

The Marshal

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ROBERT FORSYTH CHAPTER
OF THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION



Issue No. 31 Summer 2022

PRESIDENT'S DISPATCH



By Gary Page

Dear Compatriots,
As you know our July chapter meeting was cancelled due to the July 10 – 14 dates of the NSSAR Annual Congress that was held in Savannah this year and hosted by the GASSAR. The National Congress was a resounding success with the largest number of attendees of any previous Congress. I believe the number of attendees was around 630 – 640. The event was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel located directly on River St. in the heart of historic Savannah.

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CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN... (MARK TWAIN)

There are actually two meanings to this saying; simply put it means that people are judged based on the clothing that they wear and are treated accordingly. On a deeper level this phrase can be understood to mean that by dressing in a certain manner you can actually shape your behavior and affect the way you perform.

In the case of our recent National Congress (*132nd held this year in Savannah*), a uniform helped make a member of the Robert Forsyth Chapter a prime player in part of the program during the installation of the new President General. Part of the installation ceremony for each new President General involves a ring, originally owned by George Washington, first president of the United States of America. The presentation involves allowing the PG to wear the ring for a limited time, and holds all the pomp and

circumstance that the moment calls for. It also calls for an honor guard of similarly dressed Compatriots to present the ring. This lucky spot fell to our own Chapter President, Gary Page.

Dressed in his Continental Line uniform, Gary, along with Wilder Smith, Dess Smith, GASSAR Color Guard Commander Scott Collins, formed a



box around First Lady Cilla Tomme, wife of PG Michael J. Tomme. Cilla carried the George Washington ring in the procession resting on a pillow next to a locket which would be a gift for the new First Lady. PG Tomme Presented the ring to incoming PG Bruce Pickette.



(History of the ring and how the National Sons of the American Revolution came about possessing it can be found on page two.)

President's Dispatch

The Robert Forsyth Chapter was well represented at the Congress with Tom Slaughter and Chip Van Alstyne serving as Day and Bus Captains. Myself, Emil Decker and Ed Rigel, Jr. participated in numerous Color Guard events and our own Allen Greenly was the Congress Co-Chairman. Ed Rigel, Jr. and I were also members of the Congress Planning Committee which began event planning almost five years ago. I want to give my personal thanks to our Robert Forsyth Chapter members who participated in this Congress and for their help and commitment in making this event a resounding success.

On a sad note, as most of you may know already, our GASSAR President Joe Vancura suddenly passed away shortly after the conclusion of the Congress. A number of attendees tested positive for COVID and it appears that Joe also contracted COVID, although he initially tested negative. On Sunday evening, Joe apparently had a heart attack and passed away. Joe did a fantastic job at the Congress and as the GASSAR President representing the Georgia Society as the titular host of the 132nd National Congress.

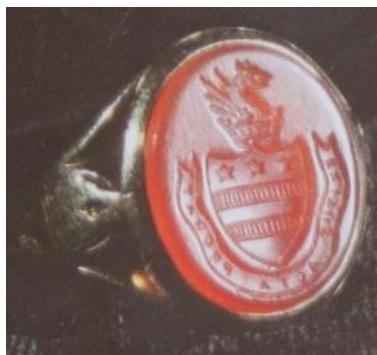
The GASSAR hosted numerous events at the Congress to include:

- Ft. Morris Ceremony
- Midway Grave Marking
- Parris Island Tour
- Mighty Eighth Tour
- Bench Dedications at Johnston Square and Tricentennial Park

Ed Rigel, Jr., Emil Decker and I also participated in the opening and closing Color Guard ceremonies for the formal Congress meetings. I had the honor of participating in the four man Honor Guard for the George Washington Ring Ceremony for the newly elected PG Bruce Pickett. This was truly an honor for me as the ring presented was the actual signet ring worn by George Washington himself. Videos of many of these events are available with the provided links. Until we meet again, God Bless America! Patriotically yours!

