

The President's Message

By Chapter President Wayne A. Griswold



Wow! It's almost Christmas and another year has come and gone. With it ends my term as chapter president. I am deeply indebted to you for this wonderful opportunity. It has been a tremendously rewarding experience and has given me memories to last a lifetime. More importantly, the Gold Country Chapter thrives! It is still the award winning chapter it was when I took office January 1, 2008. We have participated in many local, state, and national activities; we have won many state and some national awards. Thanks to Chapter Genealogist Earl Young, we have reached the 100 member mark. None of this would have been possible without you or without the support of our volunteers who have provided continued, faithful service over the last two years.

Speaking of Christmas, the chapter's annual Christmas Potluck and Awards Ceremony will be held Saturday, December 19th at the Shady Glen Estates Recreation Hall in Colfax (see directions on page 6). If you'd like to bring a dish, please call me at 916-985-3756. This event always offers a fun time of fellowship and provides an opportunity to recognize a few people for their outstanding service to the chapter. Following the awards portion of the program, we will install the chapter's new slate of officers. Our incoming president will be Keith Bigbee who will serve in this office until December 31, 2010. On

January 1, 2011, Dave Gilliard, the current first vice president, will step forward to complete the two-year term. I am extremely thankful to all of the men who stepped forward to hold a chapter office. See page 7 for the complete list and please remember to say "thank you" the next time you see them.

On November 12-14th, the California Society held its 134th Fall Board of Managers Meeting in Riverside. This was a very successful meeting, but the most exciting news, at least in my mind, was the changes to the California Society's Youth Program Awards. Next year's youth awards will be the highest offered in the history of the California Society. The 2010 winning contestants in the Eagle Scout Scholarship, Knight Essay, and JROTC programs will receive a \$1500 US Savings Bond. The first place winner of the Americanism Elementary School Poster Contest will receive a \$500 US Savings Bond followed by the second place poster award of a \$250 US Savings Bond. There is also a new Americanism Middle School Brochure Contest which is the first SAR contest offered in the middle school system. This contest challenges students to combine literary and artistic skills to create a tri-fold brochure based on an American Revolution theme. The Brochure Contest awards will be \$600 and \$400 US Savings Bonds for first and second place prizes, respectively.

There's so much more to share. Look for further details in the *California Compatriot*. I want to close by wishing you and your families the absolute BEST for a Very Merry Christmas and a Bright and Wonderful New Year!

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Calendar of Events

Monday, December 7th
National Pearl Harbor Day - Fly the Flag at half staff to sunset.

Saturday, December 12th
For details contact Dale Ross, 530-274-1838.

Monday, December 14th
209th Anniversary of the death of George Washington, Fly the Flag!

Saturday, December 19th
Annual Christmas Potluck & Award Ceremony, 2:00-5:00 P.M. Shady Glen Estates, Colfax.

Friday, December 25th
Christmas Day, Fly the Flag!

Friday, January 1st
New Years Day- Fly the Flag!

Saturday, January 16th
Regular Meeting, 9:00 A.M., Lou LaBonte's Restaurant, Auburn. The Spring CASSAR Planning Committee will meet after the regular meeting.

Monday, January 8th
Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday - Fly the Flag!



The next Gold Country Chapter meeting is
Saturday, December 19th at 2:00 P.M.
Shady Glen Estates, Colfax

The Gold Country Chapter's 2009 regular meetings will be held on the 3rd Saturday of each month except in May, September, and December. During these months special meeting dates occur in order to accommodate other Chapter or California Society activities. All regular meetings are held in the banquet room of Lou LaBonte's Restaurant, 13460 Lincoln Way, Auburn, (530) 885-9193, at 9:00AM. See you there!

Visit our Chapter, State and National Websites
GoldCountrySAR.org ♦ CaliforniaSAR.org ♦ SAR.org

The submission deadline for the January edition of
The Forty-Niner is Thursday, December 24, 2009.

