

# The Marshal

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

Issue No. 38 Summer 2024



## PRESIDENT'S DISPATCH

By Christopher Russo



If you are reading this, it means that I had not disappeared, as the editor had feared. [Editor: I threatened the good President that I was going to claim he was in hiding after a prominent Past President was shot at,..... not that it actually had any effect, but here the president continues his Dispatch.]

Any organization is only as good as it's members. The members of our chapter are among some of the finest people I have known.

Our members have participated in a number of events this past quarter. Namely, a grave marking ceremony for 5 Patriots buried in the historic cemetery in Midway, GA; a charity run outside of Dahlonega; and a flag retirement ceremony in Cumming.

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## 3000+ FLAGS RETIRED THIS YEAR

Our Annual Flag Retirement Program continues to grow larger, in both the number of flags retired and the number of persons attending. Our parent chapter, (Piedmont for those who don't know), is our co-sponsor and covers the flag drop box in the two Roswell Home Depots, while we cover the ones in Cumming and Dawsonville's Home Depot stores.

Our humble little ceremony, in the early years, was held outside of the Ingram Funeral Home, in front of the garage where they collect and process the many flags we, and other organizations bring in. We collect and deposit bags of worn flags throughout the year, and Ingram graciously takes them and puts them to rest.

The Ceremony is held close to Flag Day each year. At the invitation of the Funeral Home Director, we have subsequently moved the event inside the Chapel. More comfortable, more dignified, and a blessed relief for those in wool uniforms who attend. The addition of the Award Winning Georgia Society Color Guard to our program was a definite plus to our ceremony, and more DAR and C.A.R. members have started to attend.

Covid didn't stop us, though it caused some angst at the time, but the numbers of

attendees continued to return and grow. Rick Reese Jr. developed the Zoom approach during this time, and many meetings and events throughout the Georgia Society have benefited from his efforts. Thank you Rick.

The program has evolved over the years to include more participation from the attendees. In addition to the GASSAR Color Guard, one year we invited the DAR to help inspect the flags for serviceability. The ladies loved it, and it has become a tradition now. I believe involving the ladies has led to more and more chapters attending each year.

(continued on page 2)





With them, the Children of the American Revolution has also become more involved, playing *Taps* on the bugle and inspecting the flags with the DAR. This year, their role grew even larger. The Children of the American Revolution presented a single flag to be retired, but similar to the 13 flag presentation they have shown us at Fort Morris, they brought the large flag down the aisle one stripe at a time. Georgia State C.A.R. Senior Librarian, Emil Decker, read a short passage for each piece, reminding the assembled of the meaning, the service, the duty, and the honor we, the people, hold to this nation, and how the flag symbolized all that..... and much more.

Each piece of the large flag was respectfully carried down the aisle by members of the C.A.R., and delivered to State President Lilly Wright, who helped that member carefully lay their portion of the flag to rest on top of the other flags gathered in the antique coffin provided by Ingrams. These collected standards represented the 3000 plus flags gathered this year and were honored, and laid to rest.

May God continue to bless this country, and may we continue to recognize our duty to continue a program where we take care of our great nation's symbols.











Above Right: George Thurmond stands next to his uniform. George passed his along, as he is no longer able to participate in Color Guard duties, and recommends anyone no longer able or wanting to wear their uniforms bequeath them to someone who will or can. Thanks George!







## President's Dispatch

This month I would like to recognize two Compatriots who make us shine.

First up is Stephen Johnstone. Compatriot Johnstone has again organized and ran the Heroes Hill Climb.

The event, which took place on the Saturday before Memorial Day, is a 6 mile up and back climb on Cooper Gap Road outside Camp Merrill. On this particular day, it rained from start to finish, with thunder claps and lightning strikes being a recur-(run)-ing feature. Over 200 participants made the ascent to where the Appalachian Trail crosses and returns to the wilderness. At the top, a bell is rung, a card with the name, photo, and biography of a Fallen serviceman or woman, is tacked to the board. Then back down the hill we go. I can attest it was much easier going down.

