

M I N N E S O T A

SAR Salute



THE MINNESOTA SOCIETY SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION NEWSLETTER • www.MinnesotaSAR.org • WINTER 2021



Geoffrey Bodeau had the best background during the Zoom meeting.

MNSAR 132ND ANNUAL MEETING

The Minnesota Society, and the Minneapolis and Saint Paul Chapters of the Sons of the American Revolution held their annual meetings via Zoom Video Communications on January 16, 2021.

The Society was called to order by President Dennis Garvin Croonquist, who led the Pledge to the U.S. flag and read the Pledge to the SAR. Chaplain Michael Swisher delivered the Invocation. Reports for the Minnesota Society, Minneapolis and Saint Paul Chapters, except financial reports, were posted on the Minnesota Society website for membership reference.

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 Minnesota Society SAR
 132nd Annual Meeting

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 American Eagle

.....
 Ethan Read Awarded
 Meritorious Service Medal

.....
 Remembering Two MNSAR
 Members

.....
 2021 MNSAR and Chapter Officers

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Minnesota Society
Sons of the American Revolution
15111 Elmcrest Ave. N.
Hugo, MN 55038-8348





MINNESOTA SOCIETY SAR ANNUAL MEETING

MNSAR Membership

Corresponding Secretary COL Ronald McRoberts reported on membership. 2020 membership statistics for the Society followed the trend for recent years with many more new members than losses. Membership on 01 January 2020 was 257 and on 31 December was 279. Registrations were recorded for 23 new members and eight pending as of 31 December. In addition, two reinstatements were recorded, but there were no transfers in. Losses included for deaths, one transfer out, and twelve subject to being dropped due to non-payment of dues.

The median age of members is 60 years of age. The median length of membership is eight years. Finally, once again, the Minnesota Society led the National Society in the percentage of life members at 27.92%.

Minnesota Society Financial Report and Endowment Trust Fund

Treasurer Richard E. Smith presented the Annual Financial Report. It showed net assets of \$48,176.43 as of 31 December 2020. Michael Swisher, Trustee of the MNSAR Endowment Trust Fund reported that donations to Principal during 2020 were \$4,506.55. The principal on hand as of 31 December 2020 was \$52,848.88 and interest accrued during 2020 was \$937.06, for a total of \$53,785.94. The Trustees proposed that the 2020 interest of \$937.06 be expended as follows: \$350 for the Veteran's Medal, \$50 for the Minnesota

Genealogical Society, and the balance for the MNSAR Color Guard.

Eagle Scout Scholarship and Awards Program

Compatriot Richard Smith reported as chair for the Eagle Scout Program. For the 2020 contest, marketing focused on social media beginning with an article on the MNSAR website and Facebook. An article was posted to every Minnesota Scout Council's Twitter feed. Each council was contacted and asked to post the SAR Eagle Scout contest on their internal social media feeds and websites.

ROTC Medal Program

Compatriot James Hagen reported that the MNSAR awards silver medals and certificates to ROTC (college) cadets and bronze medals and certificates to JROTC (high school) cadets chosen by their respective units. The 2020 MNSAR ROTC program was quite different due to the COVID-19 pandemic. ROTC and JROTC units that chose to present SAR awards did so virtually. All seven ROTC units presented the MNSAR ROTC silver medals and certificates to one of their cadets. However, only nine of the twelve JROTC units chose to present MNSAR ROTC bronze medals and certificates to their cadets.

MNSAR Color Guard

Compatriot Steven Hyde reported that due to the pandemic, the MNSAR Color Guard had suspended all event-related activity until such a time that it is considered safe to do so. In

2020, they had to cancel the traditional 4th of July Pancake Breakfast event, turn away requests to post colors for the DAR, and sideline the education program in schools. The good news is that they added a few new members to their ranks! The MNSAR Color Guard has two uniforms gifted to the MNSAR that are available to anyone who is interested in joining. One reason they are interested in growing the Color Guard Squad is that on July 4th 2026, our nation will be celebrating its 250th year as a nation. It seems like five years is a long way off, but if they start planning now, the MNSAR Color Guard will be in a better position to participate in this once-in-a-lifetime event.

