

M I N N E S O T A

SAR Salute



THE MINNESOTA SOCIETY SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION NEWSLETTER • www.MinnesotaSAR.org • SPRING 2018



2018 Annual Washington Day Luncheon

February 18, 2017 – Minneapolis, Minnesota – 37 members of the Minnesota Society, along with spouses, guests, and members of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution in the State of Minnesota, gathered for the Annual Washington Day Luncheon. The total attendance was 64. Jax Café had prepared their signature Chicken Chardonnay for the group, with a vegetarian alternative for those desiring such, and a delightful Fruit Tart dessert.

Secretary-Treasurer Jones presented three special awards and announced three additional ones: The Bronze Color Guard Medal and Certificate was presented to Steven Hyde. The same award was mailed to John Sassaman and Aaron Printup who were out of town. The Meritorious Service Medal was presented to Paul Kent Theisen, and the Patriot Medal to John Sassaman and Ronald McRoberts.

**INSIDE THE
MNSAR SALUTE...**

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Annual George Washington
Observance and Luncheon

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Military Lessons from the
Southern Campaign of 1778-1781

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American Eagle

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New MNSAR Members

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Minnesota Eagle Scout Wins First
Runner-up at NSSAR Competition

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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MILITARY LESSONS FROM THE SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN 1778-1781

COL Ronald Edward McRoberts, Past President General, North Central District NSSAR and Past President of both the Minnesota Society SAR and Minnesota SR brought a fascinating and thorough presentation about British Generals Clinton and Cornwallis's fateful Southern Campaign culminating in their surrender at Yorktown.

McRoberts started his dissertation by citing *On War*, a book by Prussian general Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831), written mostly after the Napoleonic wars, between 1816 and 1830. Among many strands of thought, three stand out as essential to Clausewitz's concept:

- War is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means.
- The military objectives in war that support one's political objectives fall into two broad types: "war to achieve limited aims" and war to "disarm" the enemy: "to render him politically helpless or militarily impotent."
- All else being equal, the course of war will tend to favor the party with the stronger emotional and political motivations, but especially the defender.

The British still dreamed of a mass Loyalist uprising that would turn the war decisively in their favor. Sir Henry Clinton believed that the South was Toryland. He would use Savannah as a base to conquer the Carolinas and then Virginia, after which, with his army augmented by a huge influx of Tories, he would move to

reduce the North in similar detail.

In December, 1779 General Clinton embarked from New York with the fleet of Admiral Marriot Arbuthnot – 8,700 men on board ninety transports and ten warships.

On May 12, 1780, after a six-week siege at Charlestown, SC, General Benjamin Lincoln surrendered 5,400 men, 6,000 muskets, and 400 cannon to General Henry Clinton. This was the biggest disaster to befall American arms in the war and the largest American capitulation until the fall of Bataan in 1942. Clinton returned to New York, leaving General Charles Cornwallis the theater commander in his absence.

On May 29, British forces under Lieutenant Banastre Tarleton encountered an American force at Waxhaws Creek, SC. Tarleton offered "No Quarter" to American forces trying to surrender. The American sustained losses of 113 killed, 150 wounded and 203 captured compared to British losses of three killed and 12 wounded.

The Continental Congress responded by appointing the hero of Saratoga, General Horatio Gates, Commander of the Southern Department. On August 16, General Gates engaged the British forces under Charles Cornwallis at Camden, SC. Gates erred grievously by placing his militias along the center and left flank where they opposed some of the best regiments in the British army. During the rout, Gates himself spurred his horse and ignominiously galloped off at the first sign of disaster, not stopping until he reached Charlotte, 60 miles away. American

losses were estimated at 240 killed and over 800 wounded; Cornwallis lost a trifling 68 killed and 256 wounded.