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A Soldier's Christmas

By Michael G. Lucas



Every year American soldiers serve around the world and will not be able to spend Christmas with their loved ones. Americans in the military have served their nation in difficult circumstances and in faraway places. While they sacrifice for our country, they often have to spend Christmas on battlefields, in foxholes, in prisons, or enduring other miserable conditions. They join a long tradition of sacrifice dating back to the Revolutionary War.



It was Christmas Eve 1783. Mount Vernon was just around the next bend. General Washington was returning to his beloved home. During the war he fully expected that he'd never see Mount Vernon again. Several years earlier, the British sloop HMS *Savage* had threatened Mount Vernon with its guns trained on the house. Benedict Arnold had ravaged Virginia; Washington had expected that the traitor would have sought revenge by destroying Mount Vernon. Now it was almost Christmas and, undoubtedly, George Washington's mind was filled with thoughts of the last nine Christmases. He had been made commander of the Continental Army on June 15, 1775. He informed Martha three days later of his appointment and promised her that he'd finish up his work and be home before Christmas.

Instead of enjoying the Christmas of 1775 in the comforts of Mount Vernon, he found himself looking down on the British who were snug in the comforts of Boston. He would not make it home for this Christmas... but perhaps next year.

His thoughts would have moved on to that following Christmas. Washington's army had just been run out of New York and morale had hit rock bottom. Enlistments were about to end and Washington would soon watch his army walk away like whipped dogs. Against the advice of his officers, Washington ordered a crossing of the frozen Delaware River on Christmas Day 1776. He boldly attacked the Hessians garrisoned at Trenton; his success turned the

tide and changed the outcome of the war. Christmas at Mount Vernon would have to wait... perhaps next year.

The next Christmas would find Washington at Valley Forge. His army would be refined in the crucible of suffering. Undernourished and poorly clothed while living in crowded, cold, damp quarters, the army was ravaged by sickness and disease. As many as two thousand men died that winter. His soldiers needed him to stay with them both to fight Congress for provisions and to encourage them to persevere. Mount Vernon would have to wait... perhaps next year.

In the years ahead, in order to maintain his army, he would spend Christmas at Middlebrook, New Windsor, Newburgh, and Morristown, where he endured the worst winter of the 18th century along with mutiny, lack of pay for his soldiers, and crippling inflation. Washington had hoped to spend Christmas 1782 at home, but instead he had to again spend it with his army. His officer corps was on the verge of insurrection and he had no choice but to stay. Anger had been brewing among his officers because they had not received their pay as promised. They finally met together to plan a move against Congress. He begged the officers to do nothing "that would tarnish the reputation of an army which is celebrated throughout Europe for its fortitude and patriotism." His emotional appeal averted a mutiny attempt. What had been achieved on the battlefield could have easily been erased without his personal intervention. James Thomas Flexner, in *George Washington in the American Revolution*, concluded that "Americans can never be adequately grateful that George Washington possessed the power and the will to intervene effectively in what may well have been the most dangerous hour the United States has ever known." Christmas after Christmas the nation needed him; he would be unable to keep that promise made to Martha. Martha learned that, if she wanted to spend Christmas with her husband, she would have to come to him. Finally, after eight long years of war and unbelievable sacrifices, George

Washington would keep his promise. He was going home for Christmas.



Mount Vernon was just up ahead and a sense of peace must have enveloped the General. Washington's trip home for Christmas was the culmination of an amazing month. What had just occurred over the last three weeks changed the course of world history just as much as had all the victories on the battlefield.

On December 4th, Washington crossed the Hudson River on his trip south to Mount Vernon. He had just left Fraunces Tavern in New York City. It was an emotional farewell to his officers who had served with him for so many years.

