



Woodland Cemetery Project Update

Just a little follow up to the Axios articles about the Woodland Cemetery tree that was hit by lightning and was being considered for a carving project to honor the history of Des Moines and her residents.

City cemetery supervisor Ganesh Ganpat put me into contact with Daniel Just, Urban Forestry Project Manager for the City of Des Moines and we met with renowned tree sculptor Gary Keenan to determine the viability of the project for this tree.

Before I get to that, perhaps the real story here was the willingness of so many to help and not stand in the way or put up roadblocks to the plan. The idea was first shared with Mr. Ganpat. Then Jason Clayworth of **Axios** published an informative article about it. This brought public attention and ideas as it was one of his most viewed articles.

<https://www.axios.com/local/des-moines/2026/08/11/woodland-cemetery-catalpa-lightning-strike> and <https://www.axios.com/local/des-moines/2026/08/21/woodland-cemetery-catalpa-removal-seeds-sculpture>

Members of different civic groups like the local Grenville M. Dodge Camp #75 of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and the Iowa Sons of the American Revolution discussed plans for possible funding of the project.

It would have been quite easy for any of these people to just say "No" at any time and the tree would come down and mostly be forgotten. Instead, each person considered the idea and allowed it to move forward.

Mr. Keenan and Mr. Just determined that due to several factors, including the apparently somewhat hollow trunk of the tree that a large carving is not possible. That does not mean this is the last to be heard of the tree. Other creative ideas are being considered, including, if possible, the harvesting of seeds and use of some of the tree material for the benefit of the city.

While the desired outcome of having the largest carving in the State of Iowa that would honor the history of Des Moines will not happen, it will always be remembered that no one stood in the way, which is a positive sign that history matters.

Mike Rowley

Department of Iowa (SUVCW) at the 145th National Encampment



On August 2, 2026
SRA/War of 1812
members attended the
National AUVCW
Encampment. Those
included (middle three)
Don McGuire PDC, **Matt
Schwalm**, and
Department
Secretary/Treasurer **Dan
Rittel**.

New Members

Randy Breese continues to amaze us with his dedication! New members include:

James Sallan Murphy

Garret Thomas Henderson

Ryan Michael Henderson

This brings the number of **new** members for our Society to an amazing 28. Randy Breese, our registrar, is a real blessing. Thank you, Randy, for all your work!!

Awards Meeting Scheduled for Tuesday, October 27th

An in-person awards meeting of the society will be held on Tuesday, October 27th, 6:15PM at the Urbandale Public Library. It will be offered on Zoom and will serve as the monthly meeting that had previously been scheduled on October 22. Wearing patriot uniforms is welcome and encouraged, but library policy prohibits weapons of any kind on the premises.

Brothers in the Effort



As members of IA SAR, 1812, SUVCW & MOLLUS we often volunteer for projects both old and new. This week members took part in the installation of a granite stone on the unmarked grave of a Civil War veteran in NW Iowa.

After having obtained approval from cemetery officials last April and with the stone now delivered to the home of our member the cemetery officials were notified and asked to mark the spot for the stone to be installed. As the original person contacted had retired and his replacement was not aware of this project we were told of requirements, regulations and fees that would have made the marking difficult.

Iowa SUVCW Brother Roy Linn came in to save the day. Through his past volunteerism, Roy's workmanship and his dedication has built up a relationship with local officials and made the marking possible.

On the morning of Monday, September 21st the stone was installed and will forever be a reminder of the service and sacrifices of Captain Thomas Prescott.

Following the installation in Sioux City, members were joined by members of the DAR,



American Legion, VFW, Cherokee Veteran Affairs, Boy Scouts, local historical Society and about 50 guests, as four veterans buried in Beacon Hollow Cemetery were given military rights in a special ceremony at MHI in Cherokee yesterday afternoon.

This was a program like those held at both the Clarinda and Independence Mental Health Institutes. All of these were initiated by members of the MIAP Missing in America Project.

