



# SAR Alabama



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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Compatriots,

It has been a very busy but fun summer. On May 31, First Lady Kay and I participated in the Morgan County Bicentennial Celebration by portraying Revolutionary General Daniel Morgan, for whom Morgan County is named, and Mrs. Morgan.

On June 8, I attended the Montgomery Area DAR Luncheon where I delivered greetings on behalf of the Alabama Society SAR. In the latter part of June I had to undergo a heart catheterization due to changes in my stress test. Fortunately, the changes were minor and no stents or other surgery was required and I was given the all clear by the doctors.

On July 6, I commanded the Color Guard at the memorial service for our recently departed compatriot, friend and past state president Hal Thornton. It was a fitting ceremony with many out-of-state dignitaries and guests including past President General Steve Leishman and current President General Larry Guzy. Later that day, after the memorial service, we held a Minuteman ceremony where our own Dr. David Billings was installed as a Minuteman in the class of 2018.

It was then on to the National Congress in Houston on July 13-18 for First Lady Kay and I. Congress is always a chance to meet old

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## Dr. Dave Billings latest ALSSAR member inducted as Minuteman



—Photo by George Royer

Past ALSSAR president David Billings, center, receives award in July ceremony in Huntsville.

ALSSAR compatriot Clarence David Billings Jr. became the 13th compatriot from Alabama to receive the prestigious Minuteman Award and the fourth this decade when he was honored in a special ceremony on July 6.

Normally, Billings would have received his award at the annual Congress but he was unable to attend that meeting in Houston because of medical issues.

Instead, NSSAR President General Larry Guzy made a special trip to Huntsville to present the award in person at an event attended by numerous Alabama Society compatriots, along with NSSAR Secretary General Warren Alter and Registrar General Bruce Pickette.

Billings was one of six people selected to receive the highest award presented to compatriots who have made distinguished and exceptional contributions of service to the National Society. The other five were presented awards at Congress: Martin Boyer of the France Society, Douglas T. Collins of the Kentucky Society, Edward P.

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## ALSSAR well represented at Congress

The 128<sup>th</sup> Congress was held at Houston's Westin Memorial City Hotel on July 14-18, with several Alabama delegates among the 271 compatriots and guests that attended the event.

Among the business conducted at the annual event:

- A new logo was approved and was referred to the Chancellor General to obtain appropriate copyright or trademarks.
- A motion to amend Article III of NSSAR Constitution to include adoptees was defeated.

• A motion to restrict membership on the Board of Trustees to one member from each of the state societies which would exclude former President Generals, General Officers, and Executive Committee Officers was defeated.

• A vote of the delegates ruled that President General Larry Guzy had not met the requirements for nomination from the floor. A motion to allow a second nomination from the

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## Message

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friends and make new ones. At this Congress Colin Wakefield of Tennessee was installed as the new Southern District Vice President General. Compatriot Wakefield is a dual member with Alabama and the Tennessee Valley chapter. We also had a chance to congratulate our new President General Warren Alter and his First Lady Nancy.

August started off busy as on Aug. 3, I was invited to give four presentations to the Morgan County School System Learning Conference where I was able to impart some history to, of all people, history teachers as well as other teachers. Some 450 teachers took part in the learning conference.

On Aug. 4, it was off to Tennessee to attend the Joseph Greer Chapter summer picnic. It's always fun to visit our compatriots in Tennessee. On Aug. 19, I presented "The Battle of Blackstock's Plantation – Tarleton's First Taste of Defeat" to a meeting of the Cahaba-Coosa chapter. I finished up August with a visit to the Tennessee Valley chapter summer social.

On Sept. 9, I attended a meeting with the Shoals Area chapter where I brought them up to date on the happenings from Congress. On Sept. 12, First Lady Kay and I visited the Cheaha chapter where I presented the "The Battle of Blackstock's Plantation – Tarleton's First Taste of Defeat." The next day, Kay and I had an opportunity to visit the Tri-State chapter. It was fun to visit both chapters who showered us with kindness and hospitality.

On Sept. 15, I brought greetings during the Huntsville DAR Ringing of the Bells for Constitution Week. On Sept. 17, I participated in the Athens DAR Ringing of the Bells ceremony at Athens State University. On Sept. 18, Kay and I gave a presentation at the Foster Academy school on the Revolutionary War in the persona of our ancestors. On Sept. 20, Kay and I attended the SAR/DAR luncheon with the Wiregrass chapter in Enterprise where I brought greetings and I had the pleasure to induct a new compatriot.

Then, on Sept. 26, I presented "The Forgotten Presidents" to the Decatur Rotary Club. To round out September, