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®

BATTLE LINES

NEWSLETTER OF THE SARATOGA BATTLE CHAPTER, SAR

Dennis F.M. Marr, Editor 3 Ravens Court, Troy, NY 12180

Dfmarr@aol.com

518-283-2908

SPRING 2009

IN OUR MEMORY

George H. Ballard, Sr.

We were deeply saddened at the death of our immediate Past President, Compatriot George H. Ballard, Sr. who passed away on 17 March 2009 after a long illness. George had to resign his post for health reasons last year.



George Ballard (l.) and Duane Booth

A number of chapter members attended George's memorial service on 19 March and performed the SAR ritual for a deceased compatriot. This service included the recitation of George's 10 Revolutionary War Patriots and their service.

George was a kind, gentle man, and a gentleman, who was loved by all who knew him. He was born 9 Januray 1941 in Mt. Kisco, NY and was retired from the NYS Dept. of Transportation as a Heavy Equipment Operator. He leaves to mourn him his lovely wife Nancy and his sons George H., Jr. and Steven, as well as four brothers, a sister, five grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

Richard E. (Dick) Beresford

Many of us knew Dick as a Ranger at the Saratoga Battlefield, and he was a staunch friend of Saratoga Battle Chapter. Dick died of multiple medical complications on 29 April 2009. Dick had no siblings or descendants and willed his body to Albany Medical College as an anatomical gift. He was a true Renaissance man, and one of good will, and we will miss him.

SCHUYLER SOCIETY C.A.R. CONTINUES TO SHINE

At the recent C.A.R. National Convention in Crystal City, VA, the Schuyler Society C.A.R. once again received numerous outstanding recognitions.

Preeminent among the awards received was the Gold National Merit Award, and recognition as the 2nd Most Outstanding Society in the Nation for 2008-2009! Folks, this is huge, and it stands as a tribute to the children and their Senior mentors for consistent hard work, year in and year out.

The Bemis Heights Society was also recognized with the Gold National Merit Award.

Your chapter is a proud co-sponsor of both of these Societies, and we offer them our congratulations on a job well done!

The Schuyler Society also received nine additional National Awards for 2008-2009:

1. Local Society With the Best Program on the Second Virginia Convention.
2. Local Society With the Best Program on Patrick Henry.
3. Local Society With the Most National Promoters Confirmed.
4. American Heritage: Local Society With Best Program.
5. Local Society Receiving Credit for Most Archival Spoons.
6. Local Society With the Best Program on the National Endowment Program.
7. Magazine Fund Contest: Local Society With the Best Program.
8. Local Society Receiving Credit for the Most Magazine Fund Pins.
9. Patriotic Education Contest: Local Society With the Best Program.

Saratoga Battle was recently named a State Patriot by the NYS Society C.A.R. in recognition of its support of the Schuyler and Bemis Heights Societies. Last year, Chapter Genealogist Dennis F.M. Marr was named a National Promoter by the Schuyler Society for the support that he arranged via the Lawrence I. & Blanche H. Rhodes Memorial Fund, Inc., of which he is Executive Director.

Congratulations, again, to both outstanding Societies!

R.O.T.C./J.R.O.T.C. AWARDS PRESENTED

The chapter continues its long support of the R.O.T.C. programs at both the secondary school and college levels.

Silver NSSAR R.O.T.C. awards were presented to the three combined service programs at Siena College/Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

The NSSAR J.R.O.T.C. medal was presented at Christian Brothers Academy in Albany on 30 April. This school has had a US Army ROTC program since 1892. The award is presented as part of Military Honors Night at the School.

The NSSAR J.R.O.T.C. medal will also be presented at LaSalle Institute in Troy on 3 June. This school also has a long history of US Army ROTC affiliation and is consistently graded an Honor School of Distinction by the US Dept. of Defense in their triennial inspection. The award is presented as part of the Officers' Commissioning Ceremony for the coming school year.

TIPS ON USING ANCESTRY.COM

Dennis F.M. Marr, Genealogist

Ancestry.com is the largest subscription genealogy site on the Internet. Many users fall into the habit of doing a more or less "generic" search for information, when it is possible to dig much deeper into their 28,000+ databases. You may not have known that when you enter names and locations under their "Search" tab that your results are not from a scan of all databases; these results are only from a search of the most common Ancestry databases: censuses, military, immigration, directories/member lists and birth, marriage and death records. To be sure, this is a tremendous amount of information.

However, if you fail to get what you are looking for with this initial search, you can go the equivalent of a library card catalog and hand-pick databases that look the most promising. To do this, click first on the "Search" tab from the home page. To the right will be a box entitled "Browse Records." The databases that you see listed here are among those scanned in the initial, general search. Go all the way to the bottom of this box and click on "list all databases." This brings you to the first page of the 28,481 databases (as of 17 May 2009). At the bottom of this first page is a search box where you can refine your search terms. You can then type in a database title. If you get no hits, it's probably because the actual database title is slightly different. In this case use the second box entitled "keyword(s);" I have personally have had tremendous luck using this feature, and you do not then have to know the exact title of a particular database.

Doing this keyword search should turn up one or more databases that are relevant to your search.

If you are looking for, say, records from Albany, NY, you could also go to the alphabetical database listing. This can

be a bit cumbersome, as you need to continuously "drill down" to get to where you want to go. In this example, you would click first on "A," then "Al" and finally "Alba." There will be databases, in alphabetical order, beginning with "Alba" and you can easily scroll down to the ones containing "Albany." To use this feature, go to:

<http://www.ancestry.com/search/rectype/alldblist.aspx>

Ancestry.com is not cheap, especially since they abandoned a-la-carte pricing in favor of two large "bundles," US records and World records.

You may find that using this search technique will help you to get more out of your Ancestry subscription. Remember, too, that data is continuously being added, so it can pay to repeat searches that in the past might not have paid off.

FamilySearch.org EXPANDING

The Latter Day Saints (LDS) website FamilySearch.org is in the process of adding tremendous amounts of new data to their site. Much material previously available only on microfilm is being digitized and put online. They have set up a pilot site where you can experiment with this new material and see what's being added periodically. Go to:

<http://pilot.familysearch.org/recordsearch/start.html#start>

Eventually, this new information will be incorporated into their main website:

<http://www.familysearch.org/eng/default.asp>

FamilySearch also has a detailed "card catalog." Using this feature, you can search on place, keyword, title, etc. to find record groups that may be of help to you. You can then have relevant microfilm sent to a local Family History Center for your use. Find the catalog at:

http://www.familysearch.org/eng/Library/FHLC/frameset_fhlc.asp

INTERNET ARCHIVE

Formerly known as the "Wayback Machine," this site can take you back to what a particular web page looked like at a specific date in the past. This is very helpful when you know where you once found information but it is no longer there. Start at:

<http://www.archive.org/index.php>

Using this archive, check out what Ancestry.com looked like on October 28, 1996:

<http://web.archive.org/web/19961028055925/http://www.ancestry.com/>