



The Iowa Compatriot

The Journal of the Iowa Society, Sons of the American Revolution Dec. 20, 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.

Salvation Army Bell Ringing: A Joint Project of the SAR and SUVCW

By Randy Lyon



One never knows what to expect from the weather when one signs up to help the Salvation Army with its annual "Kettle Campaign." This year, November 21st and 22nd turned out to be mild with lots of sun (and sons) and lots of enjoyment for compatriots Larry Hoelscher, Dennis Geesaman, and Randy Lyon.

Working the Asbury HyVee gave us lots of business on both days that we manned the kettle. With hour-long shifts, we worked from 10:00 a.m. until noon both days. With a welcoming "Good morning" and "Happy Holidays," we encountered many who wanted to know more about our uniforms as they punched one, five, or ten dollar bills into the kettle. One of the special joys was giving the bell to youngsters to ring. There were looks at mom or dad for permission, but then great smiles and a hefty shaking of the bell often accompanied by a contribution.

This was our first but certainly not our last year working with the Salvation Army!



Heroism and EMS Medals Awarded to Dubuque Firefighters

By Larry Hoelscher

October is Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness month. As it happened, Tom Ludescher, a Dubuque firefighter, was put into a Dubuque ambulance with such a cardiac event. His fellow firefighter, Alex Miller, became aware that Tom had become unresponsive and his pulse ceased. Alex Miller began CPR and shocked Ludescher with a defibrillator. Before they could get to the hospital, Alex had to do the same procedure again. Tom was awake and responsive when they wheeled him into the emergency room. In the hospital, Tom had a stent placed in one artery and another artery was opened with a ballon angioplasty.

On Thursday, November 17th, 2022, Dubuque's Fire Chief Amy Schellar gathered the EMS team that saved Tom's life at the Dubuque's Fire Department Headquarters where Randy Lyon and I presented Alex Miller with an SAR certificate of Heroism and presented him with a medal for such valor.

Dubuque's firefighters are retrained every two months in how to treat cardiac arrests. They call it a "Wheel of Survival." In recognition of this ongoing program, the SAR presented the EMS Medal to supervisor Sam Janecke. The two firefighters are seen with their medals on their uniforms.



Firefighters Sam Janecke (left) and Alex Miller (right) receive SAR awards

The group picture shows all the firefighters that attended the presentation. Those in the picture were all involved with the saving of Tom Ludescher's life. Tom (dark blue shirt) and his brother Mark (white shirt) are the two kneeling in front of us. The SAR is proud to support the men and women of the Dubuque Fire Department and their ongoing lifesaving efforts in our community.



Larry Hoelscher and Randy Lyon met with the firefighters who were involved in saving the life of Tom Ludescher (bottom right) to present awards

Wreaths Across America at Rock Island Arsenal

By Justin Blood



As it was getting closer to December 17th, I realized I was not going to have my SAR uniform purchased and acquired in time. That is when the almighty Mike Rowley came to the rescue and offered to send me a loner coat and tricorn hat. I purchased some pants and an undershirt that fit the times and was able to gear up for my first event.

My patient and supportive as well as beautiful wife and I scrambled to get ready and make it to the Rock Island Arsenal Cemetery 15 minutes before 11 a.m. so that we could get acclimated and see how the event will be run. We got there at 11 a.m. and were surprised that a large group of participants, volunteers, soldiers, and staff had already amassed themselves and were in silent prayer.

We made our way to the back of the crowd as Colonel Daniel D. Mitchell made a speech on the origin and significance of the wreath and how it has been used to honor soldiers and the fallen. As we were watching, I realized how cold it was and how I was the only "Rev War" clad person there. The people in the crowd started to realize that as well. I got a lot of "I'm just going to turn and look but pretend not to be looking at the guy in the SAR gear" looks. These always had smiles and nods that accompanied them.

Following the Colonel, Jamie Trentz, the Wreaths Across America Coordinator, made a heartfelt speech on how we need to hold our American Values strong so that we won't have to tell our children about the time when we used to be free. I thought about the clothes I had on and how so many have died fighting for our freedoms. She ended by saying how it was incredible to see so many volunteers waiting to help. There were too many for the number of wreaths purchased.



Justin Blood with Wreaths Across America Coordinator Jamie Trentz

After the speeches and ceremony, I was able to take some pictures with people and I got a lot of smiles and looks, and even a "Hello General" from one of the attendees. This was a great experience for my wife and for me, and I am looking forward to attending more events in SAR gear. It was a very positive time and I am proud to be a part of this organization.

