

M I N N E S O T A

SAR Salute



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Pilgrimage to Stephen Taylor Grave Site

Winona Minnesota – On June 9, 2012 ten members of the MNSAR and one guest enjoyed a pilgrimage to the final resting place of Stephen Taylor, the only Revolutionary War soldier known to be buried in Minnesota. Taylor rests in Woodlawn Cemetery along Highway 61 in Winona, Minnesota.

MNSAR Past President, Marvin Stonecipher (Stoney) organized the event. James Foster, MNSAR Color Guard member, conducted the flag ceremony. Flowers were also placed at the grave site. MNSAR President, COL Ronald McRoberts, recited a brief history about Stephen Taylor.

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 American Eagle

 for the MNSAR Color Guard
 Busy Independence Day Weekend

 Medals and Awards Programs
 2012 MNSAR

 Grave Site
 Pilgrimage to Stephen Taylor

MNSAR SALUTE...
INSIDE THE

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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DID STEPHEN TAYLOR ACCOMPANY ETHAN ALLEN TO TICONDEROGA?

Stephen Taylor was born between 1752 and 1768. Family lore states that he was present at the capture of Fort Ticonderoga. We do know that he served in the Berkshire Massachusetts Militia for 26 days in Capt. John Strong's Company, Col. John Brown's Regiment in September 1777.

Soon after the fighting at Lexington and Concord, Captain Benedict Arnold went before Dr. Joseph Warren and the Committee of Safety with a plan. He proposed to lead a band of Americans to seize Fort Ticonderoga from the British. On May 3, the committee named Benedict Arnold a colonel in the new American Army and authorized him to go to western Massachusetts and recruit four hundred men for his expedition.

The idea was daring but not original. Weeks before the battle of Lexington, Samuel Adams had sent John Brown, a Pittsfield lawyer, to gather information about the condition of the forts since the French and Indian War. He returned to say that if the king's troops provoked a battle, Fort Ticonderoga should be seized at once. In fact, Brown had assigned the task to a group of New Hampshire farmers who were already waging a running battle

against New Yorkers in a property dispute. Those men from New Hampshire, led by a giant named Ethan Allen, called themselves the Green Mountain Boys.

The Green Mountain Boys were deep in the preparations when Benedict Arnold arrived. Colonel Arnold announced that he had come to lead the charge against Ticonderoga. The Boys laughed. If Ethan Allen was replaced, the Boys would stay home. Amid mockery and shouts, Colonel Arnold was taken to meet Allen. Hours passed, heads cleared, and the Boys learned that their mission would now have two commanders. One of them had an army of two hundred and fifty men, the other had a piece of paper signed in Cambridge; the commission from the Massachusetts Committee of Safety.

It was nearly daybreak before they had rounded up enough small craft to row only eighty-three men from their party across Lake Champlain to the fort's high walls. The Boys crept to the fortress gate. It was open. The sentry on duty was asleep. At the prospect of such an easy victory, the Boys began to whoop, which roused the sentry. He aimed his weapon, thought better of it and ran away. Ticonderoga had been built as a garrison for four hun-

dred men, but during the dozen years of peacetime the British had let it deteriorate and kept it severely undermanned.

A British lieutenant, Jocelyn Feltham, who heard the triumphant shouts ringing over the battlements, jumped from bed, threw open his door and ran into an immense man. Another, very dapper man was standing beside him. "By what authority have you stormed this fort?" Lieutenant Feltham demanded.

"In the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress!" roared Ethan Allen.

As they pressed on to the commander's quarters, waving his sword above his head, Allen shouted over and over, "Come out, you old rat!"

Allen assured the captain that the Green Mountain Boys had already disarmed his men. At the news, Captain De la Place held out the hilt of his sword in surrender.

Was Taylor present at the capture of Ticonderoga? He may have indeed been there but there is no proof to back up this claim. There are three possible answers to this puzzle:

- He was there.
- He marched to Fort Ticonderoga but was left on the shore of Lake Champlain because there

was only room for 83 soldiers in the boats.

- He wasn't part of this party but did serve under Col. Brown at an unsuccessful attempt to re-take Fort Ticonderoga in 1777.

After the Revolutionary War Stephen Taylor moved to Ontario and then Allegany Counties New York. He moved to Winona County Minnesota in 1856. Mr. Taylor died in 1857. In 1865 his remains were moved to Woodlawn Cemetery in Winona. His remains were again moved to its present location and a monument was installed in the same cemetery in 1933. The monument was not intended to depict Fort Ticonderoga. The monument, which was used by the New York company elsewhere, was intended to depict a colonial stockade with corner lookout towers.

