

# BATTLE LINES

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SARATOGA BATTLE CHAPTER, EMPIRE STATE SOCIETY, SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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*Saratoga Battle Chapter members (L-R) 1st Vice President Mike Skelly, President Michael Companion and Compatriot Peter Hormell; and Mary Skelly (far right)—members of the Recreated 2nd Continental Artillery Regiment—demonstrate Revolutionary War-era cannon use June 12 during the American Veterans Archaeological Recovery project at Saratoga Battlefield. Photo from American Veterans Archaeological Recovery on Facebook @opnightingaleusa.*

## Joel Munsell's Fate

By Eric Schnitzer

Following the British surrender at Saratoga on October 17, 1777, General Horatio Gates forced marched the Northern Army to Albany out of concern that the British were approaching the city from the south. After a march of 40 miles, most of the army's personnel staggered into Albany on the night of October

18, and on the following day, Gates deployed his forces in and around the city, ensuring its safety from the British Advance Squadron, which was then anchored off Claremont, located about 45 miles south. After a few days, news of the withdrawal of the small British fleet convinced Gates that the time was right to march the Northern Army south to

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## Cannon Roars for Veterans

By Edward Munger Jr.

Veterans of Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq stepped into the past at the Saratoga Battlefield during an archaeology project that featured a visit from the Recreated 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Artillery Regiment.

Several members of the Saratoga Battle Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution hold positions in the ranks of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental.

The organization of historic educators brings the 18<sup>th</sup> Century to life with historically accurate uniforms, weaponry and language.

On June 12, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental paid a visit to Saratoga Battlefield in Stillwater, where veterans undertook an archaeological

survey of the Barber Wheatfield, a location tied to the 1777 battles.

Veterans were taking part in a project put together by [American Battlefield Trust](#), American Veterans Archaeological Recovery and the [National Park Service](#) aimed at helping modern warfighters transition back into civilian life.

Their encounter with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental entailed lessons on loading and firing muskets and a cannon.

American Veterans Archaeological Recovery – a veteran-run nonprofit organization, posted videos of the action on its Facebook page. [[@opnightingaleusa](#)].

Participants got to fire the iron cannon named

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*Cadet Major Jonathan Whalen, left, received the Bronze JROTC Award at LaSalle Institute in Troy on May 22 from Saratoga Battle Chapter Genealogist Dennis F. Marr, a Graduate of the LaSalle Class of 1960.*

## Upcoming Events

- July 4, 10 a.m., [Annual Citizenship Ceremony](#), Saratoga National Historical Park.
- Aug. 4, 1 p.m., Schuylerville, NY [Turning Point Parade](#).
- Aug. 16, 7 p.m., Annual Battle of Bennington Commemoration, NYS Bennington Battlefield Historic Site, NYS Rt. 67, Walloomsac.
- September 15, 2 p.m., Annual Wreath-Laying, Saratoga National Tour Road (DAR Monument), followed by Chapter Meeting.
- October 17, 10 a.m. - Surrender Day Ceremony, Fort Hardy Park, Schuylerville, NY, followed by the Sword Surrender site dedication.

Visit our website for full details on upcoming events: <http://www.saratogabattle-sar.org>

## Rhodes Fund Announces Grants

Dennis F. Marr, Executive Director of the Lawrence I. & Blanche H. Rhodes Memorial Fund, Inc. has announced 2019 grants to organizations of interest to us:

- \$17,250 - Gen. Peter Gansevoort Chapter, DAR

- Van Schaick Mansion Project
- \$1,000 - Saratoga Battle Chapter, SAR
  - \$750 - Schuyler Society, N.S.C.A.R.

## Patriot Principles Recalled in Student Recognition

*By Edward Munger Jr.*

Each year, educational institutions recognize exceptional students with awards that honor the spirit and sacrifices of our American Patriot Ancestors.

Saratoga Battle Chapter members represented the Sons of the American Revolution in honoring the following students:

• **Battalion Cadet Commander Francis Hung Mang**, a Senior at Albany High School considering enlistment in the U.S. Army or U.S. Air Force, received the Carlton E. Covell Award with \$200.

The award is presented to a high school senior "... who during their school career has demonstrated an excellence in grade average in the subject of Social Studies / American History."

The award is co-sponsored by Saratoga Battle Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution and Col. George L. Willard-Camp #154- Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. -- Former Saratoga Battle Chapter President Compatriot George F. Malinoski.

• **Cadet Major Jonathan Whalen** received the Bronze JROTC Award at LaSalle

Institute in Troy on May 22 from Saratoga Battle Chapter Genealogist Dennis F. Marr, a Graduate of the LaSalle Class of 1960.