The event raised over \$10,000, distributed to a number of groups that assist veterans and their families.

Stephen's actions in the community reflects the best of what we strive to be.

**Huzzah Compatriot Johnstone!**

Some of you may have heard of our other rockstar, Emil Decker. Like most everything he touches, Emil has transformed our annual flag retirement ceremony from a simple and quick event to a grand patriotic assembly over the years.

The ceremony this year saw the respectful disposal of over 3000 flags collected by the Robert Forsyth and Piedmont chapters. Attendance was likely the most we've seen in the 10 years the service has been performed, with attendees coming from multiple SAR chapters, along with members from DAR and C.A.R. societies and representation from both SAR state and national officers.

The newest feature was the orchestrating C.A.R. members to present each of the 13 stripes within the field, the canton, and the hoist. Without the dedication, time, effort, and creative vision, this annual ceremony would not be what we continue to experience and quite frankly expect.

**Huzzah Compatriot Decker for ALL you do!**

***Patriotically,***

***Christopher Russo  
President, Robert  
Forsyth Chapter***



## Book Reviews by Col. George Thurmond

### **Daniel Morgan Revolutionary Rifleman**

This story is about the hero of Saratoga and Cowpens. Daniel Morgan got an early start learning to fight the Indians prior to the American Revolution. The tactics that worked well there contributed to the success that he would later enjoy during the Revolution.

Daniel Morgan was born near Winchester in the Valley of Virginia. He was a rugged outdoorsman who was well known for his courage. His reputation led him to be one of the principal leaders in the abortive attempt to make Quebec the 14th state early in the war. Not to be discouraged, Morgan later was one of the reasons for the Patriot success at the Battles of Saratoga.

Morgan was an excellent shot and was called upon to develop America's first sharpshooters. This played havoc with the British at Saratoga, gaining Morgan a reputation that would long be remembered.

Following a disastrous defeat of the Patriots at Camden in August 1780, followed by the stunning victory at Kings Mountain, it was clear that the Patriots should now take on the strength of Lord Cornwallis and newly appointed Daniel Morgan was assigned this task to accomplish. The battle would be fought at Cowpens with Morgan destroying the pride of the British, led by the hated Lt Col Tarleton. The victory was so remarkable that Congress authorized a gold medal for Morgan in appreciation of his leadership.

Author Higginbotham completes the story of Morgan by following him home to the Winchester area and traces his activities until his death on July 6, 1802.

**Editors note:** *Each year at 11:00 a.m. on the morning of the celebration of the Battle of Cowpens, the Daniel Morgan Chapter, South Carolina Society, Sons of the American Revolution conducts a program to honor Brigadier General Morgan at Morgan Square in Downtown Spartanburg, South Carolina*

Four Tricorns



By Don Higginbotham, The University of North Carolina Press, 1961. ISBN 0-8078-1386-9  
Paperback \$19.95

*George Thurmond*





Our April meeting brought us a new member induction. Welcome Chuck Calhoun.



Don Loudermilk was awarded his Bronze 250 Anniversary Medal.



Nancy Hart, (a.k.a. Leslie Watkins) entertained and educated the chapter about the only woman to have a Georgia county named for her. Nancy was rough-hewn and rawboned, with red hair and a face scarred by smallpox. The local Native Americans referred to her as "Wahatche" which translates "War Woman". There are various versions of the story of her taking a group of Tories captive after they forced their way into her cabin. She held them till patriots came to collect them. Supposedly, she insisted that they be hanged immediately. In 1912 construction crews working on the Elberton and Eastern Railroad in the area found evidence that seemed to validate the legend. While grading a railroad site less than a mile from the old Hart Cabin, the workers found five or six skeletons buried neatly in a row. A few of the skeletons' necks were broken, which suggested they had been hanged. They were determined to have been buried for at least 100 years.

