



The Marshal

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



PRESIDENT'S DISPATCH

By Emil Decker



As I returned to the office of President of the Robert Forsyth Chapter in March, I looked back on the first couple of months of chapter activity. 2026 will be a banner year by the looks of our start, and I hope we continue to excel, under my leadership. The enthusiasm and willingness to participate so far has been outstanding, and I encourage every member to do 3 things.

1. Get involved. No better year to start.
2. Find new members. No better year to promote membership in our Society, this 250th Anniversary Year of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.
3. Fund our mission. Wow.... What a buzz kill. Yet, we cannot do what we do without funding, and that comes through fundraising.

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Our Finest Hour? ... Just Wait for the Next

When two of our members started to become excited about leaving the state I began to worry. Then, once I discovered they were simply planning a foray into South Carolina to assist the National and South Carolina Society, but more immediately, the Georgia Society in honoring our patriot ancestors at the 245th Commemoration of the Battle of Cowpens, I was overjoyed. We have seldom had such enthusiasm, as a chapter, to attend and the two, John Flikeid and David Johnson, would assuredly be joined by another member, Ed Rigel Jr. That would make three from Robert Forsyth. We rarely reach that number at any event other than one we sponsor, and a national event out of state? Not to mention, in uniform? I quickly asserted that I too would go.



When our Past President, Chris Russo said he would make our trip if the four of us were carpooling, we reached a magic number. All five of us would be attending in Colonial clothing. Mostly militia; Five! Unprecedented.

Once at the Cowpens site, we were greeted by yet two more members, Carl and Benjamin Watkins. These two, also dressed in Militia, are known to be very excited about reenactments, and Cowpens was just the place to be. (cont. page 2)



PRESIDENT'S DISPATCH (CONT.)

I am reminded of this inevitable need as I take on the responsibilities of the office and think back on how many other organizations have accomplished this mission in the past. From raffles, to auctions, to sales, many things have worked well, but I am reminded of the 50-pound sack of flour that raised millions of dollars. Yes, a single sack of flour.

During the Civil War, a sack of flour was repeatedly auctioned off to raise money for wounded soldiers; ultimately, \$4 million Dollars worth, in today's economy.

In January 1865, only four months before the Civil War's end, Harper's Weekly published the story of a peculiar flour sack credited with raising thousands of dollars for injured soldiers. This true tale began in Austin, Nevada, the previous year. On the eve of city elections, two wagering men, area merchant Reuel Colt Gridley and Dr. Henry Herrick, placed a bet on the vote's outcome. The loser would pay up with a 50-pound sack of flour, but not before a dose of public humiliation: Whoever lost had to ceremoniously march down the town's main strip with the bag, all to the tune of "John Brown's Body" (a patriotic melody that would later become the music for "The Battle Hymn of the Republic").

Within a day, the losing bettor, Mr. Gridley, was being cheered on by his fellow townsfolk - who turned out in numbers to watch the spectacle - as he followed a brass band down the city's center, flour sack over his shoulder. At the end of his march, he handed the sack to the bet's winner, Mr. Herrick. However, he recommended it be donated to the Sanitary Commission, a relief agency that provided care for sick and injured Union soldiers. Herrick agreed, and soon after, the hefty sack of flour was auctioned for \$350. But in an act of gallantry, the winner asked that the sack be sold again, raising another \$250. Surrounding towns joined in, and before long, Gridley and the "Sanitary Sack of Flour" had gone as far as San Francisco and raised \$63,000. Newspapers spread the story, leading the flour sack across the country, raising upwards of \$275,000 (more than \$4 million today), and ending up as far as New York City. Gridley, who had started the journey as a Confederate sympathizer, returned to Nevada an ardent supporter of the Union; the famed Sanitary Sack returned with him and it remains on display in Reno at the state's Historical Society Museum.

I am not going to auction off a sack of flour. However, I am asking that each member create their own fundraiser. Be creative. Make something, Sell it, raffle it, do what you do so well..... and bring home the bacon. OR..... if you don't have the time, inclination, or talent to put forward the work, or simply doubt your abilities,.....donate \$100.

