

M I N N E S O T A

# SAR Salute



THE MINNESOTA SOCIETY SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION NEWSLETTER • [www.MinnesotaSAR.org](http://www.MinnesotaSAR.org) • WINTER 2016



## MNSAR 127<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

Minneapolis, Minnesota – The Minnesota Society, and the Minneapolis and Saint Paul Chapters of the Sons of the American Revolution held their annual meetings at Jax Cafe on January 9, 2016. Luncheon, from the menu, was served during the meeting.

The Society was called to order by President John Charles Sassaman. President Sassaman led the Pledge to the US flag and read the Pledge to the SAR. Secretary-Treasurer John Hallberg Jones gave the Invocation. The Minnesota Society was then recessed and the Minneapolis and Saint Paul Chapters conducted their business.

*Continued inside...*

**INSIDE THE  
MNSAR SALUTE...**

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Minnesota Society SAR  
127th Annual Meeting

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Remembering Two MNSAR  
Members / Army Veterans

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2016 MNSAR, Minneapolis and  
Saint Paul Chapter Officers

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American Eagle

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Minnesota Society  
Sons of the American Revolution  
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Minneapolis, MN 55406-3743





## MINNESOTA SOCIETY SAR ANNUAL MEETING

### Minneapolis Chapter

The Minneapolis Chapter was called to order by President Geoffrey R. Bodeau, M.D. A Motion was made to forego reading the Minutes of the 10 January 2015 meeting as they were summarized in the Minnesota Society newsletter. Secretary-Treasurer Jones presented the Annual Financial Report, noting total assets of \$20,854.95 as of 31 December 2015.

Compatriot Jones reported that the Bronze Good Citizenship Medal was presented in 24 area high schools in 2015, and that we also had a presentation at a squadron of Naval Sea Cadets. Letters have already been mailed to all schools/units for the 2016 program.

Compatriot Jones spoke of the success of fund-raising projects and the giving of scholarships by the Lake Minnetonka Society C.A.R. Upon motion passed, the Minneapolis Chapter will donate \$100.00 to the Society.

### Saint Paul Chapter

The Saint Paul Chapter was called to order by President John McCallum. Secretary-Treasurer Timothy Harris presented the annual Financial Report indicating total assets of \$5,252.93.

Compatriot Harris reported that eleven area high schools participated in the

Bronze Good Citizenship Medal Program and their students were presented with their medals the past May. Letters have been mailed to eleven area high schools to begin the program for 2016.

Four Saint Paul businesses were presented with a flag certificate for regularly flying the flag on Flag Day, June 14, 2015. A fifth recipient refused the award and ordered Mr. McCallum off the premises. President McCallum had no idea why and was completely shocked by their actions.

### MNSAR Membership

Secretary-Treasurer Jones reported on membership for 2015: Fifteen new members, six deaths, and four resignations, giving a net increase of five. 2015 started at 196 and ended at 201. In addition we have six dual members. There are still ten unpaid for 2016 at this time. When the report is filed on 25 January any unpaid will be dropped, so the above numbers may change slightly. Jones reported on statistics regarding birthdates and registration dates. He also reported on Life Members, citing our 48 living Life Members are probably the highest percentage of any state society. He brought greetings from Donald Steinkraus who is 94 years old – our oldest member by age.

John Newell Rouner was presented his certificate of membership and rosette. David Foster was presented certificates for nine supplementals and John Sassaman for one supplemental. Others will be presented at our meeting on 13 February.

### Minnesota Society Financial Report and Endowment Trust Fund

Compatriot Jones presented the Annual Financial Report, showing net assets of \$41,609.38 as of 31 December 2015. He then presented the report of the MNSAR Endowment Trust. Donations to Principal during 2015 were \$2,903.00. The Principal as of 31 December 2015 totaled \$32,544.33. The Trustees proposed that the 2015 interest of \$444.69 be used to pay the following donation items: Minnesota Genealogical Society \$35.00, Taylor Grave Flowers \$20.00, Preservation Alliance of Minnesota \$40.00, and the balance of \$349.69 to the MNSAR Color Guard. If any of the amounts vary, adjustment will be made to the Color Guard Fund donation.