General Washington's trip home progressed slowly. It took four days to cross New Jersey. There were celebrations in each town. Houses were decorated with flags and bunting; towns held banquets and public addresses. In Philadelphia the celebrations lasted for days. The General reached Annapolis, the capital, on December 19th and a public dinner was held on the 22nd. It was a grand event with hundreds in attendance. There were thirteen toasts in honor of those responsible for victory. On the following day, Washington walked to the state house where Congress was meeting. He addressed members of Congress, "I now have the honor of offering ... myself before ... [Congress] to surrender ... the trust committed to me, and to claim the indulgence of retiring from the service of my country." General Washington took from his coat a parchment copy of his appointment as commander in chief. "Having now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theater of action and bidding farewell to this august body under whom I have long acted, I here offer my commission and take leave of all the employments of public life." He then handed the document to the President of Congress, Thomas Mifflin. Ironically, Washington was now surrendering his authority to the same man who had been largely responsible for the deprivations at Valley Forge and had been part of the efforts to remove him as commander.

As stated so well by Thomas Fleming in *The Perils of Peace*, "This was - is - the most important moment in American history. The man who could have been King George I of America, or President General for Life after dispersing a feckless Congress and obtaining for himself and his officers riches worthy of their courage, was renouncing absolute power to become a private citizen, at the mercy of politicians over whom he had no control. This visible incontrovertible act did more to affirm America's faith in the government of the people than a thousand declarations by legislatures and treatises by philosophers. No one put it better than Thomas Jefferson, who was an eyewitness: 'The moderation and virtue of a single character probably prevented this revolution from

being closed, as most others have been, by a subversion of that liberty it was intended to establish.'

"In Europe, Washington's resignation restored America's battered prestige. It was reported with awe and amazement in newspapers from London to Vienna. The Connecticut painter John Trumbull, studying in England, wrote that it had earned the 'astonishment and admiration of this part of the world.' No one was more surprised than George III. When he heard about it, His Majesty stuttered disbelievingly: 'If he d-d-does that, he will become the g-g-greatest m-m-man in the world.'"

After his resignation, he left Annapolis. On the morning of Christmas Eve, he crossed the Potomac below Alexandria and rode towards Mount Vernon. The sun was now beginning to set on Christmas Eve 1783. Mount Vernon was finally in Washington's view straight ahead. He was now home for Christmas, and hopefully there to stay. Little did he know that the nation would soon call on him once again. As in the past, he would answer its call and he would leave the comforts of Mount Vernon. Once again, he would tell Martha that he must go but he'd be home for Christmas.



That promise undoubtedly will continue to be repeated generation after generation. We honor those who have sacrificed so much for their country, many who must forego spending Christmas with their loved ones. We especially honor those who sacrificed their all, those who will "remain forever on duty in the cause of freedom" and will never be going home for Christmas.

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2010 Gold Country Chapter Officers

Photograph provided by S. Virgil

The American Revolution Month-by-Month



December 1775

The Battle of Quebec

By Andrew Jackson Stough, III

Edited by Michael G. Lucas



On December 2nd, Brigadier General Richard Montgomery arrived at Quebec with 300 men and supplies, including clothing which he had seized from storehouses in Montreal. From December 5th, Quebec was under siege by the combined forces (Ward). Without additional equipment and supplies it would have to be a long, and probably a nonproductive, siege in the midst of a cold Canadian winter. Plans were then drawn to attack the city. The ground was frozen solid. Earthworks to protect both cannon and men could not be built in the normal manner. The army was forced to improvise; they mound snow to resemble normal earthworks and covered it with water which froze immediately creating "Ice Works." It was a bold but disastrous move. The first time the Canadian cannon fired the ice works were blown into shards of ice, endangering anyone in the vicinity.

Montgomery had known all along that an assault was the only productive way to force the surrender of the city. Sir Guy Carleton refused to accept two letters asking for surrender. Formalities having been accomplished, Montgomery made plans for an assault. No longer possessing the larger force, Montgomery planned to attack on a dark and stormy night. It was a desperate attempt but it was the only way the city might be taken.

To wait until spring would be disastrous. Enlistments for most of the men would expire on December 31st. They would fight until then, but no longer. Springtime would surely bring more British troops, equipment, and arms for Carleton, who already had the advantage of more than twice the able bodied men that Montgomery could muster, as well as more cannon, supplies, and munitions. The time had come to either take the city or head for home. Having ventured this far, Montgomery was not going to leave without a fight.

