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The Sgian Dubh

Clan Morrison Society of North America
https://clanmorrison.net/

Morrison, Morison, Murison, Gilmore, Gilmour, Brieve, MacBrieve, Judge

Morrisons, Gilmores fought America's wars for 250 years

Some remained loyal to the Crown; some rebelled against the Union



A painting by Cpl. Charles Santford Morrison, possibly of himself leading a charge in France in World War I

By James Morrison

James Gilmore of Virginia fought so bravely in the American Revolution that 200 years later Hollywood made a movie about his exploits starring Mel Gibson. A Morrison was with Washington during the dangerous crossing of the Delaware. At least two Morrisons and a Gilmor won the Medal of Honor during the Civil War.

The dramatic painting above by Cpl. Charles Santford Morrison of St. Louis, MO, shows an American soldier charging out of the trenches in France during World War I. Some historians believe it is a self-portrait of Morrison, whose bravery earned him the Distinguished Service Cross.

In World War II, Navy Cmdr. Howard Gilmore sacrificed his life to save his crew and became the first submarine commander awarded the Medal of Honor. In the same war, Walter Frederick Morrison, an Army fighter pilot, was

shot down and imprisoned by the Germans in the notorious Stalag 13, which would later become the fictional setting for the TV show, *Hogan's Heroes*. After the war, Morrison achieved fame by inventing the Frisbee.

Rear Adm. George Stephen Morrison served in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. He traced his family to Robert the Bruce. But he might be more remembered as the father of rock star Jim Morrison of *The Doors*.

As Americans celebrate the 250th anniversary of the birth of the United States, this article looks at some of the Morrisons and Gilmors (in all of the spellings) who valiantly defended the United States in all of its wars since 1776 and at a few who remained loyal to Britain during the American Revolution or fought to secede from the Union in the Civil War.



Washington crossing the Delaware. A Morrison was there.

The Patriots

James Morrison of Warren County, PA, served with Gen. George Washington during the harrowing crossing of the Delaware River on Christmas night in 1776. Morrison, a frontier scout, marched over frozen roads to defeat Hessian troops in Trenton, NJ, in a battle that helped revive the revolution.

James Gilmore, born in Rockbridge County, VA, in 1745, enlisted in the 12th Virginia Regiment in 1777. Capt. Gilmore fought in the decisive Battle of Cowpens under the famous American Gen. Daniel Morgan in 1781. The Patriots defeated the notorious British Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton, crushed British plans to subdue the South and led to the ultimate defeat of the British Army under Cornwallis in Yorktown later that year.

Gilmore, who led the Gilmore Rifles, helped inspire the movie, *The Patriot*, starring Mel Gibson in 2000, according to Gilmore family tradition and some historians.

James Morrison of North Carolina fought for the American cause from the beginning of the conflict in 1775 until nearly the end in 1781.

Robert Patterson Morrison, born in Argyll, Scotland, in 1748, immigrated to America and fought for the Patriots in the Bucks County Militia in Pennsylvania. **Isaac Morrison**, born in 1745, was a captain in the 1st New Jersey Regiment and saw action under George Washington at the Battle of Germantown in 1777 and Monmouth a year later.

The Loyalists

Alexander Morrison was one of the most famous and unluckiest Morrisons who remained faithful to



The Battle of Cowpens, painted by American artist William Ranney in 1845

the British Crown during the Revolution. Patriots captured him in 1776 and released him two years later after he promised not to rejoin the war.

He broke his pledge shortly after his release in 1778 when he attempted to raise another army and was arrested a second time. Patriots held him for another two years, releasing him in 1780 when he returned to Scotland.

Morrison was a medical doctor who was born on the Isle of Skye and emigrated to the colonies in 1772.

He settled in North Carolina and, when the war broke out, recruited fellow Loyalists at his home near Carthage. Morrison and his troops joined forces raised by Allan MacDonald, the husband of Flora MacDonald of Bonnie Prince Charlie fame, and confronted Patriot forces at the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge in February 1776, where Morrison was captured the first time.