• **Cadet Gavin Jeffers** received the Sons of the American Revolution Bronze ROTC Medal during the 2109 JROTC Awards Night at Christian Brothers Academy in Colonie on May 2. The award is issued "in recognition of outstanding leadership qualities, military bearing and excellence, thus exemplifying the high ideals and principles which motivated and sustained our Patriot ancestors."

• **Cadet Alexandra Wagner, Midshipman Conner Whitlock and Cadet Nicholas Szczesniuk** received the Sons of the American Revolution Award during the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's 69th Annual Presidential Awards Ceremony for the Reserve Officers Training Corps. The award is "... given to cadets and midshipmen who display exceptional leadership qualities and military bearing as well as all around excellence in both academic and ROTC studies."





# Elisha Burrows

*Submitted By Compatriot Harold Rogers*

Elisha Burrows is the son of Amos Burrows and Elizabeth (Rathbone) Burrows. Amos and Elizabeth had 10 children from 1738 to 1760, Elisha being #8.

During the Revolutionary War, Elisha served in the same military unit with his older brother Paul. Records of the Daughters of the American Revolution indicate that Elisha was wounded in the Battle of White Plains in Oct. 1776. Elisha and his brother Nathan, after serving earlier enlistments, volunteered in the defense of Fort Griswold at Groton, Ct.

During the Revolutionary War, New London and Groton on the Thames River was the home port for many privately-owned armed ships that preyed upon British supply vessels and merchant ships. The Privateers were licensed by the State of Connecticut. (My Great-Great Grandfather [5 Greats] Devotion Eddy was a Privateer out of New London and Groton – we will read about this patriot ancestor in another installment of the newsletter!) Each year they increased in number and captured more British shipping.

New London's bulging warehouses brought great wealth to adventurous ship owners and merchants, but they were a potential target for British reprisals. Fort

great view of the river and the surrounding countryside.

In the summer of 1781 British generals were anxious to distract George Washington who was then marching South to Virginia. They decided to create a diversion by attacking an important northern supply center, New London, and with the same stroke, destroy the "Rebel pirate ships." The command of the expedition fell to Benedict Arnold who had deserted the American cause the year before and who, being a native of nearby Norwich, knew the Thames River well.

At sunrise on Sept. 6, 1781, the people of the town were awakened with the news that a large force of British regulars had landed on both sides of the river and were coming upon them fast. The 800 men led by Arnold into New London, on the West side of the river, met only scattered resistance as they set upon the task of destroying the City of New London. Buildings, wharfs, and ships were soon in flames.

143 buildings, nearly all in town, were consumed. Another force of 800 British landed on the Fort Griswold side of the river. The Fort had been garrisoned by 150 militia

Griswold on the East side of the river commanded a

and local men under the command of Colonel William Ledyard. The Colonel and his officers, expecting reinforcements momentarily, elected to defend the post against the superior British Force. Colonel Eyre, the British commander, sent forward a flag demanding surrender. The Americans refused. The demand was made again and the British threatened that if they were forced to storm the Fort, no quarter would be given to its defenders. The response was the same, the Americans said we will not surrender.

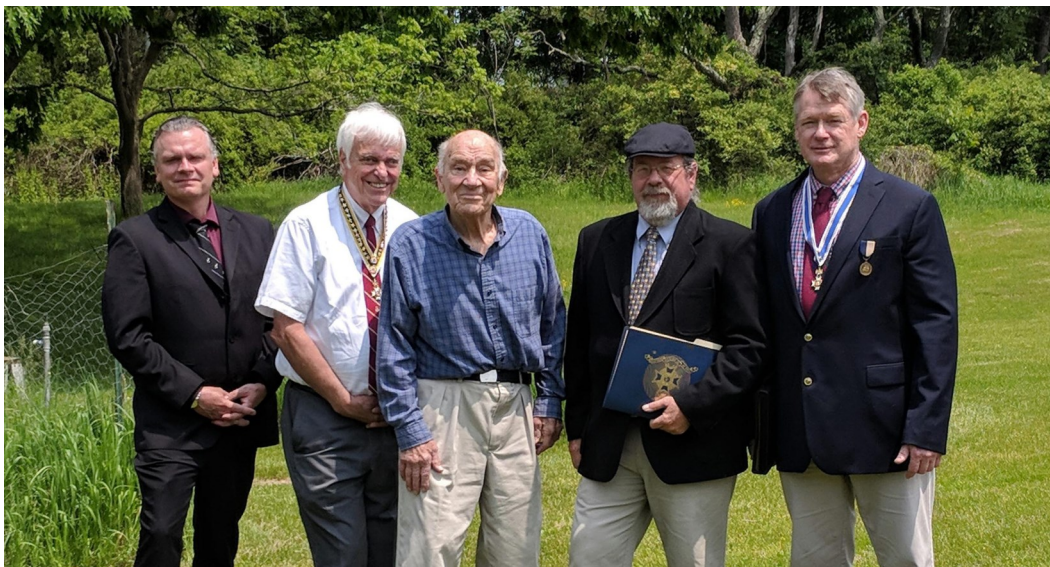
The British force immediately spread their ranks and advanced on Fort Griswold. The Americans fought bravely, the British Colonel Eyre was badly wounded, but with 800 British Regulars the garrison of 150 could not stop the British, and the Fort soon fell. Colonel Ledyard ordered his men to stop fighting. The Americans had killed 51 British and wounded another 142.