Montgomery had to wait until after a storm to open an early morning attack. In the early hours of December 31st, Montgomery attacked with 300 men; in a simultaneous

pincers movement, Benedict Arnold attacked the lower town with 600 men. Things went well until Montgomery suffered a leg wound and went to the rear for treatment. Daniel Morgan assumed Montgomery's command and the attack on the lower town continued. The way was now open into the city; unfortunately, there were too few Americans that far forward to attack and no further movement could be made until daylight. By the time first light occurred, the city was aware of what had happened and the gates were closed and manned. At this point the two American forces had become one. Many desperate attempts were made by Morgan and Arnold to scale the walls, but they were all driven back by the defenders.

Eventually Morgan was trapped by a larger Canadian contingent and forced to surrender. Montgomery, despite his wound, returned to the scene and breached the walls. This eventually led him to what appeared to be an ordinary house. Beyond the house was the heart of the city. Unfortunately he did not know that the house was heavily fortified. Calling upon his soldiers to follow him, they advanced in the predawn light toward the house. The fortified house had fifty armed men with small arms and four three-pound cannon. When Montgomery and his men were close to the house they were fired upon point blank. Montgomery and his followers were mowed down by cannon and rifle fire. Montgomery was killed, shot through the head. Several ranking officers were killed. Aaron Burr and several other officers survived the slaughter, to no avail. The battle was lost but it was not the end of the expedition (Ward).

Arnold, now the leader of the entire operation, withdrew the men who had avoided capture and he sent to Montreal for help. Help was not to come as Colonel Wooster, commander at Montreal, had too few men to properly hold the town and he was unable to give Arnold any assistance (Ward).

What about the big ifs? What would have been the result if Arnold's trace through Maine had taken twenty days as planned, instead of the actual forty-nine days? If the last two

elements of the expedition had not abandoned the march to return to Boston could Arnold have attacked earlier and with greater strength? Had the departure of Montgomery not been delayed, would he have been able to join Arnold with force enough to storm Quebec?

It is time to consider other events occurring or terminating during December of 1775 such as the appointment of Esek Hopkins of Massachusetts to be commodore of the Continental Navy.

Beginning in March of 1775, the Earl of Dunmore, Royal Governor of Virginia, took offense at the action of the Virginia Convention when it authorized that "The colony should be put into a posture of defense," authorizing a militia and accumulation of war stores. In April he sent a body of Marines to Williamsburg, seizing war supplies stored there. The town rose up and demanded the return of the stores. Dunmore swore that he would consider "the whole country in rebellion." He threatened to reduce towns and houses to ashes as well as any other available form of devastation. Following the example of Lexington and Concord, Patrick Henry, with a company of militia, demanded boldly that the governor repay them for the stores which had been seized. On May 4th, 1775, the payment for the stores was made and the militia went home.

This was followed on May 6th by a proclamation that all persons were to avoid assistance to Henry and the militia, under threat of reprisal by the governor. However, the colonists did support Henry and the insurgents. Conditions deteriorated so badly that Dunmore became concerned for his own safety. On June 8th, he sought refuge on a man of war ship at Yorktown until the small fleet sailed for New York. In August he began recruitment of Indians, Negroes, indentured servants, and Loyalists for his own army (Ward). In the meantime, he used the naval forces to shell and burn settlements along the Virginia coast.

In October, a British armed ship ran aground in a storm and was seized, looted, and burned by local residents. Dunmore retaliated by threatening to burn the town of Hampton, Virginia. Local men, defending the town, not only drove off a landing party, but they captured one of the landing party's boats along with its sailors (Ward).

Great Bridge was located about ten miles south of Norfolk. It spanned several swamps and was anchored by several islands of hard land in the swamps. On December 11th, 900 Virginians and North Carolinians met and defeated Dunmore's forces which then fell back on Norfolk. Dunmore gave notice that on January 1, 1776, he would burn the town. On New Year's Day he began a seven-hour bombardment of the town. The fires raged for two days and finally there was nothing left of the most prosperous town in Virginia but ashes. Eventually Dunmore's fleet was split up and sent to Florida and Jamaica. Dunmore joined the British fleet off New

York. Dunmore later went back to England where he was rewarded with Governorship of the Bahamas. The slaves were returned to a life of bondage in Jamaica.