*Gary Page,
President,
Robert Forsyth Chapter*

The George Washington Ring



The most valuable property owned by the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution is not its Headquarters property nor even its Endowment Fund. It is a small circular object, about 7/8 of an inch in diameter, which rests in darkness, untouched for three-hundred sixty-four days of the year, emerging for only one night annually when a new President General is installed. It shares its space in a safety deposit box with the deed to the SAR Headquarters building, an insurance policy, some stock certificates, and an affidavit about the ring's own origins. The affidavit states, "The Seal Ring of gold set with carnelian cut with the coat of arms of General Washington, that accompanies this statement belonged to and was worn by General Washington."

This ring was donated to the SAR when SAR PG Messmore Kendall, died in 1959. The ring included an affidavit purported to verify its authenticity, signed by William Lanier Washington, a descendant of the country's first president.

Another ring, similar but slightly different, is claimed to be George Washington's ring, and is also known to exist. It was donated by the William Randolph Hearst family to Mount Vernon. Could Washington have had two of the rings?

There is no proof that George Washington ever used a seal ring and there is no proof that William Lanier Washington's item is authentic. Occasionally there is a skeptic who questions its authenticity, despite the affidavit of William Lanier Washington and the great care given by the SAR to the ring since 1922, when it was originally presented to the SAR.

The ring itself is gold, with a thin band bearing a delicate shank. It is a perfect size ten on a modern mandrel. There is no maker's mark or any inscription whatsoever on the inside. On each outer surface, the metal of the side is deeply incised to give in raised relief a stem, three leaves, and a three - part bud or flower at the top, too worn to identify. The annulus of the crown is oval, surrounding and holding in place a light orange carnelian in which is incised the Washington crest: a shield with three stars at the top and two transverse bands beneath; surmounted by a crown containing a griffin; underlain by a ribbon bearing the Latin words "Exultus acta probat." These words come from line Eighty Five of the second Heroines of Ovid, and are translated literally as "*The outcome proves the deed.*" A common variation is rendered "*The end justifies the means.*"



A seal made using the Washington ring would show the griffin facing left and the words of the motto read properly from left to right. The original Washington crest, done in colored glass, can be seen in a window of what is now the buttery at Sulgrave Manor, Northamptonshire, England, a mid-16th century Tudor hall house built by Lawrence Washington, the great-great-great-grandfather of George Washington.

In the spring of 2000, President General Howard Horne (1999-2000, 2001) contacted Balfour, to see if the company could make an exact replica of the ring. He was referred to a company called Creative Molding, located in North Attleboro.

President General Bill Gist (1995-1996) picked up the ring at the bank, put the artifact in his pocket, and flew to North Attleboro. Gist said many times that he was scared to death something would happen to the ring while it was in his possession. Fortunately, nothing did.

The Creative Molding employees took the measurements, a mold, and generally did everything necessary to replicate Washington's ring. The company determined they could not cut the stone in its facility, however, if Creative Molding was to proceed, it would have to contract a company in

The George Washington Ring

Germany to cut the stone and then make the appropriate carving. The German company prepared twenty stones and shipped these to Creative Molding. In February 2001, ten rings were shipped to the SAR Headquarters with another ten held in stock should additional rings be needed in the future. The first ten cost \$1,200 apiece. Presidents General Gist, Horne, Russ Page (1998-1999), and Bruce Butler (2000 - 2001) received the first four rings. The SAR ordered the additional ten when Roland Downing was President General from 2005 to 2006, and these cost nearly \$2,000 apiece. Each President General personally pays the cost of his replica Washington seal ring.

If the SAR needs additional rings in the future, Creative Molding will have to start from their mold and have new stones carved. The replica of Washington's seal ring is presented to the incoming SAR President General after he has had the original Washington seal ring on his finger for a brief few minutes during his installation.