Rev. George Gillmore headed for the colonies in 1769, after studying logic, metaphysics and natural philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. A Presbyterian preacher, he remained loyal to the Crown even as his congregations first in Connecticut and then in New York supported the revolution and forced him to flee. He ended up in Nova Scotia, the Canadian refuge for many Loyalists.

The Civil War

The Union

Maj. John Curtis Gilmore of the 16th New York Infantry won the Medal of Honor by heroically rallying his forces at the Second Battle of Fredericksburg in Virginia in 1863. At one point in the fight, he realized his left flank was about to collapse. Under heavy Rebel fire, he rushed to the wavering line, seized the regimental flag and waved it so all of his men could see.

"Hold straight on," he shouted, as the line held.

The battle ended in a Confederate victory. Gilmore served until the end of the war, rising to brigadier general when he retired from the Union army in 1901. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Union **Gen. Quincy Adams Gillmore** devised a devastatingly effective plan for the bombardment of the Confederate Fort Pulaski in Georgia in 1862 and revolutionized siege warfare for the rest of the conflict.

At the mouth of the Savannah River, Fort Pulaski protected the strategic port of Savannah and, with 7½-foot thick walls, was considered impregnable and out of range for traditional smooth-bored cannon, widely used at the time.

Gen. Gillmore, the chief engineering and artillery commander, ordered the old cannon replaced by rifled cannon, which had far better range and accuracy, and pummeled the fort in a 30-hour bombardment, leading to the Confederate surrender and closure of Savannah.

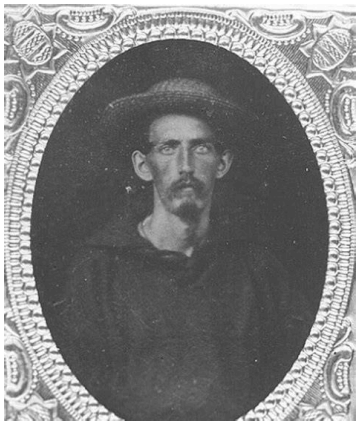
Two Morrisons won the Medal of Honor for bravery in combat.

Francis Morrison, a private with the 85th Pennsylvania Infantry, exposed himself to heavy rebel fire to save a wounded comrade during the Bermuda Hundred Campaign near Richmond, VA, in 1864.

John Gordon Morrison, coxswain of the gunboat USS Carondelet, was cited for his “heroic conduct and his inspiring example” to his crew after his vessel was rammed by the Confederate ironclad Arkansas, as the rebel boat ran the Union blockade of the Yazoo River near Vicksburg, MS, in 1862.

The Carondelet was “badly cut up, several of her crew killed, many wounded and others almost suffocated” from steam released by the damaged engine, according to the Medal of Honor citation, which recognized Morrison’s "meritorious conduct” during the engagement.

The Navy bestowed an additional honor on the courageous coxswain by naming a destroyer after him. The USS Morrison served in the South Pacific from 1943 until 1945 when Japanese suicide pilots sank the destroyer off Okinawa.



John Gordon Morrison

The Confederacy

Cavalry **Maj. Harry Gilmor** led 135 rebels on an audacious raid around Washington DC in July 1864, sparking widespread panic in the poorly defended Union capital. Maj. Gilmor, a Maryland native, disrupted railroad traffic south of Baltimore, fewer than 50 miles north of Washington, and even captured a Union general.

His exploits were part of a larger plan by confederate Gen. Jubal Early to raid Washington, force Union Gen. Ulysses Grant to dispatch troops from his siege of Richmond, the Confederate capital, to reinforce the federal city, and maybe even capture President Lincoln, himself. Early attacked Fort Stevens in what is today Northwest DC before abandoning his raid and retreating to the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia.

