

M I N N E S O T A

# SAR Salute



THE MINNESOTA SOCIETY SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION NEWSLETTER • [www.sar.org/mnssar](http://www.sar.org/mnssar) • SPRING 2011

## 2011 Annual Washington Day Luncheon

Minneapolis, MN – Thirty-one members of the Minnesota Society SAR along with spouses, guests, and members of the Minnesota SR, gathered for the Annual Washington Day Luncheon. The total attendance was 52. The chefs at Jax Cafe had prepared a colonial-era meal with choice of three entrees, including Beef Brisket, Virginia Ham, and Stuffed Game Hen. The assemblage greeted Executive Chef Bob Foster and Sous Chef Mike Olson with a hearty applause for the outstanding meal they had prepared.

SAR Secretary-Treasurer John Hallberg Jones introduced new member Dennis Sabourin Walsh and he was presented his rosette. President Ronald McRoberts presented Hon. Paul Kent Theisen, Captain of the MNSSAR Color Guard, the NSSAR Bronze Color Guard Medal and Certificate.



*Dennis Sabourin Walsh*



*Hon. Paul Kent Theisen*

**INSIDE THE**  
**MNSSAR SALUTE...**

Minnesota: A Global Competitor  
 is the Topic of the Day at the  
 Annual Washington Luncheon

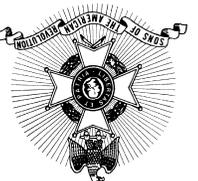
Hutchinson Eagle Scout  
 Honored

The Battle of Guilford Court  
 House – Robert Brett Rasmussen –  
 2010 Eagle Scout Contest Winner

American Eagle

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Minnesota Society  
Sons of the American Revolution  
2700 East Minnehaha Parkway  
Minneapolis, MN 55406-3743





## “MINNESOTA: A GLOBAL COMPETITOR” IS THE TOPIC OF THE DAY AT THE ANNUAL WASHINGTON LUNCHEON



Edward Dieter, Deputy Director of the Minnesota Trade Office, delivered a fascinating oration entitled “Minnesota – A Global Competitor.”

He started his address by stating that trade has been essential to America since before the United States was independent – one might even say since before it was discovered. Columbus sailed in this direction in hopes of finding a shorter and more secure route to trade with the Orient.

As America was settled, much of the trade of the British colonies was with England. It is not an exaggeration to say that the American Revolution had its roots in the British efforts to restrict and tax colonial trade. The Sugar

Act, the Stamp Act, the Townsend Acts, and perhaps most famously, the Tea Act, culminating in the Boston Tea Party and the occupation of Boston, all were aimed at taxing trade or forcing the colonies to purchase certain goods from Britain. The colonists’ resistance to these measures led directly to the Revolution. Even as broader issues such as taxation without representation and the rights of the colonists as British citizens became the principles for which our ancestors fought, the roots of the conflict can be found in the restrictions on trade.

After winning our independence, the many problems of foreign and interstate commerce were key factors in the decision by the Founding Fathers that the Articles of Confederation were inadequate and a Constitutional Convention “to form a more perfect union” was necessary.

The U.S. today is not only still the largest economy in the world but we are a little larger than China, Japan and Germany combined. The U.S. is also still the number-one manufacturer in the world – ahead

of China, Japan, and ahead of Germany. The big difference between the U.S. and China or Germany is that more of what we manufacture is for domestic consumption.

He then went on to talk about Minnesota Trade:

Minnesota companies, both large and small, are players in the world market. Minnesota GSP was approximately \$267 billion in 2010. Year in and year out we export about ten percent of our total production.

Minnesota’s main manufactured exports are computers and electronics, followed by industrial machinery, medical devices and transportation. These four sectors make up about two-thirds of our manufactured exports.

Naturally our number-one market is Canada. China has been our number-two market since 2005. Minnesota companies ship more than \$1 billion in manufactured goods to China every year, and the addition of services and agriculture brings the total to more than \$2 billion.

After China, Japan ranks as our state’s third market in 2010, followed

by Mexico and Germany.

Minnesota is a global player in world markets. We have great multinational companies like 3M, Cargill and Medtronic, but we also have companies in the state that are shipping products to more countries than they have employees. Nearly one in five manufacturing jobs in the state depends on exports.

Today even more than 200 years ago, U.S. trade with the rest of the world is critical for our entire economy. The economic prosperity of Minnesota is closely tied with the rest of the world.

