

MINNESOTA SAR Salute



THE MINNESOTA SOCIETY SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION NEWSLETTER • www.MinnesotaSAR.org • SPRING 2026



MNSAR 137TH ANNUAL MEETING

Minneapolis, MN – The Minnesota Society Sons of the American Revolution held their annual meetings at Jax Cafe on January 17, 2026.

Minnesota SAR President Kevin Sullivan called the meeting to order and welcomed members. The Color Guard posted the colors followed by the Pledge to the U.S. flag and the SAR Pledge. Chaplain Michael Scott Swisher delivered the invocation. A moment of silence was observed for compatriots Phillip Southwick and Allen Dean Shepersky who had passed away during 2025. A thank you note was received from the Shepersky family thanking the MNSAR for honoring their dad and his life.

The assemblage enjoyed luncheon, each ordering their own entree from Jax Cafe's menu.

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DOUBLE ISSUE
MNSAR SALUTE...
2026 Annual Meeting
MNSAR 2026 Officers
Washington Day Luncheon
Events and People Related to
July 4, 1776
Minnesota Eagle Scout Winner

Has your address changed?
If so, please inform the MNSAR at
the above address – Thank you.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Minnesota Society
Sons of the American Revolution
718 Vermillion St.
Hastings, MN 55033-2133





MINNESOTA SOCIETY

MNSAR Membership

Corresponding Secretary Michael Schurch reported on membership. The membership count on 01 January 2026 was 230. We had 33 new members, two transferred in and two reinstatements. Compatriot Kintzinger presented supplemental membership certificates to Brian Ellingson and Richard Howie.

Minnesota Society Financial Report and Endowment Trust Fund

Treasurer Richard E. Smith reported 2025 receipts of \$3,445.85. Total expenses were \$6,650.42, including \$4,875.00 distributed to state chapters from a 2024 donation. This yielded a net loss of \$3,204.57. When adjusted to offset the distributed donation, the State Society had a net income of \$1,670.43.

Compatriot Michael Swisher reported on the John Hallberg Jones MNSAR Endowment Trust Fund, noting that the Trust had \$2,707.83 in interest available to distribute to the Minnesota SAR. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to return \$2,500.00 back to the Endowment Fund to increase the principal.

America 250 Programs

On Memorial Day the MNSAR will present a bench in Farmington, Minnesota. The MNSAR will participate in an event hosted at the Mall of America on July third through the fifth.

North Central District Zoom Meeting Events

Informal Zoom meeting events take place monthly and are open for all Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska and Dakota SAR members. Compatriot Sly, VPG of the North Central District SAR, described past presentations and announced the topic of upcoming Zoom events.

ROTC Medal Program

James Hagen reported that Silver SAR ROTC Medals and Certificates were presented at six ROTC units in Minnesota. Bronze SAR JRROTC Medals and Certificates were presented at eight JROTC units in Minnesota, and Bronze SAR Sea Cadet Good Citizenship Medals and Certificates were presented at two Sea Cadet units.

Minnesota SAR members who made in person presentations on behalf of the society were: Michael Bradley, Dennis Croonquist, Scott Fredell, John Glendenning, James Hagen, Dr. Thomas Shaffer and Dr. Richard Smith. The James B. Ladd Trust reimbursed the MNSAR for mileage for the presenters and for lettering the certificates. Each compatriot presenter chose to donate their potential mileage reimbursement to the MNSAR. This resulted in a total of \$305.88 being deposited in the MNSAR's General Fund.

Eagle Scout Scholarship and Awards Program

Compatriot Richard Smith reported as chair for the Eagle

Scout Program. The Eagle Scout Committee executes three tasks: administers the Eagle Scout Contest, issues SAR Certificates of Achievement to Eagle Scouts in Minnesota upon request, and serves as the point of contact for scouting-related activities. As the Minnesota winner of the 2024 Eagle Scout Contest, Matthew Higley received \$400. Minneapolis and Saint Paul Chapter winners each received \$100.