New Business

A MNSAR Bylaws Revision was first affirmatively voted by the Board of Managers and then by the MNSAR membership. The Bylaws revision changes the language of the Secretarial duties allowing the MNSAR to split the duties of the Secretary to a recording secretary and a corresponding secretary.

Minneapolis Chapter

The Minneapolis Chapter was called to order by President Steven Hyde. Secretary-Treasurer Thomas Harris presented the Annual Financial Report, noting total assets of \$22,802.30 as of 31 December 2020.

Michael Huttner, Chairman of the Minneapolis Chapter Bronze Good Citizenship Medal Program reported that medals

and certificates were presented in 19 area high schools in 2020, and at a squadron of Naval Sea Cadets. Letters have already been mailed to all schools/units for the 2021 program.

The Minneapolis Chapter will donate \$200.00 to the Lake Minnetonka Society C.A.R. and \$100.00 to the Hennepin History Museum.

Saint Paul Chapter

The Saint Paul Chapter was called to order by President Christopher Willard Moberg. Secretary-Treasurer Timothy Harris presented the Financial Report indicating assets totaling \$5,881.57.

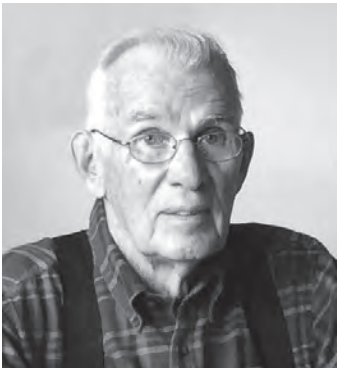
Compatriot Harris reported that eleven area high schools participated in the Bronze Good Citizenship Medal Program and their students were presented with their medals the past May. Letters have been mailed to twelve Saint Paul area high schools to begin the program for 2021.

No Flag Certificates were awarded during 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. Ordinarily five Saint Paul businesses are presented with a flag certificate for regularly flying the flag on Flag Day, June 14.

With no further business appearing, President Croonquist recited the SAR Recessional and declared the annual meetings of the Minnesota Society, Minneapolis Chapter, and Saint Paul Chapter adjourned.



REMEMBERING TWO MNSAR MEMBERS



Leonard Charles Wilson
1930-2020

Leonard Charles Wilson, age 89, passed away quietly on April 20, 2020, at the Oak Hill Assisted Living Home in Grand Rapids, MN, where he had been a resident since November 2016.

Len was the first child of Leonard William and Anne (Knoph) Wilson, and was born in Grand Rapids, MN, on June 16, 1930. He grew up, and lived most of his life in Grand Rapids, attending grade school at the "Old Central School", and graduating from Grand Rapids High School in 1950. During WWII, while his step-father, Logan Crowder, was in the service in the Philippines, Len, Don, and Anne lived in Lansing, MI, near Anne's parents, Charles and Anna (stepmother) Knoph, Len also spent two years in Korea, serving in the Korean War, with the SCAR-WAF, Special Category Army Reassigned With Air Force, in the Army Corp of Engineers, reaching the rank of Corporal. He drove a "Barber Green", laying blacktop landing strips for the Air Force. He got to witness his baseball hero, Ted

Williams, land the jet he was piloting, and he lived to bring home the bullet that was shot through his cot, while his unit was in their foxholes, avoiding "bed-check Charlie."

The Wilson family has a long history of military service, including the Korean War (Len and Don Wilson), the Civil War (George and Josiah Wilson), the War of 1812 (Samuel Wilson), and the Revolutionary War (Robert and Eleanor Wilson). Len became a member of the MNSAR after Elaine and Renee's genealogy research proved the lineage back to Robert Wilson.

Len played baseball in his youth. He became a pitcher, and his brother, Don, was the catcher. He played American Legion ball, and in June 1949, pitched the first baseball game ever played by Grand Rapids High School. He carried newspaper clippings of his no-hitter, and perfect games in his wallet. Len was scouted by the Chicago Cubs, and was asked to go to their pitching camp in Michigan. Unfortunately, he never got the chance to go.

Len worked his whole career at Blandin Paper Co. in Grand Rapids. He started before being drafted into the army and going to Korea. He received his promotions and raises when he returned home from the war. In the early 1970's, he went from being a Super Calendar operator to being Foreman of a crew, a position which he held until he retired in 1992.

