



FORT HARRISON SENTINEL

Fort Harrison Chapter

Sons of the American Revolution



Vol. 17, No. 1

March 2017

I begin this first Chapter newsletter of 2017 on a very sad note. Our oldest Compatriot, and one of our last remaining WWII veterans, James J. Geary, died on the 25th of February at the age of 102. James had a deep love of our Commonwealth and its history, especially that of the War Between the States, and was instrumental in preserving this history for future generations. Locally this is best exemplified in his role as the principal creator, designer and founding director of the New Market Battlefield Museum.

Our Chapter began this year with the installation of our Officers for 2017 in January by then VA Society 2nd Vice President (and current 1st Vice President), Pat Kelly, of the Thomas Jefferson Chapter. I am now serving as Chapter President; Randy Atkins as 1st Vice President; Joe Price as 2nd Vice President; Rev. Roy Martin, Jr. as Chaplain; Jim Nelson as Treasurer; Randy Heneberger as Recording Secretary; Tim Knight as Registrar; Dave Dean as Corresponding Secretary; Peyton Yancey as Historian and Steve Knight as Webmaster. Pat gave an excellent presentation on hardships faced by those early settlers living on the frontier of southwestern Virginia before and during the Revolutionary War. Our guest speaker in February was c/LTC Michelle Pineda of the Harrisonburg High School JROTC program. Michelle is the first recipient of our Chapter's Enhanced JROTC Cadet Award. This award differs from our usual JROTC Award in that it is presented to an outstanding Cadet in the Junior Class who meets a set of criteria established by the National Society which includes a short essay on "How JROTC Has Prepared Me to be a Better Citizen of the United States". Our Chapter's winner is then submitted to the VA SAR for competition against the winners from other Chapters with the winner of that competition then being submitted for competition at the National Society. Michelle did well at the state level but, unfortunately, was not the winner. This Award will be continued by our Chapter but will not replace our usual JROTC Award which is presented in May of each year to a Senior Cadet selected by the Instructors of that program.

Our Chapter has been active during these first months of 2017 in a number of other ways. We presented two Flag Certificates—one to the Town of Bridgewater and the other to Kingmor Supply, Inc. of Mount Crawford, in recognition of their proper display of the American Flag. Several of our Compatriots attended the annual Lincoln Day Ceremony held at the Lincoln Cemetery north of Harrisonburg on February 12th. This event was conceived by Compatriot Dr. Phil Stone over 20 years ago and every year he has given an excellent presentation on a different aspect of the life of President Abraham Lincoln, whose ancestors are buried here. On February 18th, our Chapter Wreath was presented at the annual Crossing of the Dan Ceremony held in South Boston, VA. Representing our Chapter were Rev. Roy Martin, Jr. (who is not only our Chapter Chaplain but VA SAR Chaplain as well and participated as a member of the VA SAR Color Guard), Past Chapter Presidents Hank Almond and Tom Pettit (accompanied by his wife, Daille) and myself (accompanied by my wife, Norma) The previous weekend, my wife and I attended the Annual Meeting of the VA SAR in Richmond where our Chapter received 7 streamers for our Chapter Flag. These were in recognition of our participation in the Rev. War Monument Dedication held at Blanford Cemetery in Petersburg, VA; the presentation of War/Military Service Medals to our Compatriots who are veterans; making a presentation on the SAR to a local civic association; making a contribution to the American Revolutionary War Museum in Yorktown; participation in the Outreach and Fund Raising Initiative of the VA SAR; participation the Flag Recognition program and for Chapter Excellence. We also received a star

for our Revolutionary War Grave Recognition streamer. Additionally, we participated in the Naturalization Programs held in Federal Court here in Harrisonburg. I would like to thank all of our Compatriots who have represented our Chapter at these programs and also extend the most sincere thanks and deepest appreciation on behalf of our Chapter to Leann Cloud, whose efforts have made this endeavor possible. There are 13 such programs scheduled for this year and I urge all of you consider the possibility of participating and representing our Chapter in those remaining. Please contact either Past President Tom Pettit or myself if you would like to do so. Norma and I also attended the Spring Trustee/Leadership meeting in Louisville, KY on March 2nd and 3rd and we will attend the annual meeting of the VA Society of the C.A.R. in Staunton on the 10th and 11th of March.