References: John Alden's *A History of the American Revolution*, Robert Leckie's *George Washington's War*; Jeffrey Shaara's *Rise to Rebellion*; Edmund Morgan's *The Birth of the Republic*, Christopher Ward's *War of the Revolution*.

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GOLD COUNTRY CHAPTER ANNUAL CHRISTMAS POTLUCK

Come join the Gold Country Chapter at its Annual Christmas Potluck on Saturday, December 19th, 2:00pm to 5:00pm.

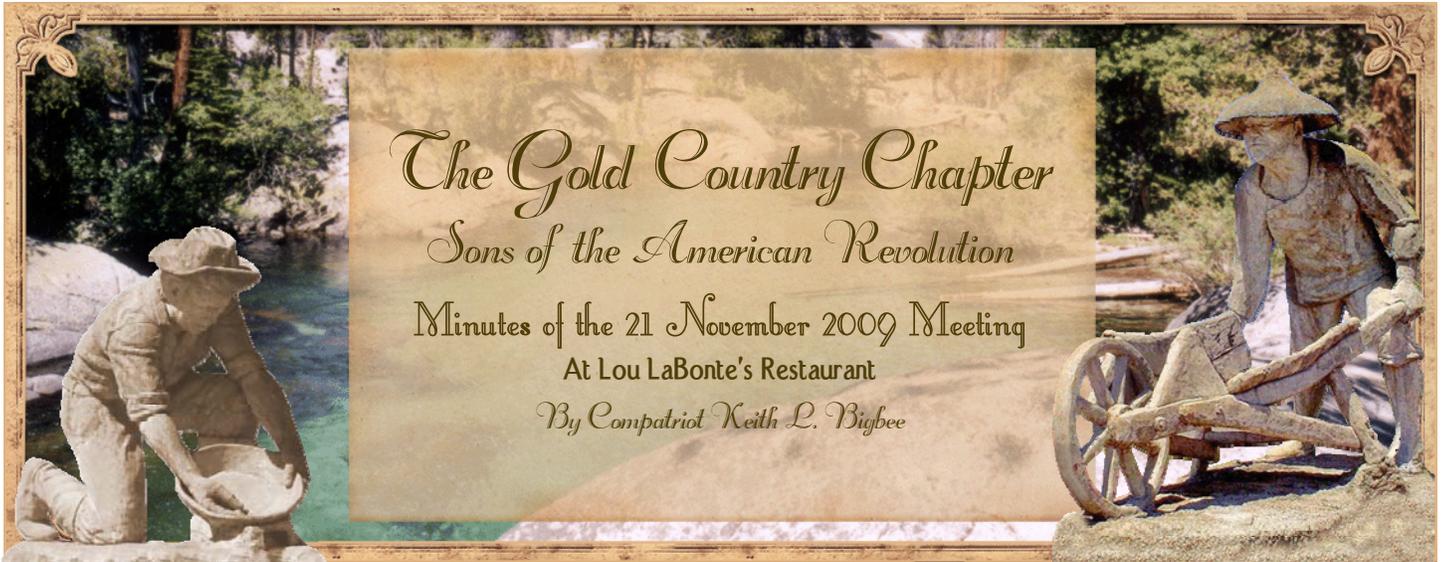
This year's potluck will be held at the Shady Glen Estates Recreation Hall, 450 Gladyscon Road in Colfax. From Colfax take Highway 174 towards Grass Valley. Shady Glen Estates is located off Highway 174 behind the Giovanni Restaurant. Please contact Coreena Ross at (530) 274-1838 or email at cr7861@jps.net to sign up for your favorite potluck dish.

Great food!



Great fellowship!





President Griswold called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. Chaplain Ron Williams gave the Invocation. Compatriot Bob Gentry led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by Compatriot Dale Ross with the SAR Pledge.

