



**THE ESCAPE OF JOHN
CHAMPE**



**Guidon of the U.S.
Light Dragoons**



**Newsletter Editor:
Barry Schwoerer.**

Email:

barry@schwoerers.com

THE CIPHER

SGT MAJ JOHN CHAMPE CHAPTER

VIRGINIA SOCIETY SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

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Thank you Compatriots for renewing membership. This year we only lost two members who elected not to renew. That means we retained 96%. HUZDAH to all.

One would think that a cold and snowy January would result in little activity for SAR. Although activities slowed somewhat we still had a busy month. A great deal of time was spent capturing 2025 chapter activities for the Americanism and U.S.S. Stark reports. The Americanism report is our report card on how the chapter performed for all of the things National SAR has set as goals. The U.S.S. Stark report captures what we do in support of Veterans. For 2026 we are transitioning to a single report card that combines Americanism and Stark. Chapter Compatriot Daniel Lindner is managing the new SMART report. Thank you Dan.

Our 2026 officer slate was sworn-in by VASSAR 1st Vice President Darrin Schmidt at our chapter meeting on January 17. For the first time since the chapter was rechartered in FEB 2022 we have all officer positions filled. Welcome to our new Secretary John "Jack" Curtis.

2026 is shaping up to a busy year. We are receiving requests for our uniformed Color Guard to open a variety of events with presentation of Colors and we are being asked to have our compatriots in Rev War uniform at other events just to give a presence.

I ask you to support our events and help us celebrate America's 250th birthday.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS JANUARY-JUNE 2026

- February 6-7. VASSAR Annual Meeting.** Virginia Crossings Hotel and Conference Center, 1000 Virginia Center Parkway, Glen Allen, VA 23059
- February 14,** Before the GW Birthday parade). **Commemoration of the Unknown Revolutionary War Soldier** at the Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 323 S. Fairfax St., Alexandria.
- February 14, 2:00-4:00pm, George Washington Birthday Parade** in Alexandria, VA. start assembly about 12:00 noon.
- March 21, SMJC Chapter Meeting.** 11:00am, Loudoun Museum, 16 Loudoun Street, SW, Leesburg. Guest speaker Chris Yohn: "History of the Revolution on the Pennsylvania frontier"
- March 29, 1:00pm, SMJC CHAPTER SIGNATURE EVENT:** National Vietnam Day Commemoration at Loudoun County Courthouse Vietnam Memorial. Partner with VFW-1177 and American Legion Memorial Post 2001
- APRIL 18, 11:00am SMJC SIGNATURE EVENT** Commemoration of John Champe at the Champe Farm Memorial Obelisk, also Commemoration of the Battle of Lexington & Concord
- May 16, 11:00am. SMJC Chapter Meeting.** Commemoration of the Accomplishments of the 5th Virginia Convention + **250th anniversary** of the start of the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. Loudoun County Courthouse
- May 23, Saturday, all day. The Road to Independence Historical Encampment at Franklin Regional Park** SMJC color Guard, displays, kids games, musket demonstration Bring the kids. A multi-horse dragoon unit will perform
- May 25, National Memorial Day Parade,** Washington DC (Workman float)
- May 25, Memorial Day parade Hamilton,** Chapter color guard leads the parade. Static display in Hamilton Community Park following the parade.. Schwoerer truck towing bell on trailer
- May 30, 1:00pm SMJC CHAPTER SIGNATURE EVENT** Commemoration of Gen. Anthony Wayne's Army crossing the Potomac. Lucketts at the new Memorial Sign.
- June 7, Sunday, all day.** Stratford Hall **250th anniversary Richard Henry Lee resolution to Congress calling for Independence.** displays, two musket demonstrations, mini-encampment.
- June 13, . Time TBD 250th Anniversary Virginia Declaration of Rights** at Gunston Hall.

SMJC 2026 OFFICERS INSTALLED

VASSAR 1st Vice President Darrin Schmidt installed the 2026 officer slate at the January 17 Chapter meeting and luncheon. With the installation of Secretary John “Jack” Curtis, the chapter has a full slate of officers. Your chapter officers are pictured below.



President
Barry Schwoerer



Vice President & Quartermaster
Mark Sink



Historian
David Welker



Mike Watson
Registrar



Jim Watts
Chaplain



Jack Curtis
Secretary



Tim Murphy
Treasurer

YOUTH & Education PROGRAMS

Joseph S. Rumbaugh Historical Oration

January 17, 2026 Addison Vaughan is our nominee for the Oration contest. At our Chapter meeting in January, Addison was awarded \$250 check. Addison is a Junior at Stone Bridge High School. She is the daughter of Chapter member Chris Vaughan. Due to conflicts with her school schedule she is not able to attend the VASSAR Contest at Glen Allen, VA.



