



SAR Alabama



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This summer, despite being hot and dry, was also very busy. The heat caused a couple of violent storms, one dropping a small tornado and causing major damage in a couple of cemeteries here in Madison County. It certainly put us behind in scheduling a marking ceremony.

Summer also means SAR Congress time. This year our 135th annual Congress was held in Uncasville, Conn. Our Alabama attendance was a little weak this year. Although we were smaller in number, they knew that Alabama was in the house.

Key takeaways from Congress were:

- Strategic Plan 2035 and 5-Year Operational Plan were presented and discussed.
- Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) approval obtained for SAR fundraising.
- Museum development progressing with interactive exhibits planned.
- Focus on 250th anniversary preparations and state/chapter involvement.
- Emphasis on membership growth, retention and training through SAR University.
- New reporting structure implemented for tracking organizational goals.

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Gen. Galvez compatriot Edmon McKinley receives Minuteman Award at Congress



—Photo courtesy of Benny Hannah

Edmon McKinley, right, was Minuteman Award recipient.

Former ALSSAR president and Gen. Galvez chapter compatriot Edmon McKinley was honored with the Minuteman Award at the annual Congress in July.

McKinley has served as the NSSAR Chancellor General for two terms and as a member of the Executive Committee for three years.

In addition, he has served as a member of the Veterans Committee for nine years, the Historic Sites and Celebrations Committee for six years, the Museum Board — Model Ships Subcommittee for six years, the 250th American Revolutionary War Committee for

six years, the Museum Board for seven years, the George Washington Endowment Fund Board for four years, the Legal Advisory Committee for seven years, the Bylaws, Rules and Regulations Committee for three years, the Council of State Presidents for two years, the Congress Review Committee for two years and the Finance Committee for one year.

Other ALSSAR recipients of the Minuteman Award include Robert H. Smith (1953), William T. Carpenter (1955), Robert P. Gordon (1959), Ryall S. Morgan (1968), John L. McConnell

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SAR, DAR join forces in grave marking ceremony

The Tennessee Valley chapter traveled to the Beason Union Cemetery in Steele to join up with a pair of DAR chapters for a special grave marking ceremony honoring Revolutionary War patriot Capt. Edward Beason on Oct. 18.

The Josiah Brunson chapter NSDAR and the Gen. Sumpter chapter NSDAR helped organize the event and the Children of the American Revolution were also represented by the attendance of senior vice president Jason Hodges.

Edward Beason (original spelling 'Beeson') was born

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—Photo courtesy of Benny Hannah

Tennessee Valley chapter members team up with DAR chapters to honor patriot Edward Beeson in ceremony

Message

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I personally feel that awards night is a key part of Congress. I tried to capture all the times that the Alabama Society was mentioned. I am certain that I missed a couple but here we go with some definition of the award.

The requirement to receive the President General's Education Outreach Streamer is for the compatriots of a chapter to do a certain number of new historical presentations or to present an existing presentation in a new venue or to a new audience. Presented to the Tennessee Valley chapter.

The Alabama Society participated in the following contests and will be receiving a participation streamer for each.

- Sgt Moses Adams Memorial Middle School Brochure Contest

- Americanism Poster Contest
- Joseph S. Rumbaugh Historical Orations Contest
- Outstanding JROTC Cadet Contest
- George S. & Stella M. Knight Essay Contest
- Arthur M. King Eagle Scout Scholarship competition

This Council of Youth Programs Outstanding Participation Award is presented annually at Congress to the societies that have fulfilled the qualifications during the previous year. The qualifications are that each society must submit entries to at least six of the eight national youth contests. (Alabama was only one of 12 states to receive this award.)

The Liberty Bell Americanism Award and Streamer is presented to the chapter, based upon size, which presents evidence of best implementing SAR resolutions and principles. With 200-plus members, SAR third place to Tennessee Valley chapter.

President General's State Society and Chapter Activities Competition Awards is presented to the chapter and state society, based upon size, which shows evidence of the most complete practice of implementing SAR programs and resolutions. With 200-plus members, SAR second place to Tennessee Valley chapter.