All living Presidents General are now permitted to purchase copies of the seal ring. These copies are not replicas as they are purposely made different in several respects from the original. Sardonyx, a much darker and more opaque stone than the original orange carnelian, is used for the seal. There are variations in the gold work and in the carving of the seal. On President General Horne's copy, the gold work is not as deeply sculptured and the oval seal is smaller and darker. The griffin has a serpent's tongue and streamlined wings on Horne's ring. There is no possibility of confusing a copy with the original. Additionally, for each ring Creative Molding has replicated, the company also makes a seal ring box in which the ring is stored for the Presidents General.

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Stocker, A. F. (October 2008). Personal communication.

<https://www.sarsandiego.org/general-george-washingtons-ring/>

<http://treasurebeachesreport.blogspot.com/2014/03/3314-report-george-washingtons-ring.html>

Community News



Left: John Flikeid, Donald Loudermilk, and Allen Greenly were part of the 13 members firing a salute at the Atlanta Braves Game on July 4th. Especially exciting, because Allen was firing his newly acquired musket for the first time.

Right: Compatriot J.C. Hustis was only one of many members from Robert Forsyth who helped make the National Congress a success. Many hours behind the scene, as well as participation during events in uniform put the Georgia Society and the Robert Forsyth Chapter right in the middle of the best Congress ever held in recent memory. Other members helping out at the Congress included President Gary Page, VP Chip Van Alstyne, Emil Decker, Tom Slaughter, Ed Rigel Jr.,

(Cont.)





Left: Emil Decker joined J.C. Hustis at his church, along with members of the Georgia Society Color Guard & Elijah Clarke Militia for a special Independence Day service. Muskets were fired after the presentation and message.

Below: Grave markings at Midway Cemetery at the start of the 2022 Congress included many of the usual gang of musketeers and flag totters from Robert Forsyth.



Below: Emil Decker and Gary Page participated in the two (2) bench dedications at Congress.



Right Center: How cool is it to be a brand new member of the National Sons of the American Revolution, and have a National Congress be your first event ever attended? (L-R) Emil Decker, Robert Forsyth Chapter, Preston Lewis, Marshes of Glynn Chapter, and Stephen Weaver, Blue Ridge Mountains Chapter.

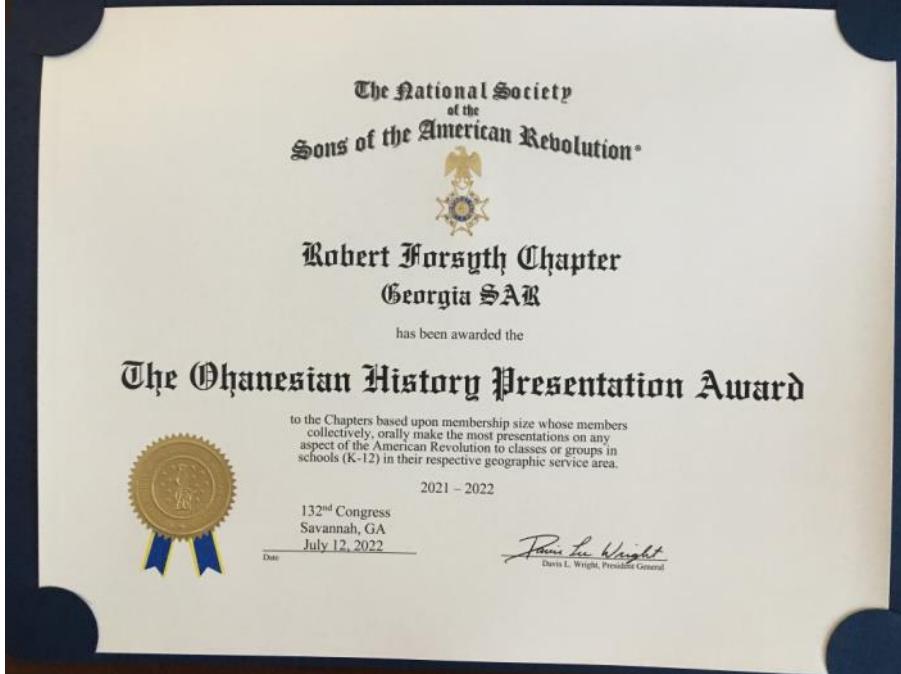
Compatriot Lewis received notification of Membership from National on Monday, and visited the National Conference in Savannah on Tuesday. Welcome brother.