In 1955, Leonard was united in marriage to Elaine Adell

Johnson, at Virginia, MN, daughter of Eino and Tyne Johnson. This marriage produced a daughter and a son, Renee Adell and Mark Leonard. Len was very proud of his two children, and talked about them wherever he went, to whoever would listen. In June 2019, Len and Elaine celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary.

Len and Elaine took many bus tours, traveling across the United States and Canada. He liked to take walks, and ride his bicycle, and spend time with his family.

Source:

<https://www.rowefuneralhomeandcrematory.com/obituary/leonard-wilson>

Mark Dean LaGrange III
1939-2020

It is with the saddest of hearts that the LaGrange family announced the passing of Mark Dean LaGrange III on July 7, 2020. LaGrange joined the MNSAR in 1977.

Mark was a consummate source of strength, resiliency, leadership, and love for his family and friends. Family and friends referred to Mark as a "man's man", with a bright smile and positive attitude that drew everyone to him. He spent his 35+ year career traveling the world, but family always came first. Mark was a veteran and a true patriot. Born February 2, 1939, in Ray, AZ. He grew up in Duluth, MN, playing hockey through boarding school at Kent in Kent, CT. He is a graduate of South Dakota



State University.

Mark and Carolyn were happily married for 53 years, and enjoyed time dancing. He appreciated spending time at their farm fishing and trap shooting with his kids and grandchildren. Mark delighted in taking his dog Foster everywhere with him.

Mark was an active Episcopalian, serving as a member of the vestry and later as an usher at St. Peter's Church in Ladue, MO.

Source:

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/stltoday/name/mark-lagrange-obituary?pid=196482517>



2021 MINNESOTA SOCIETY SAR OFFICERS

The following compatriots were nominated and elected to serve 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:.....Christopher Willard Moberg
 Vice President:Steven James Hyde
 Corresponding Secretary:.....COL Ronald E. McRoberts, P.P.
 Recording Secretary:.....Duane L. C. M. Galles, Ph.D.
 Treasurer:Richard Eugene Smith
 Genealogist / Registrar:.....John Charles Sassaman, P.P.
 Chancellor:Brendan Robert Tupa, J.D.
 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.
John Hallberg Jones	COL Ronald E. McRoberts
John Charles Sassaman	Larry Wray Sisk
Hon. Paul Kent Theisen	Buford Allen Young

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

Robert Wayne Allison	Charles Edward Boyles
Tracy Ashley Crocker	David Adriance Foster
Jay Thomas W. Franklin	James Everett Hagen
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
Kevin Everett Sullivan	Stephen Paul Thompson

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

Trustee ending January 2022:COL Ronald E. McRoberts, P.P.
 Trustee ending January 2023:Duane L. C. M. Galles, P.P.
 Trustee ending January 2024:Michael Scott Swisher, P.P.

Nominated for Election at the NSSAR National Congress in Renton, WA, in July 2021

National Trustee for Minnesota: ..Duane L. C. M. Galles, P.P.
 Alternate National Trustee MN:...Christopher Willard Moberg

MINNEAPOLIS CHAPTER SAR

President:..... Kevin Everett Sullivan
 Vice President: Robert Wayne Allison
 Secretary-Treasurer:..... Thomas C. Harris
 Chaplain: Michael Scott Swisher, P.P.
 Board of Managers:..... Tracy Ashley Crocker
 Timothy Charles Harris
 Michael William Huttner

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.
 Steven James Hyde
 Hon. William Raymond Johnson
 Robert Edward Kahl, II
 Larry Allan Lundblad, Ph.D.
 Aaron Hale Printup
 Rehn Douglas Smith
 Hon. Paul Kent Theisen
 Larry Larson Warren

SAINT PAUL CHAPTER SAR

President..... James Everett Hagen
 Vice President Richard Eugene Smith
 Secretary-Treasurer Timothy Charles Harris
 Chaplain Thomas Christopher Harris
 Board of Managers..... John David McCallum
 Dennis Garvin Croonquist
 Christopher Willard Moberg

NEXT MEETING NOTICE

The Annual George Washington Observance and Luncheon Meeting will not be held due to the coronavirus pandemic.

