



## The Iowa Compatriot

The Journal of the Iowa Society, Sons of the American Revolution December 21, 2023

*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 in Dubuque

By Randy Lyon



While the amount of donations raised has not been announced, the SAR and the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) did make it on the Salvation Army's Facebook page. The weather was great again this year. Youngsters were given a chance to ring the bell, which encouraged some adults to contribute financially. The two organizations with their overlapping memberships had a great time for a great cause.

Those in the top picture are John Pregler (Camp Commander, SUVCW), Matt Schwalm (SAR/SUVCW), and Larry Hoelscher (SAR/SUVCW)

Randy Lyon and Dennis Geesaman (SAR/SUVCW) are in the bottom picture.

### 41 New Members Join the Iowa SAR in 2023

Thanks to the tireless efforts of Registrar Randy Breese and the recruitment efforts of our members, the Iowa SAR was privileged to add 41 new members to our ranks! Welcome!

Stephen McIntire  
Matthew Schwalm  
David Lang  
Caden Mager  
Carter Nordman  
Charles Hanson  
Jeremy Hanson  
Preston Moore  
Jared Benson  
John Benson  
Ryan Benson

Werner von der Ohe  
Timothy Parker  
Robert Hammann  
Daniel Martin  
James Fosse  
Cole Blankenheim  
Kurt Blankenheim  
Thomas Blankenheim  
Carter Duncan  
Dillon Duncan

Grant Duncan  
Andrew Oberfrank  
Nolan Oberfrank  
Daren Rickard  
Timothy Rickard  
Vincent Henrichsen  
Scott Nyenhuis  
Joel Pease  
Nathan Pease  
Harold Mann

Mark Meyocks  
Josef Strosche  
Karl Strosche  
Dylan Waugh  
Luca Waugh  
Norman Meinking  
Christopher Havran  
Connor Havran  
Joseph Hawkins  
Ryan Cline

## News from the Dubuque VA Clinic

By Randy Lyon



The Iowa SAR purchased a HyVee gift card in Dubuque that will be part of the collection taken up locally for the VA Hero Tree.

Carried out under the auspices of the Iowa City VA Hospital, the effort is helping to feed a local veteran's family this Christmas. Our contribution of \$50 will help bring cheer to the needy.

The staff of the Dubuque VA Clinic posed quickly for a seasonal picture. It's amazing to see how many there are, and a fine group it is! It is hard to remember that my volunteering only began in April. They seem like family! What a blessing!!



*Randy Lyon (middle of the back row) poses with the Dubuque VA Clinic staff*

## Civil War Stone Installed in Davis City

By Mike Rowley

On November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Iowa SAR volunteers became aware of the death of Jacob Zimmerman of Davis City, Iowa. On December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, a 180 pound granite marker was installed on his grave. What makes this a bit different is that Zimmerman was a veteran of the Civil War and had died 122 years ago.

Iowa SAR member Mike Rowley, who is also Camp Commander of Grenville M. Dodge Camp #75, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, was first contacted by Robert Seitz, a great-grandson of Jacob Zimmerman, to see if the grave might be marked after all these years. After obtaining the required documentation and getting approval from city officials and the VA, the mission was accomplished.

The volunteers hope that these headstones not only honor the veterans and their service, but that they also serve as a sign for all living veterans and their families that their sacrifices will always be remembered.





## Salvation Army Bell Ringing in Cedar Falls

By David Nation



Iowa SAR member David Nation volunteered in uniform at the Fareway store in Cedar Falls to ring the bell for donations to the Salvation Army.

Pictured at left are Dave and the volunteers that he relieved.

## Wreaths Across America at Rock Island National Cemetery

On December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Iowa SAR member Justin Blood participated in Wreaths Across America at Rock Island National Cemetery. He was among several hundred people who braved the rain and 44 degree temperatures to honor veterans buried there. Volunteers placed 3,600 wreaths on veteran graves.

Justin, dressed in his Revolutionary War uniform, was interviewed by Thomas Geyer of the Quad-City Times. During the interview, Justin identified himself as a member of the Sons of the American Revolution and expressed his desire to show respect for the soldiers.

The main speaker for the event was Major General Jeffrey W. Jurasek, First Army Deputy Commanding General (Support). Justin met several service men and women at the event. After the picture at right was taken, one of the Vietnam Veterans (far right) handed Justin a commemorative Vietnam Veterans coin. As Justin puts it, the moment “hit me hard in the tear ducts.” It was a great experience!



