



The Musket Report



Newsletter of the Wiregrass Chapter, Alabama Society, Sons of the American Revolution

ENTERPRISE, ALABAMA

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Compatriots Honored at March Chapter Meeting

Several recognitions of service were observed this past Chapter meeting. Compatriot and former Chapter President Malon Murphy was decorated with the long-overdue Chapter Meritorious Service Medal for his years of faithful service to the Wiregrass Chapter, especially with his support of several patriot grave markings which have occurred during his tenure.



Compatriot Malon Murphy



Compatriot John Cheney



Compatriot Bob Cooper



Compatriot Paul Olson

Compatriot John Cheney was presented his 35-year membership certificate. Compatriot Cheney has the distinction of being a **Charter Member** of the Wiregrass Chapter which was created on 19 December 1992. He currently serves as our Chapter Treasurer. Compatriots Vice President Bob Cooper and former Chapter President Paul Olson were presented their five-year membership certificates. Thank you all for your service!

Wiregrass Chapter Represented at ALSSAR Annual Convention



Last month, the Alabama Society of the Sons of the American Revolution held its Annual Meeting and Convention. During the event, the 2026–2027 slate of state officers was elected. Attendees also participated in informative sessions covering application preparation, the new Americanism tracking procedures, and the new SAR University. The convention recognized outstanding chapters and members with several awards presented by the State Society for distinguished service and achievement. A total of 57 members were in attendance, including four representatives from the Wiregrass Chapter. (Pictured here from left to right: Compatriots Parker, Dallas, Kitchens, and Mullins.)

Our very own Chapter President Phillip Kitchens earned the District Henry Knox Achievement Medal. This year, Vice President General Dr. John Fulwider of the Southern District SAR (AL, LA, MS & TN) wished to recognize those members who truly go above and beyond in perpetuating the mission of the SAR in their respective Chapters. VPG Fulwider referred to these men specifically as, ‘the movers and shakers’ in the SAR. President Kitchens has spearheaded multiple Revolutionary War historical projects simultaneously. Excellent job PK!



The Wiregrass Chapter wishes to extend its deepest condolences to our Treasurer John Cheney and his family on the loss of his mother Ann Cheney who served the ALSSAR as First Lady from 1988 to 1889.

Dates to Remember

Wednesday 8 April, 1100am- Join us in partnering with the City of Enterprise as we commemorate the 250th year of American Independence! AUSA Luncheon. Enterprise Civic Center.

Thursday 9 April, 6:30pm- *Moonlighters* (Big Band) 250th Celebration. Dothan Houston County Library. We will have our America 250/SAR Banner on display to honor the 53 Revolutionary War Veterans of the Wiregrass with a possible special appearance of one of our Wiregrass Minutemen for photo ops.

Thursday 16 April, 11:30am- Wiregrass Chapter April meeting. Enterprise Country Club 3000 Ozark Hwy, Enterprise, AL 36330

Saturday 18 April, 2:00pm- Captain William Brackin Marking. Kirkland - Brackin Cemetery Henry Co Rd 73 Newville, AL Directions on Google Maps: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/T74ZWbBBPDcRHLZC7> We still need about 2 more volunteers to arrive early and help with the tent and chairs setup.

Friday 24 April, 8:30pm- Wiregrass Honor Flight. Come out and honor our veterans as they return from our nation's Capital! Enterprise Community College. Several of our uniformed members will be on hand. Arrive around 7:30pm or after for entertainment.

On the Horizon

Saturday 16 May- ALSSAR Board of Managers meeting. Details for this event will be communicated shortly. Location: American Village 3727 Hwy 119, Montevallo, AL 35115

Saturday 4 July, 10:00am- 250th Commemoration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence! Join us in celebrating our Independence as the Wiregrass Chapter ALSSAR and the Three Notch Chapter ALDAR participate in the **4th of July Parade in Andalusia**. We will also have a hand in the public reading of the Declaration of Independence shortly after the parade. The line up for the parade will commence in the First Baptist Church of Andalusia parking lot at **9:00am**. All members are highly encouraged to participate!