Once again, as a chapter alternative to a labor-intensive fundraiser, something I know all of you enjoy selling tickets for, I am going to ask that each one of you make a donation in the amount of \$100 to the Chapter's coffers.

This simple act will provide the funds we need, and will be raised via your personal fundraising efforts. Either way, we win, you win, the organization wins, the community, education programs, & other efforts we will accomplish this next year will win....Thanks to you!

Go enjoy the Semiquincentennial!

Emil Decker
President, Robert Forsyth Chapter



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reuel_Colt_Gridley



<https://www.rgj.com/picture-gallery/news/2014/10/29/original-emancipation-proclamation-in-reno/18154261/>

The original Sanitary Sack of Flour from Austin on display at the Nevada Museum of Art on Wednesday Oct. 29, 2014 as part of the sesquicentennial celebration.

[Marilyn Newton/RGJ](#)

Our Finest Hour? ... (Cont.)

Think of it. Seven members of Robert Forsyth all dressed and ready for battle! Well, at least, the reenactment of a battle.

As we lined up to march into the pavilion set up for the ceremony, with flags and muskets, yet another two members showed up. Robert Forsyth recently processed the membership of the Bull brothers, Kholson and Jantsan, members of the Patriots of Liberty C.A.R. Society. They too were clad in Colonial Garb and joined the line. Never before has Robert Forsyth had so many attend such an event, and all nine “dressed to the nines”, which I guess is kind of ironic, but most appropriate.

If you haven't been to such an event, you should go. If you haven't dressed the part, and participated, you don't know what you are missing. Truly, you don't. This is the year for you to join in and celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and the official start of our nation. Ask any of the above members. I believe they will give you an affirmative for an answer.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Even before the year was 2 days old, the Robert Forsyth Chapter was out in force. John Flikeid, David Johnson, and Emil Decker supported a Scout's Eagle Project of holding a flag retirement ceremony on Jan. 2. They joined DAR, Lyman Hall and Button Gwinnett Compatriots at the Ceremony.



Eight days later, Robert Forsyth lit up the horizon, or at least the Cumming Water Tank.



"Keep an eye on the Cumming Home water tower in 2026 for red, white, and blue"

Robert Forsyth Chapter is 'sponsoring' the lights on the Cumming Home water tower a number of times in 2026. The water tower is located off GA 400, across from Northside Forsyth Hospital, just south of exit 14. Each year non-profit organizations submit requests to the City of Cumming to have the water tower lights represent a cause or event. Robert Forsyth has a number of events that will be recognized with the tower being lit up in red, white, and blue. The city has an America 250 category and we have signed up for the grand majority of those commemorations.

250th Anniversary of Thomas Paine Publishing 'Common Sense', January 10th

Benjamin Franklin's Birthday & Battle of Cowpens, January 17th

Battle of Kettle Creek, February 14th

Battle of Brier Creek, March 3rd (we'll ensure our Compatriots in the Skunk Brigade and guardians of the battlefield are aware)

Patriots' Day / 250th Anniversary of British troops evacuating Boston, March 17th

Passage of the Stamp Act (1st Direct Tax on Colonists), March 22nd

Anniversary of Patrick Henry's "Liberty or Death" speech, March 23rd

Anniversary of Paul Revere, William Dawes & Samuel Prescott's Ride, April 18th

Battle of Bunker Hill, June 17th

250th Anniversary of Independence Day, July 1-5

Anniversary of the Treaty of Paris, ending the American Revolution in victory, September 3rd

United States Constitution Day, September 17th

Anniversary of the Boston Tea party, December 16th

If you are in the area on any of these days, stop by the water tower and take a photo.

At Heroes of the Hornets' Nest & Kettle Creek, Emil fired his first cannon salute at an event, featuring his newly constructed artillery piece. We expect a lot of noise from his corner in the future. Other members of the Chapter participated at the Washington / Kettle Creek Event as well. Seven members pictured, including our Charter member, former Chapter, GASSAR President, current Secretary General, and future President General, Allen Greenly.



Had a little fun with AI. Ask the computer to braid the beard....It got a little carried away!



President Christopher Russo presented the Chapter Wreath on War Hill.



Jantsan Bull participated in the 13 flags placement of the C.A.R. portion of the ceremony.



