



Iowa Compatriot

November 1, 2025

***"...in their most trying moments, when they were weary from the heat or shivering from the extreme cold: when they were scared or doubtful, when they dreamed hopefully of better days to come, I suspect they envisioned a beautiful place of great abundance and opportunity. I bet those dreams looked a lot like Iowa. For these 41 veterans Iowa was their choice for their final home."***

Mike Rowley, Iowa SAR Color Guard Commander, 04 October 2025

Under bright sun and 90-degree weather, the Iowa Society of the Sons of the American Revolution Color Guard members, Rick Hickman, Randy Lyon, Dave Nation, Larry Hoelscher, Kevin Parmenter, David Rowley and Mike Rowley, joined by Nebraska Color guard member Kameron Heffner, opened the ceremony to re-dedicate the monument by posting the Colors. Also present from Iowa SAR were members Bob Harris, Randy Breese, Doug Frazer, Ron Rittel, Josh Parmenter, and Donald Richardson

A proclamation from Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds confirmed the importance of the event not only to those present but for all Iowans.

The re-dedication came about to recognize the addition of the name of the 41st patriot Matrom Elmore to the monument and to kick off the beginning of celebrations of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the United States of America. But it was really a chance to remember all 41

of these patriots as well as their families. The ceremony was also a chance to recognize those veterans from the Korean War to Vietnam to Operation Iraqi Freedom II and others that came to join in the public program.

Members of the VFW, American Legion, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States {MOLLUS,} Iowa Department of Veteran Affairs, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Women's Auxiliary to SUVCW, Colonial Dames, General Society of the War of 1812, SAR, DAR, CAR, Masons, ASW and descendants of at least 7 of the 41 patriots were in attendance. They traveled from as far away as Tennessee and Northern Minnesota as well as Dubuque, Clinton and Washington, Iowa.

The event was covered by several the media. It was SAR & 1812 member David Lamb, visiting in Prague, Czechoslovakia who saw the first account of the event as it was picked up by one of the wire services.

When they chose to volunteer 250 years ago, I doubt these men thought we would be speaking of them now. But it is a tremendous example of how what is done even for a short time of one's life can have ripple effects that last for centuries and can affect millions.

### **It Was A Dazzling Day for Pictures**



It could not have been a finer day for descendants of those who fought for America in the Revolution, the Iowa Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, or photographers! Under a bright sun a fortunate collection of visitors saw one of the finest programs ever presented honoring our ancestors. Iowa holds the Midwest record of honoring its revolutionary history.

To whom do we credit the success of such a day? Other than the All Mighty for the weather, the honor clearly belongs to Mike Rowley. In a herculean publicity effort, Mike drew a crowd of descendants from far



and near. And then the masterpiece! He asked if there were any other descendants. Present. When two hands were raised, he quietly replied, “then we need to turn to the other book.” He had come prepared to read a short history of each of the forty-

one treasured ancestors! On this day as many before, Mike Rowley was the quintessential leader—a man for which a scribe once wrote of the **True Gentleman**— “a man for whom honor is sacred.” (Pictures courtesy of the Des Moines Register)

### **You were Promised Pictures...and As Promised:**



Shown with Mike Rowley, SAR Color Guard Commander, Richard and Denise Bohrer were so moved by the idea of a tribute honoring her direct ancestor Francis Burrell, one of the 41 patriots listed on the monument , that they drove all the way down to Des Moines from Northern Minnesota.



David Nation, IASSAR Treasurer with Jene Lynne McMillan—DAR National Chair, Flag of the United States of America VAVS Representative.





Three fine-looking Revolutionary War clothed gentlemen (Randy Lyon, Larry Hoelscher, David Nation) drew several requests for photographs as they visited the Capitol's rotunda prior to the festivities.



Iowa Color Guard members posted the Colors at the Ceremony on the grounds of the Iowa State Capital Building in Des Moines, Iowa.

From left to right: Kameron Heffner (Nebraska Society), Kevin Parmenter, Larry Hoelscher, Randy Lyon, Dave Nation, Rick

Hickman and David Rowley. (Photo taken by Josh Parmenter}



IASSAR President Kevin Parmenter set the stage for the day's events with a hearty welcome and an obvious pleasure in the beginning of what was to be an historic occasion.