GASSAR Chancellor, Chuck Olson gave us a look into how the laws and courts of Georgia changed, ..... And in some ways didn't change as Georgia moved from Colony to State.



Emil Decker, State President Ed Rigel Jr., and Donald Loudermilk represented the Chapter at the Midway Church Grave Marking Ceremony. Our Chapter was a Co-Sponsor for this event.





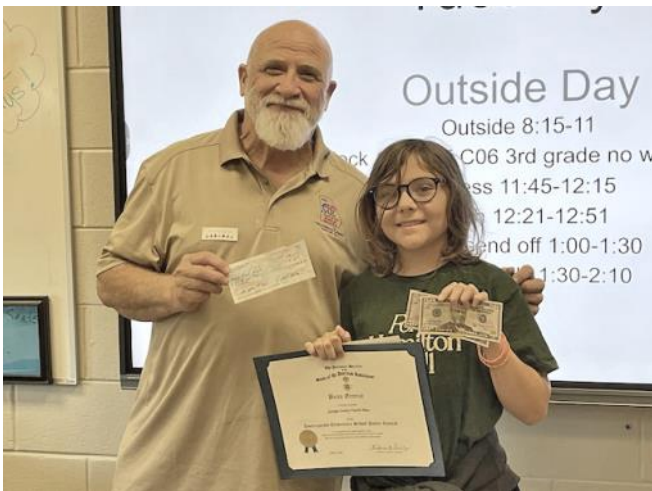
## COMMUNITY NEWS (CONT.)



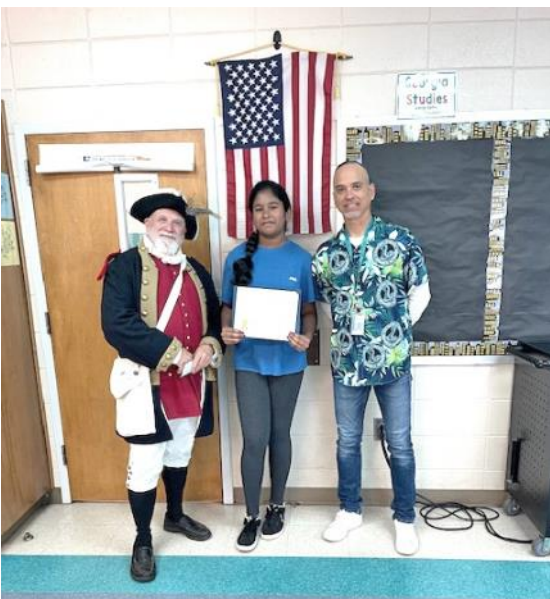
Don Loudermilk was presented with the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Medal for meritorious service by Patriots of Liberty Chapter Regent Debra Kielly. Don has dedicated his time, energy, talents, and resources to the organization in support and furtherance of the DAR mission of historic preservation, education and patriotism. It is awarded to a member once in a lifetime for service to the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Members J.C. Hustis and Emil Decker participated in a Traveling Trunk / Militia presentation to the Stephens County JROTC along with the Lyman Hall and Button Gwinnett Chapters..

Past President Emil Decker presented both cash and a check for Chapter 1st and State 2nd place poster winner. Way to go Beau!