World War I



Going over the top in World War I was a sure way to get killed. Twenty-five percent of those who climbed out of their trenches to charge across open fields to fortified enemy positions died.

Cpl. Charles Santford Morrison was one of those who survived. He fought valiantly and won the Distinguished Service Cross for his attempt to rescue a severely wounded colleague who had fallen near German lines.

Cpl. Morrison’s story is both heroic and tragic.

Born in 1888 in St. Louis, MO, Morrison was drafted into the Army and arrived in France in June 1918 as part of Company L, 354th Infantry Regiment, 89th Division of the American Expeditionary Force. Three months later, he volunteered to rescue a wounded Doughboy who fell while on patrol about 400 yards from the American trenches.

He braved “intense and accurate” enemy fire to reach his colleague, who had already died of his wounds.

His award citation recognized his "extraordinary heroism," but his story ended in tragedy after he returned to civilian life. Unable to find a job to support his wife and two children, he was charged with abandoning his family and sentenced to one year in a workhouse in 1923. Meanwhile, the War Department awarded him the Distinguished Service Cross, which he refused to accept while in prison.

The American Legion learned of his predicament and lobbied to win him a parole later that year.

However, Morrison died in December of pneumonia, exacerbated by lungs weakened from exposure to mustard gas in the war. He was buried with military honors at Valhalla Cemetery in St. Louis.

"The story of Charles S. Morrison is a tragic tale of a man who displayed extraordinary courage and heroism serving a country that did not yet have procedures to assist war veterans burdened by poverty or wounds received in action," wrote historian Michael R. Santoro.

The painting at the beginning of this article is believed to depict Morrison charging out of the trenches in France in 1918. It is signed "C. Morrison '18."

War World II

Howard Walter Gilmore sacrificed his life to save his crew and became the first submarine commander to receive the Medal of Honor in World War II. Cmdr. Gilmore was captain of the submarine USS Growler, operating in Japanese-controlled waters in the South Pacific in 1943. The Growler, which had surfaced, was attacked by an enemy gunboat. Cmdr. Gilmore ordered his crew to ram the gunboat, even though he was severely wounded on the bridge.

He ordered the submarine to dive. Realizing that his injuries would prevent him from getting below, he cleared the deck of his crew, famously issuing the command, "Take her down."

The Navy later honored him by naming a submarine tender the USS Howard W. Gilmore.

Stanley A. Morrison, a first lieutenant in the 101st Airborne Division, won the Silver Star and lost his life commanding a platoon that delayed the German advance on the Belgium town of Marvie that led directly to the key town of Bastogne in the famous Battle of the Bulge in December 1944.

"If the German panzergrenadiers [mechanized infantry] and tanks had overrun the glider infantrymen [of the 101st Airborne] who defend Marvie, they might have taken Bastogne, and the history of the Battle of the Bulge would have been radically different," wrote historian Leo G. Barron.

Lt. Morrison and his troops from the 327th Glider Infantry stood in their way and, for their tenacity, earned the nickname the Bastogne Bulldogs. Morrison was ordered to defend a hill south of Marvie. After several hours of fierce fighting against German armored forces, Morrison informed his superiors that he was surrounded inside a farmhouse.

"Now they are all around me," he radioed to his commander. "I see tanks just outside my window. We are continuing to fight them back, but it looks like they have us."

Morrison's sacrifice helped delay the Germans from destroying the 101st Airborne surrounded in the town of Bastogne until Gen. George Patton led his tanks in a 100-mile rescue to relieve the siege and defeat the Germans.

Pfc. Jack B. Morrison won the Silver Star for his bravery against the Japanese in the 1945 Battle of Luzon in the Philippines. Pfc. Morrison, a flame thrower operator with the Army's 6th Infantry Division, exposed himself to hostile fire to clear out dug-in enemy machinegun positions that had pinned down his team.