Right Bottom: Milton Historical Society hosted J.C. Hustis and Emil Decker with the Traveling Trunk for an evening of looking and discussions of life in the 18th century.



Below: Thanks to the efforts of J.C. Hustis and Emil Decker, the Chapter won the Ohanesian History Presentation Award during the National Congress held in Savannah. The award statement reads, "To the Chapter based upon member size whose members collectively, orally make the most presentations on any aspect of the American Revolution to classes or groups in schools (K-12) in their respective geographic service area."

In addition, the chapter received a \$500 check to further the outreach program.



Below: J.C. and Emil recently presented Life in the 18th century to the Milton Historical Society. This was a first time event with this group. We hope we will be asked back for other presentations.



Above: J.C. Hustis meets our outgoing President General Davis Wright while at Congress.

Below: J.C. and Emil enjoy taking the traveling Trunk to Horizon Christian Academy.



Right: Horizon Christian Academy Is still of the old school frame of mind, where persuasion allows us to fire muskets as part of the presentation. Kids love it!
[Editor: Kids of all ages!]

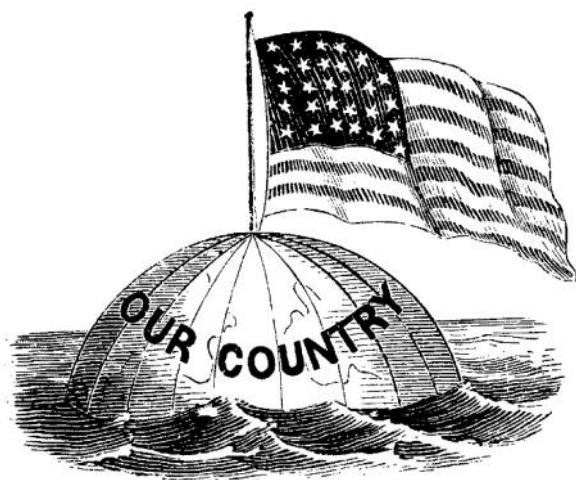


Below: J.C. and Emil presented a Scout Certificate to Drew Covington Upon his ascension to the rank of Eagle Scout. His Eagle Court was held at New Hope UMC, where his father is minister.





J.C. and Emil ended a busy September at the Hampton extension of the Forsyth County Library, where lots of interest was generated by many home schoolers who came for the well advertised event. The thing I love about home schooled kids are the dedicated parents who support their kids, and encourage them to go the extra mile. These two young ladies even got dressed up for the event.



Book Reviews by Col. George Thurmond

The Yorktown Campaign

This is an excellent publication of the events leading up to and culminating with the surrender of General Cornwallis at Yorktown. The Centenary of the surrender brought about renewed interest in the Revolution and its events.

Author Johnston covers the significance of the event – that independence had been taken and, at Yorktown, assured beyond question. Although peace would not come until two years later, hostilities, for all practicable purposes, ceased with the victory at Yorktown.

The author covers the operations of Lafayette and Cornwallis in Virginia and Washington's role in the campaign. The skillful use of the French army and navy proved to be a critical role in bringing about the defeat of the British.

Records were available from the primary commanders that assisted in recording this historic battle. How to get Washington's American and French troops from New York and Connecticut to Yorktown proved to be a considerable task – one accomplished with great skill by the commander.

The Yorktown campaign is a well documented history of this great event and is recommended reading.

Three Tricorns



ISBN 0-915992-19-1, Eastern Acorn Press, 1881, Reprinted 1997, by Henry P. Johnston

Paul Revere's Ride

Author David Hackett Fischer puts Paul Revere back on his horse again to provide an in-depth story of events on April 19, 1775 that would change the world. He provides valuable insight into the ride made famous by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow 85 years after the historic event.