The National Distinguished Service Medal was presented to Tennessee Valley chapter compatriot James Griffith for his work as Vice President Generals travel coordinator.

The National Gold Meritorious Service Medal was presented to Gen. Richard Montgomery chapter compatriot Bill Stone for his work with EXCOM.

The National Gold Meritorious Service Medal was presented to Edmon McKinley for his work as the Chancellor General.

The National Gold Meritorious Service Medal was presented to Jim Griffith for his work as education chair, SAR University.

The Gold Roger Sherman Medal was presented to the following Alabama Society Members:

- David Chaffin (Dual member TVC) for his work as a National Committee Chair
- Jim Maples, Tennessee Valley chapter, for his work on the GWEF Board.
- Eric Alford, Gen. John Archer Elmore chapter, for his work on the GWEF Distribution Fund.
- Jim Griffith, Tennessee Valley chapter, for his work as the education chair, SAR University.
- Benny H. Hannah, Jr., Tennessee Valley chapter, for his work on Patriot Programs for Strategic Planning.
- Ray V. Cassell II, Tennessee Valley chapter, for his contribution to the International Society.

The Gold Henry Knox Achievement Medal was presented to David Billings and Jim Griffith, both from the Tennessee Valley chapter.

The Bronze Liberty Medal is presented to those compatriots who have recruited 10 new members over a period of time. The Alabama Society had three members who qualified for the award. Since all three had already received the Medal previously, Oak Leaf Clusters were awarded. Congratulations to Ron Bearden, Ray Cassell and Earl Gillian Jr.

Our own Rita Pickette was awarded the Medal of Appreciation to a DAR Member for her work in assisting the First Lady.

I also received an award from the Council of State Presidents for participating in my fourth consecutive event.

As you can see, Alabama did make a splash at Congress this year. My expectations are that we will do even better this coming year. We have a lot of great people in our chapters doing a lot of great things. We need to do a better job at documenting those things.

—Benny Hannah

McKinley

(Continued from Page 1)

(1984), Horace R. Jordan (1995), O. Lee Swart (2001), P. Rod Hildreth (2003), John R. Wallace (2008), Larry P. Cornwell (2012), Michael C. Wells (2013), C. Bruce Pickette (2017), C. David Billings (2018), William O. Stone (2019), James H. Maples (2021) and Fred Olive (2022).

In addition to McKinley, the Minuteman Award was presented to Jay DeLoach of North Carolina, Thomas Jackson of Texas, Daniel McKelvie of California, Greg Ohanesian of South Carolina and William Sharp III of Michigan.

The NSSAR's most prestigious award, it was first presented in 1952 and can only be given to a maximum of six recipients each year. To date, 443 compatriots have received the honor.



—Photo courtesy of Benny Hannah

McKinley is escorted by Paul Callanan, left.



—Photos courtesy of Bennie Hannah

Tennessee Valley chapter compatriots were on hand to provide support to the grave-marking ceremony.

Ceremony

(Continued from Page 1)

on Jan. 1, 1757 in Guilford County, N.C. He joined the Army of the Revolution in the spring of 1778. He became an ensign and lieutenant in the company of Capt. David Brower, of Col. Thomas Dugan's North Carolina Regiment. He was commissioned as a captain of a company of foot soldiers in Col. Dugan's militia. He later served under Col. John Litteral, Col. Reed and Col. Bleecher (or Bletcher). He was allowed a pension on his application of Nov. 7, 1832 while a resident of St. Clair County.

Beason lived in Guilford County and Stokes County, N.C., in the Sequatchie Valley, Tennessee and on the Tennessee River near Scottsboro before settling in St. Clair County in 1814. He married Selena "Betty" Lamb in 1776 in North Carolina.

They had four known children, including:

- Elizabeth was born in 1777. (Note: the DAR doesn't recognize John Graves as her husband).

- Uriah M. was born about 1785 and married Sarah Ann Maples.

After Betty died, Beason married Ann Pennington in 1790 and they had three known children before Ann's death in 1823:

- Richard D. was born on Feb. 3, 1791, and married Frances Key.