On October 7, American forces under Colonels William Campbell, Isaac Shelby, Benjamin Cleveland, and John Sevier entrapped a large body of Loyalists under Major Patrick Ferguson at King's Mountain, SC. After Ferguson was killed the loyalists tried to surrender but were dealt a taste of "Tarleton's Quarter," and several were shot down before the colonels could restore order. Ferguson's entire force was annihilated.

On December 3, 1780 General Nathanael Greene arrived in Charlotte, NC to assume command of the Southern Department from the disgraced General Horatio Gates. With only 2,500 Continentals and militia he boldly initiated offensive operations against larger British forces. Disregarding the risks, General Greene daringly split his forces by sending General Daniel Morgan and 600 men on a wide sweep through South Carolina. He was at liberty to attack the rear of General Cornwallis's army to buy time.

On January 17, 1781, Colonel Banastre Tarleton and 1,100 troops caught up to General Daniel Morgan's forces at Cowpens, SC. As anticipated, he immediately attacked without proper reconnaissance and plunged headlong into the trap awaiting him. The first and second lines of Morgan's militia fired skillfully and retired, knocking down many officers. The British, though staggered, came on and engaged the veteran

Continental who suddenly feigned a retreat and gave ground. At a given signal, Morgan's regulars suddenly turned around and delivered a point-blank volley into the disorganized pursuers, which stunned them. The cavalry then charged over the hill and flanked the British. It was a superbly executed double envelopment and Tarleton's army literally disintegrated. Cowpens was an American tactical masterpiece and a crushing blow to General Cornwallis, who had lost his remaining light troops.

General Cornwallis doggedly pursued American forces under General Greene. On March 15, Cornwallis finally confronted General Greene's larger American force at Guilford Courthouse. The Battle of Guilford Courthouse was a dearly bought British victory; Cornwallis lost 93 killed and 439 wounded – one-fourth of his army. Cornwallis was unable to sustain such attrition and abandoned his conquest of North Carolina. They marched to Wilmington, 200 miles distant and eventually into Virginia.

On July 20, General Cornwallis was ordered by General Henry Clinton to march to Williamsburg, VA, on the coast. Once there he was to establish a strong base from which his army could be supplied and reinforced from the sea. He arrived at Yorktown at the tip of the Virginia peninsula on August 1, and began entrenching. On September 12, Admiral Thomas Graves concluded that he was badly outnumbered by the French and he sailed back to New York to gather reinforcements. This single

act forfeited control of the sea to the allies; British forces under General Cornwallis are now sealed within their works at Yorktown by Admiral Francois-Joseph-Paul, comte de Grasse. By September 14, advance elements of the combined armies under Generals George Washington and Jean-Baptiste, comte de

Rochambeau, reached Virginia and were transported to Williamsburg by French naval units. The massed Franco-American force formally occupied the outer ring of General Cornwallis's defenses and planted their siege artillery and started digging trenches.

On October 14, a combined assault under Colonels Alexander Hamilton and Guillaume de Deux-Ponts captured Redoubt Nos. 9 and 10 in Yorktown's defenses. Both readouts were incorporated into the allied siege lines, which allowed additional cannon to be mounted at even closer range. On October 19, 1781 the British formally surrendered 8,081 men of the Yorktown garrison effectively ending the Revolutionary War.

COL. McRoberts used his unique perspective, having been a military planner in the army, to impart military lessons learned during the Southern campaign of 1778-1781.

The British did not win the hearts and minds of the American populous when Lieutenant Ban-



astre Tarleton offered "No Quarter" to American forces trying to surrender. Many Tories, after Ferguson's defeat at Kings Mountain, had grown timid and faint of heart, which meant that the British army could not afford another loss of face.

To use Carl von Clausewitz's term, "Center of Gravity" – even though General Greene's army was weaker than Cornwallis's, his enterprising spirit made him more important. The center of gravity lay with him, and he pulled the other forces in his direction.

For the most part, the British engaged in military action with no thought of the political impact to the Southern loyalists. The American's were victorious in only two battles yet won the war without defeating the British army.