American and Minnesota companies have the products, skills and determination to succeed in this fast growing market. Many of them already are. Companies that export are more likely to pay better wages and have better benefits, grow sales faster, are less likely to go out of business, and create more jobs. The Minnesota Trade Office works to help Minnesota companies to compete in the global marketplace every day.



## MINNESOTA EAGLE SCOUT WINS FIRST PLACE!

Robert Brett Rasmussen, of the Northern Star Council Boy Scouts of America, represented the MNSSAR in the national competition of the Eagle Scout Scholarship and Awards Program. The national winners are:

- First Place: Robert Rasmussen, Minnesota – \$8,000 scholarship
- First Runner-up: Garrett Weeks of Utah – \$4,000
- Second Runner-up: Harrison Hatcher of Florida – \$2,000

Bobby, from Hutchinson, Minnesota, was honored at the annual George Washington Day Observance

and Luncheon as the Minnesota winner. His mother and father were also in attendance. Bobby read his patriotic essay entitled *The Battle of Guilford Court House* which is presented below.

Bobby's application, four generation ancestor chart and his patriotic essay were sent to National SAR headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky to compete with other state winners where he won the \$8,000 scholarship.

This is the third year in a row that Bobby won the Spreading Wings trophy as the Minnesota contest winner.

### The Battle of Guilford Court House

By Robert Brett Rasmussen – 2010 MNSSAR Eagle Scout Contest Winner and NSSAR Winner

There was often a fine line between victory and defeat during battles of the Revolutionary War. In some cases, victory was so muddled it took weeks to sort out the real winner.

Need evidence? Consider the Battle of Guilford Court House where American forces retreated and left the British with a battlefield and apparent victory. In the months that followed, the results became more clear and the battle is remembered as one of the most decisive of the revolution.

The Revolutionary War began in Lexington, Massachusetts in 1775 and for three years, most of the fighting occurred in the northern colonies. In 1778, the British turned their attention to the south and claimed major victories in Savannah and Charleston. Eager to gain control of the south, British General Charles Cornwallis sought a climactic battle

which would deliver a knockout punch.

American fortunes were in the hands of General Nathaniel Greene, who was determined to avoid a battle until his army had reached peak strength. Having surrendered large areas of land to buy time, Greene was finally ready for the confrontation with Cornwallis and prepared for battle at Guilford Court House inside the present-day city of Greensboro, North Carolina. Greene commanded a force of 4,400 which included 1,700 Continentals and 2,700 militia. Although outnumbered with an army of 1,900, Cornwallis was certain the British would overcome the rebels just as they'd done on scores of other battlefields.

On the morning of March 15, 1781, Greene deployed his men for three lines of battle. The fighting began about noon when the British approached the first line, a

group of North Carolina militia deployed behind a rail fence. Although the line quickly collapsed, the militia used a barrage of musket fire to inflict heavy casualties before retreating.

As the British advanced, they faced a greater obstacle in the second line, which was comprised of Virginia militia. The one-hour skirmish resulted in more losses for the Redcoats, who were finally able to break through and advanced toward the final line. The heaviest fighting took place on the third line, where Greene had stationed his Continentals. After an exchange of musket fire and a barrage by British cannons, the Americans broke off and retreated from the field.

The entire battle lasted just 90 minutes. Although the British had technically defeated the Americans, they lost 25 percent of their men and were spread across a large area without food or shelter.

The serious losses of manpower left the British too weak to pursue Greene's "defeated" army and unable to occupy the outposts of North Carolina. As a result, Cornwallis made the fatal decision to lead his army to Virginia, where seven months later he was defeated at Yorktown. Conversely, the American force marched south and fought battles that liberated South Carolina and Georgia.

The Battle of Guilford Court House was an important event in the Revolutionary War and showed how victories aren't always what they appear. For the British, an apparent victory set in motion the consequences of ultimate defeat. For the patriots, it showed how a short-lived retreat didn't diminish the resolve and spirit of the American people – attributes which served the colonies well during the revolution and have kept our country strong for future generations.

# AMERICAN EAGLE

News of Yesterday Reported Today

Tuesday April 29, 1777



## BRITISH RAID DANBURY CONNECTICUT

New Haven, Conn. – About three o'clock the morning of April 26, there was a loud pounding on Brigadier General Benedict Arnold's door. The breathless announcement that fifteen hundred British regulars and the Prince of Wales Loyalists had landed at Cedar Point, some three miles east of Norwalk, Conn. on the Saugatuck River, and had marched to Weston, where they had bivouacked for the night. Apparently, the courier told Arnold, their target was the main American supply base in Connecticut, located twenty-three miles inland at Danbury. Arnold was soon whipping his horse over muddy roads in a cold downpour, the aged General David Wooster was at his side. Behind them rode one hundred New Hampshire militia. At Fairfield, they learned that five hundred militiamen under General Gold S. Silliman were also pursuing the British toward Danbury.