We did say it was a grand day for photography which led to a comparison of lenses, pixels, etc. by a couple of aficionados (Larry Hoelscher and Doug Frazer)



Descendants of several of the 41 Revolutionary War soldiers listed on the memorial were featured in a group photo on the grounds of the Iowa State Capitol.



The Evansdale McDonald's is a necessary stop for travelers between Dubuque and Des Moines. Larry and I launched into a history of the Society much to the delight of the denizens who also took our pictures.



### **Punk in the Corn-Iowa SAR Sponsorship**

Justin Blood brought to the Society this year a new method of raising funds for worthy organizations. "Punk in the Corn" was a rock festival scheduled for the Mississippi Valley Fairgrounds on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of

October. With our financial contribution to the activity, rock bands preformed continually between 11:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. with 60% of the profits going to K-9s for Warriors, Wounded Warrior Project, and Child Mind Institute (all ranked 4 Star organizations by Charity Navigator).



The weather was cool, but the bands were “hot.” Crowds ranged in age from retirement to teens. Food trucks supplied everything from shrimp and fries to funnel cakes; vendors displayed T-shirts and jewelry.

Justin deserves our congratulations for opening a new method of fundraising and doing the major part of the work on the two days. He was joined by Tony Townsend, Larry Hoelscher, and Randy Lyon in operating the SAR booth on Friday.



Pictures with Revolutionary War clad figures are always popular and the rock festival was no exception. The booth also allowed us the opportunity to offer free family tree charts for those supplying family information. These charts will be posted on Ancestry.com.

### **Path to Accomplishment**

While a single individual can do great things, in reality it usually takes the talents of many to make things happen. The often-untold path to accomplishments are rarely direct or immediate. Sometimes things happen or don't happen, and most are just left to wonder how or why.

Soon when visitors to Samuel Merrill's grave in Woodland Cemetery in Des Moines, Iowa encounter a 26-foot flagpole they might wonder, When why, how, and who brought it to this point.



To know the full story they would need to be familiar with, an author, a newspaper photo from 117 years ago, a volunteer & bank CEO, an offer to pull members in a parade, an American Legion member, an Iowa nice businessman, City of Des Moines cemetery supervisor, two former Iowa governors and descendants who are members of War of 1812 Iowa Society and how they all came together.

Several years ago while assisting with research for a book, (*Woodland Cemetery in Des Moines: A History*--paperback) I came across Des Moines Register photos from a 1908 article about the mausoleums in Woodland Cemetery. Having visited the site many times I knew that the photos revealed that now over 100 years later something was missing.—a flagpole near the mausoleum of Governor Merrill.

In September of 2022, I had been contacted by a volunteer who had an appreciation of veterans' service and their resting places. He turned out to be John Rigler II, a bank CEO with a unique and very generous offer of a flagpole. All that was needed was a 26' trailer and lots of expertise.

Overhearing my dilemma and wanting to assist, an American Legion member from a nearby town contacted me. He said he might know a nice guy from Rippey, Iowa with a business, equipment, expertise and willingness to assist.

In February of 2025 I asked the bank CEO if his offer was still available.

Rick Hickman, who has a family connection to Iowa's 18th governor Albert Baird Cummins, showed up with truck and trailer and did what was needed while expecting nothing in return.



With the assistance of the Des Moines cemetery and supervisor Ganesh Ganpat, a 26-foot commercial flagpole again stands at the mausoleum site of Civil War colonel and 7th Iowa Governor Samuel Merrill.

Dedication ceremonies held on October 25, 2025, were attended by Randy Lyon, Doug Frazer, Mike Rowley, David Burkett, and Don Richardson.

Thanks in large part to the volunteer and bank CEO **John Rigler II**, the trailer and owner of the past home of 18th Iowa Governor A. Cummins- **Rick Hickman**, the Perry, IA American Legion member, **Donald Richardson**, the Rippey, Iowa businessman **Dan Brubaker**, and **Ganesh Ganpat** of the city of Des Moines.

Once again making the case that we can be better together. Written by Mike Rowley

## Great Idea!



National Veterans Day Poster  
<https://department.va.gov/veterans-day/poster>

Directions for printing your own for distribution.