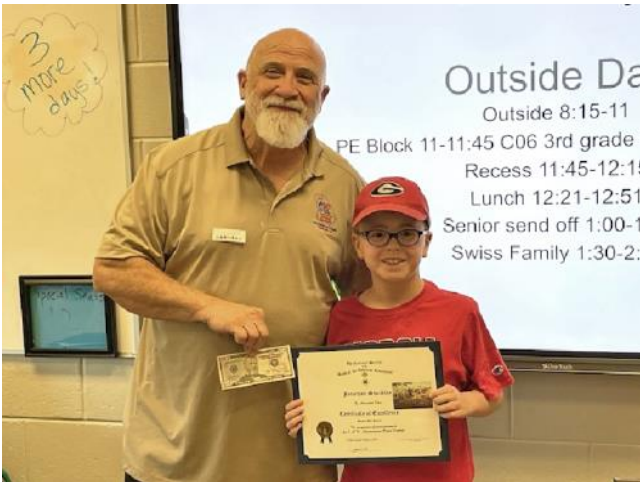


Our Chapter brochure contest winner from Vickery Creek MS also did well at State level, bringing in the 2nd place brochure.

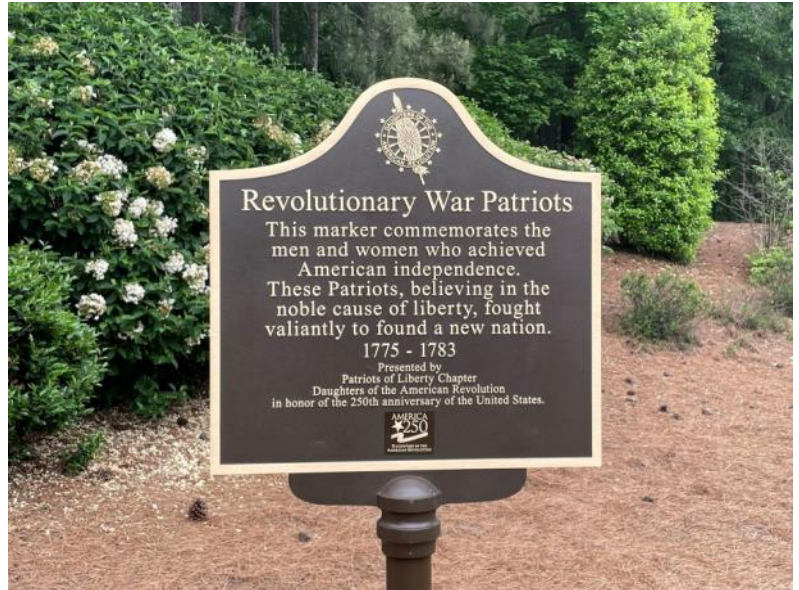




Jonathan was our 2nd place Chapter Poster Winner.



America 250 Patriots Marker was placed in Newton Park Johns Creek, GA and dedicated on April 27, 2024 by the Patriots of Liberty Chapter, Georgia DAR.



Craig Benton from Piedmont Chapter brought the June meeting presentation. Craig was a participant in the Washington's Tomb Guard last September and explained the estate, the history, and the experience of the event.

September, 2023 Tomb Vigil. Craig was joined by GA Society members Bill Edelen, National / GASSAR Color Guard Commander Scott Collins, and our own J.C. Hustis.

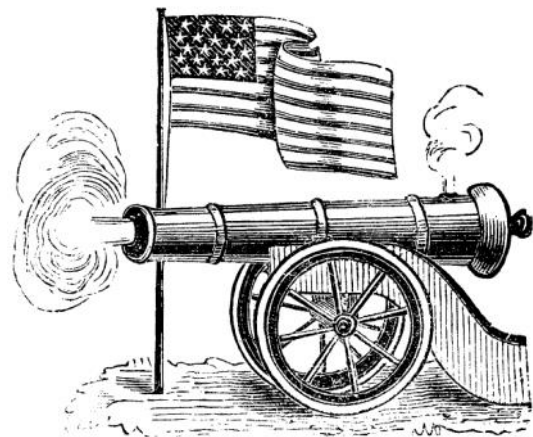




Past President Emil Decker joined Carter Wood at Myers Elementary School where they met up with Lady Liberty and marched in the **Patriotic Day Parade** founded by the school's namesake. Every year they honor the men and women in the military and first responders and all things patriotic. The Kindergarteners lead the way!