- Jeremiah was born on Aug. 12, 1799, and married Jane Chambers.

- Curtis Grubb Beason was born on March 22, 1802, and married Martha Clark.

Beason then married Dicy Mullen. Dicy outlived Edward and died in 1843 or 1844. They had three known children:

- Dicy Ann was born on March 31, 1829

and married Logan Snead.

- Isaac was born in 1832 and married Louisa Allen.

Edward Beason died on Jan. 16, 1837, and was buried in the Beason Union Cemetery.

The grave marking event included wreaths being placed by the Josiah Brunson chapter and the Gen. Sumpter chapter, the Tennessee Valley chapter color guard, Grant chapter CAR and the descendants of Capt. Edward Beason.

The TVCSAR color guard provided a musket salute. David Thomas, mayor of Springville, played the bagpipes. The event concluded with a reception at the Church of Pleasant Hill sponsored by the DAR chapters with support from the Springville High School band and the Beta Club.

—Benny Hannah



Beason descendants gathered for the grave-marking ceremony.



The gravesite of Edward Beason.

In Memory...

Jimmy Frank Meacham

The Gen. Richard Montgomery chapter recently lost one of its compatriots when **JIMMY FRANK MEACHAM** passed away on Sept. 16. He was 89.

Meacham was born on May 5, 1936, to Howard and Odessa Meacham in Roanoke. He graduated in Chilton County High in 1954 and served in the Air Force.

He and Myra, his wife of 69 years, were married in June, 1956. He worked for the State of Alabama in the Revenue Department and retired in 1998 after 21 years.

He was active in the United States Air National Guard from 1976 to 1996, retiring as a master sergeant.

Meacham was a faithful and dedicated member at Eastmont Baptist Church serving as a Deacon, working with "Carpenters for Christ" and being involved in many other areas of ministry within the church.

He served as an Active Law Enforcement Chaplain from 2003-2018.

Recently he was also involved with prison ministry. He enjoyed being an active member of Gideons International and was a dedicated member of the Gen. Richard Montgomery chapter in the Sons of the American Revolution.

For several years he had an online daily ministry he called "My Thought for Today", which shared with many people his faith, his prayers, and scripture filled thoughts that dealt with our Christian day to day lives.

In addition to his wife Myra, he is survived by his daughter Debbie Walker and son-in-law Les, grandchildren April Elisabeth Tompkins, Heather Anne Clark and her husband Chris, Joshua Scott Walker, and great grandchildren Levi and Ezra Clark. He is also survived by his two younger siblings, Darlo Hartdegen and Anthony Meacham.

Services were held Sept. 20 Eastmont Baptist Church. Burial followed on Sept. 22 at Alabama National Cemetery in Montevallo.



—Photo courtesy of Benny Hannah

ALSSAR Color Guard fires a volley during the grave-marking ceremony in Montevallo on Sept. 27.

ALSSAR places marker at grave site of Solomon Massengill

After the fall Board of Managers meeting at the American Village on Sept. 27, Alabama Society members joined the ALSSAR Color Guard and Honor Guard to place a granite SAR marker at the grave site of patriot Solomon Massengill.

Massengill resided in northern Alabama, but was visiting his son in Montevallo when he passed away. Patriot Solomon Massengill is buried in Reynolds Cemetery just off Alabama Highway 25.

His qualifying status per the Daughters of the American Revolution lists him as a "SOLDIER, GEN Sumpter at Blackstocks."

The Battle at Blackstocks Plantation took place on Nov. 20, 1780 between Brigadier General Thomas Sumter's militia and Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton's British troops. Historians regard the battle as a tactical victory for the Patriot forces despite the fact that Sumter was severely wounded during the fighting. The American victory was crucial for boosting morale in the darkest days of the Revolution. It also helped diminish Tarleton's aura of invincibility, potentially emboldening the militia at future battles.

—Bill Daniel

American Village founder Tom Walker passes away

Thomas Greene Walker Jr., the founder and president emeritus of the American Village, passed away peacefully in Huntsville, surrounded by family, on Sept. 25. He was 71 years old.