Our upcoming programs promise to be very informative. This month Jimmy A. Lawson will talk on the early families of western Greene (then Orange) and western Rockingham Counties with mention of those who served during the Revolutionary War. There are a number of our Compatriots whose early ancestors lived in those regions. In April, Teresa-Kay Lam and Bill Henry will present a program on the Blue Ridge Heritage Project which honors those families who lives were significantly altered by the creation of the Shenandoah National Park. **Also at that meeting we will vote on two amendments to our Chapter constitution proposed at the February meeting of our Board of Managers. The first concerns Article V, #1 and would change the wording to read: "Membership meetings shall be held September through May. The annual meeting shall take place during the month of January of each year." This change allows our Chapter to change our meeting dates as needed without having to change our Constitution. The second concerns Article V, #4 and would change the wording to read: "The Board of Managers shall meet no less than twice a year on the call of the President or when requested in writing by any two members of the Board." The Board of Managers of our Chapter consists of the elected officers and the immediate Past President.** In May, our 1st Vice President, Randy Atkins, will talk on how to read and record the inscriptions on old tombstones without damaging them, which is a problem many of us have faced as we have researched our ancestors.

Our Chapter will present its ROTC Award at James Madison University on the afternoon of April 26th. Our JROTC Award will be presented in May at Harrisonburg High School. I also remind you of the upcoming reading of the Declaration of Independence at noon on July 4th.

Upcoming regional and state events of interest include the annual Multi-Chapter meeting at Graves Mountain Lodge which will be held on April 15th. The guest speaker will be VA SAR President Mike Elston and the master of ceremonies will be Edmund Davidson, President of the General Daniel Morgan Chapter. It will begin with a Social Hour at 11AM with the meeting beginning at 11:45AM. There will be a break for a "family style" lunch at about 12:15PM with the meeting ending at 2:30PM. If you have never attended one of these, I urge you to consider doing so and bring your wife and any guests you wish. All are welcome. It is a wonderful opportunity to meet Compatriots from other Chapters and to learn what these Chapters are doing to project the image of the SAR in their communities. This year the meeting will be held in the downstairs lounge. The food is excellent and the scenery in this area of Madison County is beautiful. The Lodge is located in Syria, Virginia and directions to the Lodge can be obtained from the Lodge website (www.gravesmountain.com). The cost of the meal is \$18.00 per person and reservations can be made by sending your check, made payable to the Culpeper Minutemen Chapter, to Bill Mutziger, Treasurer of the Culpeper Minutemen Chapter at 119 Rolling Green Lane, Brightwood, VA 22715. Reservations need to be received by April 7th. Also upcoming are two ceremonies marking the 259th Anniversary of the birth of President James Monroe. At 11AM on April 28th there will be a ceremony at Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond where he is buried. On April 29th at 10AM there will be a ceremony at his birthplace in Westmoreland County, VA.

Mike Elston, our new VA SAR President, has stated his goals for this year, outlining them under the title "A Call to Arms". A copy of this will be forwarded to our membership by our

Corresponding Secretary. His basic goals are to establish partnerships and build relationships with our youth and our communities, to honor our Patriot Ancestors by telling their stories and to increase our membership by not only encouraging the addition of new members but also by retaining those we now have.

As you have read this newsletter, you hopefully noticed the use of VA SAR for VASSAR. Has the name of our State Society been changed? Absolutely not. However VA SAR has begun to be used to designate our State Society for many events, memorials and in correspondence. This is part of a new initiative put forward by the National Society as an endeavor to “rebrand” our image. It is entirely elective and will not affect our Chapter’s full name.

In closing, I want to remind you that the continued success of our Chapter depends not on the work of a few but in the participation of a majority, if not all, of our Compatriots. With the adoption of the Americanism Report as the judge of Chapter Activity, numbers now count. We need the help of as many of our Compatriots as possible to insure our success. I look forward to seeing you at our monthly meetings which are held at the Wood Grill Buffet on Reservoir Street in Harrisonburg. We encourage the attendance of wives and guests. While our meetings begin at 6PM, we encourage all to be present by 5:30PM to obtain their dinner from the buffet and begin their meal.

Christopher N. (“Kirk”) Sheap M.D.