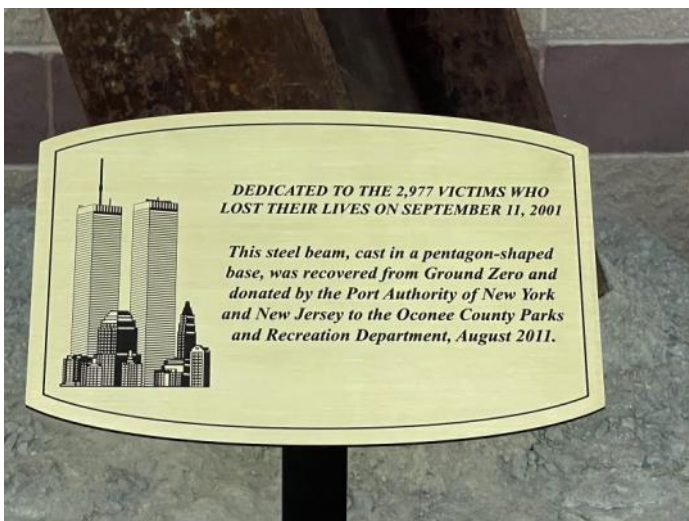
The same day as the Hill Climb in north GA, down in south GA where it was NOT raining, Compatriot Emil Decker was training to get CANNON Certified with the Skunk Brigade. Now, if Robert Forsyth will approve the purchase of a cannon.....







President Christopher Russo, his lovely daughter Eva, and Emil Decker attended the Cumming Veteran's Park Memorial Day Salute, with speeches, rifle salute, songs, Color Guard Presentations, and yes, heat, lots of heat.



On Memorial Day Emil drove down to the Oconee County Veterans Park, less than a mile from where he spent his high school years, to participate in the Commemoration there. They have a piece of the twin towers in the gymnasium entrance.







As State President for the Georgia Society, Ed Rigel Jr. has been all over the state and region representing Robert Forsyth and the Georgia Society. Here he is at the end of June at the National event at Ramsour's Mill, driving the stakes for the flags.

Compatriot J.C. Hustis arranged for the GASSAR Color Guard to Present the Colors and demonstrate musket firing after the service at his church, New Hope UMC, in Gainesville, GA.







Ed Rigel Jr. GASSAR President and lead Color Guardsman at the Patriotic Concert on the last night of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter.



### Ask the Expert:

With Lionel Hildebrand

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

**Why was the American Revolution continuing past 1776 if America had already declared independence?**

Interesting question. I suppose if Jolly King George and Parliament had simply agreed, sent over an International Welcome Wagon Fruit Basket and said, "Its all yours", there would have been no revolution and a lot less blood shed. As you know, they didn't.

**Looking at it from a genealogical standpoint, is the average British person or the average American person more likely to have had an ancestor that fought in the American Revolution?**

Another Interesting question. Let us look at it via mathematical statistics.

1. The Royal British Army in North America reached 34,000 in 1776, and averaged about 30,000 for the rest of the war. Large numbers of the Royal Army were German Auxiliaries (c 10,000 ?). The population of the British Isles was 8 million in 1775. This makes the overseas deployment to the American continent a ratio of about 1 in 400.
2. The rebel forces at their height was about 80,000 but averaged much less normally. The terms of enlistment, pay, ability to go home, etc. was much easier for the patriot forces. Regardless, looking at the numbers, the population of the 13 colonies was approximately 2.5 million. This is a ratio of 1:31.
3. Now the average American person is therefore much more likely to have an ancestor than the average British citizen. One must remember also that large numbers of Americans served in the Royal forces (in the regulars, provincials, or militia). These folks, called Tories or Loyalists, if counted as Americans due to being here on this continent, and with offspring remaining here after the war, increases the ratio even more.
4. The Population in America has expanded at a much greater rate than the British Isles since 1775. Even accounting for immigration from non-participating nations, the increase in the ratio is still in favor of the Average American.



