these Iowa patriots besides this one.

Colonel Shari Bennett, commander of the Rock Island Arsenal Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center, and IASSAR Color Guard Commander Mike Rowley at the plaque dedication

DAR America 250! Patriot Marker Dedication in Omaha, Nebraska



On Sunday, November 6th, 2022, VPG Chris Moberg and IASSAR Color Guard Commander Mike Rowley joined the Nebraska SAR Color Guard in posting the Colors for a DAR America 250! patriot marker dedication at Memorial Park in Omaha, Nebraska. The event was well attended and featured excellent speakers and local musicians.

Nebraska DAR State Regent Marcia Shavlik was very appreciative of the District Color Guard, and invited our members to participate with the Nebraska DAR again for three additional America 250! patriot marker dedications that are planned for 2023.

American Legion's Veterans Day Program in Dubuque

By Randy Lyon

It was a brisk 31 degrees when compatriots Dennis Geesaman, Larry Hoelscher, and Randy Lyon arrived at the Mystique Ice Civic Center in Dubuque for the Veterans Day observance. The available seats filled quickly with a crowd estimated at 250 people. Being new participants in the activity, many questions were asked about our group and many photographs were taken.



Larry and Randy joined the Color Guard prior to the program

The hour-long program featured a female singer who performed the extremely difficult "Star-Spangled Banner" perfectly, a Color Guard of approximately fifteen members, and a female veteran of the armed forces who spoke on the universal need for veterans to address their physical and mental health care needs. Music was provided at the beginning and end by a very talented drum, fife, and bagpipe group. It was a grand occasion.



Left to right: Iowa Legislator Chuck Isenhart, Dennis, Larry, and Randy

It was also an opportunity to meet one-on-one with one of our local legislators and the city manager. The latter was invited to a presentation to the EMS staff of the fire department. Our local legislator joined us in discussions about the upcoming legislative session as it would deal with health care.

More Veterans Day Activities

By Mike Rowley

The Iowa Society of the Sons of the American Revolution took part in at least three additional programs on Veterans Day. The first program included the Iowa National Guard Army Color Guard, VFW, American Legion, Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds, and the Iowa Soldiers Home Commandant at a program to mark Veterans Day at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery in Van Meter, Iowa. The second program was also at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery, and was for the dedication of an Iowa Society DAR monument. The third program was at Woodland Cemetery in Des Moines, Iowa. The program included a brief history of Iowa's contribution during the Mexican/American War (1846-1848), a reading of the 465 known veterans of that war that are buried in Iowa, and decorating graves.



Mike Rowley stands at attention on a hill during the Veterans Day ceremony in Van Meter, IA



Mike Rowley participates with the Iowa Society DAR for a monument dedication on Veterans Day



Rick Hickman and Bob Niffenegger at the Veterans Day event in Woodland Cemetery

Take a Minute: Share Your Generosity

By Randy Lyon



Thanksgiving and Christmas are traditional times of sharing with others. Your society is asking you to share - and it won't cost you a dime! We would like to know of donations you've made to veterans' groups. Fisher House Foundation is one of mine. Fisher House Foundation builds comfort homes where military and veteran families can stay free of charge while a loved one is in the hospital. Fisher House has up to 21 suites, with private bedrooms and baths. Families share a common kitchen, laundry facilities, a warm dining room, and an inviting living room. The foundation rates a coveted 4-star rating from Charity Navigator.

Where do you make donations? Are the donations in the form of personal care items (liquid soap, shampoo, or dental and nail care) or publications like magazines or books? Have you donated useable tools to a veterans' organization for their projects? We would like a receipt from the organization for the estimated value of donated items or the amount of any financial contributions. This information will be used to fill out the 2022 USS Stark Memorial Award Scoring Sheet for the Iowa SAR.

Thank you. The information can be sent to Randy Lyon at randylyon1915@gmail.com. Happy holidays!!

Flag Certificate Presentations

By Randy Lyon



It was an interesting weekend of presentations. The doorbell rang and a male voice identifying himself as Scott Sievers said he was just about to get into the shower. He thanked me for understanding and asked that I leave the certificate in the door.



Nicole James had a big grin on her face when she answered the door. She was a student of mine in one of the first classes when I taught fourth grade. The family's American flag flies all the time.



A photo I overlooked in March shows me with Vern Conrad who had just completed twenty years of active military service in the United States Army. His flag flies every day in the backyard and is visible from two streets.



Kenneth Harris of Dubuque remembers flying a flag in his yard all his life. He was “honored” by the certificate and was anxious to show it to his wife when she returned home.



Contacting the homeowner proved to not always be possible. I use a system of making three attempts on three different weeks and always on Sunday. As there was not an answer, I was able to open the storm door and leave the certificate inside.

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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.*