George & Stella Knight Essay Contest

January 5, 2026. The chapter received two essays, one from a student at Thomas Jefferson High School and one from a student at Stone Bridge High School. The contestant from Thomas Jefferson was selected as the chapter winner. Her essay was forwarded for judging by VASSAR. Results will be announced at the VASSAR annual meeting on February 7. The chapter will present an award when she is available. No photo available

National SAR Tom & Betty Lawrence American History Teacher Grant

January 22, 2026 Kathryn “Katy” Knapp is the chapter nominee for the American History Teacher Grant. Katy will receive the VASSAR award on February 7 at Glen Allen. Her nomination has been forwarded to National SAR for judging against nominees from all 50 state Societies. Katy is a teacher at Gum Springs Middle School in Aldie.



VETERAN SUPPORT

January 2, 2026 The chapter received a thank you letter from the Martinsburg Veterans Medical Center thanking the chapter for donations for the annual Christmas list. Thank you to all compatriots who donated.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

January 23, 2026. Historian David Welker gave a presentation as John Champe after the Revolution at Hal & Bernie Hanson Regional Park in Aldie. David was dressed in Colonial Attire. Barry Schwoerer dressed in a Continental Army uniform accompanied him. The presentation was recorded and is being prepared for posting on the Chapter website. The presentation will be made again on June 20, at 11:30am at the same location. Chapter members may attend, reservations are not required

EVENTS SPONSORED BY OTHER CHAPTERS

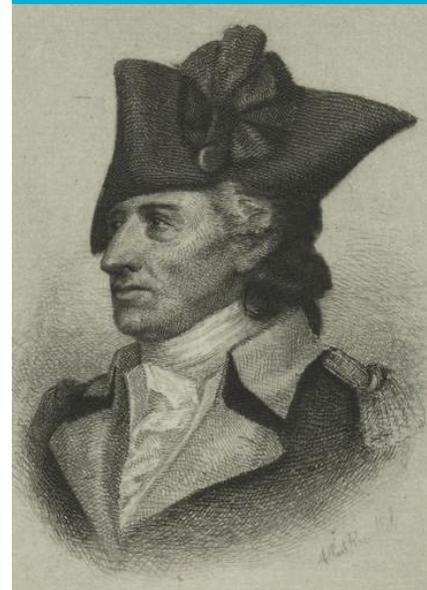
BRIGADIER GENERAL GEORGE WEEDON REMEMBRANCE

January 10, 2026, Fredericksburg, VA

Ken Bonner represented the chapter a the ceremony remembering BGen George Weedon.. Weedon and his men fought in battles in New York, Brandywine and Germantown. He is buried in the Masonic Cemetery in



David Welker as John Champe



BGEN George Weedon

OTHER CHAPTER EVENTS (cont)

Frederick and Clark County, City of Winchester VA250 Kick-off

January 11, 2026, Winchester, VA

Compatriot David Welker portrayed General Daniel Morgan for the VA 250 Committee kick-off for Frederick County, Clark County and the City of Winchester. Welker dressed as a Virginia Militia man. His performance received great reviews. No photo available

COMMEMORATION OF GENERAL PETER MUHLENBURG

January 24, 2026

Ken Bonner and Steve Van Deusen represented the chapter at the Col. James Wood II sponsored commemoration of Revolutionary War General Muhlenburg. Muhlenburg is known for the story that he removed his religious robe while preaching at his church in Woodstock, VA to reveal the uniform of an officer in the Continental Army. That day he reportedly recruited men for a company of soldiers. Steve Van Deusen presented the chapter wreath. The event was moved indoors because of cold weather. No photo available

250th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION OF THE BURNING OF NORFOLK

January 31, 2026

Ken Bonner and David Welker represented the chapter for the Commemoration of the Burning of Norfolk. Because of ice and snow the event was virtual. David Welker presented the Chapter wreath. The original 1776 event involved British bombardment of Norfolk followed by Patriot Burning the city to prevent further British use of the port. The fire destroyed over 800 buildings. For a detailed story about the event see our December newsletter 'Historians Corner'.

WHAT DO WE DO ?

The Virginia Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (Virginia SAR) is dedicated to preserving the legacy of the American Revolution, honoring our patriots, and inspiring future generations through education and community outreach.