Thanks were given to the Eagle Committee members who reviewed the entries: Kerry Johnson (Vice Chair), Rich Howey, Craig Whiting, and Thomas Shaffer.

The 2025 contest winner will be in attendance at the George Washington Observance and Luncheon in February.

Service Awards

Six awards were presented to members, three to non-members. Among the awards were the following:

- Guy Kight – Silver Henry Knox Achievement Medal
- Stowe Kintzinger – State Outstanding Young Member Medal
- Richard Smith – State Meritorious Service Medal
- Christopher Moberg – Silver Henry Knox Achievement Medal and Oak Leaf Cluster
- John Sassaman – Oak Leaf Cluster for Silver Sherman Medal
- James Hagen – State Distinguished Service Award
- Geoff Bodeau – Silver Henry Knox Achievement Medal

Veterans Committee

The primary responsibility of the Veterans Committee is to solicit, evaluate and approve applications for the two veterans medals. The War Service Medal for service in conflicts, and the Military Service Medal for other service in the U.S. Armed Forces. Ronald McRoberts serves at the Veterans Committee Chair.

Three awards have been approved and will be distributed at the 2026 Washington's Birthday meeting.

MNSAR Color Guard

Color Guard Commander, Terry Sater reported that as well as posting the colors during MNSAR meetings, Color Guard members also participated in the following activities during 2025:

- 06 Feb – Patriot Chest Presentation at St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Minneapolis
- 03 April – Patriot Chest Presentation for DAR, Hastings
- 07 April – Patriot Chest Presentation for the Boy Scouts, New Prague
- 22 April – Patriot Chest Presentation for Providence Academy, Plymouth
- 30 April – Patriot Chest Presentation for Southview Elementary, Apple Valley
- 26 May – Memorial Day, Folds of Honor, Midland Hills
- 21 June – Officer Commissioning at the VA, Minneapolis



SAR ANNUAL MEETING

- 30 June – MNSAR Memorial Service at Woodbury
- 04 July – C.A.R. Flying Pancake Breakfast, Wayzata with “live” TV appearance on Channel 9 News

Numerous events are in the works for 2026. The MNSAR black powder insurance policy has been replaced by a NSSAR national policy and a refund has been issued.

Living History Team

Compatriot Richard Howey reported that the Living History Team had a busy month of April, 2025 with four Patriot Chest presentations: The Fort Snelling Chapter of the DAR in Hastings; Scouting of America units in the city of New Prague; The fourth grade class at Providence Academy in Plymouth; The fourth grade at Southview Elementary in Apple Valley. Later, in October, a Patriot Chest Presentation was performed to the senior men’s group at Meetinghouse Church in Edina.

In 2026, Patriot Chest Presentations are scheduled for Trillium Woods Senior Home in Plymouth, Trail Life Troop in Chaska and the fourth grade class at an elementary school in Farmington.

Fellowship Committee

The Committee consisted of three members: James Hagen (chair), David Foster, and Ronald McRoberts. The primary activity of the Committee during the year was to investigate possible suitable venues for

Society meetings. The primary motivation was that some members had expressed reservations regarding driving into the city. We investigated, both individual and collectively, multiple sites including restaurants, golf course club houses, and conference centers. Our criteria were primarily geographic location, accessibility, audio-visual support, menu options and cost. Our conclusion was that none of the possibilities investigated were preferable to Jax Café in Minneapolis. Although all venues met our criteria for location, accessibility and audio-visual support, none also satisfied our criteria for menu options and costs. In particular, few would permit us to order off a menu, as opposed to common menu with a very limited number of options, and most also would incur a substantial room charge of several thousand dollars.

For the coming year, the responsibilities of the Fellowship Committee should be reviewed including venue selection, meeting program including selection of speakers and meeting announcements. Some of these responsibilities are shared with other committees and individuals, including the Society President.

Minneapolis Chapter

The Minneapolis Chapter was called to order by Secretary-Treasurer Thomas Harris in the absence of both the President and Vice President. Thomas Harris presented the Annual Financial Report,

noting net income of \$4,214.98 as of 31 December 2025. Total assets equals \$29,744.72.