The scene is set up to the evening of April 18 when the activity that would set off a war with Great Britain would begin. The ride and following events are covered in great detail.

One interesting sidelight is that after warning John Hancock and Samuel Adams about the "Regulars" on their way to arrest them, it would become necessary for Revere to return to Lexington and rescue Hancock's trunk that he left behind in his haste to depart. The trunk contained confidential papers that would have surely served as a disadvantage to the Patriot cause.

The ensuing engagement with the "Regulars" and their return to Boston is told in great detail. Also interesting is what happened to the principals following the event.

I highly recommend reading this book in concert with "The Day the American Revolution Began" by author William H. Hallahan.

Three tricorns.



Ask the Expert:

With Lionel Hildebrand

If you have a question you would like to ask, please forward to the editor, eldecker@windstream.net. He will see that it gets to me.

Was George Washington ever shot?

I have found no evidence of it. Though he had a number of close calls.

The closest he came was the Battle of Monongahela.. With men and officers being shot down all around him, George Washington rode forward to take charge of the collapsing lines at the Battle of the Monongahela on July 9, 1755 during the French and Indian War.

While riding along the ranks looking to steady the men, Washington had two horses shot out from under him and four bullet holes shot through his coat.

During the Revolutionary War, at the 1777 Battle of Princeton, Washington rode on his horse as bullets fired from British rifles 30 yards away whizzed around him.

When troops worried about their leader getting shot, he simply said, "parade with me my fine fellows, we will have them soon!"

What if GW was killed in battle? [See Edition 17 concerning his possible demise]

I am fairly positive that if General Washington had been killed, the USA as a nation would have given other persons or nations, namely France, Spain, and the Netherlands, far more credit than they deserve for prosecuting the successful rebellion against Great Britain.

Washington getting killed in battle (probably at Princeton or Brandywine) would have been a disaster. Not from a military standpoint. Almost all revolutions fail. Ultimately the only way for a revolution to succeed is for a military leader to seize the government. (See Napoleon, who at one time sneered, "They expected me to be a Washington.")

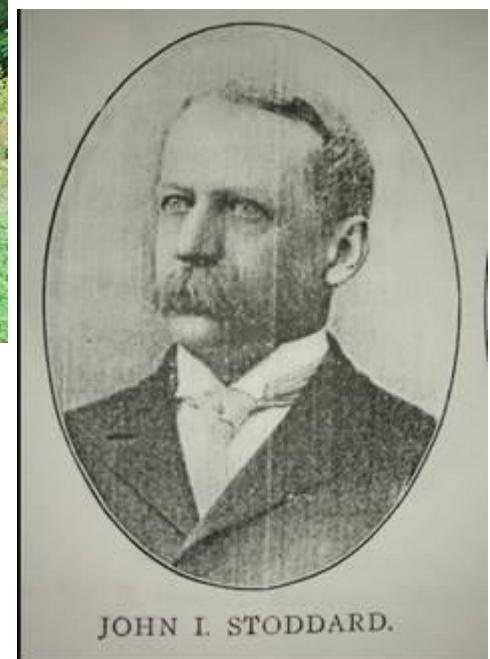
If alternate universes with semi-parallel histories interest you, then Ronald Gibbs wrote a novel about this subject. It is called *The Long Shot: The Secret History of 1776*. The book is set in an different reality in which Gen. George Washington is shot in the chest, sustaining a potentially fatal wound early in the Revolutionary War.

George Thurmond

Stoddard's Stockade

Having read of Peter Stoddard's connection to Savannah in the last edition, we take a return visit to take an extended look at this connection.

The development of First Union African Baptist Church, now listed as an historical landmark, began in 1879 when John I. Stoddard divided the Mary Field plantation into lots and sold 12 acres to former slaves for the purpose of building a church and developing a cemetery. The land was purchased in 1881 for \$82 and the first church was built. The original church building burned in 1884 and was subsequently rebuilt.