Gary Everding

**Be sure to watch Ken Burns “The American Revolution” premiering on PBS on November 16**



## Iowa SAR Welcomes 32 New Citizens



Iowa SAR members Larry Hoelscher and Randy Lyon had a wonderful afternoon on October 17<sup>th</sup> welcoming newly naturalized citizens. The program was held in the Federal Courthouse in Cedar Rapids. Together with the new citizens were at least sixty friends and family members.

We presented American flags to new citizens.

In keeping with our last visit in September, we posed for a stream of pictures before and after the two ceremonies. It was a joyous time.



The new citizens were each issued a citizenship certificate. If they wished to receive a passport, this certificate had to be mailed in with their

passport application form. It was suggested that copies of the original certificate should be made and stored in a safe location.

There were two groups for the naturalization ceremony. The first group included people from Kosovo, Burma, Mexico, Canada, China, Congo, Togo, Zambia, Philippines, and Nigeria. The second group had former citizens of Germany, Ecuador, Canada, Liberia, Sudan, Pakistan, Philippines, Vietnam, and Belize.

## **Keeping Our Fingers Crossed!**



Just finished shooting a segment hopefully to air before the Ken Burns revolutionary war documentary special November 16 on Iowa Public television.

Mike Rowley



## **Underground Railroad Operatives Identified and Honored with Marker**

Woodland Cemetery in Des Moines contains gravesites of at least 15 Underground Railroad operatives from the Civil War era. These graves have been documented by the Forever Free Pilot Mentoring Project managed by the West Des Moines Historical Society.

Mike Rowley, published historian of Woodand Cemetery, had background information for those identified as Underground Railroad operatives.





Many citizens attended the ceremony on Saturday, October 25, 2025. The National Park Service announced that Woodland Cemetery has been accepted into the Network to Freedom.

Following the DAR event, Mike served as a guide to another section of the cemetery containing the mausoleum of Governor Merrill and another SAR project.

### **Lots to Celebrate on October 25<sup>th</sup>!**



This is a picture of four very happy compatriots celebrating a very important day for Iowa SAR's own—Doug Frazer.

Doug has just been recognized as having an ancestor who held an officer's rank in the United States military during the Civil War. As such, Doug is recognized as the newest

Iowa member of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS).



## David and Dana Lamb Make Wonderful Contribution to Scotland

# American's passion for Scotland's military past is displayed in Dunoon

MODERN ease of travel and communications has built many links between Dunoon and all parts of the world and the town's close relationship with the US Navy ensures a tight military bond to America continuing today.

For one couple from Iowa, Dunoon is a special home.

David and Dana Lamb have a love for the town and have just gifted part of their passion to the Castle House Museum.

David is a long-term collector of Scottish Military Badges.

His particular passion began when he started to pick up the odd piece on sale at places like Camden Passage, Covent Garden and Petticoat Lane in London.

That is where it began, but it subsequently saw him picking out the best in Scottish Military Badges all around the world.

Several years of research and most of his time during

the Covid pandemic went into framing and matching them, wherever possible, to the tartans worn by the regiments in their heyday.

Building the collection has provided David with considerable years of enjoyment. He has proudly displayed the memorabilia at home and taken the badges on tour "to many, many places and events".

But it is to Dunoon they have now travelled where they are now on display at the Museum.

Manager Andrey Kelly said: "We have this fabulous new display here at Castle House Museum of Scottish Military Badges."

"The donor, David Lamb, visits Dunoon regularly as he is a descendant of the Lamont family. He is also a great friend and supporter of the Museum."

"He wanted to have his collection displayed here and we are deeply honoured to be chosen."



David commented: "I'm deeply grateful to Castle House Museum for allowing me to share my dream of sending these badges back home to a place where I know they will be seen and

enjoyed for generations to come."

"I have always felt like Dunoon holds a special place in my heart and this is one way of trying to give something back to a place

that has given both of us so very much in terms of fond memories over many years."

While visitors can spend happy hours and days observing the collection, David wryly remarked:

"And as my loving spouse observed, she now has so much more wall space in our den at home."

\* Castle House Museum is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-4pm



Our Liberty Tree made it through another very dry summer in Dubuque with weekly watering. It looks great!

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