The Minneapolis Chapter will donate \$200.00 to the Lake Minnetonka Society C.A.R. and \$100.00 to the Hennepin History Museum. A motion was made to make a donation of not more than \$100.00 to the Minnesota Genealogical Society, which passed.

Saint Paul Chapter

The Saint Paul Chapter was called to order by President Thomas Wayne Shaffer. The Minutes of the 18 January 2025 meeting were read by Secretary-Treasurer Richard Smith. The 2025 Treasurer’s report was presented by Smith indicating assets totaling \$10,476.78.

Seven Saint Paul area high schools participated in the Bronze Good Citizenship Medal Program and their students were presented with their medals the past May.

Flag Certificates were awarded to four Saint Paul area businesses for regularly flying the flag on Flag Day, June 14:

- Perkins Restaurant, Hastings
- The Confluence Hotel, Hastings
- Edward Jones Financial, Chisago City
- The City of Scandia

Nominating Committee

MNSAR Officers will remain the same as 2025 with the exception of Stowe Andrew Kintzinger as the Corresponding Secretary and Michael Schurch, the Recording Sec-

retary. The nominated officers were then elected and sworn in.

President Sullivan closed the meeting with a solemn moment of remembrance for patriot ancestors. Following the SAR Recessional, Chaplain Michael Swisher offered the benediction. The MNSAR Color Guard retired the colors and the meeting was adjourned.



2026 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, and the Saint Paul Chapter Sons of the American Revolution.

MINNESOTA SOCIETY SAR

President:.....Kevin Everett Sullivan
 Vice President:Richard Eugene Smith
 Corresponding Secretary:.....Stowe Andrew Kintzinger
 Recording Secretary:.....Michael Schurch
 Treasurer:Richard Eugene Smith
 Genealogist / Registrar:.....John Charles Sassaman, P.P.
 Chancellor:William Raymond Johnson
 Historian/Newsletter Editor:Timothy Charles Harris, P.P.
 Librarian:.....Stephen John Vescelus
 Surgeon:George Floyd Smith, M.D.
 Chaplain:Michael Scott Swisher, P.P.
 Sergeant-at-Arms:Thomas Christopher Harris

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

Geoffrey Robert Bodeau, M.D.	Hon. David S. Bouschor
Dennis Garvin Croonquist	William Leslie DeCoursey
James Fredrick Foster	Duane L. C. M. Galles, Ph.D.
James Everett Hagen	COL Ronald E. McRoberts
Christopher Willard Moberg	John Charles Sassaman
Larry Wray Sisk	Buford Allen Young

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

Charles Edward Boyles	Tracy Ashley Crocker
David Adriance Foster	Jay Thomas W. Franklin
Steven James Hyde	Marvin Lane Jansma
Hon. William Raymond Johnson	Larry Allan Lundblad, Ph.D.
John David McCallum	Robert Arthur Minish
Thomas Truxtun Morrison, Sr.	Randall Roger Nelson
Christopher John Pizinger	Aaron Hale Printup
Rehn Douglas Smith	Stephen Paul Thompson

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

Trustee ending January 2026:Duane L. C. M. Galles, P.P.
 Trustee ending January 2027:Michael Scott Swisher, P.P.
 Trustee ending January 2028:COL Ronald E. McRoberts, P.P.