Sources:

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REMEMBERING TWO LONGTIME MEMBERS OF THE MNSAR

Curtis John Oliver, of Brooklyn Park passed away January 29, 2018 after a long, courageous battle with cancer. Curtis was 74 years old. He was survived by his spouse, Gail Hanson. Curtis was a longtime member of the Minnesota Society SAR and the Minnesota society of the War of 1812.

A memorial service will be held at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, May 6, 2018 at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church. It will include some of his compositions as a special tribute.

Published in the StarTribune on February 4, 2018

Roger V. Young of St. Paul was called home on January 31, 2018. He was 66 years old. Roger was preceded in death by his parents, Harold and Irene. He was survived by his devoted, loving brother, Allen. Roger was a longtime member of the Minnesota Society SAR, Minnesota Society of the War of 1812, Minnesota Branch of the National Pilgrim Society, and St. Agnes Men's Club. He was a participant at the Ally People Solutions for 40 plus years. A solemn High Requiem Mass Extraordinary was held at The Church of St. Agnes on Tuesday, February 6.

Published in the Pioneer Press on February 4, 2018

MNSAR MEMBERSHIP REPORT

New Members were welcomed during the Washington Day Observance and Luncheon. SAR Secretary-Treasurer Jones presented a certificate and rosette to new member Kenneth Hatch. Other new member certificates were mailed to the recipients who were not in attendance. Robert Allison was presented a star for his approved supplemental application. The member rosette was presented to James Stuart who was attending his first SAR meeting.

NEW MEMBERS:

Name	Patriot
Stephen Dean Goodrich.....	Stephen Goodrich
Timothy Wayne Coats	Nicholas Blankenship
Daniel Ryan Coats	Nicholas Blankenship
Bryan Thomas Coats	Nicholas Blankenship
Kenneth Roy Hatch	Nathan Hatch

The Constitution Day Luncheon will be held at Jax Cafe on September 22, 2018. Michael Moses will speak about the Battle of Germantown. Watch for detailed information to be mailed.



MINNESOTA EAGLE SCOUT WINS FIRST RUNNER-UP AT NATIONAL COMPETITION!



Wyatt S. Hahn, of the Northern Star Council Boy Scouts of America, represented the MNSAR in the national competition of the Eagle Scout Scholarship and Awards Program. The national winners are:

- First Place: Missouri Society – \$10,000
- First Runner-up: Minnesota Society – \$6,000
- Second Runner-up: Florida Society – \$4,000
- The next seven entries with the highest scores each received \$200.

A Minnesota Eagle Scout has either won, placed or showed at the national level by the NSSAR Eagle Scout Scholarship and Awards Committee eight times since 2002!

CONGRATULATIONS WYATT!

Wyatt, from Hutchinson, Minnesota, was honored at the annual George Washington Day Observance and Luncheon where he received the Spreading Wings Bronze Eagle Trophy as the Minnesota winner. His mother and father were also in attendance. Wyatt read his patriotic essay which is presented below.

Wyatt'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 \$6,000 scholarship.

The Role of Medicine in the Revolutionary War, by Wyatt S. Hahn – 2017 MNSAR Eagle Scout Contest Winner

The Revolutionary War not only included many events which made it famous such as the Battle of Lexington and Concord, the Battle of Saratoga, and the Siege of Yorktown, but also included people like George Washington, Charles Cornwallis, and Nathanael Greene. As with other wars, there are many people who were forgotten who actually made large contributions to the success of the army. Although medicine was not very advanced during the American Revolution, physicians, surgeons, and nurses all played a very important role especially as the Continental Army weathered a long and cold winter at Valley Forge between 1777 and 1778.