"The gallant actions and dedicated devotion to duty demonstrated by Private First Class Morrison, without regard for his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Army," according to the citation that awarded him the third-highest combat medal.

Second Lieutenant Walter Frederick Morrison was a P-47 Thunderbolt combat pilot who flew 58 missions in World War II. He was shot down over Italy in March 1945 and held in a German prisoner-of-war camp until the end of the war two months later. He was confined to a camp called Stalag 13, which became the fictional setting for the

POW camp in the television comedy *Hogan's Heroes*. However, he is best known for what he did after the war. In 1955, he invented the Frisbee and became a wealthy man after selling the product to the Wham-O toy company.



When he died in 2010 at the age of 90, newspapers like the New York Times ran extensive obituaries with this photo, which showed he was not only a war hero but also an inventor with a self-effacing sense of humor.

At the age of 19, Scottish-born **William Morrison** wasn't even an American citizen when he joined the U.S. Army's 10th Light Division (Alpine) and became one of the legendary "ski troopers" of the division's 3rd Battalion, 86th Mountain Infantry Regiment. His unit, later named the 10th Mountain Division, saw action against the Germans in the invasion of Italy.

Rear Adm. George Stephen Morrison was one of the most-decorated naval officers who served in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. He was awarded the Navy Distinguished Service Medal, two Legions of Merit and a Bronze Star with V for Valor device. He was a fighter pilot in World War II and commanded the aircraft carrier USS *Bon Homme Richard* in the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident, which led to the escalation of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.

Despite his distinguished career and an ancestry he traced to Scottish King Robert the Bruce, he was overshadowed by his son, **Jim Morrison**, the lead singer of the rock group *The Doors*. Adm. Morrison was the keynote speaker at the decommissioning of his aircraft carrier in Washington, DC, on July 2, 1971. His son died the next day in Paris at the age of 27. His cause of death was officially ruled as heart failure, but rumors persist that it was exacerbated by heavy drinking and an accidental overdose of heroin.

Korean War

Two Morrisons and two Gilmores were awarded for valor in the Korean conflict, long known as the "Forgotten War," often fought in bloody battles in mountainous terrain on hills with no names, only numbers.

Marine MSgt. William Morrison was awarded the Navy Cross, Silver Star and Purple Heart after he and five other Marines held a crucial bridge for four hours against 200 Chinese soldiers in the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir in December 1950. Their bravery allowed 400 other Marines to escape.

Three months later in March 1951, Army **Pvt. Knots Gilmore** sacrificed himself to save two colleagues, when he grabbed an enemy grenade that landed near them on Hill 347, a key observation post in the Chorwon Valley. The grenade exploded as he threw it back. Congress awarded him the Distinguished Service Cross for "extraordinary heroism."

In September, **James E. Morrison**, an Army master sergeant, received the Silver Star and the French Croix de Guerre for his heroism at the Battle of Heartbreak Ridge, where a French battalion was attached to his 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Division. MSG Morrison led his platoon up the strategic ridge where they held out for weeks during the month-long battle. He was wounded by a grenade but refused to leave his troops.

Despite a serious head injury, **Army PFC Lawrence J. Gilmore** left an aid station to return to the fight when he realized that his comrades were under renewed attack by an overwhelmingly superior force at the Battle of Kumsong in December. Gilmore, an expert in automatic rifles, continued sweeping the enemy with deadly fire until he was mortally wounded. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Star.

Vietnam War

Air Force Maj. Paul J. Gilmore shot down the first Soviet-made MiG-21 fighter jet of the Vietnam War on April 26, 1966. Maj. Gilmore, flying a McDonnell F-4C Phantom II along with co-pilot Lt. William T. Smith, spotted the MiG near Hanoi. He dropped his external fuel tanks, engaged afterburners and scored his historic victory.

From the Chairman

By Michael Morrison
Chairman, Clan Morrison Society of North America

I hope your 2026 has been treating you well thus far. It is hard to believe that so much of this year is already behind us, and the end of the Highland games season and the holidays are rapidly approaching. I, for one, am ready for this heat to release its stranglehold on Southeast Alabama.