## HEROES HILL CLIMB

Submission by Tisha Johnstone

Robert Forsyth SAR is a proud sponsor of the Hero Hill Climb, a Memorial Day event held just outside Camp Merrill Army Ranger Base in Dahlonega, Georgia. This event allows participants to walk, run, ruck, or bike up a 3-mile mountain hill, carrying the name of a fallen servicemember with them. When they reach the top, they pin their Hero Card onto the Hero Board and ring the Liberty Bell in their honor. The participants then carry an American flag back down (with some choosing to do this multiple times, each time carrying a new name up).

Participating were compatriots Carl Watkins, Benjamin Watkins, Chris Russo, Stephen Johnstone, and Eric Johnstone (who is a dual C.A.R. member). Compatriot Stephen Johnstone organized this event. Patriots of Liberty C.A.R. also helped sponsor the event with members Eva R., Eric J., Michael C., Katie C., Braylan B., Kholson B., and

Jantsan B. participating and volunteering in the constant downpour.

The event helped raised \$10,500 for three

organizations. On June 8, 2024, a check presentation ceremony was held at the Overhang Bar and Grill. \$5,000 was given to the U.S. Mountain Ranger Association for their Benevolence Fund (aiding soldiers in need during emergencies such as sudden family deaths, natural disasters, and unforeseen hardships), \$5,000 was given to Mission 22 (an organization aimed at preventing veteran suicide, supporting veterans and their families), and \$500 was given to the Camp Merrill Non-Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA) (a

non - profit that runs the Overhang Bar and Grill and promotes the morale and esprit de corps of all personnel and dependents assigned or attached to Camp Merrill).



President Chris Russo received for the chapter, a plaque honoring our participation and support in sponsoring the Hill Climb.





## Stoddard's Stockade

*As long as we are talking about Revolutionary heroes and heroines in my family, let's not forget Anna Strong. Anna was the wife of my 2nd cousin 6 times removed. Anna Smith Strong was George Washington's only female spy. Here's her story.*

Anna Smith Strong (April 14, 1740 – August 12, 1812) Setauket, New York was an American Patriot, and she may have been one of the only female members of the Culper Spy Ring during the American Revolution. No information has been found concerning Anna's activities after the war.

Selah Brewster Strong III (December 25, 1737 – July 4, 1812) was a delegate to the first three provincial congresses in colonial New York, and a captain in the New York militia in 1776. He was imprisoned in the sugar house at New York City for "surreptitious correspondence with the enemy,"

according to Rivington's Gazette of January 3, 1778. Family tradition has him later transferred to a prison ship, the HMS Jersey. Anna brought him food, and little did the British know, Anna used her wealthy loyalists family members to persuade, (bribe) British officials to parole her husband to Connecticut. Upon his release, he spent the rest of the war in Connecticut with the family's younger children while Anna stayed on Long Island. As noted by Caleb Brewster's crewmate Robert Brush, Selah actively helped Brewster and his crew avoid capture by the British when they were hidden on the Strong property on Mount Misery.



The T. S. Strong Home from a Sketch by Mrs. Carol Davis Petty.

<https://tbrnewsmedia.com/connecting-selah-strong-to-the-culper-spy-ring/>

Copy of drawing of the Strong house in Mount Misery. This house, circa 1796, replaced the original house, which burned. Photo from Long Island Forum

Major Benjamin Tallmadge, Continental Army, began working with Abraham Woodhull in the summer of 1778 to create what became known as the Culper spy ring. Anna's role in the ring was to relay signals to a courier who ran a smuggling and military mission whaleboat across Long Island Sound. Anna's job was dangerous. She relayed information to Abraham Woodhull, another Culper spy who lived in Setauket. Caleb Brewster, a known spy to British forces, rowed across the Long Island Sound to and from Connecticut and needed to deliver information from Woodhull to Tallmadge. Tallmadge then would decide which pieces of information would make their way to General Washington.