Right: Robert Forsyth members have been attending and providing support for a 250 series of lectures at the Milton Library.



Left: Our Chapter Chaplain, Byron Tindall is properly outfitted in Clerical clothing provided by his wife, Anne. Anne recently won the DAR Fiber Arts entry for Historic Dress from the State of Georgia. Congrats to both Byron for his modeling, and to Sequoyah Chapter's Anne Tindall for her seamstress creation.

Below: On January 10, President Chris Russo traveled to Athens, Tennessee, attending a Joint Meeting with the Patriots of Liberty Society, Children of the American Revolution (C.A.R.), and the Alexander Keith Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution in Athens, Tennessee. The meeting was held at a downtown Athens venue owned and maintained by the Hiawassee Chapter, TNSAR.

Russo brought greetings on behalf of the Robert Forsyth Chapter and participated in a storytelling session where attendees were encouraged to share photos of their ancestors. He also presented the colors as part of the Hiawassee Chapter Color Guard. Russo was accompanied by his nephew, Brayden, a member of Patriots of Liberty C.A.R. Together they shared a photo of their great-grandfather, Dolphus Jabez Askew and his pet/trick mule Roxie. Russo also holds dual membership in the Tennessee Society's John Sevier Chapter, as does his cousin Bryan Beck. Beck, in turn, is a dual member of the Robert Forsyth Chapter.





Above: On March 15, the Sequoyah Chapter, NSDAR, Robert Forsyth and Cherokee Chapters, NSSAR held a Liberty Tree Dedication at Big Canoe, GA. Our member Jantsan Bull brought greeting from the GA Society, C.A.R. and Compatriot Decker gave a history lesson on Liberty Trees.

Right: President William Tankersley gave his "Independence, the Stud Horse" presentation to the Annual assembly, and was presented a Chapter Certificate of Appreciation specially made for his spectacular efforts.



Left: David Johnson, Treasurer, was awarded the Chapter Distinguished Service Medal for his efforts at maintaining and expanding the chapter's treasury. (Without jail time.)

Right: The hardest working man behind the growing of the membership in the chapter is our Registrar, Charles Meagher. Charles has been instrumental in the chapter's acquiring new members, and was awarded an OLC to his Meritorious Service medal.



Left: Outgoing President Chris Russo and family pose with the Robert Forsyth Charter. Happy to be leaving the President's post?? Just look at the smile.



Right and Below: New officers were sworn in at the March Annual Meeting. Emil Decker returns as President, while (R - L) Charles Meagher as Registrar, Past President Chris Russo takes back the Genealogist and Historian offices, Byron Tindall as Chaplain, John Flikeid as Vice President, David Johnson as Treasurer, and Carl Jackson as Sgt.-at-Arms. Chip Van Alstyne, (not present) will be our Secretary.



Right: Chris Russo, before vacating the President's position, awarded several awards. The Lydia Darragh and Martha Washington medals to his daughter, Eva, who is almost like a member herself, providing great support for her father and the chapter both.



Left: President Russo also presented the Chapter Henry Knox medal to incoming President Emil Decker for his long term support to the Chapter in almost every way possible.



The Bull brothers both received their Bronze 250th Anniversary medal.



Left and Right: Sometimes, when you least expect it, a camera can find you and the next thing you know you end up advertising for other organizations and your own! ALWAYS smile and keep your eyes open.

MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Photo Credit: Philip Beck

Sons of the American Revolution at the Autumn Shindig, one of our annual signature events for the Milton community.

The Milton Historical Society's mission is to appreciate and promote the past through education, preservation and exploration.

Volunteer Opportunities at the Northeast Georgia History Center!

Volunteer Opportunities
We have many volunteer opportunities for our events throughout the year including:

- Living History Interpretation
- Historical Activity & Craft Station Leads for Events
- Remote or In-Person Historical Research for Programs
- Gainesville Reads Children's Literacy Program

Or something else! Let us know what you can offer!

Learn More: www.neghc.org info@neghc.org
111 Academy St NE (across from Insko Building)

Below: Our C.A.R. / SAR Junior members received their certificates and were sworn in by President General Elston at the C.A.R. State Convention.