### Minnesota Society Programs

Compatriot Sassaman reported on the Eagle Scout Program, indicating disappointment that only four Eagle Scouts entered the contest and that none of the entries were worthy of being

forwarded as a State winner. They will receive certificates of participation and patches. It is hoped that there can be better cooperation with Scout leaders next year.

Once again the Minnesota Society presented medals in all ROTC-JROTC units in the state. Letters have already been mailed to the eleven JROTC units and the seven ROTC units in Minnesota.

Duane L.C.M. Galles presented a proposal to award a Silver Good Citizenship Medal to the President of the Minnesota Orchestra, the President of Minnesota Public Radio, and Marilyn Carlson Nelson, to honor the citizenship effort of the Minnesota Orchestra's trip to Havana, Cuba, for a concert now that relations have been formalized once again. The concert was broadcast nationwide by Minnesota Public Radio, and had been financed by Marilyn Carlson Nelson.

### Minnesota Color Guard

Compatriot Steven Hyde presented a fine report on the MNSAR Color Guard. He displayed our new drum stating it is hand made in Bellows Falls, Vermont by Cooperman Drum. Cooperman craftsman have honed their skills of selecting trees in the local forests for their unique tone qualities and



## TWO MNSAR MEMBERS / ARMY VETERANS PASS AWAY

New Brighton, MN – William A. Harris, Sr. of Minneapolis died Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2015 at the age of 96.

William Arthur Harris was born on Dec. 3, 1918 to Arthur and Minnie (Martell) Harris in Minneapolis. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II in the Headquarters Battery, 38th Field Artillery Battalion of the 2nd Infantry Division, V Corps of the First Army under General Hodges. He reached the rank of Technical Sergeant. Bill operated a radio relaying messages from the front lines to headquarters. He landed in Europe at Omaha Beach on D-Day Plus 1 and saw eleven months of combat that took him from Normandy to Brest to Elsenborn (during the Battle of the Bulge) and finally ending at Pilsen, Czechoslovakia on V-E Day. He married Harriet May Dustin during a six day leave on December 5, 1942 prior to being shipped overseas. He first met his 2-year-

old son when he came home from the war. Bill and Harriet had four sons. Bill made his career as a piano technician at McGinnis and then at Schmidt Music. He was one of their most requested technicians. After Bill retired he would still tune pianos upon request – something he did until he was well into his eighties. Bill was a charter member of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Northeast Minneapolis. Bill enjoyed woodworking and the family cabin in northern Minnesota.

New Ulm, MN – Larry D. Johnson, 68, of New Ulm died Tuesday, Nov. 17, 2015 at the Abbott-Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis after a long, well-fought battle with illness as a result of exposure to Agent Orange.

Larry Dale Johnson was born on May 22, 1947 in New Ulm to LaRay and Ruth (Reece) Johnson. He served in the U.S. Army during Vietnam. On May 27, 1967 he was united in mar-

riage to Kathleen Schugel at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm. Larry worked in the gun department at Scheel's in Mankato and Retzlaff's in New Ulm and later was sales manager with Prudential in Mankato for 13 years. Larry enjoyed guns, sports shooting, hunting, reading, martial arts (Black Belt), auctions, garage sales, and selling "Junk" on eBay. He was a member of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America, Izaak Walton League, Ducks Unlimited, Junior Pioneers, Friends of New Ulm Public Library, VFW, DAV, American Legion, National Rifle Association, Smithsonian Institute, and the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. He was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, friend and will be missed by many. "Forever Our Hero."

bending characteristics, as well as the craft of sawing the logs and steam-bending the lumber.

The MNSAR Color Guard once again participated in the Fourth of July C.A.R. flying pancake breakfast in Wayzata, and for the second consecutive year, led the annual City of Ramsey Happy Days Parade. The Color Guard was awarded "Peoples Choice" award by the judges.

Compatriot Sassaman, who is also in the Color Guard, was present at Larry Johnson's funeral for which the family was very grateful.

A blog provides news and information about the color guard as well as links to related organizations, information sources and sutlers. Go to <http://www.sarmnccg.blogspot.com>. For information about joining please contact [psstheis36@mainstreet.com](mailto:psstheis36@mainstreet.com).