AMERICAN EAGLE

News of Yesterday Reported Today

Friday September 24, 1779

GREAT DAY FOR AMERICA'S NAVY

Flamborough, England – Yesterday John Paul Jones, captain of the *Bonhomme Richard* engaged the British frigate *Serapis*, commanded by Captain Richard Pearson, in a memorable 3-1/2-hour duel. The slaughter on both sides was great; an estimated 150 Americans and 170 British were killed or wounded. Despite the fact that his ship was sinking Jones outlasted his adversary and forced a surrender.

On June 16, 1779, Spain declared war on Britain, and at once seriously complicated the problem of subduing the American colonies.

The British fleet, already spread thin over the vast new empire, now found it necessary to reinforce Gibraltar and Minorca. The West Indies came under the threat of a Spanish fleet at Havana and a French fleet and army at Santo Domingo. French Admiral D'Estaing began to take island after island away from Britain, with the result that Sir Henry Clinton had to send eight thousand regulars from New York to the West Indies.

Clinton was so gravely weakened that he began to consider the evacuation of New York. He did not do so, but Newport, which had resisted both the French and the Americans the year before, was abandoned without a shot.

Then, in August, the Mother Country herself came under the guns of a Franco-Spanish fleet. For the first time since the

Spanish Armada was routed in 1588, the "island set in a silver sea" was threatened with invasion. In his alarm, King George III tried to rally the people by reminding them how valiantly the subjects of Queen Elizabeth had met the same threat two centuries previously. His oratory was not needed, however, for the vast enemy fleet turned out to be only a "huge mob of ships." On August 16 as the combined fleets came in sight of Plymouth, a storm drove them out of the Channel. The Bourbons "talked big, threatened a great deal, did nothing, and retired."

The only sailor who really twisted the British lion's tail was a renegade Scots captain named John Paul Jones.

In 1778 in command of the *Ranger*, Jones attacked the English town of Whitehaven and burned ships in port. He also invaded Scottish soil and he so terrified the British coast that Lord North planned to send a special squadron against him as soon as Britain was free of the fear of a Franco-Spanish invasion. After the Franco-American alliance, Jones began to use French ports as sanctuaries, and he quickly put together a small, marauding fleet. His flagship was the *Bonhomme Richard*, named for Franklin's famous *Poor Richard's Almanac*. She was a clumsy old veteran of the tea trade with India, converted by the French into a forty-two-gun third-rater. Most of her officers were American, with French Marines in



her fighting tops, while her crew was a motley of Scots, Englishmen, Swedes, Norwegians, Portuguese and Swiss, as polygot as any pirate ship that sailed the Spanish main. In September 1779, Jones put out from France for the North Sea. With him sailed the 32-gun frigates *Pallas* and *Alliance* and the 12-gun brigantine *Vengeance*. Captain Jones was proud of his fleet as he paced the *Bonhomme Richard's* quarterdeck, resplendent in a fine new blue coat with white lapels and gilt epaulets on the shoulders. As he walked he sipped at a glass of limeade.

At dusk of September 23 Jones's ships were sailing off Flamborough Head on the coast of northeast England. It was a calm evening. There was almost no wind, and the darkening blue sea was like glass. Through his glass Jones sighted a convoy of merchantmen escorted by two war ships. At once he guessed correctly that only a British

convoy would be in such waters, and ran the Union Jack up his masthead. He was right. The warships were the *Serapis*, a brand-new ship of the Royal Navy mounting fifty guns, and commanded by Captain Richard Pearson, and the *Countess of Scarborough*, 20. Jones at once signaled his ships to form line while he made for the heavier *Serapis*.

Like land warfare naval combat was based upon shock. On land it was the bayonet charge; at sea it was the broadside, usually fired within pistol shot of the enemy ship, a shock so devastating that neither stout human hearts nor stout wooden ships could long endure it. Because a fighting ship's armament was arrayed on either side of the ship at from one to two or even three levels, ships almost never fired at each other from the few guns mounted fore and aft; rather, they fired from their sides, with as many as thirty or forty five heavy-caliber guns