American and British accounts of the subsequent events are at odds. The American version holds that after Colonel Ledyard gave up the sword in surrender he was immediately killed with it and a massacre ensued. Before the "massacre" it is claimed that less than 10 Americans had been killed but when it was over, more than 80 of the garrison lay dead and mutilated and more than half of the remainder were severely wounded. The American wounded

were placed on a heavy artillery cart, which as it was being moved down hill, broke away and smashed into a tree causing terrible suffering. Prisoners who were able to walk were placed aboard the British ships. As evening approached, General Arnold and the rest of British, boarded those ships and left New London.

Elisha and his brother Nathan were both taken prisoner by the British and interned on a prison ship in New York harbor. History records their brother, Rev. Silas Burrows, had opened his home to town's people suffering from smallpox eventually including his two younger brothers who had been released from the horrible conditions in the enemy prison ships.

Elisha died Sept. 18, 1830 in the hamlet of East Hartford, in Washington County, New York.



*Congratulations to the Walloomsac Battle Chapter - SAR 2019 Chapter Officers: (L-R) Mike Skelly, Chapter Member; Duane Booth, Treasurer/Registrar; John Sheaff, Immediate Past President; Peter Hormell, President; Michael Companion, Vice President/Secretary. Photo by Mary Skelly.*

# Awards at ESS-SAR Meeting

By Duane Booth

The Saratoga Battle Chapter was well represented at this year's Empire State Society's Annual Meeting with nine members attending – President Michael Companion and Treasurer David Flint represented current officers and webmaster Dennis Booth also present. Past chapter presidents Duane Booth (2003-2005), Jonathan Goebel (2005-2007) and Primitivo Africa (2011-2013) and chapter members Joseph Fitzpatrick, Peter Hormell and Ford Oxaal were in attendance.

The meeting, held May 4<sup>th</sup> at the Holiday Inn in New Hartford, was well attended with over fifty members and guests enjoying a fun-filled day and a great lunch. As is usual, the Oriskany Battle Chapter did a wonderful job as our host – a hearty thank you to George & Kathy Gydesen and Treasurer Tom Foley.

C.A.R. State Society President Elizabeth Oxaal who is a member of the Schuyler Society, which we jointly sponsor, spoke of this year's theme and her project. C.A.R. Senior State President, Dr. Sara French was also present. It is hoped that Elizabeth will be at our September 15<sup>th</sup> chapter meeting.

Chapter members Dennis and Duane Booth were each awarded the Silver Roger Sherman award. Dennis received the award for his help with the society's online database and for redesigning and maintaining the society's website. Duane received the award for his many years of service to the state society. Duane was also surprised, and humbled, when ESS President James Eagan began reading a proclamation declaring May 4<sup>th</sup> 2019 to be Patriot "Duane Paul Booth Appreciation Day". To everyone's knowledge this was a *first of a kind* proclamation for us but it is certainly is a

fine example of how others could be recognized.

Also honored was Kathryn "Kitty" Fitzpatrick, wife of chapter member Joseph Fitzpatrick. Kitty received the Lydia Darragh award for service to a president during his term. Kitty has long supported her husband Joe as the first lady of the Schoharie-Leatherstocking Chapter and is always there taking pictures and helping SAR members

society day at an Army Football Game at West Point, likely this fall. Tickets would be available to all SAR members at a reduced rate and we'd be recognized.

We are proud of President Eagan's service to our state society and to the Rochester Chapter. Jim was presented with the past president's pin and certificate. Jim Eagan was also awarded the Patriot Medal for his service to the SAR. Congratulations



*Saratoga Battle Chapter Past-President Duane Booth, left, and Saratoga Battle Chapter member Dennis Booth, received the Silver Roger Sherman award May 4.*

any way she can. Well-deserved, Kitty. Congratulations and thank you!

Under old business the "State Fair" project which would have continued our presence there, largely done in the past by the Syracuse Chapter, was narrowly defeated. New business included a resolution allowing Janice Duncombe, wife of Trustee Raynor Duncombe, to represent our society on the National Society's Ladies Auxiliary. Plans are being made for a lineage

Jim and a big "thank you" to both you and Roberta.