Giving a brief history of medicine during American Revolution is important to understanding the actions taken over the course of the war. The

most common medicines used in the revolutionary time period included opium tinctures, calomel, a mercury compound, cream of tartar, and lavender spirits. One of the most common and advanced practices of preventing a disease, such as smallpox, was called inoculation. Inoculation was the deliberate infection of individuals who did not have a disease in order to build immunity to it. The British army often sent troops infected with smallpox to the Colonial Army which resulted in an American death rate of 20 to 25 percent. George Washington called for all his troops to be inoculated, which lowered his death rates from 17 percent to 1 percent. Washington's idea to put a poison in the body to reach a cure was brilliant because it is the beginning of what we do for cancer today. As for medical training, doctors usually did not

attend twelve to fifteen years of schooling as they do today, but often times simply spent a couple of years as an apprentice to a senior physician before beginning a practice of their own.

The need for hospitals grew drastically at the beginning of the war and four districts of hospitals. Four hospital districts were created: the Eastern, Northern, Middle, and Southern. Conditions at these hospitals were poor and inadequate. Pay each day for the attending physicians was \$6.00 and nine rations for the General Director, \$4.00 and six rations for the Senior Surgeon, and \$1.00 and two rations for the Surgeon's mate.

As winter fell on Valley Forge in 1777, the first record of any sickness came on December 23. On this day George Weedon, who always kept a very orderly journal, made the first comments regarding sol-

diers who had fallen ill. The journal stated that on December 26, 1777, "2,898 men were reported sick or unfit for duty largely due to the lack of clothing." Then again on February 1 of the next year, the journal spoke that, "the number of incapacitated increased to 3,989, again traced to the need of clothing." As numbers of those ill continued to rise and weather conditions worsening, the physicians at Valley Forge did all they could to prevent a complete wipeout of the entire army.

The behind the scenes medicine which took place during the American Revolution played a major role in the success as well as strategy of the armies. Because of this, the physicians can be seen as the forgotten heroes who made an impact on the outcome of the American Revolution.

AMERICAN EAGLE

News of Yesterday Reported Today

Monday June 29, 1778



BATTLE OF MONMOUTH COURT HOUSE FOUGHT TO A DRAW

Monmouth Court House, New Jersey – Yesterday, General Washington’s reinvigorated army had proved themselves the equal of the best British professionals during the Battle of Monmouth Court House.

On June 19, following the British evacuation of Philadelphia, General Washington, alert to General Henry Clinton’s intentions, roused the Continental army and decamped from Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. He marched 14,500 men to intercept the fleeing British.

On June 25 he learned that British troops were approaching the tiny crossroads village of Monmouth Court House and deputized General Charles Lee to lead the offensive. (In April Washington had been rejoined by Lee, who was released in a prisoner exchange after sixteen months of captivity in New York.) When Lee balked at the assignment as beneath his lofty dignity, fit only for a “young volunteering general,” Washington handed the job to Lafayette, who would command the vanguard force to harry the British rear. “The young Frenchman, in raptures with his command and burning to distinguish himself, moves toward the enemy who are in motion,” the aide James McHenry wrote in his diary. Suddenly afraid that Lafayette would steal his glory, Lee informed Washington that he had reconsidered. “They say that a corps consisting of six thousand men, the greater part chosen, is undoubtedly the most honorable

command next to the Commander in Chief; that my ceding it would of course have an odd appearance;” he wrote with considerable understatement. “I must entreat therefore... that, if this detachment does march, that I may have the command of it.” If he did not get the command, Lee asserted, he would be disgraced, which meant he might have to resign.

Whatever Washington thought of Lee’s attempts to gratify his own self importance, he couldn’t afford a feud with his second in command on the eve of battle, even if Lee had shown little sympathy for the planned attack. On the other hand, he didn’t wish to disappoint Lafayette. So he crafted a nice compromise, adding one thousand men to the operation and placing Lafayette under Lee’s nominal command. As James McHenry wrote, “To prevent disunion, Lee is detached with two brigades to join the Marquis and as senior officer to the command. His detachment consists of 5,000 men, four-fifths of whom were picked for this service.”