The monument asserts that Mr. Taylor served at Ticonderoga with Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys.

Following the program everyone enjoyed a picnic at a local park. Quite naturally the picnic discussion revolved around genealogy and history.

Source: Patriots, by A.J. Langguth, Simon and Schuster, 1988



2012 MNSAR MEDALS AND AWARDS PROGRAMS

Minnesota Society ROTC Awards

Once again the Minnesota Society presented medals at all the units in Minnesota. There are seven ROTC units in Colleges and Universities and twelve JROTC units in high schools. We noted with regret that the General Vessey Leadership Academy in Saint Paul closed in December. That unit had been in operation for several years as a charter school and was not able to continue, primarily for financial reasons.

The Minnesota Society was represented by several of our members who did the presentations: Paul K. Theisen, David S. Bouschor, Ronald E. McRoberts, Marvin E. Stonecipher, Larry W. Sisk, Ross A. Matlack, Dennis G. Croonquist, William R. Johnson, A. Dean Sheper-sky, James F. Foster, T. Truxtun Morrison, and John Hallberg Jones.

We extend our thanks and appreciation to these individuals for their service to SAR in doing these presentations.

Minneapolis and St. Paul Chapter Bronze Good Citizenship Medals

The Minneapolis Chapter has one of the largest programs in the nation for this award. In 2012, we had medals presented in 24 area high schools and also in two Naval Sea Cadets Squadrons. Many of the schools consider this the highest award they present, as the qualifications are: male or female, junior or senior, based on *character, scholarship, leadership, and service*. As before the program was an outstanding success.

Medals were also awarded to eleven St. Paul area high school students this year. (One school, St. Bernards, has closed its doors.)

Flag Certificates

On Flag Day five Saint Paul area businesses were presented with flag certificates by the Saint Paul Chapter SAR. This years recipients were:

- Lake Drive Chiropractic Clinic, Circle Pines
- Lino Lakes Assisted Living, Lino Lakes
- P&N Sales, Circle Pines
- Pine Manor Estates, Circle Pines
- State Farm Agents: Mark A. Peterson and John Savageau, Circle Pines

2012 INDEPENDENCE DAY MNSAR COLOR GUARD ACTIVITY



Annual July 3 Event in Nisswa, Minnesota

The MNSAR Color Guard is seven members strong. Two of them appeared at the annual event in Nisswa, Minnesota on July third. From left to right are, Paul K. Theisen (SAR), Faye Leach (DAR), Angie, granddaughter of Coralee Fox (DAR), and Craig Whiting (SAR). Angie handed out flags and booklets to the children and the SAR and DAR members talked to the adults about their organizations.

It was extremely hot so the Color Guard shed their wool coats until it was time for photos. Paul Theisen stated, "Coralee, Angie and Faye were delightful to be with again, they definitely add a colorful dimension to our display."



Sixth Annual Wayzata CAR Pancake Breakfast

On the Fourth of July Guard members Craig Whiting, Aaron Printup, Paul Theisen, Paul Brady, John McCallum and Jim Foster attended the C.A.R. annual pancake breakfast at the depot in Wayzata. Also attending were members of the 7th Pennsylvania, a re-enactment group from the cities. Teaming together the 7th and the Guard raised the Betsy Ross flag and conducted several live fire volleys with muskets accompanied by drums. Again brochures were handed out, photos taken and a great deal of discussion about the SAR was undertaken.

Theisen noted, "It was fun watching the people approach the flying pancakes. Everyone applauded and had a good laugh when they caught one. Some even caught two on the fly!"

AMERICAN EAGLE

News of Yesterday Reported Today

Thursday August 7, 1777



AMERICAN'S BADLY MAULED DEFENDING FORT STANWIX

Oriskany, NY – Yesterday, an American Force led by General Nicholas Herkimer was badly mauled by an ambush prepared by Brigadier-General Barry St. Leger.

British Brigadier-General Barry St. Leger, leading a force of eighteen hundred red-coats, Hessian chasseurs and “Royal-greens,” or Tories, Indians, Canadian Axmen and auxiliaries, had sailed up the St. Lawrence and across Lake Ontario to land at Oswego on the New York shore. His army is on an advance down the Mohawk Valley to join Burgoyne in Albany. Marching southeast, they appeared off Fort Stanwix at the head of the Mohawk Valley on August 2.