### Other Business

The officers of the Minnesota Society, the Minneapolis Chapter, and the Saint Paul Chapter were installed by Secretary-Treasurer John Hallberg Jones. MNSAR President Sassaman read the SAR Recessional, and with no further business appearing, declared the annual meeting of the Minnesota Society, the Minneapolis Chapter and the Saint Paul Chapter SAR adjourned.

# AMERICAN EAGLE

News of Yesterday Reported Today

Friday November 21, 1777

## DELAWARE RIVER FORTS ABANDONED

Billingsport, New Jersey – Yesterday, American forces under Colonel Christopher Greene were ordered to abandon Fort Mercer, New Jersey, effectively surrendering control of the Delaware River to the British. Commodore John Hazelwood also burned the American warships *Andrew Doria*, *Hornet*, and *Wasp*, while state vessels *Sachem*, *Washington*, *Independence*, and *Mosquito* in Delaware Bay were likewise torched to prevent their capture. British control of the Delaware River is now secure, although Forts Mifflin and Mercer have delayed General William Howe for two months.

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It is also possible that the defeat last month of the Hessian Colonel von Donop to take Fort Mercer shocked the lethargic Sir William Howe into activity, of which, though not endeared he was eminently, capable, for his preparations to take Fort Mifflin on Mud Island were masterful. On November 10 he opened his bombardment of the fort with four 32-pounders from *Somerset*, six 24-pounders on *Eagle* and one, 13-inch mortar, together with the artillery he had already emplaced at the mouth of the Schuylkill. The effect might have been dev-

astating but for the presence of another capable French engineer, Francois Louis Teissedre de Fleury. He was a descendant of one of the noblest families in France, and though hardly more than a boy so skillful an engineer and so brave a soldier that he quickly won the respect and affection of those Americans with whom he served. If his requests for fascines and palisades to shore up the fort's defenses, as well as for a heavy chain to be stretched to the Pennsylvania shore to block the passage of British warships, had been granted, it is likely that Mifflin might have held out indefinitely. Fleury himself was undaunted declaring: "The fire of the enemy will never take the fort. It may kill us men but this is the fortune of war. And all their bullets will never render them masters of the island if we have courage enough to remain on it."

The ragged, footsore, hungry Yankee Doodles did indeed possess that courage, among them Joseph Martin, who wrote: "Here I endured hardships sufficient to kill half a dozen horses." He and his comrades had not "a scrap of either shoes or stockings to my feet or legs." And again: "The British batteries in the course of the day would nearly level



our works, and we were, like the beaver, obliged to repair our dams in the night. As the American defenders made repairs, a soldier would stand guard, and when he saw the muzzle flash of a British artillery piece, he would call out – 'A shot!' – upon which everyone endeavored to take care of himself, yet they would ever and anon, in spite of all our precautions, cut up some of us."

"Ever and anon" those casualties were mounting, and when the dead and wounded were evacuated at night to Fort Mercer, replacements were sent into Mifflin bringing timber, tools and other supplies for repairs. But Fleury, acting as a commander in the absence of Lieutenant Colonel Samuel Smith, was still determined to hold out. "Our ruins will serve us as breast-works," he

said. Unfortunately, the tenacity and courage of Fleury and Mifflin's four hundred defenders – most of them Marylanders – had already been undone by the treachery of an engineer named Robert White. He was a secret Tory, and when he was placed in charge of sinking a line of *cheveaux-de-frise* to bar the river to British warships, he deliberately left open a passage on the Pennsylvania side. Again and again enemy warships penetrated this line of sunken obstacles to come within pistol shot of Mifflin. Even so, the stubbornness of the rebel defenders had begun to discourage Howe's troops, until White deserted to them and, by his reports of the Americans' dire circumstances, persuaded them to renew the assault.

Washington, meanwhile, in his eagerness to hold the

Delaware forts, was all for reinforcing and resupplying the garrison. Remote from the battle itself, however, he had to depend upon the reports of staff officers, who advised evacuation. It was done, and among those survivors taken off Mud Island was the badly wounded, Fleury, as well as Joseph Martin, who, having been ordered to destroy hogsheads of rum, had the American private soldier's customary good sense to fill his own canteen with the delectable liquid before he closed his eyes and swung his ax.