The *Shelby County Reporter* noted that Walker's "vision transformed a South Shelby County meadow into one of the nation's most distinctive classrooms of freedom."

The Tennessee Valley chapter compatriot was honored by former ALSSAR president Bill Stone in an announcement of Walker's death from the American Village Citizenship Trust.

"Tom Walker was my friend and one of the great American patriots of our time," Stone said. "He was a member of the Sons of the American Revolution, earning some of the highest recognitions possible. God has taken back a great man. Tom leaves a legacy of untold wealth to our nation. God Bless you Tom Walker and thank you for your service to our country and the world."

Walker was born in Albertville on Dec. 10, 1953, to Thomas Greene Walker Sr. and Johnnie Faye Braswell. He attended the University of Montevallo where he studied political science and history, graduating with honors in 1975.

It was at Montevallo that he met and fell in love with his wife, the former Betty Ann Driver. From the beginning of their relationship, Betty was his rock and steadfast companion. Tom served as Student Government Association president and along with Betty and his friends, he worked for the betterment of the university — the beginning of Walker's efforts and eventual reputation as someone who wanted to create positive change.

Tom and Betty married in 1976, and he served as a Government Specialist with the Cooperative Extension Service while attending Mississippi State University, where he earned his master's in political science in 1981. Later, he and Betty moved to Northport where he served as the city manager and city clerk. During these years, he and Betty welcomed their first child, Matt, in 1980. Little sister Jane joined the family in 1982, and the four Walkers soon moved to Montgomery when Tom became the executive officer of the Alabama Association of Realtors. In 1986, they welcomed little brother Jeff to the family.

It was not long before Tom was called back to Montevallo to serve as Special Assistant to the President and Director of Governmental Relations, where he continued his work bettering the university that brought him so much joy. While serving these roles and raising a family, Tom had an idea for a historical camp based on American history. This idea became the basis for the American Village.

Chartered in 1995, the American Village held its grand opening on Nov. 30, 1999. Standing on 188 acres in Montevallo, the American Village serves the nation as an educational institution that seeks to strengthen and renew the foundations of American liberty and constitutional self-government by engaging and inspiring citizens and leaders, with a special emphasis on programs for young people. Since its opening, the American Village has served more than 800,000 students from the southeastern United States and attracts thousands of public visitors each year.



—Photo courtesy of American Village

American Village founder Tom Walker, left above, with Bill Stone, and with Presidents-General Warren Alter, left below, and Mike Tomme.



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Walker

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Ironically, the American Village Citizenship Trust noted in its release, Walker's passing came on the day his legacy was honored at American Village.

"The day is significant as it is the grand opening of what Mr. Walker considered the crowning glory of the Montevallo, Alabama campus -- a replica of Independence Hall from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

"Tom's work served a purpose—to inspire a deep knowledge of and appreciation for America's legacy of freedom, and to commemorate the sacrifices paid to ensure liberty and justice for all. Because of his service to citizenship education, Tom was one of only 16 citizens appointed to the United States Semiquincentennial Commission, which oversees the nation's 250th birthday celebration and commemoration of independence. Tom was unanimously elected as vice chair of the commission at its first meeting in Philadelphia, PA.

"Tom also volunteered his time and talents to the Montevallo and Shelby County communities, helping found the Leadership Shelby County program, leading the efforts to locate the Alabama National Cemetery to Montevallo, and serving the University of Montevallo as vice chair of the Board of Trustees and president of the National Alumni Association."

Numerous organizations recognized Walker for his service and tireless efforts. Among them, he has been recognized by the American Bar Association, receiving the Isidor Starr Award for Excellence in K-12 Law-Related Education. The Sons of



—Photo by Diane Seales

Tom Walker receives his George Washington Fellow certificate and pin from NSSAR President General Warren Alter, right, in 2018 ceremony.

the American Revolution and Daughters of the American Revolution both awarded Tom with their highest national honors (the SAR Distinguished Patriot Leadership Award and Gold Citizenship Medal and the DAR Medal of Honor). The Citizenship Trust Board of Trustees presented him with the Cornerstone of Liberty Legacy Award for Exemplary American Leadership.