Wreaths Across America Comes to Dubuque

By Randy Lyon

For the first time in the history of the city, the Wreaths Across America program came to Dubuque on December 17th. I'll admit there was a special feeling to the event knowing that tens of thousands of these wreaths were being placed in cemeteries across the United States at the same time. We had a good start this year, but already have plans to bring the program to seven cemeteries in the Dubuque area next year working with the American Legion.

We had a rugged looking but very pleased crew with compatriots Dennis Geesaman, Randy Lyon, and Larry Hoelscher joined by Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War members Karl Geesaman and Matt Schwalm, who served as photographer.

Despite the cold weather, the image of fresh green wreaths against the snow was something we'll never forget.



Left to right: Dennis Geesaman, Randy Lyon, Karl Geesaman, and Larry Hoelscher

Wreaths Across America at Woodland Cemetery in Des Moines

By Mike Rowley

On Saturday, December 17th, 2022, nearly 100 volunteers arrived to take part in the Wreaths Across America program at Woodland Cemetery in Des Moines, Iowa. Veterans, active service members, and families of the military placed a wreath for each branch of the service and POW/MIA.



Left to right: Marshall Linn, Mike Rowley, Jody Firestine, Laurie DeHai, Ron Rittel, David Krcil, Donald Pugsley, Brad Harryman, and Marilyn Rittel

1812 Veteran Elisha B. Lee Wreath Laying and Gravestone Dedication

By Mike Rowley

After the Wreaths Across America ceremony at Woodland Cemetery, one more wreath was driven to a very small triangular section of land separated by E 23rd Ave, NE Oakhill Road, and NE 56th Street in Delaware Township in Des Moines, Iowa. Here is the story of how this came to be.



Mike Rowley lays a wreath and dedicates the gravestone of 1812 Veteran Elisha B. Lee

In February of 1796, George Washington was near the end of his 2nd term of an American experiment called the Presidency. That same year, the parents of Elisha B. Lee were blessed by the birth of their first child. With the hopes and dreams of most parents for their child's welfare, they probably did not imagine that just 18 years later their son would take up arms against the British during the War of 1812. With Elisha ending his service in 1814 and the war ending a year later, it seems unlikely that he could have imagined the path his life would take and that 50 years later Americans would be fighting again. This time they would be fighting against themselves in a Civil War.

During his early boyhood years in Virginia, he would never have heard of a place called Iowa. Surely he never imagined that it would someday be his home and final resting place. Elisha might have been intrigued by the notion that his three months of volunteer service in 1814 would be remembered by Americans 208 years later in 2022. It would have been impossible for him to conceive of the scientific and technological advances that would lead to the finding of his grave.

Volunteers Mike Rowley (a retired pharmaceutical salesman), Tim Rowley (an employee of NCMIC insurance company), and Bob Niffenegger (a retired Des Moines firefighter) have placed over 240 gravestones on unmarked veteran graves over several years. Volunteers and members of the War of 1812 in the State of Iowa have researched, documented, and recorded over 730 graves of those known veterans of the War of 1812 that chose Iowa as their final home and are buried in Iowa.

In August of this year, Archie Cook, a local historian, and Tour Director at Woodland Cemetery in Des Moines made Mike Rowley aware of a collection of non-GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) membership cards with veteran's service records on them. After searching through over 6,000 cards, Rowley discovered information on Elisha B. Lee. He was a veteran of the War of 1812, and he was said to have been buried in Polk County, Iowa. A search of military records and newspapers would document the military service, the pension through the Des Moines, Iowa Agency, and the local residency of and the family of our veteran.

The difficulty would be proving his burial location. Early pioneer cemeteries, church graveyards and even municipal cemeteries often have gaps in original records due to natural disasters, floods, fires, and poor record keeping. The likely location appeared to be Harvey Cemetery; a little known, mostly family burial ground. Even for lifelong residents of the City of Des Moines, information and even the location of this "abandoned" cemetery is shared by relatively few.

Rowley drove to and, after missing the "entrance" several times, found Harvey Cemetery. After getting out and walking the grounds, it seemed that the chances of proving burial there was unlikely. Rowley again sought the knowledge of other local historians. In addition to Mr. Cook, historian and researcher John P. Zeller and John Woolson of the Glendale Cemetery offices were both contacted. With the combined efforts of all involved, a 29-page Polk County Department of Public Works Harvey Cemetery report, a 2002 Des Moines Register article on Harvey Cemetery, living descendants, and contact information was found.

