SAR Alabama

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Over these past months, I have been reminded time and again that the strength of the Alabama Society rests not in any single event, but in the character, devotion, and fellowship of our compatriots.

Whether standing at a Memorial Day wreath□laying, participating in a Fourth of July parade, presenting the colors before thousands, or gathering in Greensboro for the 136th Congress, our members have shown what it means to carry the legacy of 1776 into the modern day.

This summer's activities—spanning ceremonies, parades, America 250 commemorations, Liberty Tree plantings, grave markings, recruitment outreach, and chapter meetings—reflect a society that is alive with purpose.

At every stop, I saw the same qualities that I wrote about in our Fourth of July letter: courage, conviction, and the quiet, steady work of responsible citizenship.

Our chapters are not simply hosting events; they are shaping the civic culture of their communities.

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-Photo by Adria V. Poehlein

Compatriot David Poehlein portrays Revolutionary War Patriot William Walling.

Tennessee Valley Chapter Shares Revolutionary War History at Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll

The Tennessee Valley Chapter participated in Huntsville's annual Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll on Oct. 18, bringing Revolutionary War history to life for visitors exploring one of Alabama's oldest historic cemeteries.

Organized by the Huntsville Pilgrimage Association, the Stroll has been an annual tradition since 1990. Costumed portrayers stationed throughout Maple Hill Cemetery share the stories of individuals who helped shape Huntsville and the Tennessee Valley. The event draws large crowds while promoting awareness and preservation of the historic cemetery.

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Birmingham Chapter Holds Grave Marking Ceremony

Members of the Birmingham chapter gathered in Hueytown on July 25 at Bethlehem Methodist Church to hold a grave marking ceremony for Rev. Capt. James M. Tarrant Sr.

Tarrant, a Revolutionary War patriot, was born on Nov. 30, 1753 in Halifax Hills, Pittsylvania County, in the colony of Virginia.

He was the son of Leonard Douthitt Tarrant II. When he was very young, his father moved the family into Amherst County, Virginia where they lived for 16 years. Later, they removed to Henry County on the border of Virginia and North Carolina.

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Message

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They are teaching history, honoring service, and modeling the virtues that sustain a free people.

The 136th Congress in Greensboro reinforced this truth. Surrounded by compatriots from across the nation, we were reminded that our work is part of a larger, ongoing effort to strengthen the Republic.

The memorial service honoring 572 departed compatriots underscored the importance of kindness, respect, and fellowship within our society. The business sessions highlighted the need for modernization, visibility, and chapter-level vitality—areas where Alabama continues to excel because of your dedication.

As I wrote in our Time Capsule Letter to Americans in 2276, the names of our officers, chapter presidents, committee chairs, and members represent more than a roster—they represent a living chain of stewardship stretching back to the patriots of the Revolution.

Every event we attend, every youth we encourage, every veteran we honor, and every ancestor we commemorate is part of that chain. Our work is not ceremonial; it is generational.

What impressed me most this season is the spirit with which our chapters serve. The 2026 fall BOM report offers detailed reports of all 13 ALSSAR chapter activities. The following narrative references some events in which I attended or participated.

The Gen. John Archer Elmore chapter's Independence Day parade, Cahaba-Coosa chapter's Liberty Tree plantings, Birmingham chapter's grave marking and the Wiregrass, Elmore, and Montgomery chapters' America 250 collaboration with the Montgomery Biscuits minor league baseball team. These efforts embody the "Spirit of 1776—imperfect, striving, courageous" that I referenced in the time capsule message.

I want every officer and every chapter to know how deeply I appreciate your work. You make ALSSAR a force for good in Alabama. You strengthen our communities. You honor our ancestors. And you ensure that the next generation inherits not only the memory of the Revolution, but the virtues that sustain it.

Thank you for your devotion, your fellowship, and your unwavering commitment to the mission of the Sons of the American Revolution. Because of you, the next 250 years will shine as brightly as the last.

-Ronald N. Dains, Ph.D.



-Photo by Adria V. Poehlein

Chapter SAR Color Guard members Bob Anderson, Lawrence Hillis, and Steven Brouse lead the procession through Maple Hill Cemetery.

Stroll

(Continued from Page 1)

The Tennessee Valley Chapter Color Guard, led by Compatriot Bob Anderson and joined by Compatriots Lawrence Hillis and Steven Brouse, presented the colors and led the procession through the cemetery. Their participation connected Huntsville's local history with the chapter's mission to honor Revolutionary War Patriots and preserve their stories for future generations.

Compatriots William Sommers and David Poehlein portrayed Revolutionary War Patriots Albert Russel and William Walling, respectively. They shared the men's personal histories and military experiences while discussing daily necessities and camp life during the struggle for independence. These conversations connected the stories of two local Patriots to the broader experience of Revolutionary War service.

Throughout the afternoon, the chapter's Color Guard discussed Revolutionary War-era flags, period weapons, and soldiers' equipment with visitors. These exchanges offered a closer look at how the founding generation served.

Chapter members additionally supported a wreath-laying ceremony honoring Revolutionary War Patriot John Ward Sr. at his grave. Members of the John Hunt Society, Children of the American Revolution, placed a wreath and participated in a brief commemorative ceremony while Tennessee Valley Chapter Color Guard members Lawrence Hillis and Steven Brouse stood beside them.

The ceremony gave young participants an active role in remembering a Revolutionary War patriot and provided another opportunity to connect visitors with the cemetery's historical significance.

Pleasant autumn weather and strong attendance allowed the chapter to engage a broad cross-section of the community.

During the nation's 250th-anniversary commemorations, the Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll served as a meaningful example of how Alabama SAR chapters can preserve local history, honor Revolutionary War patriots, and inspire interest in America's founding.

-David Poehlein



-Photo courtesy E.T. Brown

Descendants of Capt. Tarrant pose with members of the Color Guard at the grave marking ceremony on July 25.

Tarrant

(Continued from Page 1)

Tarrant volunteered for the War for Independence in 1776 at the age of 23.

He married Jane Birch (Burch) in 1776 in Henry County, Virginia and they had 12 children.

While a resident of Henry County, he was commissioned First Lt. Henry County Militia on Feb. 16, 1778. The appointment was witnessed by Patrick Henry.

First Lt. Tarrant was commissioned a captain in the Virginia Militia on June 24, 1780 by his friend Thomas Jefferson, then governor of Virginia.

Soon after receiving his commission, he was ordered to march his men toward North Carolina to fight a gang of Tories who had murdered and robbed near Flower Gap Mountain (Ararat in Patrick County).

In time he rose under Gen. George Washington and commanded a company of infantry.

The Rev. Capt. Tarrant prayed regularly among his fellow soldiers with Gen. Washington and his officers before battle.

Capt. Tarrant "fought bravely" at the Battle of Yorktown in 1781 in Virginia. In 1787 he moved into Greenville County, South Carolina.

Arriving in the Alabama Territory in 1817, Rev. Tarrant migrated to the Possum Valley area, (Dolomite/Hueytown), eight miles east of the town of old Jonesborough (Bessemer area), on Possum Creek, a hunter's paradise.

Instrumental in organizing a church in the area with Margaret Prude and Nancy Sadler, Rev. Tarrant along with his slave, Adam, built the first church, a one-room log building of hand-hewn timbers in 1818. Rev. Tarrant served as the first Methodist minister.

The Rev. Capt. James Tarrant, Sr. died on July 5, 1840 at his home with his son, James Tarrant, Jr.

See TARRANT, Page 4



-Photo courtesy E.T. Brown

Birmingham chapter compatriot E.T. Brown introduces Lauri Sitton Rogers, fourth great grandchild of Tarrant.



-Photo courtesy E.T. Brown

ALSSAR president Ron Dains addresses the crowd at the ceremony.

In Memory...

Howard D. Poarch
Walter Brown Stevenson Jr.

The Alabama Society lost a pair of compatriots over the summer, including Howard Poarch and former Gen. Richard Montgomery chapter president Walter Stevenson.

HOWARD D. POARCH, a resident of Vestavia Hills and a compatriot in the Cahaba-Coosa chapter, passed away on July 1. He was 85.

Poarch was born in Birmingham on Nov. 26, 1940, to Demoval and Mary Lou Poarch. He spent his early years in Richland, Wash., where his father was employed at the Hanford Nuclear site. He returned to Alabama to attend Auburn University, where he graduated in 1962. He practiced accounting in Birmingham for more than 50 years and retired as a partner in MPK Group.

He was a member of the Episcopal Church of the Ascension and numerous lineage societies, including First Families of Alabama and the Sons of the American Revolution and was a Mason.

He is survived by his wife, Marcia, stepsons (and their wives), Michael (and Kim) Curtiss and James (and Monica) Curtiss, and by the special friends who became family, Rakesh and Hina Patel. He is also survived by grandchildren Kaleigh Campbell, Cole, Derek, and Brady Curtiss, Bela and Deven Patel. Other survivors include his brother, James D. Poarch, nephews and their wives, Johnathan and Casie Poarch, Douglas and Adrienne Poarch, and five great nephews and nieces.