The fall of Fort Mifflin seriously crippled the defense of Fort Mercer, not so much materially as morally. Mercer's defenses, were still in the hands of the capable French engineer, du Plessis, and Nathanael Greene had been sent by Washington to take command in New Jersey and to repel Lord Cornwallis in Howe's Second attempt to take the fort. Moreover, whereas Fort Mifflin had been undone chiefly by the fire from shore batteries on Province Island and the treachery of Robert White, Fort Mercer had been reinforced – including a command led by the Marquis de Lafayette, recovering from his Brandywine wound – and still possessed the gunboats and galleys that sunk Her Majesties ships *Augusta* and *Merlin*. Yet when Cornwallis landed at Billingsport on the New Jersey shore on November 18 with two thousand men, the fort was abandoned without a shot and all its buildings and supplies

were burned.

Why remains a mystery, except the possibility – if not actually the probability – that its defenders were demoralized and Greene did not dare rely upon them for another siege. They had behaved splendidly in beating back Donop's force, but then, night after night they had witnessed the arrival of casualties from Fort Mifflin, and day after day they had seen that fortress taken apart shot by shot. The prospect of having to face the same sort of bombardment, heavier now that the British could sail upriver unimpeded as far as Red Bank, may have sapped their moral strength. Indeed, Yankee Doodle never could match the disciplined stoicism of the European professional under artillery fire, and so the Delaware forts fell to the British, enabling Sir William Howe to hold on to Philadelphia while George Washington, with a heavy heart, marched his weary veterans off to find a suitable location to winter his troops.

*Sources:*

*Revolutionary War Almanac, 2006*  
by John C. Fredriksen  
*George Washington's War*  
by Robert Leckie,  
*Harper Perennial, 1993*

## Delaware River Forts Time Line

**Oct. 15** – The siege of Fort Mifflin intensifies as four British batteries, assisted by the warships HMS *Roebuck* and *Vigilant*, pound the American position at close range.

**Oct. 21** – Colonel Karl von Donop ferries 1,800 Hessians across the Delaware River and encamps at Haddonfield, NJ, prior to assaulting Fort Mercer.

**Oct. 22** – At Fort Mercer von Donop issues a surrender ultimatum to Colonel Christopher Greene, who refuses. Von Donop then decides to attack immediately rather than await support from British vessels in the Delaware River. Von Donop falls, fatally wounded, and is abandoned on the ground. The attack then sputters out, with the Hessians losing 371 casualties and 120 prisoners. The Americans suffer 14 dead and 23 injured.

**Oct. 23** – Admiral Richard Howe orders part of his fleet to engage the American garrison at Fort Mifflin. Six warships then penetrate the cheveaux-de-frise blocking the river, but good shooting by armed galleys under Commodore John Hazelwood drives the ship of the line HMS *Merlin*, 64 guns, and the 18-gun HMS *Augusta* aground at Hog Island. Both are grounded and burned.

**Nov. 10** – The British, taking advantage of a new channel opened up by the Delaware River, bring up heavy cannon, warships, and floating batteries to pound Fort Mifflin, PA, into submission.

**Nov. 14** – Under cover of darkness, General James M. Varnum ferries 450 men from his brigade into fort Mifflin to bolster the garrison. American artillery facing Province Island also manage to sink a British floating battery on the Delaware River.

**Nov. 15** – Fort Mifflin, having sustained five days of intense shelling, is further pummeled by the warships HMS *Somerset*, *Iris*, *Roebuck*, *Pearl* and *Liverpool*. At one point, frigates HMS *Vigilant* and *Fury* slip to within 20 yards of the fort and add to the conflagration. With 350 cannon throwing out 1,000 heavy balls every 20 minutes, Major Simeon Thayer finally abandons his muddy charge. The American sustain 300 casualties, and the survivors flee under cover of darkness. British losses are seven killed and five wounded.

**Nov. 18** – General Charles Cornwallis crosses the Delaware River at Billingsport and pushes on with 2,000 men against Fort Mercer. General Nathanael Greene is charged with holding onto that beleaguered post for as long as possible. However, before he can issue orders to that effect General James M. Varnum and Colonel Christopher Greene jointly decide to abandon the post against impossible odds.

**Nov. 20** – American forces are ordered to abandon Fort Mercer, NJ, effectively surrendering control of the Delaware River to the British.