Attendance: There were fourteen members and four guests in attendance. President Griswold welcomed all the guests, including Mayor Holmes and our newest transferred member, Bob Gentry.

President Griswold then recognized all of the DAR members in attendance: Coreena Ross and Patricia Hopkins from the Captain John Oldham Chapter; Winona Virgil and Io Beyer from the Emigrant Trails Chapter.

General Business: President Griswold asked for a motion to approve the October meeting minutes as published in the newsletter. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes.

Presentations: Compatriot Bill A Welch was presented a Supplemental Certificate, bringing his total number of Supplementals to twenty-five.

Reports:

Treasurer: Bruce Choate reported dues payments were coming in and that the books were in balance.

Membership: Earl Young reported that Assemblyman Ted Gaines and his son's applications have been submitted.

Knight Essay: Earl Young reported that the contestant essay contest deadline is December 15, 2009.

Valley Forge Teacher: Earl Young reported that he has not received any information from the CASSAR Chairman regarding any changes to the program.

Color Guard: Dale Ross asked which members were planning on attending the Wreaths Across America program at the Dixon National Cemetery; he inquired if participants wanted to carpool. He also reported on the Auburn Veterans Day Parade. The chapter received a thank you from the Auburn Boosters for its participation in the parade.

CASSAR Report: Keith Bigbee reported on the Fall Board of Managers meeting held last weekend in Riverside. Overall it was a great meeting with a lot of the California Society's business being accomplished. All except one of the bylaw proposals were approved. The issue of scanning documents did not pass. The new budget was approved unanimously, with an increase to the youth awards and an overall reduction in the budget to reflect economic uncertainty.

New Business: Past President Keith Bigbee, chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented a slate of officers for the coming year. Voted into office by the membership were:

2010 Gold Country Chapter Officers	
President (One Year Term)	Keith Bigbee
1st Vice-President	Mike Holmes
2nd Vice-President	Bill A. Welch
Secretary	Ed Beyer
Treasurer	Bruce Choate
Registrar	Smitty Virgil
Historian	Barry Hopkins
Chaplain	Ron Williams
Genealogist	Bob Gentry
Chancellor	Craig Hopkins

---Minutes are concluded on page 10



Gold Country Chapter

At Auburn's Veterans Day Parade!

The Gold Country Chapter was proudly represented in the annual Veterans Day Parade in historic downtown Auburn. This year's theme was "Welcome Home, Vietnam Veterans." The Parade featured a number of aircraft flyovers and an Honor Guard rifle volley

tribute at Auburn's landmark Clock Tower. Chapter members Mayor Mike Holmes and County Supervisor Jim Holmes, shown in the classic Buick, participated as parade dignitaries. Leading the chapter Color Guard was Bill A. Welch playing the bagpipes. Marching behind him were Lyndell Virgil, Smitty Virgil, Bill D. Welch, Barry Hopkins, Keith Bigbee, and Dale Ross. A large enthusiastic crowd along the parade route showed their appreciation by waving flags and giving hearty applause to our veterans.



Photographs by W. Griswold and M. Lucas



THE Forty-Niner

Newsletter of the Gold Country Chapter

California Society of the Sons of the American Revolution
PO Box 408 ♦ Meadow Vista, CA 95722-0408



First Class

Address Correction Requested

--- *Minutes concluded from page 7*

Congratulations and thank you to all the newly elected officers. The new Chapter officers will be sworn in at the Annual Christmas Potluck, to be held at the Shady Glen Estates in Colfax at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, December 19th.

During the meeting a potluck signup sheet was circulated among the members.

President Griswold entertained a motion to donate \$150 to the Wreaths Across America program for the purchase of ten wreaths in memory of our veterans. The motion was approved.

Closing: The meeting was drawn to a close with a moment of Silence in Recognition of our passed compatriots. Ron Williams gave the Benediction and Ed Beyer led in the SAR Recessional. The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 A.M. ∞



Photograph by S. Virgil

Incredibly, Bill A. Welch received one more Supplemental!!!