For his dedication to the University of Montevallo, the UM National Alumni Association honored him with both the Alumnus Loyalty and the Distinguished Alumni Awards. For his service to the community, Tom received an honorary doctorate of laws from Troy University. The Women's Committee of Birming-

ham named him as a "Birmingham Citizen of the Year." In 2024, he was an inductee in the inaugural class of the Shelby County Hall of Fame.

In addition, the American Village named its newest addition the Thomas G. Walker, Jr. Independence Hall.

Walker is survived by his wife of 49 years, Betty, their three children, Matt (Candace Herron), Jane (Josh) Herndon, and Jeff; two grandchildren, Wells and Whitt Herndon, a sister, Brenda Cash and brothers Tom (and Cathy) Driver and Doug (and Kellie) Driver.

Services for Walker were held on Sept. 30 at the Lucille Ryals Thompson Chapel at the American Village. Burial followed at Montevallo Cemetery.



—Photo courtesy of William Rozier

Cheaha learns of Native American service

The Cheaha chapter held its monthly meeting on Sept. 10 in the Anniston Room of the Anniston/Calhoun County Public Library. The guest speaker was Dr. Tamara Levi, who presented a program on "Native American Service in the Revolution." Following the presentation Dr. Levi, center, was presented the National Society's Challenge Coin by Cheaha chapter vice president Ron Burson, left, and chapter president Eric Sloughfy, right.



—Photo by Hal Yeager/Governor's Office

American Village CEO Alan Miller and Gov. Kay Ivey cut the ribbon on Independence Hall as, from left: Jack Hawkins, Geri Albright, Judge Keith Watkins, Cathy Randall, state Sen. Arthur Orr and Cam Ward look on.

Gov. Kay Ivey, trustees, state leaders gather at American Village for grand opening of Independence Hall replica

By DAVE DOMESCIK
Shelby County Reporter

MONTEVALLO – Joy and sorrow met on Thursday, Sept. 25, as the American Village cut the ribbon on its grandest project yet—a full-scale replica of Independence Hall—just hours after the death of the site's visionary founder, Tom Walker.

Gov. Kay Ivey headlined the ceremony alongside trustees, educators and civic leaders, dedicating the building as the Thomas G. Walker Jr. Independence Hall in his honor.

"Sadly, we have lost Tom, but his great legacy will live on, just like America's legacy," Ivey said. "Truly, no one is more deserving of this special recognition."

Ivey further recognized Walker for his vision in making the American Village what it is today.

"I personally watched Tom Walker grow this Village from a few buildings in 1999 into this amazing American history campus that you see here today," Ivey said. "It is a gift to our nation and to the people of our state."

The dedication featured prayers, patriotic music, a musket salute and reflections on Walker's vision of civic education. Dr. Geri Albright opened with an invocation, asking that the new hall "stand as a reminder of the sacrifices made to secure our freedom and the responsibilities we bear to protect them."

Troy University Chancellor Dr. Jack Hawkins Jr. praised Walker's foresight in forming a partnership between Troy and the Village, citing sobering statistics about declining U.S. his-

tory proficiency among students. He announced a \$1.3 million Troy University contribution toward the project's completion.

"There has to be an undertaking where we bring together a greater understanding on our young people," Hawkins said. "That's the goal of our partnership and that's why we're engaged today. Our future rests on what this kind of project represents for our great nation."

American Village trustee Dr. Cathy Randall honored Gov. Ivey's leadership and personal support of the Village, calling her "Alabama's most consequential governor ever."

State Sen. Arthur Orr, chair of the Alabama USA Semiquincentennial Commission, placed the moment in historical context.

"The building we dedicate today is much more than bricks and mortar rising from the meadows in south Shelby County," Orr said. "It stands as a testament to the principles of liberty and individual rights under a limited government that was discussed in our country's two most famous documents: the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, both of which were made and adopted in Independence Hall."

Col. Alan B. Miller, Walker's successor as president and CEO, acknowledged the bittersweet timing of the day.