Stay updated with events by visiting our Events Page on the website: <https://www.sarwiregrassal.org/events>



Registrar's Report

Compatriots Jason Dallas & Paul Mullins

Spring of 2026 is a busy season! So much so, Compatriot Paul Mullins volunteered to be on the genealogical team. A thousand thanks to you Paul!!! Here is the application status as of 01 April 26:

At National Headquarters:

1. Mr. Michael Semeniuk- Patriot Samson Powers, NH *(New Applicant)*
2. Mr. David Kirkland- Patriot Joseph Watford, NC *(New Applicant)*
3. Mr. Jason Dallas- Patriots Andries Van Wie, NY & Elias Naudain, DE
4. Dr. John Simmons Jr.- Patriot Hudson Blankenship, VA

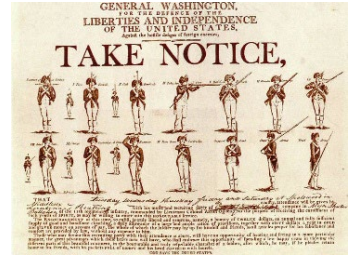
Actively Working:

1. Mr. Stuart Lawrence- Patriot John Brock, VA *(New Applicant)*
2. Mr. Brad Countryman- Patriot Peter Bellinger, NY *(New Applicant)*
3. Mr. James Crabtree- Patriot David Carter, NC
4. Dr. John Simmons Jr.- Patriots Henry Snelgrove, SC & Benjamin Clements Sr., VA

The Wiregrass Chapter Color Guard



In an effort to better honor our patriot ancestors and increase the visible presence of the SAR in the Wiregrass area, the Chapter is proud to announce the reactivation of our Color Guard, traditionally known as *The Wiregrass Minutemen*. This distinguished group will participate in local patriotic events where our Chapter has influence, helping to promote the mission and visibility of the Sons of the American Revolution. In addition, members will have opportunities to support statewide events. To ensure professionalism and uniformity, we will adhere to the current drill manual utilized by both the National SAR and ALSSAR Color Guards. While the purchase of a musket or rifle is not required, members are expected to obtain appropriate 18th-century attire. At present, we have four fully uniformed members, with another in the process of acquiring his kit. There are numerous reputable sources available for obtaining proper clothing and equipment. We strongly encourage all interested members to consider joining this exciting and meaningful initiative. For additional information, please contact Secretary Dallas or President Kitchens. HUZDAH!



Help bring history to life and honor the legacy of those who fought for American Independence!

From the President



President Phillip "PK" Kitchens

My fellow Compatriots,

This year is moving fast, and April is already upon us. As our Registrar Jason Dallas has informed us, we have several new members on the way and a couple of membership reinstatements so far this year. April will be a big month for our chapter with the City of Enterprise America 250 Proclamation on Wednesday, April 8th at 11:00am. We will have several Wiregrass Minutemen there for the proclamation. On Thursday, April 9th at the Dothan Houston County Library at 6:30pm the Moonlighters (Big Band) 250th Celebration. We will have our America 250/SAR Banner on display to honor the 53 Revolutionary War Veterans of the Wiregrass with a possible special appearance of one of our Wiregrass Minutemen for photo ops. Of course, our Wiregrass Chapter Meeting on April 16th at 11:30am at the Enterprise Country Club. Followed by the America 250/Wiregrass SAR Grave Marking Ceremony for Captain William Brackin on Saturday, April 18th at 2:00pm. ALSSAR President Ron Dains will be in attendance, all who can come please do, we believe that we will have a large attendance for this ceremony. It is truly an honor to be able to be a part of honoring Captain William Brackin and his descendants.

As we continue to celebrate Americas 250th we will have more and more opportunities to be visible and share our love for history to all who will listen. By the way, our Pomeroy Foundation Grant was approved. We will begin the process of having our Historical Marker forged and by Veterans Day of this year we will set it in the ground at the Ozark/Dale County Library Park. I will be meeting with the Library Board to confirm the park landscaping so we can begin this process. We will need physical and financial support to complete this task. I know that the Wiregrass SAR can make it happen.

HUZDAH!





HOW ARMIES WERE RECRUITED AND LED DURING THE REVOLUTION

Chapter Historian: Compatriot James Crabtree

Was it a War of Independence or was it a Revolution? Some will argue one way or another and a few people will say that it was a revolution that led to a War of Independence. However, I would argue that it was indeed a revolution, a revolution that began with Americans demanding the same rights as Englishmen but ended with the United States rejecting much of what was wrong with British institutions of the 18th Century.

The British Empire was sea-based. As a result, the Royal Navy was well-equipped with solid ships, proven ordnance, and a legendary reputation that was hard to beat. The British Army was composed primarily of regiments raised and recruited in the British Isles. Unlike the navy, the army was not “royal.” This is because the Royal Navy “belongs” to the king and the king alone in British tradition. The regiments which made up the British Army have a tradition going back to when nobles were responsible for providing troops for the king.

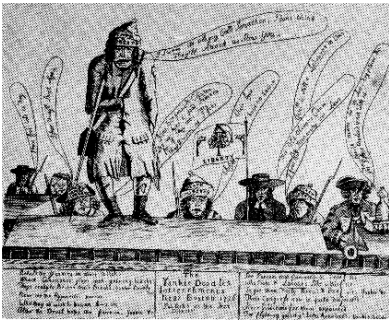
The British had regimental recruiting teams, scouring the countryside for recruits. Composed of a captain, a sergeant and a musician playing a fife and drummer they would march into a village and offer drink and food to all the eligible men there. After several hours of imbibing and talking at least some would take the King’s Shilling. More than a bounty, once enlisted during peacetime you were in the army for life, with the possibility of a pension after 25 years of service. In wartime, volunteers would be offered 3-year enlistments. The officers of the infantry and cavalry regiments bought their commissions. This was to insure that only men of good social standing could be officers.