Nominated for Election at the NSSAR National Congress in Greensboro, NC, in July 2026

National Trustee for Minnesota: ..Richard Eugene Smith
 Alternate National Trustee MN:...Michael Schurch

MINNEAPOLIS CHAPTER SAR

President:..... Hon. William Raymond Johnson
 Vice President: Robert Frederick Vance, Jr.
 Secretary-Treasurer:..... Thomas Christopher Harris
 Chaplain: Michael Scott Swisher, P.P.
 Board of Managers:..... Tracy Ashley Crocker
 Michael William Huttner
 Steven James Hyde
 Robert Edward Kahl, II
 Larry Allan Lundblad, Ph.D.
 Aaron Hale Printup
 Kevin Everett Sullivan

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

Geoffrey Robert Bodeau, M.D.
 William Leslie DeCoursey
 Arthur Louis Finnell
 Duane L. C. M. Galles, Ph.D.
 Robert Wayne Allison

SAINT PAUL CHAPTER SAR

President..... Thomas Wayne Shaffer
 Vice President Richard Arthur Howey
 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Eugene Smith
 Chaplain Thomas Christopher Harris
 Board of Managers..... Dennis Garvin Croonquist
 James Everett Hagen
 Christopher Willard Moberg

Next Meeting

The Minnesota SAR's Constitution Day Luncheon will be held on September 26, 2016. Watch for detailed information to be mailed to you in the weeks prior to the meeting.



WASHINGTON DAY LUNCHEON

Minneapolis, MN – The Minnesota Society Sons of the American Revolution, in conjunction with the Minnesota SR, held their George Washington Day Observance and Luncheon meeting at Jax Cafe on February 21, 2026. thirty-one members were present plus spouses, family members, the Eagle Scout family, DAR members and our guest speaker.

The MNSAR Color Guard posted the colors with the accompaniment of fife and drum, precisely at 11:00 a.m. President Kevin Sullivan read the SAR mission statement as a reminder of the purpose our society. The Color Guard Commander, Terry Sater, led the Pledge of Allegiance. The MNSAR Corresponding Secretary, Stowe Kintzinger, followed by reciting the SAR Pledge. Chaplain, Michael Scott Swisher provided the invocation.

Thomas Shaffer, a member of the Eagle Scout Committee, presented this year's MNSAR

Eagle Scout contest winner, Michael Korf, with a certificate, badge, Eagle Scout bronze medal, and a \$400 check. Shaffer noted that during the years that he has been a member of the committee Korf's essay was the best.

Reports were made by the Color Guard Commander, Terry Sater, and the Living History Team Leader, Richard Howey. They discussed future events including:

- 27 Feb – Patriot Chest Presentation at Trillium Woods Senior Home
- 25 May – Memorial Day – Folds of Honor, Midland Hills
- 25 May – Memorial Day – Bench Dedication Ceremony, Farmington
- 3-5 July – America 250 Event at the Mall of America
- 04 July – C.A.R. Flying Pancake Breakfast Event, Wayzata
- 12 Sept – Salute the Troops, Jordan

Plus other pending Patriot Chest and Color Guard appearances.

Howey introduced Grant Kruger and his wife Nancy, who was in attendance. Kruger wore a replica uniform and will be the MNSAR's George Washington. Howey shared a museum grade replica of George Washington's pistol. Only senior officers of the Patriot Army carried them. He also showed a functioning reproduction of an officer's pistol, which was donated to the MNSAR by the Northland Chapter.

MNSAR Color Guard Commander, Terry Sater, presented the NSSAR Caleb Gibbs award to Steve Hyde for twelve years of service as the MNSAR Color Guard Commander. A likeness of Major Caleb Gibbs is on the face of the medal. Major Gibbs was the Commander of Washington's Guard from May 1776 to January 1781

Corresponding Secretary, Stowe Kintzinger, assisted

President Sullivan in presenting awards. Donald Alan Youel and Andrew Bruce Youel each received Military Service medals and certificates. Ted Youel accepted the award on their behalf. Donald Andrew Youel received a War Service medal and certificate.

President Sullivan announced that the Northland Chapter has gone through the process of being dissolved. They have transferred their assets to MNSAR and have closed their accounts.

President Sullivan announced that the fall meeting will be held at a date and location to be determined. He reminded the audience to check out the monthly North Central District Zoom meetings.

Following the SAR recessional, Chaplain Michael Swisher rendered the benediction, and the Color Guard retired the colors. The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.



Former MNSAR Color Guard Commander, Steven Hyde, accepting The Caleb Gibbs award.