On June 27, as the British reached the vicinity of Monmouth Court House, the advance American forces pulled to within six miles of the tail end of their column. Meeting with his generals, Washington ordered Lee to attack the British column the next morning, as soon as it sprang into motion. He himself would hang in the rear with six thousand men, prepared to move forward with the main body of the army.

Around dawn Washington learned that the British Army had risen early and was already marching toward Sandy Hook. He sent orders for General Lee “to move on and attack them unless there should be very powerful reasons to the contrary,” and started toward Monmouth Court House with his men. Washington recommended that Lee’s men jettison their packs and blankets to accelerate their speed. Unfamiliar with the local topography, Lee found himself penetrating terra incognita, a problem that had troubled the Continental Army in previous contests. On this morning of brutal weather, the temperature would zoom close to one hundred degrees, and many men stripped off their shirts and rode bare-chested. Private Joseph Plumb Martin opined that “the mouth of a heated oven seemed to me to be but a trifle hotter than this ploughed field; it was almost impossible to breathe.”

Toward noon, as his main force advanced toward Monmouth Court House, Washington couldn’t see what was happening up ahead and assumed that all was going according to plan. In reality, Lee had made only a confused, halfhearted attack against the British Generals Clinton and Cornwallis who, anticipating a possible attack, had concentrated their finest soldiers in the rear. They turned the tables, gathered six thousand men, and chased back the outnumbered Americans, who fell back in terror. Washington’s first inkling of disaster

came when a farmer told him that American troops were retreating. Having received no report from Lee himself, Washington was at first incredulous. Then a frightened young fifer who was hustled into his presence assured him that “the Continental troops that had been advanced were retreating.” Washington was shocked. Fearful that a false report might trigger chaos, Washington categorically warned the boy that “if he mentioned a thing of the sort, he would have him whipped.”

Taking no chances, Washington spurred his horse toward the front. He had not gone fifty yards when he encountered several soldiers who corroborated that the entire advance force was now staggering back in confused retreat. Soon Washington saw increasing numbers of men, dazed and exhausted from the stifling heat, tumbling toward him. He told aides that he was “exceedingly alarmed” and could not figure out why Lee had not notified him of this retreat. Then Washington looked up and saw the culprit himself riding toward him: General Lee, trailed by his dogs. “What is the meaning of this, sir?” Washington demanded truculently. “I desire to know the meaning of this disorder and confusion!” According to some witnesses, it was one of those singular moments when Washington showed undisguised wrath. Indignant, Lee stared blankly at him and spluttered in amazement. “Sir? Sir?” he asked, offended by Washington’s tone.

To his self-serving view of events, Lee believed that he had performed a prodigious feat, rescuing his overmatched army from danger and organizing an orderly retreat. "The American troops would not stand the British bayonets," he insisted to Washington. "You damned poltroon," Washington rejoined, "you never tried them!" Always reluctant to resort to profanities, the chaste Washington cursed at Lee "till the leaves shook on the tree;" recalled General Scott. "Charming! Delightful! Never have I enjoyed such swearing before or since. Lafayette said it was the only time he ever heard Washington swear. Lee, babbling incoherently, tried to explain to Washington that he found himself facing the British on an open plain, making his men easy prey for British cavalry. Washington brusquely dismissed Lee's reminder that he had opposed the attack in the first place: "All this may be very true, sir, but you ought not to have undertaken it unless you intended to go through with it!" In retrospect, Washington had trusted too much to an erratic general who had supported the mission only reluctantly, and he now banished him to the rear. Lafayette said of Washington's encounter with Lee that "no one had ever before seen Washington so terribly excited; his whole appearance was fearful." This was the temperamental side of Washington that he ordinarily kept well under wraps.