Oldest Known Civil War Monument



FILE PHOTO

"Taps" is performed during a re-dedication ceremony for the Kossuth Civil War Monument Saturday, July 9, 2016, in Kossuth. Dedicated on July, 4, 1866, the monument is the oldest known Civil War monument located west of the Mississippi River.

Flag Retirement Ceremony



It may not be glamorous, but one of the duties accepted by the SRA is the annual proper disposal of worn-out American flags.

SAR board member Doug Frazer attends to the duty in Des Moines this past month.



Accompanying him was a group of local citizens.

NSSAR Surgeon General Health Minute
by Matthew S. Bowdish MD, NSSAR Surgeon General 2026-2027

Give Me Liberty...And Lower Blood Pressure

Hypertension (aka High Blood Pressure) is a silent and deadly condition that affects 60% of older adults and is a top contributor to heart attacks, strokes, and kidney damage in men ages 50 to 80 years old. It often runs in families— if your parents had it, you likely carry an elevated risk.

Diagnosis is simple: regular blood pressure readings at home or in your doctor's office. Annual screenings are recommended for all men in this age group.

Treatment starts with lifestyle (i.e., diet, exercise, salt reduction) and can include medications like ACE inhibitors or diuretics. Left unchecked, hypertension quietly damages your arteries.

Contact your personal physician today for blood pressure evaluation and personalized management strategy. Protecting your heart today means more active years with your family in the future.

Youth Protection



Youth Protection: Iowa SAR will follow guidelines and procedures for youth protection as contained in the NSSAR website. Members who, as part of their member duties work with or communicate with youth (age 18 and under) must take online training through NSSAR (about 30 minutes; free), with completion certificates downloaded and sent to IASSAR Secretary Doug Frazer. Secretary Frazer will answer any member questions about the NSSAR Youth Protection Program. IASSAR Registrar Randy Breese will check all prospective new members' names against a national list of sex offenders before approving and sending applications to NSSAR.

Here is NSSAR's definition of "youth / child," as part of its Youth Protection Program:

For our purposes, youth/child is defined as any person under the age of 18 years of age. The term volunteer includes any SAR compatriot or SAR staff personnel. All adults working with youth under the age of 18 at any SAR sponsored event are required to read/understand, agree to, and abide by these policies. (p. 5)

There had been some confusion as to the definition. The online training narrator incorrectly defined youth / child as any person who is *18 years and under*.

Some IA SAR/182 Activity Since the July Meeting

Mike Rowley

July 30--- National Logan's Brigade and WRC using IA SAR/1812 Member's format for unmarked graves instruction

JULY 30- William Manson-1812 stone installed in **Centerville, Iowa** .

In February of 2026, Mike Rowley, a volunteer member of the America 250 Iowa Task Force, approached the city about placing a standard military headstone to honor an unmarked veteran, William Manson.

Although In William is not buried in Oakland Cemetery, his original resting place is unmarked and is believed to now be farmland. Several of his children and grandchildren, however, are buried in Oakland Cemetery. With approval from the City Council, permission was granted to place the headstone on the plot of one of his children.

The military headstone was installed today in William Manson's honor. This memorial serves as a lasting tribute to his service and sacrifice for our country.

JULY 31-- Joshua Dyer reaches out for city approval to mark CW vet Roswell Cory resulting in application to be submitted

August 1, -- Mahlon Sheetz stone arrived CW vet in Marengo, IA

August 3rd—Received an offer by O J Fargo

I have just finished another lengthy project to supplement my Iowa Civil War soldiers searchable database.

Tilting at windmills is my specialty.

I have 2700+ CDVs (Carte de Visits)/pictures of Iowa soldiers with at least 2 from each regiment.

That doesn't make a dent in the 72,000+ that served but it is a one-of-a-kind collection. Of course, I am always on the lookout for more that might be hidden in some obscure location.