My many relatives have religious connections, as you may have deduced after several articles. Let me introduce James Cowan Watson.

My polygamist 2nd Great-Grandfather was a pioneer member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was an industrious teamster. Not the Chicago goon type, he owned a livery company that hauled stone to build the dang spectacular Mormon Temple.

Grampa James Cowan Watson was not a bigamist, he was a trigamist. He had three concurrent wives and supported them all. He did what he believed God wanted him to do: "Go forth and multiply." That he did, by fathering 24 children.



He did two or three stints in a Utah prison, converting inmates while there each time. To be released he had to agree to support only one wife. He agreed, then he would support all three wives and go back to prison once more.

Son of Robert Watson and Mary Cowan

Married Mary Condie, 6 Aug 1864, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah

Married Ellen Riley, 10 Aug 1874, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah

Married Elizabeth Abbott Evans, 28 Feb 1884, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah

[https://www.findagrave.com/.../35169331/james-cowan-watson'](https://www.findagrave.com/.../35169331/james-cowan-watson)

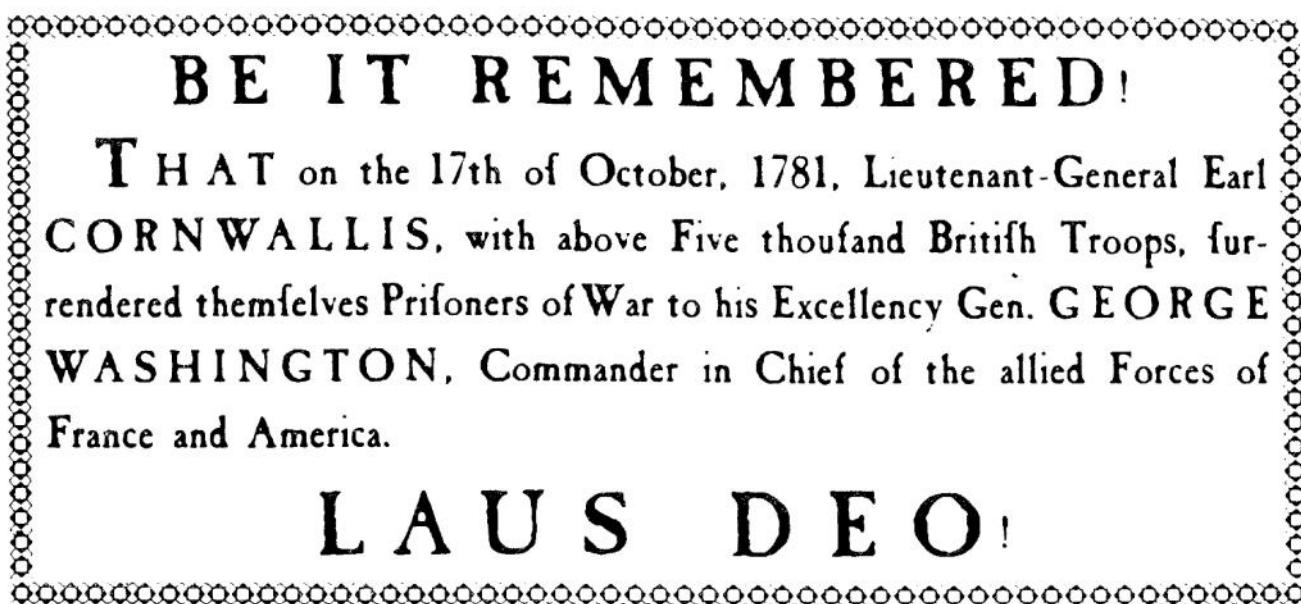
My great-grandmother Ellen Watson Currie was the third child from the first wife and did not want to be a polygamist wife herself. Thus, she left LDS to join the First Congregational Church. My mother and grandmother grew up in Salt Lake City with many close LDS friends.