## Wreath Laying at Highland Memory Gardens in Des Moines

By Randy Breese



Although Highland Memory Gardens did not have an official Wreaths Across America ceremony, I visited the cemetery to lay two wreaths. The first wreath was for Wayne Gordon “Dick” Elliott. He was my grandfather’s brother and served in WWI in France. The second wreath was for John William McCormack, a neighbor from my childhood home who was a POW in WWII.





## Wreaths Across America at Dubuque

By Larry Hoelscher

Camp #206 of the SUVCW met at Linwood Cemetery in Dubuque on Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. to place wreaths on the headstones of our fallen. Camp Commander John Pregler stood behind the headstones with the American Flag as we took turns laying wreaths at the headstones of the veterans. As we laid each wreath, we stood back from the stone, read the name on the headstone, thanked the veteran for their service, and gave them a salute that they deserved. In all, we placed 28 wreaths at Linwood.



*Left to right: Matt Schwalm, John Pregler, Randy Lyon, Dennis Gessaman, and Larry Hoelscher*

We then went to the headstones of Henry Rose and his wife Kathrine Rose to lay a wreath. Camp #206 installed these headstones earlier this year to honor Henry Rose, a black union soldier who served honorably in the 11<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Missouri State Militia Cavalry, Company E, during the Civil War from 1862 to 1865.



*Left to right: John Pregler, Dennis Gessaman, Randy Lyon, Matt Schwalm, and Larry Hoelscher*



## Wreaths Across America at Woodland and Glendale Cemeteries

By Mike Rowley

Wreaths Across America projects were celebrated at 28 different locations in Iowa. In Des Moines, Iowa SAR members George DeMoss, Rick Hickman, Ron Rittel, and Mike Rowley joined with over 70 volunteers helping with the planning and distribution of 1,092 wreaths at Woodland and Glendale Cemeteries in Des Moines, Iowa. This year the veteran honorees to place wreaths for each branch of the service were also employees of the City of Des Moines.



*Left to right: Andrew Finke, Dan Hejkal, Jonathan Gato, Kiley Cook, Mike Rowley (not a veteran or city employee), Chad Hall, David Schneider, Mike Nothdorf, Marilyn Rittel (daughter of a WWII veteran and POW), and David Krcil (bugler)*

## Boston Tea Party 250<sup>th</sup> Observance in Des Moines

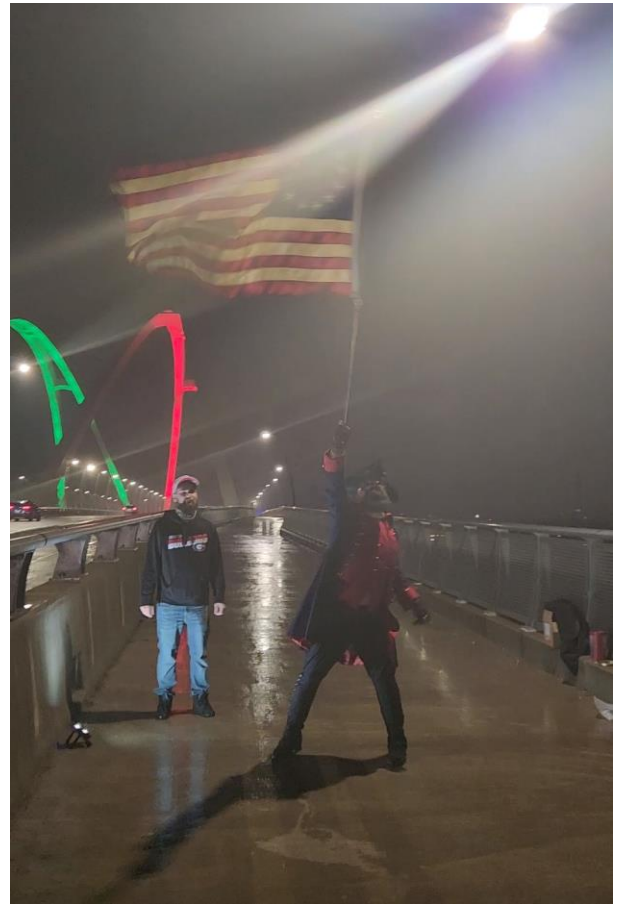
By Mike Rowley

On December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, three generations of Iowa Sons of the American Revolution members took part in a public remembrance of the “Destruction of the Tea,” also known as the Boston Tea Party: Isaac Rowley (age five), father David Rowley, and grandfather Mike Rowley. The observance took place in Greenwood Park in Des Moines, Iowa.