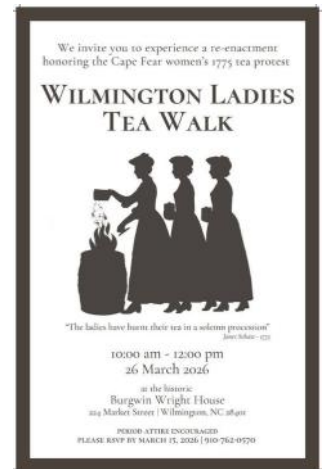


AMBASSADOR TO THE COLONIES

You can take the Georgian out of the Colony, but you can't take the Georgian out of our hearts. Since J.C. Hustis moved to the Colony of North Carolina, we haven't seen much of him.....unless you follow him on Facebook or receive his messages. As a "Member of Robert Forsyth", our 'Ambassador to the Colonies', we will try to keep up with him as best we can.

J.C. has attended several events, (*Historian, don't forget to include in our SMART report*), including Moore's Creek, a DAR Patriot Marker Dedication at the USS North Carolina Battleship Park, the Race to Wilmington Commemoration, A Colonial Faire, where he did a Travelin' Trunk exhibit, Grave Markings, and even attended a DAR Tea Walk.

(Pint o' Beer afterward?)



Book Reviews by Col. George Thurmond

The Life of General Francis Marion By Brigadier General P. Horry and Parson M. L. Weems

Francis Marion may best be credited with the creation of the first Special Forces, for his role in South Carolina was that of a celebrated Partisan Officer who kept the flame for independence alive during the entire time that the British held South Carolina.

After the original publication date of 1809, General Horry furnished information to Parson Mason Weems who developed a reputation of embellishing the truth. For instance, it was Parson Weems who's Life of Washington that created the story of Washington cutting down a cherry tree. Needless to say, General Horry, who rode with Francis Marion, was not enthusiastic about the completed story.

This is a revealing story about a determined Patriot who continued to fight against all odds and was always able to elude the British because he knew the countryside better than his adversary. Marion was always somewhat surrounded by the British, yet he could anticipate their every move. Hence, the nickname, Swamp Fox.

There is a story in Chapter XVII that sums up all for the Patriots and the American Revolution: A young officer was sent with a flag of truce to discuss a prisoner exchange. Being led blindfolded into Marion's secret camp, the officer was startled to see the troops ragged, unshaven, and shoeless with a minimum of weapons. Being treated to dine on baked sweet potatoes with the famous General Marion, the officer was further startled to learn that all of the soldiers had served the general for years without pay.

Upon returning to his Georgetown post, the officer looked so serious that his Colonel asked why the desperate look. The officer replied "Why sir, I have seen an American General and his officers, without pay, and almost without clothes, living on roots and drinking water; all for Liberty! What chance have we against such men!"

The resurgence in Patriotism following the movie, *The Patriot* led to the republication of this book. This is great reading and is highly recommended.

Four Tricorns  Publisher : Blair, January 1, 2000 (Reprint) Paperback: \$5.32

ISBN-10 : 0895871963 ISBN-13 : 978-0895871961

George Thurmond

Ask the Expert:

With Lionel Hildebrand

If you have questions, please forward to the editor, eldecker@windstream.net. He will see that it gets to me.



Is it fair to say that the American Revolutionary War was "started in the North, fought in the South and won by the French"?

Many believe the American Revolution should be divided into two phases, 1775-78 and 1778-1781.

The American Revolution in the North (1775-1778) began with armed rebellion in Massachusetts. Armed conflict started at Lexington and Concord, followed by the Battle of Bunker Hill and the British evacuation of Boston. The British launched a massive force to seize New York City, defeating Washington on Long Island and in Manhattan, forcing a retreat of the patriots through New Jersey.

