



The Iowa Compatriot

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

January 14, 2024

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.

A Special Christmas

By Randy Lyon



The holidays provided the opportunity for me to have the honor of presenting my son-in-law Tim Parker with his Military Service Medal and certificate.

Tim served in the Navy and then returned home to join Intel in California. He tests computer chips and practices martial arts. He married Chris, my daughter, who is a partner in a large law firm. They live in San Jose, California, when not traveling.

Ruth and I thoroughly enjoy their company. This Christmas was made extra special with Tim receiving this award from the Society.

“Junior, You Done Good”

By Randy Lyon

Ray Cheatham is one of my favorite characters at the VA Clinic in Dubuque. Beneath his taciturn expression lies a man with a fascinating history, and after an initial period of getting to know you he can regale a person with story after story of his “misspent” youth and time in the military.

He met my invitation to have his family history done with, “This ain’t going to be your easiest project, junior” and then, “Don’t you have a better subject?” I persisted and began an interview process that took several weeks (one appointment per week to see the doctors). Ray is not in the best of health.

The going was tough. We met with dead ends, such as “white folk” having the same names as he gave me. We only had one side of the family with which to work, but over time several new names gave me links to pursue.



I remember my pure, unadulterated joy and amazement when one of these names led to the name Banneker. This was impossible! Not right here in Dubuque, Iowa! Better check the line up to this again.

But it was true. This friend of mine can rightfully have reason to believe he is the fifth-great-grandson of Benjamin Banneker, one of the foremost African Americans of the Revolutionary War period. Banneker was a correspondent with Thomas Jefferson, the author of a series of commercially successful almanacs, a scientist, and an assistant of Major Andrew Ellicott in establishing the original borders of the District of Columbia!

I took the history text that I wrote out and his family tree to Staples and had them bound. When I told him that I had a surprise, Ray looked at me with an expression very similar to the one in the above picture. He probably thought I had some cookies or donuts with which I'm known to travel. When I explained the book and his history, he continued with the same expression until he began fingering the pages.

"I'm going to send this to my son in Texas," he said. "Junior, you done good!"

Iowa SAR Chancellor Lance Ehmcke Elected to Sioux City School Board

By Mike Rowley

At each gathering of the Sons of the American Revolution, President Chris Moberg reminds us of our duties as members:

The Sons of the American Revolution honors our Revolutionary War patriot ancestors by promoting patriotism, serving our communities, and educating and inspiring future generations about the founding principles of our Country.

Of course, as we have seen by all the activities recorded on the Stark Report and the Americanism scoresheet, these objectives are accomplished in many ways. However, I would like to recognize long-time (more than 50 years) Iowa SAR member Lance Ehmcke for one more service to his community. In November of 2023, he was elected to the Sioux City Iowa School Board. It is a challenging position that certainly encompasses all of these mission items.

Iowa SAR to Announce the "Operation Child Read" Project

By Randy Lyon

At the January 2024 meeting of the Iowa City VAVS Committee, the SAR representative will be announcing a new program to aid the wider community utilizing the Dubuque VA Clinic. The impact of the program is expected to be felt throughout eastern Iowa as the clinic addresses the needs of veterans as far away as Ely to the southwest, Guttenberg to the north, and DeWitt to the south in addition, of course, to the populations surrounding Dubuque. The project will be entitled "Operation Child Read," and it will be free as another way of saying, "Thank you for your service!"

It has been observed on many occasions that caregivers attending to elderly veterans often bring young children with them to the clinic. These children range in age from babies to preschoolers. In conversations, it is not uncommon to find veterans talking about their grandchildren. Most, if not all, of these grandparents and parents are unaware of the learning potential of young children. In five minutes a night, parents with preschoolers or grandparents taking care of young grandchildren can become masterful teachers of reading.

The focus of the project will be sight words, which also go by the name Dolch words. These are 220 of the most used words in the English language. When I used to do absentee ballot distribution and found a young family, I introduced the words with this modest statement, "How would you like your child to own kindergarten?" I was not exaggerating. Youngsters beginning school who know the Dolch words are miles ahead of the other students.

The Iowa SAR will be making the Dolch words available to anyone interested. Using a very easy game, these words, which cannot be sounded out, can be quickly learned five minutes at a time. Imagine grandchildren visiting their grandparents who now have a game to play with them that teaches at the same time. It's a win-win as parents and grandparents find their children finding "their" words in other printed material.