WALTER BROWN STEVENSON JR., a lifelong resident of Montgomery and a longtime member of the Gen. Richard Montgomery chapter, died peacefully on July 3 after an extended illness. He was 83.

Stevenson attended Sidney Lanier High School and Auburn University and was a graduate of Troy University. He was also the recipient of an honorary doctorate from the University of West Alabama. He was a proud member and past president of the Gen. Richard Montgomery chapter as well as a member of related groups, the Germany and Jamestown Societies.

He was a curious man with many varied interests who never stopped learning – genealogy, travel, camping, wood working. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the Montgomery Catholic football and soccer teams as well as the marching band. He enjoyed a long retirement after working for the state for 37 years, with his last position as the division chief of the Office of Water Resources (ADECA).

Stevenson is survived by his wife, Aleen Koenig Stevenson, his daughter, Lisa Holifield (Joseph) and his son, Patrick Stevenson (Deborah), along with five grandsons -- Tate Holifield (Kayla), Rhys Holifield (Kate), Alan Stevenson, Ryan Stevenson and Cody Stevenson. He adored his great-granddaughter, Eva Holifield.

Services were held at Leak Memory Chapel on July 16, with visitation followed by a celebration of life service.

Tarrant

(Continued from Page 3)

According to the 1840 U.S. Census, Jefferson County, AL and the Census of Pensioners, 1841, he was buried on his own premises a few yards from Bethlehem Church.

"The mortal part of James Tarrant, soldier, statesman and a servant of the cross, lie in the family garden of the old homestead." This appeared in an article dated June 20, 1886 in the *Birmingham Post-Herald*.

—E.T. Brown



-Photo courtesy E.T. Brown

ALSSAR Color Guard fires volley at the ceremony.



-Photo courtesy E.T. Brown

Lisa Sitton Burleson, fourth great grandchild of Tarrant.



Gen. Richard Montgomery Chapter holds record ceremonial inductions

-Photo courtesy Bruce Pickette

The Gen. Richard Montgomery Chapter had its greatest number of ceremonial inductions in several years at its September meeting. Flanked by Chapter Registrar and former President General Bruce Pickette (far left) and Chapter President William Kirkland (far right), the newest compatriots are (from left): Kenneth Brown, David Lewis, father Michael Lewis, and Jim Locke. Compatriot Kirkland performed the inductions and Compatriot Pickette, as their sponsor, pinned on their SAR Rosette. Compatriot Brown was also presented the membership certificate for his son Kevin. The meeting included a presentation by chapter member and former National Society Genealogist General Larry Cornwell on Mysteries of the Revolution.

-Photo courtesy Bruce Pickette

Chapter inducts Montgomery city councilman Charles Jinright

New Gen. Richard Montgomery member Charles Jinright (pictured center), the former president of the Montgomery City Council, was inducted by chapter president William Kirkland (pictured right) at the chapter's October meeting at the Montgomery Country Club. Compatriot Jinright's rosette, the recognition emblem of the Society, was pinned by his sponsor, chapter registrar and former NSSAR President General Bruce Pickette. The guest speaker at the chapter's October meeting was chapter compatriot Bill Dean, who gave a presentation on "Artillery in the Revolution."



ALSSAR Color Guard Supports Vestavia Hills Liberty Tree Dedication

Four members of the ALSSAR Color Guard posted and retrieved the colors during the Vestavia Hills Historical Society's Liberty Tree dedication at City Hall on Oct. 20.

Participating were David Jones, Randy Brown and Cade McCool of the Black Warrior River chapter and David Poehlein of the Tennessee Valley chapter. Dressed in Continental uniforms and militia attire, the compatriots provided a visible connection to the patriots whose service and sacrifices secured American independence.

Historical Society president Frank Buck welcomed attendees, and Dr. Bill Brunson, senior pastor of Vestavia Hills Methodist Church, offered the invocation.