Given her location, Anna's job of signaling consisted of pinning a black petticoat up on her clothesline. It was visible to both Brewster and Woodhull. The coastline, riddled with small coves, in which Brewster could hide himself and his boat, and Woodhull needed to know which cove Brewster was in.





<https://girlwithalessonplan.tumblr.com/post/90655872176/coolchicksfromhistory-anna-strong-art-by-megan>

With six coves, Anna would hang white handkerchiefs up, with the number of handkerchiefs corresponding to which cove Brewster was hiding in. While the tradition of the clothesline signal is unverifiable, it is known that the British suspected a woman at Setauket who fit Anna's profile. British law provided for lands to be confiscated if left abandoned, and they speculate this is why Anna remained on Long Island when her husband left for Connecticut. Since she had some of her children with her, her arrest would have left them parentless.

Selah Strong was on Washington's list to be reimbursed for expenses incurred in connection with activities for the Culper Ring. Abraham Woodhull wrote a message to Benjamin Tallmadge to say that he would be visiting New York again and, "by the assistance of a [lady] of my acquaintance, shall be able to outwit them all." Several historians surmise that Anna Strong was the lady identified as, "a 355", (Tallmadge's code for the word "lady").

AMC's Revolutionary War period drama TURN: Washington's Spies was based on Washington's Spies: The Story of America's First Spy Ring (2007) by Alexander Rose. Heather Lind plays Anna Strong in the series. In the show she is depicted as a woman with no children of her own.

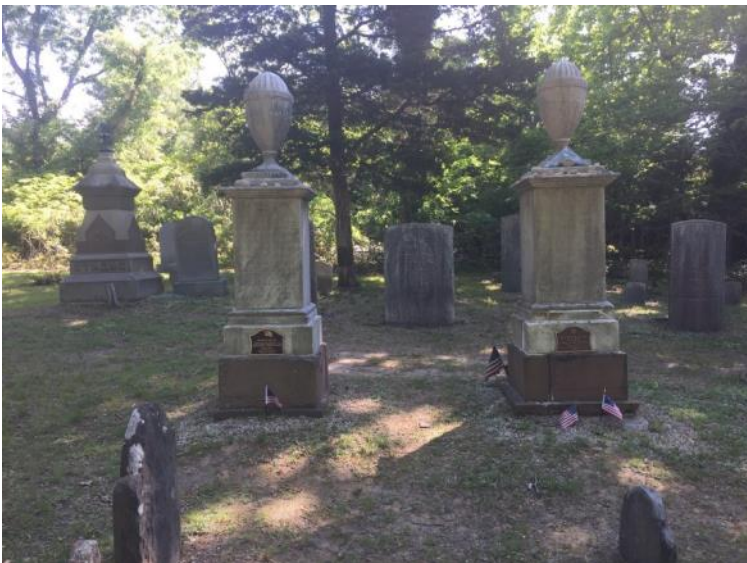
In part due to Anna's simple and discreet system, the Culper Spy Ring was responsible for the discovery of Benedict Arnold's act of treason. Arnold devised a plot to surrender West Point to the British for 20,000 pounds and a place in the British command. The information was passed to General Washington, though by that time Arnold had fled.

Although members of the ring were subjected to intense British scrutiny, and several arrested, none were ever outed. The ring was kept in such great secrecy that General Washington did not know the identities of all his spies, and the ring's existence was virtually unknown to the public until the discovery of correspondence in 1929.