Grant Kruger a.k.a. George Washington



Ted Youel, President Kevin Sullivan, Corresponding Secretary, Stowe Kintzinger, and the Youel family.



EVENTS AND PEOPLE RELATING TO JULY 4, 1776



Doug Ohman was the keynote speaker at the MN-SAR George Washington Day Luncheon. He is an author, photographer and historian but he likes to refer himself as a storyteller. He has presented over three hundred talks to various groups, but this day's presentation was his first upon the subject of the American Revolution.

He quoted Ronald Reagan: "If we forget what we did, we won't know who we are." then commenced summarizing the events leading up to the American Revolution.

Ohman stated that the British Parliament created laws to tax the colonies to help recoup the costs of the French and Indian War. The 1764 Sugar Act, the 1765 Stamp Act and the 1767/68 Townshend Acts. Each caused vigorous unrest and even riots.

Ohman talked extensively about the "bigger than life" people involved in the Revolutionary War:

– Samuel Adams and the Sons of Liberty – eventually over two-thousand men strong. They would get together to complain about the mother country.

– John Adams believed in justice over politics and defended eight British soldiers who were put on trial for the Boston Massacre. On March 5, 1770, British soldiers shot into an unruly, taunting crowd in Boston, Massachusetts, killing five colonists. This event lit the fuse.

– The Sons of Liberty and the Boston Tea Party. On December 16, 1773, American colonists, disguised as Mohawk warriors, boarded three British ships in Boston Harbor and dumped 342 chests of tea into the water. The destroyed tea was worth over one-million in today's dollars.

As a result the British introduced the Intolerable Acts, or Coercive Acts. They consisted of four punitive laws passed by the British Parliament to punish Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party. They closed Boston Harbor, suspended local government, allowed royal officials to be tried outside the colony, and expanded housing for troops. These measures were aimed to isolate Massachusetts but instead united the colonies, leading to the First Continental Congress.

The First Continental Congress united twelve colonies against British oppression by creating the Continental Association to boycott British goods,

issuing a Declaration of Rights and Grievances, and pledging to reconvene if the Intolerable Acts remained in force.

– Paul Revere and the midnight ride. On April 19, 1775, roughly 700 British soldiers marched from Boston to Lexington and Concord to seize colonial military supplies. A brief, deadly skirmish led to a running battle marking the start of the American Revolutionary War.

– George Washington being appointed commander of the continental army during the Second Continental Congress. Prior to Washington's arrival to the area surrounding Boston the Battle of Bunker Hill took place where, Dr. Joseph Warren was killed. The battle was a British victory at a very high cost.

Ohman's favorite character is Daniel Morgan. Morgan fought in the French and Indian war, he sustained 500 lashes as a result of an altercation with a British soldier. Ohman described Morgan's march through Maine, his capture at the Battle of Quebec, his famous rifle men who fought at the Battle of Saratoga and his brilliant strategy at the Battle of the Cowpens.

He reminded us of other "bigger than life" characters:

– Henry Knox and the noble train of artillery, an expedition to transport heavy weaponry that had been captured at Fort Ticonderoga to the Continental Army camps outside Boston during the winter of 1775–76.

– John Paul Jones capturing British ships in and around England.

– Francis Marion, the father of guerrilla warfare. After a seven-hour, 26-mile pursuit through South Carolina swamps in November 1780, a frustrated Lieutenant Colonel Tarleton reportedly exclaimed, "As for this damned old fox, the Devil himself could not catch him".

He also talked about inspirational stories that became legends: Washington crossing the Delaware; Thomas Jefferson and the five man committee to create the Declaration of Independence; The Liberty Bell and why it cracked; the Battle of Yorktown and the surrender of the British Army; Betsy Ross and the five-pointed star as opposed to a six-pointed star; Deborah Sampson a Massachusetts woman who disguised herself as a man in order to serve in the Continental Army. When she was wounded and treated the jig was up.

At the end of his dissertation Ohman queried the group with five trivia questions. He handed out copies of his book, "Is It Possible? Stories From Lost History" as prizes.