Washington now moved toward the front and learned that the brunt of the enemy forces would arrive in fifteen minutes. As Trench Tilghman recalled, Washington "seemed at a loss, as he was on a piece of ground entirely strange to him." The battlefield was an idyllic spot of steeply rolling farmland, split down the middle by deep ravines and creeks. Though spontaneity was never

his strong suit, Washington reacted with undisputed flair and sure intuition. Fired up with anger as well as courage, he instructed Anthony Wayne to hold the enemy at bay with two nearby regiments while he rallied the confused rout of men. Commanding as always on horseback, he succeeded in stemming the panic through pure will. When he asked the men if they would fight, they loudly responded with three lusty cheers – a novel occurrence in Washington's experience, suggesting the deep affection he inspired after the shared sacrifice at Valley Forge. His cool presence emboldened his men to resist the approaching British bayonets and cavalry charges. All the while American artillery shelled the British from a nearby ridge. Lafayette stood in awe of Washington's feat: "His presence stopped the retreat... His graceful bearing on horseback, his calm and deportment which still retained a trace of displeasure... were all calculated to inspire the highest degree of enthusiasm... I had never beheld so superb a man." Sometimes critical of Washington's military talents, Hamilton ratified Lafayette's laudatory appraisal: "I never saw the general to so much advantage. His coolness and firmness were admirable... He directed the whole with the skill of a master workman." Generals Stirling and Greene particularly distinguished themselves during the action, although Washington reserved his highest praise for Brigadier General Anthony Wayne, "whose good conduct and bravery through the whole action deserves particular commendation."

The bloody battle that afternoon was a fierce seesaw struggle that took many casualties on both sides. For two hours in blazing heat, British and Continentals exchanged cannon fire.

As in previous battles, Washington experienced narrow escapes. While he was deep in conversation with one officer, a cannonball exploded at his horse's feet, flinging dirt in his face; Washington kept talking as if nothing had happened. He was everywhere on horseback, forming defensive lines, urging on his men, and giving them the chance to display the marching skills acquired at Valley Forge under General Von Steuben. Lines of patriot soldiers fired muskets with discipline not seen before. Several times the well-trained Americans withstood vigorous charges by British regulars. Earlier in the day Washington had ridden a white charger, a gift from Governor Livingston of New Jersey. As the battlefield turned into a furnace, this beautiful horse suddenly dropped dead from the heat. At that point Billy Lee trotted up with a chestnut mare, which Washington rode for the duration.

In this marathon, day long battle, the fighting ground on until six in the afternoon. Though tempted to pursue the British, Washington bowed to the exhausted state of his men and decided to wait until morning to storm enemy positions. Clinton pulled his men back half a mile, beyond the range of American artillery. To keep his weary troops ready, Washington had them sleep on their arms in the field, ready to resume their offensive at daybreak. They inhabited a battlefield strewn with blood-spattered bodies. That night Washington draped his cloak on the ground beneath a sheltering tree, and he and Lafayette sat up chatting about Charles Lee's insubordination before falling asleep side by side. They could see campfires burning on the British side, unaware that it was a ruse used by Clinton to camouflage the British Army stealing off at

midnight. At daybreak Washington awoke and realized that the British had quietly drifted away, headed for New York. He had been tricked by the same gimmick that he himself had employed at Brooklyn and at Trenton. With his men spent from battle, Washington knew it was pointless to trail after the fleeing British.

Both sides claimed victory after the battle, and the best casualty estimates show something close to a draw: 362 killed, wounded, or missing Americans, versus British casualties that ranged anywhere from 380 to 500. After the drubbing at Brandywine Creek and Germantown, Washington may be forgiven for crowing about Monmouth as a "glorious and happy day." Having weathered the horrendous winter at Valley Forge, American soldiers, with new elan, had proved themselves the equal of the best British professionals. In general orders for June 29, Washington trumpeted the battle as an unadulterated triumph: "The Commander in Chief congratulates the army on the victory obtained over the arms of his Britannic Majesty yesterday and thanks most sincerely the gallant officers and men who distinguished themselves upon the occasion." Washington's joy at the outcome owed much to the fact that he had rescued the army from a disaster in the making.

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