2023 Stark Report: A Tremendous Record of Accomplishment

By Randy Lyon

The Stark Report has lived up to its promise of helping us appraise our annual work! With your support, with your dues, and by finding opportunities to help others, the Iowa SAR raced past last year's record to achieve over 30,000 points; an increase of nearly 2,000 points!

You can help your Iowa Society without even leaving your house. With a single email to me, your Society can break the 30,000 point total from 2023! I know many of you will contribute this year to veterans' organizations. Please let me know immediately so that I can keep a financial record for the 2024 Stark Report. Your name will not be attached or shared with anyone else!

Last year, I worked up the report using a diary-type of accounting listing the days, events, who participated, whether they were in uniform or not, and the number of hours. It was handwritten with the totaling of hours all done by hand at the end of the year. These figures were then transposed to the report to be mailed in.

This year, the report came with an Excel-type accounting system with clear instructions and instantaneous computation of hours. The auto-fill feature, however, still has glitches which I'm sure will be worked out for 2024. Using the feature to fill in repetitive numbers leads to the system, in that specific area, shutting down and throwing off the numerical total of the entire report. Corrections are only possible by emailing the form to National, whose experts can fix the problem and have it back to you the same day. Having last year's report to compare with this year alerted me to some glitches of my own. These have already been remedied.

Final grade: The Stark Report gets an A+. This is a valuable document. What does it show? From last year to this, the Stark Report indicates:

1. Extremely high volume of work in the field of grave decoration from erecting gravestones all the way to Wreaths Across America
2. Far above expectations in the area of attendance at funerals for veterans
3. A dramatic increase in visitations to veterans including those at home
4. A dramatic increase in efforts to work with veterans at the Iowa City hospital and in regional clinics
5. Fields for increased attention include:
 - a. Donations of new publications to veterans
 - b. Donations of clothing to the Veteran's Hospital in Iowa City
 - c. Donations to veterans' organizations

Thank you for your service helping the Iowa SAR help Veterans!

Israel Putnam

By Randy Lyon



Israel Putnam's life was the stuff from which legends abound. According to legend, Putnam as a child killed the last wolf in Connecticut, making the area safe for sheep farming. He reportedly crawled into the den with a torch in one hand and a musket in the other. (1)

In 1755, at the age of 37, Putnam was one of the first men in Connecticut to sign up to serve as a private in the militia in the French and Indian War. During the war, he was successively promoted to second lieutenant, captain, major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel. As a company captain, Putnam served with Robert Rogers, who gain famed as the commander of Roger's Rangers. The two men had many exploits. In one, Putnam saved Rogers' life. (2) Putnam's reputation for courage was made famous by his participation in the war. It was said that "Rogers always sent, but Putnam led his men to action."

In the late 1760s, as a member of the Connecticut General Assembly, Putnam spoke out against British taxation and was one

of the founders of the Sons of Liberty. When conflict broke out in 1775, Putnam offered his services and was made a major general in the militia, second in rank only to Artemas Ward. He was one of the leading figures at the Battle of Bunker Hill. According to legend, Putnam ordered William Prescott to tell his troops at Bunker Hill: "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes." This was important. The militia were short of ammunition at the time and untrained troops often fired high when shooting downhill. (3)

On June 14, 1775, the Continental Congress voted to create the Continental Army. George Washington was chosen as Commander-in-Chief, with Putnam and three others appointed as major generals. Of the votes, only Washington and Putnam were unanimous. (4)

After Washington took command at Cambridge in 1775, he and the other generals hoped for a speedy end of the war. Once Washington offered a toast: "A speedy and honorable peace." A few days later, Putnam offered a different one: "A long and moderate war." The sober and seldom-smiling Washington laughed out loud. Washington addressed Putnam, "You are the last man, General Putnam, from whom I should have expected such a toast, you who are always urging vigorous measures, to plead now for a long, and what is still more extraordinary, a moderate, war, seems strange indeed." Putnam replied that a false peace would divide Americans and not be long-lasting. Putnam went on, "I expect nothing but a long war, and I would have it a moderate one, that we may hold out till the mother country becomes willing to cast us off forever."

The Revolutionary War dragged on for eight and a half years, which was the longest war in United States history until the Vietnam War. Washington did not forget Putnam's toast and often reminded Putnam of it.

Sources:

1. Sheftick, Gary, "Rangers Among First Leaders of America's Army," U.S. Army, Online: https://www.army.mil/article/80795/rangers_among_first_leaders_of_americas_army
2. Hubbard, Robert Ernest (2017). *Major General Israel Putnam: Hero of the American Revolution*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company. p. 256.
3. Sheftick
4. Hubbard, p. 104
5. Hubbard, p. 55

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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.*