Brigadier General William Tryon, the deposed governor of New York, probably suggested the plan to attack the American supply base at Danbury. The plan was conceived as a punitive raid, despite the British shortage of fodder and foodstuffs. Brigadier General James Agnew was assigned co-leader with Tryon of the expedition, but the command seems to have devolved upon Brigadier General William Erskine. Earlier that winter, Erskine had led a foraging expedition to New Jersey in which "he routed the rebels with great slaughter; he took no prisoners."

At five pm on April 26th, the British reached Danbury and set fire to the ammunition and supply depots. Then they marched to nearby Ridgefield and set fire to the Presbyterian church, which was being used as a military warehouse. They also burned houses belonging to Patriots.

With six hundred men and three field pieces, Arnold and Wooster marched through heavy rain all afternoon, coming to Bethel, within two miles of the British, by eleven that night. In the distance they could see the flames of burning buildings. Their guns drenched, their numbers too scanty, they awaited dawn and the arrival of reinforcements.

At eight the morning of the 27th, according to a British officer's account, "the militia began to harass us." The number of militia "increased every mile, galling us from their houses and fences – several instances of astonishing temerity marked the rebels... Seven men from one house fired on the army and persisted in defending the house till they perished in its flames." The British had marched to within five miles of their ships when they encountered Benedict Arnold at noon: "Arnold had taken post very advantageously with a body of 5,000 men, which obliged us to form ranks and lose no time in charging the rebels."

In fact, Arnold's company included only four hundred men detached from Wooster's force. Wooster and his few hundred militia had fallen on the British rear two miles outside Ridgefield, but six British field pieces had raked them

with grapeshot and they had broken and run. Wooster had fallen off his horse, mortally wounded, with a bullet in his stomach. His son fought off British attackers on foot, refusing to surrender until he was run through with a bayonet.

All night Arnold's men had been digging trenches and building breastworks across a narrow spot in the road between two high ridges, as a second line of defense. At noon, three columns of British approached, the center column charging Arnold and his three cannon. Three British charges were repulsed with heavy losses. The fighting only lasted fifteen minutes, but it was fierce. Arnold's men, outnumbered five to one, took a heavy toll, killing seventy British with a withering fire before the British managed to flank them and charge with bayonets. Arnold was the last to retreat. As he wheeled his horse, he looked up to see a British platoon charging down a ledge of rocks at him. As he turned to fire at them, the platoon fired a volley at him. Nine bullets hit his horse. Seeing their commander fall, the Americans ran, leaving Arnold pinned under his horse, all alone to face the British bayonet charge. As Arnold fell, his pistols flew out of his hands. He struggled to get his boots free of the stirrups and get his leg out from under the dead horse. For a moment, he was helpless. A redcoat soldier ran toward him with a bayonet and shouted, "Surrender! You are my prisoner." At that instant, Arnold yanked free and lunged for his pistol. "Not yet," he shouted, shooting the redcoat

dead. Then, vaulting a fence, he scrambled into a swamp in a shower of musket balls and escaped.

That night, Arnold gathered the militia on Chestnut Hill a mile from the British camp and within sight of the British fleet, in front of a bridge they had to cross. As the British pushed on toward their ships and forded the stream, Arnold attacked, aided by Colonel John Lamb and Lieutenant Colonel Eleazar Oswald's artillery. Only a reinforcement of Royal Marines from the British fleet rescued the British as the Connecticut militia, heartened by Arnold's stand, turned out by thousands until they outnumbered the British. But despite Arnold's pleas and threats, the militia refused to charge behind him and finally fled before a Royal Marine charge. Arnold was all over the battlefield, urging them to fire from stone walls flanking the British line of march, until a second horse was shot out from under him and a bullet tore through the collar of his coat during a final British bayonet charge that scattered the militia. When the fighting was over and the British rowed away to their ships, 10 percent of their force had been wounded, five times the rate of American casualties.

Sources:

<http://www.myrevolutionarywar.com/battles/770425.htm>

*Benedict Arnold Patriot and Traitor*  
by Willard Sterne Randall,  
Barnes & Noble Books, 2003

### Next Meeting

The annual Constitution Day Luncheon will be held at Jax Cafe on October 8, 2011.