Finally, congratulations to our newly-elected state society president, George Gydesen, to his wife Kathleen, also a hard worker for the SAR, and to the entire board of managers that will guide the state society for the next two years.



## Cannon Roars...

(Continued from page 1)

“Cricket,” owned by Saratoga Battle Chapter President Michael Companion – it would fire a 1.5-pound cannonball, according to 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Michael Skelly.

“This would have been a cannon common to the area during the Revolutionary War as a swivel gun mounted on boats and fortifications common at Lake George and Lake Champlain,” Skelly said in an email.

Skelly said he and others got the opportunity to “handle grape shot that they had just recovered from the Barber wheat field which had been fired from British cannons at our patriot ancestors during the battle of Saratoga.” [See photo on page 6]

Members of the Recreated 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Regiment who were on the scene included Saratoga Battle Chapter members Mike Skelly, 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant; Michael Companion, 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant; and Peter Hormell, Sergeant. Also present were the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental’s Mary Skelly, Corporal; and Tim Butler - Captain of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Artillery.



## Joel Munsell’s Fate ...

(Continued from page 1)

secure the valley in the wake of British devastation, as well as stage the transfer of most of his regiments to Washington’s army.

Militia, of course, would not constitute a part of this transference, and with the threat of further British incursion in the valley subsided, Gates released his many militia battalions at the end of the month while in Rhinebeck. Most men marched east to New England, including over 1,000 from Connecticut. Connecticut militia had fought in both battles of Saratoga—Connecticut’s militia were the only militia to fight in both battles—and had sustained heavy casualties, particularly in the Battle of Freeman’s Farm. Still, most survived the campaign unscathed and were able to return home to tell their families about the trials and triumphs of the expedition.

At least, most were. On January 6, 1778, Elisha Munsell, the father of Joel Munsell, who had served as a 23-year-old private in Colonel Cook’s Battalion of Connecticut Militia, wrote the following petition to the Connecticut General Assembly:

*...the Memorial of Elisha Munsell of E. Windsor of the County of Hartford humbly sheweth, that his son Joel Munsell of sd. E. Windsor was sometime in the month of August, according to the order of the*

*[governor]...ordered into the public service in the Northern department under the command of Capt. Zebulon Bedwell of E. Windsor, & that his sd. Son joined the Company under sd. Capt’s. Command & accompanied him to the head quarters of the Army then under the Command of General Gates, and never failed of doing his duty during the whole of that Campaign after he joined the army, & was acting and engaged in every battle fought then & continued with the army till, by the Blessing of God, they completed that most glorious conquest over the enemies of the United States, in health and After his dismissal he returned home so, to all appearance, but in about 2 days begun to complain, and in about a week after his return was broke out with the small pox, which he must have taken when he was on the public service or most probably on his return through Albany—of which unhappily he died in about 18 days, and your memorialist begs leave to observe that it was not only a very great exercise to him... but they were put to great [expense] (for nurses) Doctering and suitable accommodation for his son while he lived, and said son but lately come of age & has left nothing but his wages to defray the expenses; & that your Memorialist is not a rich man, and poorly able to support his family in health, & noways able to pay what he was by the bowels of a father and the bonds of humanity obliged to engage for his*

*son in his wretched and suffering condition, and your memorialist most humbly prays that your honor would take his case into your wise & compassionate consideration, & since all this has come upon him by his sons being in the public service, you would grant him relief as far in your great wisdom & goodness you shall judge just and reasonable, & your Memorialist as in duty bound will ever pray—Ell.*

According to the inscription on Joel’s headstone, located in Scantic Cemetery, East Windsor, Connecticut:

*In Memory of Mr. Joel Son of Mr. Elisha And Mrs. Kezia Munsell who Died of ye Small Pox Nov. ye 23<sup>rd</sup> AD 1777 In ye 23<sup>rd</sup> year of his age*

Unfortunately, there is no evidence to demonstrate that Elisha’s petition was brought to the floor of the assembly, or that he was otherwise able to secure reimbursement. Joel’s tragic death is a sobering reminder that many who died in the American War for Independence—most, in fact—died from infections or diseases received while in the service, not in battle. One only needs to do a web search for “smallpox” to see the horrifying, painful condition that Joel, a hero and survivor of both Battles of Saratoga, endured during the final weeks of his young life.





Members of the Recreated 2nd Continental Artillery Regiment inspect Revolutionary War artifacts discovered by veterans on the Barber's Wheatfield, a site tied to the 1777 Battles of Saratoga. Photo from the 2nd Continental Facebook Page.



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