In contrast, the United States was starting from scratch. Facing the greatest navy the world had seen up to that time, Congress was hard-pressed to establish even a small fleet to oppose the Royal Navy. Privateers were given letters of marque to raid British shipping and some shipmasters took advantage of this. When the Continental Navy was created it found itself competing with Privateers who could offer their crews a percentage of prizes taken. One advantage the Continental Navy had was that it could promise better conditions than the Royal Navy. Although some ships raised by state navies did have some success, they were never really able to take on British warships in set battles.

Originally, the land defense of American colonies depended on the old English model, which created the Trained Bands to supplement the regiments raised by nobles. In theory every able-bodied man would serve when called out, providing his own musket, powder and shot. At best, the company would be called out once a year for training and electing officers. In practice the militia day would result in a few volleys being fired and a drunken election for leadership positions... more often than not the man buying the most whiskey succeeding in becoming captain. Militia were not provided with uniforms and showed up in whatever clothes the militiamen felt like wearing. This was sufficient for fighting Indians or preventing small raids from one European nation or another but was not capable of long-term fighting. Organized militias began to be raised in North America prior to the Revolution by the British among volunteers, once again taking on the role of supplementing the regiments “raised by the nobles.”

Organized militia had a variety of uniforms. Many wore scarlet, the same as the British, but others wore a great number of color combinations. Raised at the local or state-level, many were personality-driven (such as Richardson’s Regiment in South Carolina) or organized on response to a specific threat, such as the Minutemen. While some of the militiamen in these units still had to provide their own weapons, many were at least outfitted in a partial uniform. These new militia units were still composed of unpaid volunteers and as such were available to harry the British as when they sortied out of Boston, though they had a tendency to drift off when it came to extended field operations.



There was one strength that the militia had over the British Army and that was its commitment to defending the constituency which raised it. The Philadelphia militia was defending its own town, the North Carolina militia defended its own state, the Charleston militia defended its own port, and so on. While this wasn't always enough, neighboring militias could be called out to "stiffen the line" standing up to the British. The British regiments, on the other hand, were fighting an offensive war far from home and their only connection back to their home counties were the streams of men sent to be replacements.

Finally, we come to the Continental Army, the direct ancestor of the United States Army. In 1775 General Washington began the slow process of creating a national army. Raised by the individual states as part of the Continental "line," it would not be until 1777 that the Continental units were all able to drill to the same standard but by 1778 Washington's army could hold their own on the battlefield against the British and German regiments. By 1779 all units fighting for the cause wore the same uniform... in theory. Soldiers enlisted for very limited terms of service. Several battles revolved around making contact with the enemy before American enlistments expired. Soldiers were paid, but states often "outbid" the Continental Army when it came to enlistment bounties. The Continental Congress was always notoriously short of cash and when Continentals were paid the paper money was only worth a fraction of its face value.

While the Continental army was short of non-commissioned officers (especially in the beginning) they did have commissioned officers from the states and later from commissions issued by Congress. Many of these were foreign officers and this did result in some ill-feeling amongst Americans who felt they were sidelined for charlatans. There was no purchasing of commissions in the Continental Army. Commissions were given to men who were experienced soldiers or otherwise had skills that the army needed. Many states raised their own regiments for their own defense. These were not militia but organized and trained units able to join the Continental Line in battle. The states recruited, clothed, and equipped these forces, providing more manpower to defend what would become the United States.

The American Revolution upended the old military order. Following the Declaration of Independence, political power no longer came from the Crown or from a Parliament consisting of many "rotten boroughs" and corrupt politicians, but from the People. The wartime division between militia, state forces and the Continental Army would later be mirrored in the Constitution as political power was divided between local, state and federal powers and responsibilities. But the most important revolutionary element of the Continental Army was its recognition that the army served at the *Will of the People* for the *Defense of the People*. American soldiers had to be promised relatively short terms of service, terms that the government could not ignore.

The soldiers of the British Army served in North America because they were paid or because many of the soldiers knew no other life. America had no money to raise huge armies and pay them what was owed to them. The Continental Congress lacked the authority to impress citizens into the ranks. Recruiting parties had to convince American men that their cause was worth fighting for.



The Sons of the American Revolution honors our Revolutionary War patriot ancestors by promoting patriotism, serving our communities and educating and inspiring future generations about the founding principles of our Country.