"We gather on the eve of America's 250th birthday to dedicate

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Village

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not just a building, but a living classroom of liberty where generations will learn what it means to be citizens of a free and self-governing people,” Miller said. “Even as we celebrate, we do so with both joy and sorrow today... Tom was a man of deep faith, whose vision, courage and persistence brought the American Village into being. His spirit and legacy are alive here.”

The day concluded with Walker's prepared remarks, read posthumously by Miller, in which he expressed gratitude to God, his family, staff and supporters.

“I firmly believe that God guided us here, in this place and in this time, to serve, to create, to lead, to give, to remember, to educate and to celebrate,” Walker wrote. “From every dollar donated to every brick laid, I see His hand at work through the generosity and dedication of countless people who have made American Village what it is today.”

The remarks continued with Walker outlining the mission of American Village and his vision for Independence Hall as a whole.

“From the beginning, our mission has been too clear,” Walker wrote. “Our young people cannot safeguard what they do not cherish, and they cannot cherish what they do not know. The American Village exists to strengthen



—Photo by Hal Yeager/Governor's Office

Gov. Kay Ivey addresses the crowd.

and renew, among young people and all of our visitors, a deep knowledge and appreciation for America's legacy and freedom. The building behind me and the gathering of patriots in front of me, gives me great optimism that this mission will endure and flourish in the years ahead.”

Independence Hall completes the Village's representation of all three branches of American government — judicial,



—Photo by Hal Yeager/Governor's Office

American Village CEO Alan Miller made opening remarks.

legislative, and executive — and opens ahead of the nation's 250th anniversary in 2026.

“After 25 years, we finally have a building for the executive, judicial and legislative branches of government,” Miller said. “More than that, I think this really just creates an opportunity for us to put students in the footsteps of the founders. It's not a lecture, it's an experience.”

“I think it's so important for the students to understand this part of American history in the proper context, to understand the challenges that the founders faced. Our number one goal is for every student who leaves here to understand that they are heirs to that legacy and it is now their responsibility to carry it forward.”

The project is part of a multi-phase expansion. The final phase, now under way, will include a museum to house the contents of the Karl C. Harrison Museum of George and Martha Washington, currently in Columbiana.

The Harrison Museum holds the second largest collection of George and Martha Washington artifacts outside Mount Vernon. Completion of this final phase of the Independence Hall complex is anticipated by July 4, 2026.

Together, these phases will position American Village as a national destination for history education during the run-up to America's 250th birthday in 2026.

Alabama has designated the American Village as the state's official Semiquincentennial Celebration Capitol.



—Photo by Hal Yeager/Governor's Office

Former NSSAR President-General Bruce Pickett, left, attended the event.



—Photo courtesy of Benny Hannah

Barker receives Gold America 250 medal

Jim Maples, left, presents the Gold America 250 medal to ALSSAR sergeant-at-arms Joe Barker. The 250 medal is awarded to members for their participation in events celebrating the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. Compatriots earn points based on directing an event (20 points), participating in the event without directing it (10 points), attending the event (3 points) and attending an event in Colonial attire (5 points). Compatriots can earn points at the chapter, state, district or national level. America 250 medals can be bronze (25 points), silver (60) or gold (150).



—Photos courtesy of Jason Williams

Richard Henry Lee Constitution luncheon

The Richard Henry Lee chapter joined with several local DAR chapters in celebrating a combined Constitution Luncheon on Sept. 19. One of the highlights of the luncheon was the ALSSAR Color Guard which posted and retrieved the colors.



**ALABAMA SOCIETY, SONS OF
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALSSAR

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Help spread the word about your chapter in the next newsletter

If you're submitting material for the next newsletter, please e-mail your pictures and information to timgaylesar@gmail.com or send information about your chapter's activities or upcoming events by Dec. 10 to Tim Gayle at 3104 Cabot Street, Montgomery, AL 36110.



—Photo courtesy of Scott Martin

Cahaba-Coosa, DAR presents new flag in recognition of Flag Day

The Cahaba-Coosa chapter and the Oak Mountain chapter DAR presented a new flag to the North Shelby Library in a Changing of the Colors ceremony and made a presentation on the history of the flag.