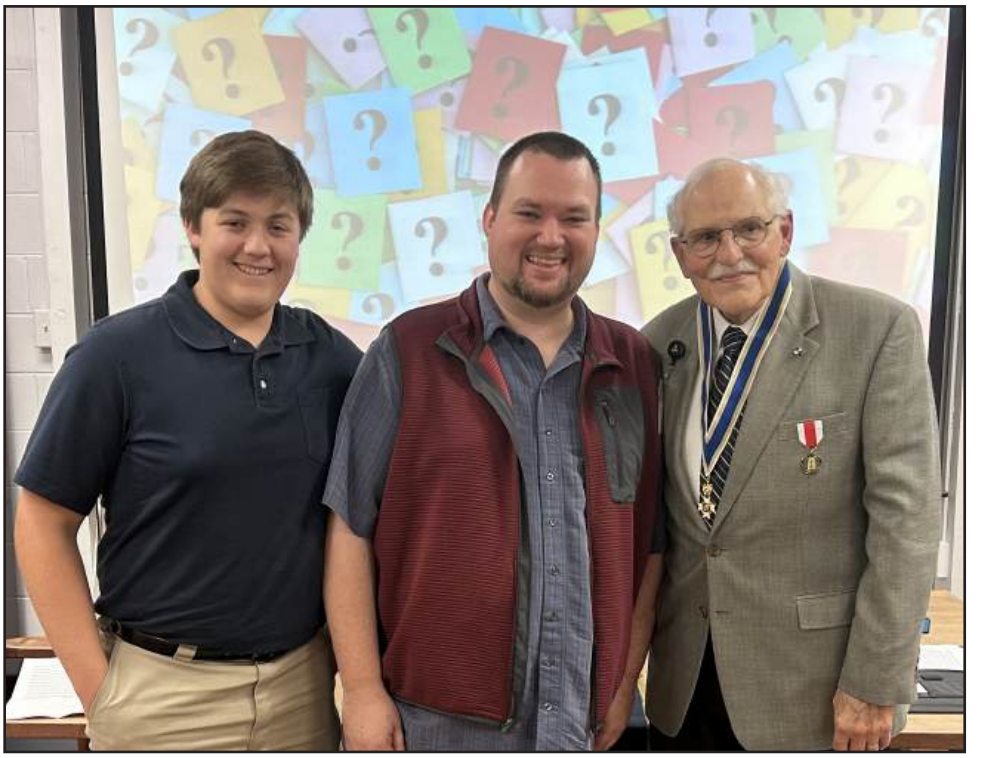
Society vice president Karen Shallenberg discussed the Alabama 250 Legacy Grant supporting the Liberty Tree project. Shallenberg had submitted the successful application for the tree, which was awarded to the society to represent Jefferson County in the commemoration of America's 250th anniversary.

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-Photo by Adria V. Poehlein

ALSSAR Color Guard members stand with the colors during the Vestavia Hills Liberty Tree Dedication. Participating guardsmen were from left: David Jones, David Poehlein, Randy Brown, and Cade McCool.



-Photo courtesy William Rozier

Cheaha chapter discusses namesake counties

Dr. Wesley Bishop of Jacksonville State University was the guest speaker for the Cheaha chapter's monthly meeting on May 13. Bishop presented an engaging program titled "Alabama Counties Named for Patriots." Prior to the main presentation, the chapter's essay contest winner, Oliver Brown, read his award-winning essay, "Baron de Kalb: The Generous Stranger." Chapter president Ron Burson, right, is pictured with Brown, left, and Dr. Bishop.



-Photo by Adria V. Poehlein

Frank Buck, president of the Vestavia Hills Historical Society, discusses the Liberty Tree presentation and plaque dedication during the ceremony.



-Photo by Adria V. Poehlein

David Poehlein of the Tennessee Valley Chapter and Randy Brown of the Black Warrior River Chapter salute the colors during the dedication ceremony.

Tree

(Continued from Page 6)

The Shades Mountain Baptist Church Jubilee Singers provided a patriotic musical tribute. Peter the Patriot delivered a Liberty Tree presentation, adding historical interpretation to the ceremony. Jefferson County Commissioner Mike Bolin presented the plaque and dedicated the tree.

Following the Color Guard's retrieval of the colors, Buck delivered closing remarks.

The Liberty Tree (1646–1775) was a famous elm tree that stood in Boston, Massachusetts at the corner of Essex and Orange Streets near Boston Common in the years before the American Revolution. In 1765, Patriots in Boston staged the first act of defiance against the British government at the tree.

The tree became a central gathering place for protesters, and the ground surrounding it became popularly known as Liberty Hall. A liberty pole was installed nearby with a flag that could be raised above the tree to summon the townspeople to a meeting. Ebenezer Mackintosh was a shoemaker who handled much of the hands-on work of hanging effigies and leading angry mobs, and he became known as "Captain General of the Liberty Tree." Paul Revere included the Liberty Tree in an engraving, "A View of the Year 1765".