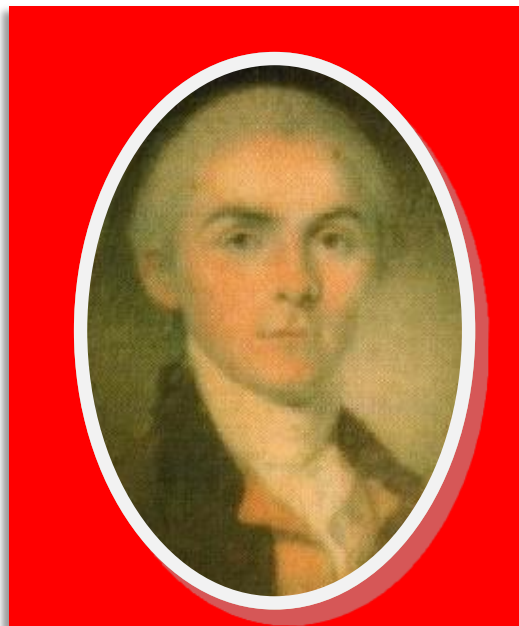
Washington's Continental Army saved the cause daring winter raids at Trenton and Princeton boosted morale. American forces achieved a massive turning point by defeating General Burgoyne at Saratoga, which directly led to the alliance with France. After France entered the war, the British held only New York City and Quebec. The northern phase solidified the Continental Army under Washington, proved the viability of the rebellion, and secured crucial foreign support. French supplies

and training, along with the French fleet ultimately helped the Patriots win.

The main British thrust shifted south (1778-1781), the "Southern Strategy", as the opinion of most of the United Kingdom expected greater Loyalist support. Smaller-scale battles continued in the North. The war in the South was brutal. It was a theater characterized by an intense civil war between Patriots and Loyalists. The British invaded Savannah, Georgia and in an upset, captured Charleston in a second attempt, including Benjamin Lincoln's Continental army. Only then did British expeditions and guerrilla resistance to them in the Carolina backcountry start. Kettle Creek, among a series of other engagements, proved the Loyalist needed the British army support. The debacle at Camden, SC. caused Washington to send Nathanael Greene to the Southern front.

A critical Patriot victory against Loyalist militia on Kings Mountain, and at Cowpens ended recruitment of Southern Loyalists for the British. American forces led by Nathanael Greene and guerrilla leaders like Francis Marion used attrition warfare, wearing down British forces under Cornwallis. General Nathanael Greene led Cornwallis on a grueling chase through the Carolinas (the "Race to the Dan"), which exhausted British resources and led to the costly Battle of Guilford Courthouse. The British ultimately were forced to retreat to Yorktown, where they were trapped by the French fleet and with the land pinch from the Patriots, they had ultimately surrendered. This is often called the end of the war, although the British did not evacuate Charleston until December 1782 and New York until the peace treaty in 1783.

SAR Calendar of Events



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: 6:00pm / Meeting 7:00pm. 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 our 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 Jul 10, 2026. 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@weegr.com

| Event | Location | Date | Status |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| Lyman Hall Birthday | Gainesville, GA | Apr 11, 2026 1 pm | State |
| Patriots Day | Various | Apr 19, 2026 | National |
| Frederica Naval Engagement | St. Simons Island, GA | Apr 18 - 19, 2026 10 am - 12 pm | National |
| GASSAR BOM | Barnesville, GA | Apr 25, 2026 10 - 12 pm | State |
| Midway Church and Grave Marking (5) | Midway, GA | Apr 26, 2026 10 - 4 pm | State |
| Liberty Tree | Columbus, GA | May 9, 2026 10 am | State |
| 250 Marker NSDAR | Jasper, GA | May 12, 2026 1:30 pm | State |
| Grave Marking Enoch Smith | Elijay, GA | May 16, 2026 1 PM | State |
| Memorial Day | Various | May 25, 2026 | National |
| Grave Marking James Pittman (NSDAR) | Madison Co., GA | Jun 7, 2026 TBD | State |
| Flag Retirement | Cumming, GA | Jun 13, 2026 | National |
| Grave Marking John Thrasher | Athens, GA | Jun 13, 2026 10 am | State |
| Flag Day | Various | Jun 13-14, 2026 | National |
| Independence Day | Various | Jul 4, 2026 | National |
| Braves Pre-Game | Atlanta, GA | Jul 4, 2026 | National |
| 136th Congress | Greensboro, NC | Jul 10-16, 2026 | National |
| GASSAR BOM | Barnesville, GA | Jul 25, 2026 | State |