fired by each ship in a single salvo. Thus from sixty to ninety projectiles, weighing as much as fifty pounds apiece, might be flying back and forth in a single exchange of broadsides. The effect was staggering and awful to behold. Heads were shot away, limbs were torn off and great oaken planks were shattered to fill the air with flying splinters as deadly as the cannon and musket balls. Decks of the fighting ships sometimes were literally awash with blood. Stricken men were carried into makeshift surgeries, where, in the absence of anesthetics, rum was poured into their throats, after which they clenched their teeth on a leaden bullet, and where the screams of the afflicted were counterpointed by the whining of the bone saws. Often a ship's own guns were as destructive as the enemy's, for they sometimes burst under pressure, killing or maiming the gunners or sending the wheeled cannon caroming wildly over the decks. Nothing was more terrifying than a loose cannon on a ship that was rising and

falling in the swells. Some ships fired shrapnel to clear the enemy rigging of sharpshooters, or chains intended to tear the enemy's sails and lines to shreds. This, then, was the combat that ensued after an outgunned John Paul Jones boldly challenged the enemy.

For some reason, *Alliance* stood off at a safe distance, while *Pallas* went after *Countess of Scarborough*, eventually capturing her. Undismayed at this lack of support, Jones engaged the heavier *Serapis*.

The *Bonhomme Richard*'s first broadside resulted in disaster: two of the three heavy guns on her engaged side burst, killing the crews and blowing up the deck above them. For fear of a repetition, the third gun was abandoned. Still undaunted, Jones put himself alongside *Serapis* and lashed both ships together. There they lay in the moonlight for two and a half hours, pounding each other at point-blank range.

At first it seemed that *Serapis* would prevail. Her guns splintered *Richard*'s rotten

timbers and sent them flying. She scored numerous waterline hits and set *Richard* to leaking badly. And one by one she knocked out Jones's main battery of twenty-eight twelve-pounders. Jones had only three nine-pounders left. All around him fires were breaking out and the pumps were falling behind the leaks. Still, he fought on. When one of his gunners called out to *Serapis* for quarter, he broke the man's skull with his pistol. When the captain of *Serapis* shouted for verification of the gunner's appeal, Jones bellowed back: "I have not yet begun to fight!" And when the British attempted to board him, he led the fight that repulsed them.

Yet, as badly as *Richard* had been hurt below, she had begun to conquer aloft. Under the direction of American officers, French marines in *Richard*'s fighting tops had cleared the enemy rigging of British seamen and had begun to pour a heavy fire into *Serapis*. Sniping, hurling grenades and combustibles, they cleared the Britisher's

upper decks. Then a grenade thrown into a pile of cartridges on a lower deck set off a chain of explosion that racked *Serapis* from bow to stern. A half hour later *Alliance* appeared and took up a raking position off the Britisher's bow. Some of *Alliance*'s shells struck *Richard* by mistake, but enough of them landed on *Serapis* to force the British captain to strike his colors.

By then *Bonhomme Richard* was a floating wreck, and Jones was compelled to transfer to *Serapis*. Nevertheless, he had won. By his refusal to submit, the indomitable John Paul Jones had humbled British naval pride, giving the Continental Navy its greatest victory.

Sources:

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

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

ETHAN READ RECEIVES NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

by Christopher W. Moberg

With many service opportunities cancelled due to the pandemic, SAR members across the country have turned to volunteering their time entering data into the Patriot Research System (PRS). The PRS contains information on patriot records, burials, biographies, and more. The database can be used by prospective members to help with their SAR application and by existing members as an aid for creating supplemental applications. A volunteer completing 40 hours of National Society service receives the

Lafayette Volunteer Service medal and an oak leaf cluster for each additional 40 hours of service.

Ethan Read started entering information into PRS as a volunteer for Minnesota in January of 2019. He quickly completed the 40 hours necessary to earn the Lafayette Volunteer Service medal and continued to volunteer his time. In January of 2020, Ethan entered applications and worked with volunteers to publish applications for the entire North Central District (Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska,

and the Dakotas). As an updater, he has completed 611 patriot record updates, 725 application entries, 42 biography entries, and 28 cemetery entries. As a publisher, he has published 526 patriot record updates, 1563 application entries, 30 biography entries, and 39 cemetery entries. This equates to well over 1,000 hours of service. Upon the recommendation of Lt. Col. Gary Green, Chairman of the Patriot Records Committee, Ethan Read has received the North Central District Meritorious Service medal. Ethan's



work is appreciated at the state, district, and national levels. Because of his many hours of service, prospective and existing members across the county will be better able to find information about their American Revolutionary War ancestors.