## Boston Tea Party 250<sup>th</sup> Observance in Bettendorf



On December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Sons of Liberty of Bettendorf, Iowa, donned disguises and at an undisclosed location, dumped tea into the Mississippi River. A clandestine video of the event has surfaced and is now going viral on the internet. For more information, see [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l\\_I4AUe1DP4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_I4AUe1DP4).

## Volunteer Santa Jobs

By David Nation



woman who wanted one last picture of herself on Santa's knee. A couple of EMTs on standby posed for a picture with one taking Santa's pulse and the other checking his heart with a stethoscope.

Iowa SAR member David Nation volunteered this year as Santa at women's and men's basketball games at UNI. These free events drew lots of children and adults who wanted a picture with Santa. Chairs were set up next to a tree for people to take pictures with their own phones. Ages ranged from a tiny baby to a 92 year old



# A Popular Tale... and “the Rest of the Story”

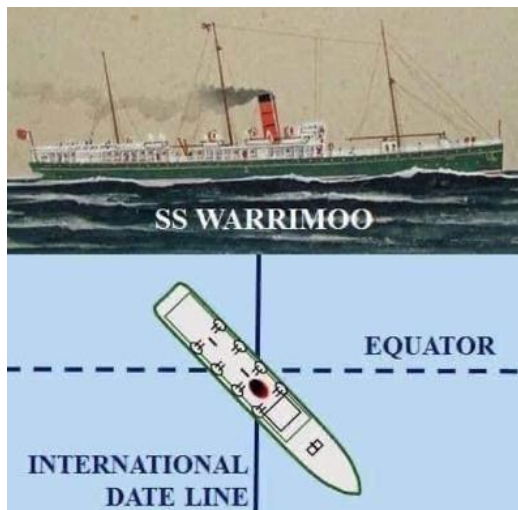
By Randy Lyon

There is a story that gets passed around this time of year. While the story is one that you should hear, there is more to the story than most people ever hear. As Paul Harvey, the popular radio host, used to say, “Here is the (long pause) rest of the story.”

Captain John Duthie Sydney Phillips, of the passenger steamer SS Warrimoo, had an idea on December 30<sup>th</sup>, 1899 to achieve historical notoriety. It was not unusual for a ship’s captain to travel out of their way to cross the equator on the date line. This was called achieving a “golden shellback.” By directing his crew carefully, Captain Phillips hoped to better even this!

Through the waters of the mid-Pacific on its way from Vancouver to Australia, the Warrimoo’s position was charted by five experienced navigators using the sun and at night with the stars every three hours. Gradually the ship’s position became LAT 0° 31' N and LONG 179 30' W. The date was December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1899. Checking and double checking the ship’s position, Captain Phillips adjusted the engine speed. At midnight the SS Warrimoo, according to his data, lay on the Equator at exactly the point where it crossed the International Date Line.

The consequences of this bizarre position were many: The forward part (bow) of the ship was in the Southern Hemisphere in the middle of summer. The rear (stern) was in the Northern Hemisphere in the middle of winter. The date in the aft part of the ship was December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1899. In the bow (forward) part it was listed as January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1900.



This ship would therefore not only be in:  
Two different days,  
Two different months,  
Two different years,  
Two different seasons,  
But in two different centuries all at the same time! (1)

Here’s where Paul Harvey and...”the rest of the story” comes in. Other than the ship’s log, which was recounted to a reporter of the Ottumwa (Canada) Journal by Captain Phillips in 1942, nothing was reported at the time. This, however, was probably where the story began. (2)

It may be that the captain and the crew believed that they had accomplished this feat. Modern scientists, however, seriously doubt that the state of technological equipment at the time was accurate enough to fix the ship’s exact location. (3)

More recent history really destroys the story. As many of us remember the Y2K mess years ago, a century ends only when the year ending in zero is over. The 21<sup>st</sup> century (third millennium) started on January 1, 2001 just like the 20<sup>th</sup> century began on January 1, 1901, not 1900. (3)

Perhaps the most famous passenger ever to sail on the SS Warrimoo was Mark Twain. There is an often seen picture of him leaning back in a deck chair that is believed to have been taken in 1895. Twain could hardly have imagined that this same ship would inspire a legend.

Sources:

1. Original story emailed to me by Karl Geesaman, brother of compatriot Dennis Geesaman
2. “Did the SS Warrimoo Exist in Two Centuries at Once?” Snopes.com.  
Online: <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/ss-warrimoo/> (courtesy: Chris Moberg)
3. “One Ship in Two Centuries: the Strange Tale of the S.S. Warrimoo,” Big Think:  
Online: <https://bigthink.com/strange-maps/ss-warrimoo-strange-tale/> Sept. 23, 2022

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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.*