## 2016 MINNESOTA SOCIETY SAR OFFICERS

The following compatriots were nominated and elected to serve another year for the Minnesota Society and/or their respective chapters. Congratulations to all the compatriots who accepted service to the Minnesota Society, Minneapolis Chapter or the Saint Paul Chapter Sons of the American Revolution.

### MINNESOTA SOCIETY SAR

President:.....John Charles Sassaman  
 Vice President: .....Geoffrey Robert Bodeau, M.D.  
 Secretary-Treasurer:.....John Hallberg Jones, P.P.  
 Registrar:.....Arthur Louis Finnell, P.P.  
 Genealogist & Assist. Registrar:..William Leslie DeCoursey, P.P.  
 Chancellor:.....Brendan Robert Tupa, J.D.  
 Historian/Newsletter Editor: .....Timothy Charles Harris, P.P.  
 Librarian:.....Thomas Christopher Harris  
 Surgeon: .....George Floyd Smith, M.D.  
 Chaplain: .....Michael Scott Swisher, P.P.  
 Sergeant-at-Arms: .....Jonathan Lee Gustafson

Past Presidents are automatically members of the Board of Managers. Those not named above are:

Hon. David S. Bouschor	James Fredrick Foster
Duane L. C. M. Galles, Esq.	COL Ronald E. McRoberts
Curtis John Oliver	Larry Wray Sisk
Marvin Eugene Stonecipher	Hon. Paul Kent Theisen
Buford Allen Young	

Board of Managers: (up to 20 members in addition to the above)

Charles Edward Boyles	Tracy Ashley Crocker
Dennis Garvin Croonquist	David Adriance Foster
Jay Thomas W. Franklin	Marvin Lane Jansma
Hon. William Raymond Johnson	Larry Allan Lundblad, Ph.D.
John David McCallum	Robert Arthur Minish
Christopher Willard Moberg	Thomas Truxtun Morrison, Sr.
Randall Roger Nelson	Christopher John Pizinger
Aaron Hale Printup	LTC Allen Dean Shepersky
Rehn Douglas Smith	Stephen Paul Thompson
Stephen John Vescelus	One Open Position

**S.A.R. Endowment Trust Fund:** (three-year terms)

Trustee ending January 2017: .....Duane L. C. M. Galles, P.P.  
 Trustee ending January 2018: .....Michael Scott Swisher, P.P.  
 Trustee ending January 2019: .....John Hallberg Jones, P.P.

**Nominated for Election at the NSSAR National Congress in Boston, MA, in July 2016**

National Trustee for Minnesota: ..Peter Arrott Dixon, P.P.  
 Alternate National Trustee MN:....Duane L.C.M. Galles, Ph.D., P.P.

### MINNEAPOLIS CHAPTER SAR

President:.....Geoffrey Robert Bodeau, M.D.  
 Vice President: .....Aaron Hale Printup  
 Secretary-Treasurer:.....John Hallberg Jones  
 Chaplain: .....Michael Scott Swisher, P.P.  
 Board of Managers:.....Thomas Truxtun Morrison  
 Tracy Ashley Crocker  
 Timothy Charles Harris

Past Presidents are automatically members of the Board of Managers. Those not named above are:

William Leslie DeCoursey  
 Arthur Louis Finnell  
 Duane L. C. M. Galles, Ph.D.  
 Hon. William Raymond Johnson  
 Robert Edward Kahl, II  
 Larry Allan Lundblad, Ph.D.  
 Rehn Douglas Smith  
 Hon. Paul Kent Theisen  
 Larry Larson Warren

### SAINT PAUL CHAPTER SAR

President.....John David McCallum  
 Vice President .....Dennis Garvin Croonquist  
 Secretary-Treasurer .....Timothy Charles Harris  
 Chaplain .....Thomas Christopher Harris  
 Board of Managers.....Larry Wray Sisk  
 John Charles Sassaman  
 Charles Edward Boyles

### NEXT MEETING

The Annual George Washington Luncheon Meeting will be held at Jax Cafe on February 13, 2016. Our speaker will be COL Ronald Edward McRoberts, Ph.D. President MN SR and Past President MNSAR. His topic will be "Boston – Cradle of the Revolution" a fascinating study of the time line of events leading up to the American Revolution.