- **Preserve History:** safeguarding monuments, archives, and stories of our nation's founding
- **Educate Youth:** scholarships, contests, and classroom resources that bring history to life
- **Honor Patriots:** ceremonies and memorials that recognize the sacrifices of those who fought for independence

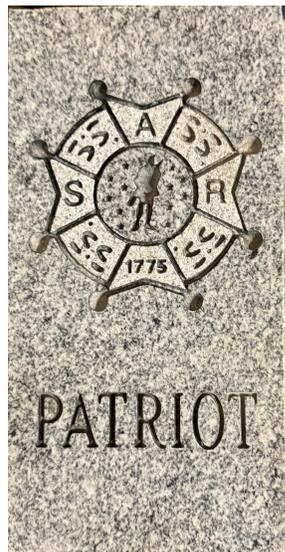


LOCATE, PRESERVE, RESTORE AND MARK PATRIOT GRAVES

The chapter spends a great deal of time finding the burial places of Patriots in Loudoun County. Many burial locations are abandoned, overgrown, and/or in bad repair. We work with property owners to clear overgrowth, do general clean-up, remove decades of dirt and algae from headstones, and do whatever we can to make burial locations presentable. We then place SAR Patriot markers at the headstone to "Mark" the grave as a Patriot of the American Revolution. When more than one Patriot is buried in a cemetery we consider ordering a monument listing all patriots. If you can help please contact Jim Watts at jimandpam.watts@verizon.net



Bronze Patriot grave marker.
typically installed on a stake.
Lug style can be installed directly on a headstone



Granite marker.
6" wide, 12"long



Monument for Eight Patriots
at Old Potts Cemetery near

SEE GRAVE MARKER DEDICATION NEXT PAGE

GRAVE MARKER DEDICATION

Concurrent with locating, cleaning and installing a Patriot Grave Marker we schedule a dedication ceremony. The ceremony is like a military burial ceremony. We invite Virginia SAR leadership and members of all other Virginia SAR Chapters. The event is posted on the VASSAR website under Color Guard Schedule of Events. The ceremony opens with a welcome and introduction, an invocation and the advance and presentation of colors (Flags), followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and SAR Pledge. A short biographical sketch is presented for each Patriot being honored. SAR has a defined dedication ceremony that is read followed by the unveiling of the marker or monument. Wreaths are presented by attending chapters with the senior VASSAR officer presenting the VASSAR wreath. Daughters of the American Revolution and Children of the American Revolution present wreaths if attending. The VASSAR fire squad then fires three volleys using replica blackpowder flintlock rifles or muskets. The ceremony closes with the SAR Recessional and benediction.

SAR has established a goal for each chapter to sponsor six Patriot Grave Markings per year. Members earn points toward the SAR Patriot Grave Marking medal with 15 markings required to earn a medal. One point is awarded for every Patriot marked. One may earn points by attending Patriot Grave markings sponsored by other chapters, including other state chapters.

Patriot Graves and Biographies Report. A SAR Goal is to complete a “**Patriot Graves and Biographies Report**” for every patriot registered with SAR. These reports are typically drafted when an applicant is registered as a member, and when a Patriot grave marking is complete. When completing the report after a grave marking we must include a photograph of the Patriot marker. SAR asks that a biographical sketch be sourced. You can find sources for the biography by looking at your Record Copy for your patriot ancestor. I ask that each of you complete a report for your Patriot Ancestor and send it via email to Grave Marking Chairman Jim Watts and me (jimandpamwatts@verizon.net, barry@schwoerers.com.) The form is available on the SAR website, under the members tab, under Awards and Program Forms. If you have any questions about completing the form please contact Jim or me.

Registrar's Corner, J. Mike Watson



There were no new member applications approved by SAR Headquarters in January. We closed 2025 with 79 members.

We have 10 new members applications and 3 supplemental applications at SAR waiting for approval. One new member application is enroute to SAR from the VASSAR Registrar.

We have one application ready for submission to VASSAR and two more almost ready for applicant signature.

Nine additional new member applications are in work.

FOR SALE: Traditions Model R210 Kentucky Flintlock



\$500 Each, one available. 50 Caliber, blackpowder rifle. Comes with flint, hammer stall and flash guard. Virginia SAR will train you how to safely fire and participate in SAR Events.

CHAPTER CHALLENGE COINS

\$10 each. See our Treasurer, Tim Murphy at our Chapter Meetings



REVOLUTIONARY WAR RARITIES

Rated a top ten Revolutionary War podcast

Use your cellphone camera to scan the QR Codes to view the SAR Facebook Channel and the SAR Facebook Group