St. Leger had been informed by Carleton that Stanwix was held by only sixty men and had no decent defense. But to his chagrin, the British commander found that the fort had been strongly repaired with glacis, ditches and bastions and was defended by 750 New York militia. He also unwisely paraded his regulars in front of it, thereby suggesting to the Americans that the besieging force was smaller than their own. Moreover, the commander, Peter Gansevoort, a twenty-nine-year-old colonel, was a courageous and intelligent soldier, who was determined to hold his position. In this he was supported by his second, Lieutenant Colonel Marinus Willet, an experienced Continental officer. Holding at all costs was not difficult to impress upon the garrison, once the screeching of St. Leger's savage allies could be heard. On

August 4 the Indians encircled the fort and ran yelling around it, after which they retreated to the cover of the woods to deliver a steady fire that killed one man and wounded six. But there was no direct assault, and the use of the Indians in the same tactics the next day suggested to Gansevoort and Willet that St. Leger was relying on terror to subdue the fort.

Yesterday, three militiamen slipped into Stanwix carrying a message from General Nicholas Herkimer, a veteran militia officer who was at Oriskany, ten miles away, with a relief force of eight hundred men. Herkimer asked for a sortie from the fort to distract St. Leger and cover his approach. He also stipulated that if his message were indeed received, that Gansevoort was to fire a signal cannon three times. This was done, with cheers from the garrison, after which Gansevoort sent Willet sallying from the fort with a command of two hundred militia.

A half mile from Stanwix they came upon a British encampment and attacked it, killing fifteen to twenty of the enemy and putting the rest to rout. Instead of pursuing the fleeing foe and thus providing Herkimer with a more lasting distraction, they returned to camp – probably to bask in the admiration of their comrades and to show off their booty, which included four prisoners, some arms, clothing, money and Indian trinkets. Unfortunately, this foray had the effect of alerting St. Leger to Herkimer's approach.

The aging worthy had decided to wait until he could

hear the sound of battle to his front. But four of his regimental commanders insisted on an immediate advance, taunting their chief for his supposed timidity. Stung, Herkimer moved out – straight into an ambush prepared by St. Leger. He had ordered the Mohawk chief Joseph Brant with four hundred Indians, plus John Butler's Tory Rangers and John Johnson's Royal Greens, to fortify a log road, or causeway, passing through a wide ravine six miles from Stanwix. The Tories were concealed at the head of “eyes” – that is, scouts or “flankers” to the right and left, “pointmen” in advance – the mile-long column, followed by supply wagons, moved onto the causeway into a devastating fire, front, flank and rear. In the first volley most of the American officers were cut down, and the rearguard regiment fled. Herkimer received his mortal wound, but dragged himself to a tree, lighting a pipe to lean against it while calmly trying to retrieve a disaster his caution might have averted.

After the first shattering blast, the fighting was fragmented into many small groups, and because it was mainly between brothers – the Indians seldom having the stomach for shot-for-shot battle – it was savage, hand to hand and without quarter. Only a severe thunderstorm saved Herkimer's force. Under cover of it the Americans moved to higher ground to form a defensive position. Upon hearing the sound of battle in the distance – the Willet sally – they took courage and fought on furiously. They

were all but undone, however, when John Butler ordered his Tories to turn their bright green coats inside-out and pretend to be a relief force. The Tories were almost inside the Patriot lines when one of them was recognized. Another savage fight ensued, ending when Brant's Indians melted away.

Herkimer's force was badly mauled, with half its numbers dead, wounded or captive. Most of St. Leger's losses were among the Indians with from sixty to eighty of the casualties.

At a parley requested by St. Leger and granted by Gansevoort, Colonel Butler and two other officers were brought blindfolded into Gansevoort's quarters. There with the blinds removed Butler launched a rambling, convoluted speech. Willet arose to respond. At the end of his speech, the mollified Butler suggested a three-day truce. Gansevoort agreed, hoping to conserve his meager supply of ammunition.

During the lull, Willet and Major Stockwell slipped from the fort, armed with eight-foot spears and carrying a few crackers and hunks of cheese. Guiding themselves by the stars, they made for Fort Drayton fifty miles away. Upon arriving at the fort they learned, to their joy, that General Schuyler had already sent a Massachusetts brigade to the relief of Fort Stanwix.

Sources:

George Washington's War by Robert Leckie, Harper Perennial, 1993