When the Stamp Act was repealed in 1766, townspeople gathered at the Liberty Tree to celebrate. They decorated the tree with flags and streamers and hung dozens of lanterns from its branches when darkness fell. A copper sign was fastened to the trunk which read, "This tree was planted in the year 1646, and pruned by order of the Sons of Liberty, Feb. 14th, 1766." Soon colonists in other towns began naming their own liberty trees, from Newport, Rhode Island to Charleston, South Carolina, and the Tree of Liberty became a familiar symbol of the American Revolution.

-David Poehlein



-Photo by Adria V. Poehlein

Jefferson County Commissioner Mike Bolin delivers the plaque presentation and tree dedication remarks during the Vestavia Hills Liberty Tree Dedication.



-Photo courtesy of David Poehlein

Local chapters unite in patriotic display for Fourth of July

On Independence Day, the Tennessee Valley chapter joined forces with the CAR's John Hunt chapter and the DAR's Twickenham, Huntsville, Hunt's Spring, Maple Hill and Rainbolt Mountain chapters to participate in the American Eras Parade in downtown Huntsville. The unique float design represented the signing of the Declaration of Independence portrayed on the front side of the float and a Revolutionary War camp scene portrayed on the back side where an officer was reading the new document to a group of Continental soldiers. Participants in the parade included Bill and Susan Sommers, Don Wolfe, Ray Cassell, Bob Anderson, Scott Owen, Steve Brouse, Mark and Phyliss Hubbs, Randal Jennings and Lawrence Hillis.

Black Warrior Chapter creates mobile exhibit



-Photo by Adria V. Poehlein

The America 250 mobile exhibit features George Washington, who presided over the Constitutional Convention, and James Madison, who was a strong proponent of the Constitution.

The Black Warrior River chapter applied for the America 250 Alabama grant to create a mobile exhibit. This exhibit is like the one they did a couple years ago at the African American Museum in Tuscaloosa.

The ability to move the exhibit from one location to another and change the theme, if necessary, can be a larger asset for the chapter and for the community.

The display made its debut at the Tuscaloosa County Synergic Center in Northport and was there through the month of September as the chapter celebrated the signing of the U.S. Constitution.

"We hope to get a lot of mileage out of this display," Black Warrior chapter president Stephen Asbury said. "The chapter is already receiving positive feedback from members of the community."

Chapter vice president and project manager David Jones said, "We plan to use the display for other America 250 events and as a recruiting tool when we are unable to have members present for extended periods of time."

-David Jones

A Message from the Surgeon General

By Matthew S. Bowdish MD
NSSAR Surgeon General

"Give Me Liberty...And Lower Blood Pressure"

Hypertension (aka High Blood Pressure) is a silent and deadly condition that affects 60 percent of older adults and is a top contributor to heart attacks, strokes and kidney damage in men ages 50 to 80 years old. It often runs in families -- if your parents had it, you likely carry an elevated risk.

Diagnosis is simple: regular blood pressure readings at home or in your doctor's office.

Annual screenings are recommended for all men in this age group. Treatment starts with lifestyle (i.e., diet, exercise, salt reduction) and can include medications like ACE inhibitors or diuretics. Left unchecked, hypertension quietly damages your arteries.

Contact your personal physician today for blood pressure evaluation and personalized management strategy. Protecting your heart today means more active years with your family in the future.

These Soldiers Were Buried in an Unmarked Grave During the Revolutionary War. Now, Historians Finally Know Their Names

By Ellen Wexler
Smithsonian Magazine

During the American Revolution, many of the soldiers killed in action were interred in unmarked graves. The fledgling nation wouldn't "systematically care for its war dead" until decades later, according to Arlington National Cemetery. "After a battle, the victorious army, which controlled the battlefield, would usually bury the dead from both armies."

At one long-forgotten burial, a list of names has finally appeared. A cemetery in Wilmington, Delaware, holds the remains of at least 66 soldiers who died during the war, and researchers have now identified 33 of them.

"For nearly 250 years, they have lain unknown and unremembered," John Carney, the mayor of Wilmington, said at a memorial ceremony in September. "For too long, their stories have been obscured and their final resting place overlooked. Today, that changes as we dedicate a permanent memorial on this hallowed ground in their honor."

The list includes 28 soldiers from Rhode Island, half of whom were Black, and 5 British officers. (At least 38 British soldiers are buried at the site, but most are still unidentified.) At the ceremony, attendees listened to the national anthems of the United States and the United Kingdom, and all 33 names were read aloud.