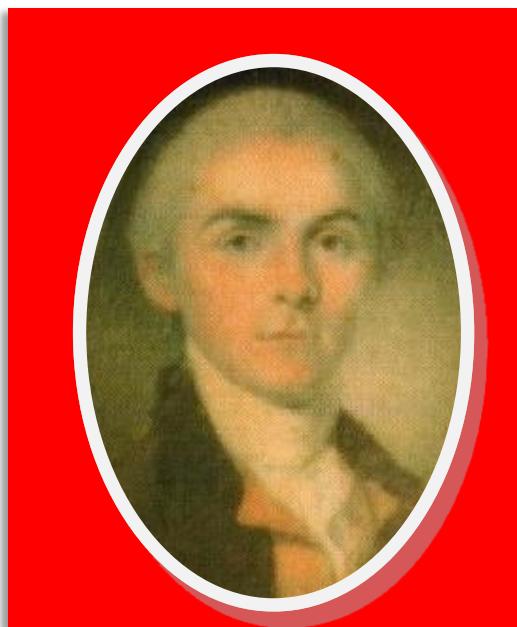


[FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) is one of the most popular genealogical resources in the world.

The site is sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and is **free** and available to the public. You do not have to be a member of the Mormon Church, nor have a relative that is....or in Peter's case, several.....dozen....!

An obvious way to have an online storage place for genealogical research without an exorbitant fee attached.





Robert Forsyth, First Marshal of the state of Georgia & first Marshal killed in the line of duty.

The Marshal

This publication is the newsletter for the Robert Forsyth Chapter of the Georgia Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. It is printed quarterly and is distributed to current and prospective chapter members and to certain officers of the state and national organizations and to certain officials of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution.

Meetings are normally held on the second Thursday of each month at "The Golden Corral", 2025 Market Place Blvd., Cumming, GA 30041. Meal: 6:00 / Meeting 7:00. We are holding meetings in various locations at the present. Contact us for the most current information. Prospective members are always welcome at monthly membership meetings. Men, eighteen years of age and older, who are interested in documenting their relationship to their American Revolutionary ancestors and in joining an active group with similar interests are urged to contact the Chapter Registrar, Charles Meagher at (404) 822-6428, via email at chasm242@yahoo.com or any chapter officer.

Deadline for the Next Issue:

The deadline for material for the next issue is Dec20, 2022. In addition to the material, please include hi-resolution imagery. Please direct all inquires or suggestions regarding *The Marshal* to the Editor:

Emil L. Decker: Txt. at 706-482-8248 or via email to: eldecker@weegrr.com

Event	Location	Date	Status
South Atlantic District Meeting	Gastonia, SC	Oct 06, 2022	District
Battle of Kings Mountain	Kings Mt. Nat. Park. SC	Oct 07, 2022	National
Siege of Savannah	Savannah, GA	Oct 09, 2022 6:45 a.m.	State
Compatriot Grave Marking	Marietta, GA	Oct 16, 2022	State
Patriot Grave Marking	Braselton, GA	Oct 23, 2022	State
Patriot Grave Marking	Elberton, GA	Oct 29, 2022	State
Georgia Society BOM	Barnesville, GA	Nov 05, 2022	State
Veterans Day Oconee Co. Memorial	Watkinsville, GA	Nov 11, 2022 11:00 a.m.	National / State
Veterans Day	Various	Nov 11 Weekend	National / State
Patriot Grave Marking	St. Simons Island, GA	Nov 18, 2022	State
Fort Morris Come and Take It	Sunbury, GA	Nov 19, 2022	National
Vann's Creek	Elberton, GA	Dec 03, 2022	State
Crawford Co. 200th Aniv. Parade & Musket Fire	Knoxville, GA	Dec 10, 2022	State
Wreaths Across America	Various	Dec 17, 2022	National

When was the last time YOU submitted an article for **The Marshal**??

History, travel trips, travel tips, ancestors, all this and more can make a great article for YOUR newsletter. Submit today !!!