The lengthy report was completed in June of 2018. Experts used everything from family Bible records to ground penetrating radar, as well as old publications (1930's) describing stones present at the time of writing. While it appears that many of the graves were removed to nearby cemeteries in the 1940's and 1950's, research showed that at least two of the burials likely remained in the cemetery. They were the graves of Elisha B. Lee and an infant son of J. and V. Harvey.

With documentation in hand, an application for a VA military stone was prepared and submitted. On October 17th the application was approved and on November 14th the stone arrived in Iowa ready for installation. At this small patch of ground with only a single gravestone, descendants of Elisha B. Lee joined with volunteers, veterans, and grateful residents to place a wreath beside the 240 pound granite marker. The gravestone will help those who pass through the site remember a soldier's name, service and sacrifice and will serve as a symbol of all of the soldiers who have defended the liberties we have today.

Save a Life!

By Randy Lyon



I just made the greatest discovery; I can save lives and add to the fame of the SAR at the same time. While tinkering with my American Red Cross Blood Donor App, I discovered that a donation group has recently been formed for SAR members. I know it is new, because before I joined there were only five members. Now we have impacted over 3,000 lives.

Being a blood donor is easy, and I imagine we have many society members now doing it. If you have the American Red Cross Blood Donor App (which makes setting appointments really easy), just click on the "Impact" button. If you are in a group which really doesn't mean much to you, switch your donation history to the SAR. If you happen to be donating platelets, these count too.

Make this easy "switch" a holiday present to your society. Become a member of the SAR/Red Cross donation group.

Outstanding Citizenship Presentation

By Randy Lyon



Katie Bries was a sixth-grade student of mine years ago and typed a ten-page essay on the political, economic, and social implications of air-conditioning. This earned her top honors at the state History Day competition and the right to represent Iowa at the national level.

Katie continued to thrive in school and arrived at the University of Northern Iowa as a political science major but graduated with a double major with anthropology. In 2010, she enrolled in Drake University Law School. Upon graduating, she joined the Air Force and started active duty in January of 2014 with the U.S. Air Force Judge Advocate General's Corps, commonly known as JAG.

She was stationed at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs and started working as a prosecutor and legal assistance attorney. She moved to Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota, where she worked primarily in military justice. Stationed at the Little Rock Air Force Base in Arkansas, she was a Special Victims' Counsel with the Air Force Legal Operations Agency, Community Legal Services Directorate, Special Victims' Counsel Division. In this capacity, she provided independent legal representation to and advocacy on behalf of sexual assault victims during the investigation and throughout the criminal prosecution process.

Besides her time in Greenland, Katie also traveled to South Korea, where she worked with attorneys and learned about international law and the law of war.

Katie moved to Washington D.C. to pursue a Master of Laws degree in environmental law. In the future she's considering teaching at the college or law school level but keeps her options open. In the fall of 2022, she held the rank of major.

I welcome every opportunity I have corresponding with her. She is a wonderful example of what great parenting, a fine mind, and tremendous initiative can mean for the young.

Flag Certificate Presentations

By Randy Lyon



Even the friendly mail deliverer told me to heed the warning on the door belonging to the Josh Langas family. With what sounded like a mastiff growling while it scratched away at the door, I was just as pleased that no one was home and left the flag certificate.



Monica Asbell told me she was not too sure initially whether to open the door or not, given my uniform. When assured through a discussion held with the door closed, her trepidation was lessened, and we concluded the presentation with her two large dogs locked in the kitchen.



"Lola," the dog, was determined to be in the picture and, as the song goes, what Lola wants... Richard Mangler said that he had watched me get out of my car and was hoping his house was my aim so that he could find out what was going on. He was quite interested in the society story and appreciated the time it took to make the presentations.



For over twenty years, I have wanted to catch the owner of this house in the yard to compliment them on their gardening. The front yard is completely planted in flowers. Even the ground next to the curb has never seen grass; only immaculately cared for flowers.

Now I know the home belongs to Francis and Mary Miller because they are flying an American flag. Here I was on the porch for the third time and...no one was home.

Your IASSAR Board of Managers

President	Chris Moberg	moberg.chris@gmail.com
1st V.P.	Randy Lyon	randylyon1915@gmail.com
2nd V.P.	Kevin Parmenter	mail@parmenter.com
Secretary	Doug Frazer	dlfrazer@yahoo.com
Treasurer	David Nation	davenation@gmail.com
Registrar	Randy Breese	iassar.registrar@randybreese.com
Chancellor	Lance Ehmcke	ldehmcke@gmail.com
Historian	Doug Frazer	dlfrazer@yahoo.com
Newsletter	Chris Moberg	moberg.chris@gmail.com
Webmaster	Chris Moberg	moberg.chris@gmail.com



*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.*