



## The Iowa Compatriot

The Journal of the Iowa Society, Sons of the American Revolution August 15, 2022

*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.*

### World War II Veteran and IASSAR Member Celebrates 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday

By Chris Moberg



Kenneth Gillpatrick from Oelwein, Iowa, turned 100 years old on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Ken is a World War II Army Veteran who was stationed in Alaska during the war. With the help of Iowa Registrar Stephen Stewart and his daughter, Dr. Melissa Stewart, Ken became a member of the IASSAR on September 24, 2021. He is a descendant of Benjamin Thurston, a Private under Captain Jonathan Poor in Colonel Samuel Gerrish's Massachusetts Regiment. Private Thurston took part in the first battle of the American Revolution: the Lexington Alarm.

On July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022, family members from ten different states and representing five generations gathered at the Masonic Lodge in Oelwein, Iowa. Dr. Melissa Stewart gave a family history presentation, which included events all the way back to the 1720s. She then presented Ken with a beautiful box containing a magnifying glass, letter opener, and pen. These items were carved by her husband, Michael Ball, from the wood of a tree from the Gillpatrick family homestead in Indiana. We are grateful to the Stewart family for their outstanding work in helping Ken Gillpatrick become an Iowa SAR member, and for their part in making his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration so special!

*Ken Gillpatrick and Dr. Melissa Stewart, October 10, 2021*

### Wreaths Across America

By Randy Lyon



In 1992, Worchester Wreath Company of Harrington, Maine, found itself with a surplus of wreaths. Arrangements were made to transport the wreaths to Arlington Cemetery. The effort was continued without much fanfare until 2005 when a picture like this resulted in an outpouring of interest nationwide from people wanting to copy the program in their own cemeteries to honor veterans. In 2007, Wreaths Across America, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, was founded. In 2008, over 100,000 wreaths were laid, and Congress established National Wreaths Across America Day. By 2014, over 700,000 wreaths at 1,000 locations were laid with 2,047

sponsoring groups, corporate contributions, and donations of trucking and shipping.

Sponsoring a wreath means that you will honor an American hero on Wreaths Across America Day. The cost to sponsor a wreath is \$15 per wreath. At the July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022, joint Zoom meeting of the Iowa SAR and Iowa War of 1812, the Iowa SAR approved a motion to donate \$150 for the December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Wreaths Across America event at Linwood Cemetery in Dubuque. Additional donations can be made by visiting [www.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org) and making a donation using location ID "IADLWC" (Linwood Cemetery) and group ID "IA0059" (IASSAR). As a pilot program, we intend to evaluate the success of the program and, if the results are as we expect based on national results, expand the program in 2023.

## **Additional Civil War Veterans Identified at Woodland Cemetery**

By Mike Rowley

Recently I was made aware of a collection of perhaps 26,000 documents concerning veterans in Iowa (mostly Civil War era) that were not members of the G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic, a fraternal organization that originated with Union Civil War veterans).

So far, after going through over 9,000 documents, 16 more veterans buried in Woodland Cemetery were found of whom we were not aware. I have sent in applications for four more VA gravestones for unmarked veteran graves found in this data. I am also near completing documentation and an application (pending cemetery approval) for a stone for a Confederate veteran buried in an unmarked grave in Dubuque.

Just when you start to think there is not much more to find, we are blessed with new information and insights.

## **Sharing the Story**

By Randy Lyon



On August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022, I met with members of the Dubuque Noon Lion's Club at the Arboretum on the northern edge of the city. I thanked them for choosing such a nice day and then got down to business.

I had been asked to speak about the activities of the Sons of the American Revolution, so I began with a bit of the history of the organization locally and some of its famous members. Moving into the recent history, I outlined the work of the organization in establishing the memorial to Jean Marie Cardinal this May. I then recounted some of the adventures of awarding flag certificates including the man who recounted once accidentally hanging the flag upside down (the sign of distress) and later answering the door to a local law enforcement officer asking if the man needed help. I moved into the work of the Society in replacing gravestones and now the campaign to raise money for our Wreaths Across America program for Linwood Cemetery in Dubuque. It was a grand day.

## **Saving Revolutionary Battlefields**

By Randy Lyon

Many of us can probably remember the campaign in the 1950s to save Gettysburg Battlefield. This Civil War site had been sliced and diced by developers for development of housing, shopping centers, restaurants, and motels. For \$5.00, a person could "own" a piece of the battlefield with the understanding, stated in the deed, that all the parcels of land would be held together. Buying up the battlefield in this manner saved it. Developed land that later came up for sale was purchased, the buildings demolished, and the property then returned to its native state.

Unheralded has been similar efforts to save Revolutionary battlefields from commercial development. A major force in this effort is the American Battlefield Trust. Recently the Trust celebrated a major accomplishment - the acquisition of its 150<sup>th</sup> site, the Great Bridge Battlefield in Chesapeake, Virginia. At the same time, the Trust achieved a total of 54,000 acres in time to begin its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. The .66-acre tract saved by the Trust had been listed for the development of a strip mall on land where on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1775, Virginia Patriots fought forces of colonial governor Lord Dunmore. British artillery from Fort Murray moving toward the Patriots that morning alerted the sentries on the bridge. They slowed the British advance and allowed the militiamen to man their defenses. Faced by sudden return fire, the British forces retreated with great losses. The battle, lasting less than thirty minutes, was the first Patriot victory of the war. Defeat at Great Bridge led Dunmore, the British Royal Governor of Virginia, and his soldiers to evacuate and ultimately leave Virginia in 1776.



## Outstanding Citizenship Presentations

By Randy Lyon

Officers Michael Fanone and Aquilino Gonell were both members of the United States Capitol Police when the Capitol was attacked on January 6<sup>th</sup>. Fanone suffered repeated attacks with a taser and gassing. Outnumbered and unaware of the danger that day, they fought courageously and serve as models of good citizenship, if not at the minimum, heroes. I mailed Outstanding Citizenship certificates and letters of thanks to the headquarters in the hopes they will reach them.

## Flag Certificate Presentations

By Randy Lyon



Roger L. and Diane M. Arensdorf had both recently had COVID-19. Although they were through with their quarantine period, they did not want to stand close enough to me for a picture. They took a picture of me holding their certificate instead.



Chuck Westphal rises to the ranks of the person who annually replaces his weather-beaten flag and carries extra flags to the cemetery to replace empty sticks whose flags had blown off. Chuck was instrumental in getting an American flag flown at the entrance to their sheltered new neighborhood. Getting the certificate to him was difficult. He had just finished his second round of COVID-19.



Brittany Herbert was more than a little amazed by my appearance on her porch. She quickly got over her surprise, however, and asked me to thank the Society for honoring her with a certificate for flying her American flag.



It came as quite a surprise to me when Steven P. and Kimberly Francois pulled in right beside my car before I got out. It surprised them too since they had to stop as I backed out of their neighbor's driveway. Anyway, we had a good laugh before I explained my visit. The two flags make quite a statement on the court. They were very pleased and surprised by the honor.



James D. and Cynthia M. Johnson display a small flag - but it's the spirit that counts!

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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.*