Editor's Note: I thoroughly enjoyed Doug Ohman's book, *Is It Possible? Stories From Lost History*, where Ohman ties his hobby of metal detecting and the treasures he finds with history and storytelling.



WOODBURY EAGLE SCOUT WINS MINNESOTA COMPETITION

Michael Korf of the Northern Star Council Boy Scouts of America is the Minnesota winner of the SAR's Eagle Scout Scholarship and Awards Program. Korf, from Woodbury, Minnesota, was honored at the annual George Washington Day Observation and Luncheon where he received a \$400.00 check as the Minnesota winner.

Korf'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 for a \$10,000 scholarship. \$6,000, \$4,000, \$2,000 and \$1,000 runner-up scholarships were also chosen. His winning essay is printed below.



I have not yet begun to fight...

John Paul Jones played a vital role in the success of the American Revolutionary War through his service in the Continental Navy. At a time when the American colonies had little naval strength, Jones's courage, leadership, and determination helped prove that the colonies could challenge Great Britain at sea. His actions not only brought important victories during the war but also helped establish traditions that continue in the United States Navy today.

Born in Scotland in 1747, John Paul Jones became an experienced sailor before the start of the American Revolution. In 1775, he volunteered to support the American cause and was commissioned as a lieutenant in the newly created Continental Navy. The American Navy was small, underfunded, and out-matched by the powerful British Royal Navy. Despite these challenges, Jones believed they could weaken Britain by disrupting trade, lowering morale, and drawing attention away

from land battles. He served aboard and commanded several ships in the fleet. Jones was assigned to the *Alfred*, the flagship of Commodore Hopkins's small fleet where he is credited for raising the Continental Colors.

Jones had early success commanding ships such as the *USS Providence* and later the *USS Ranger*. In 1778, while aboard the *Ranger*, he led raids on the British coast, including an attack on the port of Whitehaven. These raids surprised the British and demonstrated that the war could reach British shores. During the same period, Jones captured the British warship *HMS Drake*, marking one of the first major naval victories for the Continental Navy and increasing American confidence and international support.

John Paul Jones is remembered for his leadership during the 1779 battle between his ship, the *Bonhomme Richard*, and the British warship *HMS Serapis*. Although his ship suf-

fered severe damage and appeared close to defeat, Jones refused to surrender. When asked if he intended to give up, he famously declared, "I have not yet begun to fight." Through determination and skill, Jones eventually forced the surrender of the *Serapis*. This victory became a powerful symbol of American perseverance and bravery in the face of overwhelming odds.

Beyond individual battles, Jones helped shape the future of the American Navy. He believed strongly in discipline, honor, and professionalism among sailors. His actions showed American leaders and foreign allies that a strong navy was essential for defending independence and securing the nation's future.

John Paul Jones's contributions to the Continental Navy were crucial during the American Revolutionary War. Through bold leadership, he helped the American colonies challenge British naval dominance and inspired future gen-

erations of sailors and officers.

The naval traditions begun by John Paul Jones remains an important part of American history. After the Revolution, Jones later lived in Paris but died in 1792 at the age of forty-five. He was buried in Paris until the U.S. ambassador to France located his remains in 1905. Jones body returned to the United States aboard naval vessels and President Theodore Roosevelt honored John Paul Jones as "The Father of the US Navy." In 1913, Jones's remains were reburied in the chapel crypt of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

AMERICAN EAGLE

News of Yesterday Reported Today

Monday, January 8, 1781

MUTINY!

Trenton, New Jersey — Mutinous Pennsylvania soldiers accept Colonel Joseph Reed's offer of amnesty and his pledge to have the Continental Congress honor all prior commitments to them. The mutiny ends and those soldiers eligible for discharge are allowed to leave.