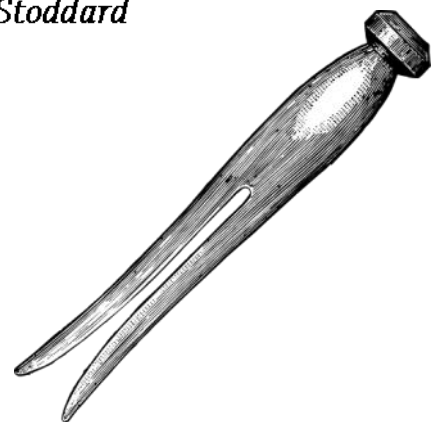
After the war, Anna was reunited with her husband Selah, and they had their tenth child, George Washington Strong. She is buried on Strong's Neck in the family cemetery. She has a NSDAR Chapter named for her on Setauket, Long Island, NY.

<http://www.annasmithstrongchapter-nsdar.org/>

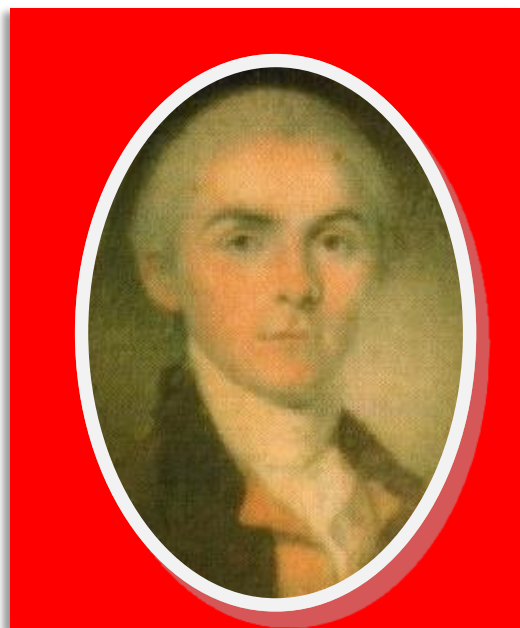
Find A Grave Memorial# 70274996



*Peter Stoddard*







*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. 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](mailto:chasm242@yahoo.com) or any chapter officer.

#### Deadline for the Next Issue:

The deadline for material for the next issue is Sep 20, 2024. In addition to the material, please include hi-resolution imagery. Please direct all inquiries or suggestions regarding *The Marshal* to the Editor:

Emil L. Decker: Txt. at 706-482-8248 or via email to: [eldecker@weeagr.com](mailto:eldecker@weeagr.com)

## SAR Calendar of Events

Event	Location	Date	Status
Freedom Fireworks	Washington, GA	Jul 3, 2024	Chapter
Independence Day	Various	Jul 4, 2024	National
National Congress	Lancaster, PA	Jul 10 - 16, 2024	National
Fairfax Resolve	Alexandria, VA	Jul 18 - 20, 2024	National
GASSAR BOM	Barnesville, GA	Jul 27, 2024	State
Battle of Camden	Camden, SC	Aug 10, 2024	National
Blue Licks	Carlisle, KY	Aug 17, 2024	National
(5) Patriot Grave Marking	Lexington, KY	Aug 18, 2024	State
The Gathering at Sycamore Shoals	Fort Watauga, TN	Sep 14, 2024	National
Siege of Augusta	Augusta, GA	Sep 14, 2024	State
Washington Tomb Vigil	Mt. Vernon, VA	Sep 21, 2024	National
Battle of Eutaw Springs	Eutawville, SC	Sep 29 - 30, 2024	National
Fall Leadership	Louisville, KY	Oct 3 - 5, 2024	National
Battle of Kings Mountain	Blacksburg, SC	Oct 7, 2024	National
Siege of Savannah	Savannah, GA	Oct 9, 2024	State
Battle of Yorktown	Yorktown, VA	Oct 19, 2024	National
GASSAR BOM	Barnesville, GA	Oct 26, 2024	State
Patriot Grave Marking	Grovetown, GA	Oct 26, 2024	State
Oconee County Veterans Day	Watkinsville, GA	Nov 11, 2024	National
Come & Take It	Fort Morris, GA	Nov 23, 2024	National
Wreaths Across America	Various	Dec 14, 2024	National