The British soldiers died after sustaining injuries at the Battle of Brandywine in Pennsylvania, where nearly 30,000 troops fought on September 11, 1777 — the largest single-day battle of the Revolution. When the British emerged victorious, they quickly set up a hospital in Wilmington to treat their 488 wounded. Two days after the battle, 112 wagons full of injured soldiers traveled to the city, located some nine miles south. Those who died were buried in the Poor and Strangers cemetery.

At Brandywine, the Continental Army tried to protect Philadelphia, which was then the U.S. capital. But the patriots ultimately retreated, enabling the British to capture the city on Sept. 26. As the British advanced, members of the Second Continental Congress fled west to Lancaster, which served as the nation's capital for just one day, on Sept. 27.

"We had to use modern algorithms to sort of reverse engineer this, to figure out how many we could have expected from the 488 to die," local historian Bill Knightly, who led the research on the British soldiers, tells Nathan Field of the Wilmington History Society. "The very, very conservative algorithm that we used came up with 38 deaths, and we actually think it's much more."

Four years after Brandywine, in 1781, the Rhode Island soldiers were among the 20,000 patriot troops who fought in the Battle of Yorktown in Virginia. After the battle, which laid the groundwork for the British Army's surrender, these members of the First Rhode Island Regiment made their way home, with many contracting smallpox along the way. Some were treated at a hospital in Wilmington, and 28 of those patients died.

"You have to believe these soldiers could at least see the end of the war coming," Knightly tells the Wilmington History Society. "And then to succumb to smallpox is probably something they did not foresee."

These men were also buried in the Poor and Strangers cemetery. As the city expanded in the 1850s, both groups of soldiers' remains were moved to the Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery, where they rest today.

Researchers found the men's names by combing through primary sources. One document lists all 28 of the Continental soldiers, who died between Dec. 8, 1781, and Jan. 27, 1782. Ten were free Black men, while four were enslaved laborers.

"Black soldiers fought alongside white and Indigenous soldiers for American independence at a time when the nation's promise of liberty did not extend to them," the City of Wilmington says in a statement. "For those who enlisted while enslaved, military service also represented a path to freedom."

In 1778, Rhode Island lawmakers, facing a shortage of soldiers, voted to allow enslaved men to enlist. In return, these men would be granted their freedom, and their enslavers would be compensated. Lawmakers repealed this policy a few months later, but by then, more than 100 enslaved men had already taken the government up on its offer.

One of the Black soldiers buried in Wilmington was Private Caesar Rose. One of his direct descendants, Jason Roomes, attended the memorial ceremony. "He went from a slave to a soldier," Roomes tells WDEL News' Mark Fowser. "I'm glad that they've built something to recognize all of the soldiers, not just the generals and colonels."

Also in attendance was Colonel Thomas Archer-Burton, a military representative from the British Embassy. During the ceremony, he spoke about the significance of honoring British and American soldiers together.

"I don't believe these soldiers could have imagined this scene," Archer-Burton said. "They couldn't have imagined the Union flag and the Stars and Stripes being carried together. They could not have imagined 'God Save the King' and 'The Star-Spangled Banner' being played at the same ceremony."

At the gathering, officials also read an excerpt from a poem by Adam Drummond, the father of one of the British soldiers. Knightly tracked down the poem at the National Library of Scotland, whose staff sent him the full text. It begins:

His past, its past, the dread suspense is o'er
My dear my lovely soldier is no more
The murdrous gun in this unnatural strife
So surely aim'd has robb'd him of his life
And he to death has fallen an easy prey
Why did I live to see the fatal day

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 Alabama Archives and History

Alabama Liberty Bell Rededication

Alabama state treasurer Young Boozer (dark jacket), ALSSAR president Ron Dains (white jacket) and DAR State Regent Malinda Williams help ring the rededicated Liberty Bell on the Capitol grounds on July 8 on the State Capitol grounds. Alabama's replica Liberty Bell was rededicated on the 250th anniversary of the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia. The bell is one of a series of 55 copies given to the states and territories by the U.S. Treasury Department in 1950. The bells toured communities across the nation to promote the purchase of Independence savings bonds, the peacetime successor to war bonds. Several metals manufacturing companies sponsored the project. After touring Alabama by truck from late May through early July 1950, bell number 38 arrived at the State Capitol on July 6. Gov. Jim Folsom accepted the gift from Ed Leigh McMillan, state chairman of the bond drive.