I thought that might be of interest to you as a curiosity if nothing else.

I can call them up alphabetically or by regiment. Coupled with the database there could also be specialty searches e. g. everyone who was wounded in the 4th Iowa, those born in Denmark etc.

If you want more than one or two I would have to send them in waves. If a bunch - giving me a flash drive would be the best bet.

I don't know whether I talked to you about the database but.....

Its base is all the information contained in the "Roster and Records" supplemented by many other minor sources.

There are 27 searchable/sortable fields - name, age, rank, regiment, company, home town, birthplace, what happened to them etc. etc. Feel free to pass it along and I will do the best I can to accommodate.

OJ FARGO

5 Rowley Brothers of Chickasaw County, Iowa
All served together in Company H of 4th Iowa Cavalry-Civil War



August 4th--
Discovered 5
Rowley
brothers all in
the same
infantry
Company at
the same
time. Trying
to determine if
there were any

others in this situation

August 4th --<https://gctimesnews.com/mailbag/a-testament-to-lewis-underwood/>

August 5th--Jos Howard Murray Iowa Clarke County stone INSTALLED

August 5th- Applied for burn permit for flag retirement Sept 12th 9:00am Glendale Cemetery

August 6th- Wrote & Submitted story Idea of brothers to Local newspapers around Chickasaw County

August 6th- Washington Redman --Glendale Cemetery -- a black--Spanish American War veteran stone installed

August 8th Submitted story idea to media including and *SAR Magazine* on behalf of Central Iowa Chapter

August 13th National editor for MOLLUS asks for article follow up-- sent same day

August 17th -- March with IA National Guard Gold Star Museum in Veterans Day Parade at Iowa State Fair

Interviews of WHO TV 13 (8-17-2026) and IPBS (8-19-2026) veterans were remembered at 3:15 to 6:35 mark

<https://www.pbs.org/video/fair-2026-wednesday-august-19-xwkdno/>

August 17th -- 4 more member submitted VA stone applications approved

Philander Turrel-- War of 1812 Monroe County, IA

Robert Playford Gregg- Sims Des Moines

Thomas Chick Prescott-- Sioux City, IA

Henry P Morris-- CW vet in Lineville, IA

August 17th proposed Woodland Cemetery tree carving project



August 20th New Hampton, Iowa newspaper runs front page story of grave marking and 5 brothers in CW story by IA SAER/1812 member

<https://www.nhtrib.com/articles/news-newhamptontribune-2/giving-veterans-their-due/?pubid=newhamptontribune>

August 21st- Axios follow up article on Woodland Tree project



August 27th Honor our veterans in Cityview Magazine! **Oct 19th deadline** **SUBMIT YOUR VETERAN PHOTOS!**

CITYVIEW Help us honor the veterans of Polk, Dallas, and Warren counties.

September 10 –

Sent talking points for newspaper article to Corydon, Albia and descendant of Henry P. Morris

September 11 - Prepared and sent James S. Denniston (CW vwt in Lineville, IA) application to local VA official for signature.

September 12 - Doug Frazer led the Flag Retirement ceremony at Glendale Cemetery in Des Moines Ron and Marilyn Rittel also participated



September 13 - Members, Dan Rittel, Ron Rittel and Mike Rowley participated in the Gold Star WWI Monument 100th Anniversary rededication that was shortened due to lightning

September 14 - 2 more veteran stones approved
 Roswell Cory - Civil War veteran in Jefferson, IA
 Charles Obrihm - War of 1812 in Decorah, IA

Written by Mike Rowley



Woodland Cemetery Struck by Nature—Again

The Des Moines area cannot catch a break from this fall's stormy and rainy weather. On September 8th high winds again smashed into the cemetery with the resulting damage recorded

by Mike Rowley. Making the wind damage even worse was the 10.45 inches of rain which fell on the city from the first of the month through September 15th.

Your Iowa SAR Board of Managers

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