The year 1780 had ended in dishonor and near-disaster, but the year 1781 began with mutiny. For years this had been George Washington's greatest fear. Again and again he had warned Congress that if his beloved, faithful troops were not properly fed, clothed and paid-in specie, that is, not in worthless Continentals — they would mutiny or just plain go home, and that would be the end of the American Revolution. As often as he issued the warning, Congress ignored it — for Congress, in truth, had neither the money to finance these basic needs nor the means of raising it.

The soldiers of the Pennsylvania Line, quartered at Mount Kemble near the old encampment at Morristown, had suffered cruelly. They were half-naked and starving and had not been paid for twelve months. They were convinced that they had been tricked by Congress. Although they had enlisted for three years or the duration of the war, these men believed (or said they had been told) that this meant that they would serve for three years unless the war ended *before* then, when they would be discharged. Thus when their three years were up — and for most of them that was on New Year's Day, 1781

— they would be given a choice of discharge or the chance to re-enlist and gain Pennsylvania's generous bounty of eighty-one dollars in silver and two hundred acres of land after the war. This was what was being paid to new recruits, some of whom were convicts who were freed on their promise to enlist. It infuriated these loyal, starving, freezing troops, in threadbare clothing to realize that common criminals, who had not yet suffered as much as a headache or heard a shot fired in anger, should have their pockets filled with hard money while theirs were empty.

Their complaint was certainly a just one, and their commander, Anthony Wayne, openly sympathized with them and placed himself staunchly on their side. This was not true of most of their junior officers, many of whom were unfit to carry a private's musket. Thus, as the year 1780 neared its close and both Congress and Joseph Reed's council took no notice of their misery, they decided to mutiny. On New Year's Day, with huzzas and random firing of muskets, they burst out of their wretched huts to form on the parade ground. Next they broke into the magazine and began firing off cannons. Throughout this display, there was neither drunkenness nor indiscipline. Under the direction of their sergeants, they maintained a remarkable order—much more precise than under their detested officers — and promised to harm no one. However, when cannon and muskets go off at random, someone is

bound to be hurt — and one officer was unintentionally killed and two others wounded.

Hearing of the uprising, General Wayne cut short his own holiday celebration to mount his horse and attempt to quell the mutiny by persuasion. The men told him their quarrel was with Congress and the council. When he persisted, they fired over his head. In anguish Wayne tore open his coat and dared them to kill him. They repeated their pledge not to harm any officer and marched off toward Princeton with guns and baggage.

Mutiny in the Continental Army had long been the dream of both the Tories and the British commanders. Sir Henry Clinton at once sought to take advantage of it, alerting a strong force of British and Hessian troops for a possible landing at South Amboy “to favor the revolt and keep the militia back.” He also assured the mutineers “that if they will lay down their arms they will be pardoned for all past offenses, be paid all the pay due them by Congress, and not be required to serve in the British army unless they chose it.” In indignation, the Pennsylvanians rejected Clinton's offer, and when he sent two spies or agents provocateurs among them, they seized them and handed them over for trial and execution. From Princeton the mutineers marched on Trenton, where they were met by Joseph Reed. Their elected Board of Sergeants negotiated with dignity and without threats, but also with acumen. They knew that their cause was just and

they were not to be dissuaded by promises.

Washington, meanwhile, was faced with an agonizing decision. Mutiny, of course, is anathema to any military organization and cannot be tolerated. Like any commander, he would rather suppress the rebellion by force than end it by negotiation. No matter how unjustly they have been treated, to talk to disaffected troops can be taken as a sign of soft-heartedness — and the malaise can spread. But if he used force, he might provoke an adverse chain reaction among the other units of the Continental Army. Washington, had he not known of the suffering of his soldiers and sympathized with the men deeply, might have been distracted enough by this dilemma to opt for the rod, rather than reason. In the end he refrained from calling upon other Continentals to quell the uprising of their mutinous comrades, standing wisely by while the problem was solved by a firm promise to pay part of the back pay and the discharge of all those who claimed their three-year enlistments had expired.

Source:

Revolutionary War Almanac,
by John C. Fredriksen,
Infobase Publishing, 2006

George Washington's War by Robert Leckie,
HarperPerennial, 1993