I am looking forward to attending the Stone Mountain Highland Games in October in Atlanta, GA. It is usually the first weekend that I consider the weather tolerable enough to wear full highland regalia during the day. It would be wonderful to meet all of you during that weekend at the Clan Morrison tent. I suspect that weekend will also serve as the 2026 annual general meeting of the Clan Morrison Society of North America for those of you who wish to attend.

I do not normally write about events for the upcoming year so early, but it is important to note so that you may plan accordingly. The 2027 Gallabrae Scottish Games in Greenville, SC, will take place on Friday and Saturday, May 28- 29, 2027, at Furman University This event will mark the investiture ceremony for Clan Morrison Chief Alasdair Morrison. This is a once-in-a-lifetime event for many of our members, and, God willing, will not happen again for more than half a century.

The board of directors for the Greenville games, Clan Morrison's North American Chieftain Andrew Morrison, the Chief`s Shennachie Chris Gilmore and I are planning a full weekend of activities to celebrate this momentous occasion. This will include dinners, an event at the opening ceremony of the games, a raising of the standard and a fealty ceremony (for those who are so inclined to participate in an ancient ritual).



Chief Alasdair Morrison

I for one will be among the first to bend the knee. Perhaps the Chief can be convinced to raid a neighboring clan tent as part of his personal right of passage. I urge all of you to pencil this in on your calendars to attend so that we can each show our Chief the support that he deserves as head of Clan Morrison.

Looking ahead to 2028, I am searching for a society member to host the annual general meeting. If you are interested, please contact me at clanmorrison2019@gmail.com.



The Clan Morrison Society of North America needs volunteers. Can you serve as a vice-chairman, treasurer, chaplain, members-at-large or tent-conveners at your local Scottish games. Please contact our Chairman Michael Morrison or visit our website and express your interest @ https://clanmorrison.net/volunteer

Membership Report

United States: Life 349; Annual 66
Foreign: Life 13; Annual 6
Total membership: 434

New Members

Brittany Elaine Brashear	St. Louis, MO
Adrienne Lynn Daniels	Hoboken, NJ Life Member
Akie DeSean Jackson	Woodstock, GA
Christine Lora	Suffolk, VA
John Saunders Lora	Ivor, VA Life Member
Rebecca K. Morrison	Arlington, VA Life Member
Sarah Gilmore de Ruiter	Norton Shores, MI
Nancy Gibbs Morrison Stott	Deale, MD

Deceased Members
Marietta S. Morrison York, SC Life Member (2026)
Emily Sleigh Morrison El Dorado Hills, CA Life Member (2026)

The Following Member Generously Donated to the Society
Donna McCool Cochranville, PA



CMSNA Executive Leadership

The Chief of Clan Morrison: R. Alasdair Morrison of Ruchdi

Chairman:	**Vice Chairman:**	**Treasurer:**
Michael S. Morrison	Vacant	(Michael S. Morrison, acting)
Membership:	**Secretary:**	**Historian:**
William Broome	Rachel Morrison	Edmund Potter, PhD
Chaplain:	**Newsletter Editor:**	**Scholarship Director:**
Vacant	James Morrison	Robert S. Morrison
Past Chieftain:	**Webmaster:**	
Anne M. Morrison	William Broome	

Past Chairmen: Anne Morrison, Chris Gillmore, Arthur Morrison, Edwin F. Holcombe Jr., Jim Morrison, Gerald B. Morrison, Jeffrey Moore, David H. Blain, David R. Gilmour

Members at Large: William Broome, Arthur Morrison, Buddy Morrison

Chairman's Advisory Committee: Edwin Holcombe Jr., Jim Morrison, Robert "Bob" Morrison, David R. Gilmour, Chris Gilmore, Jennifer Wolcott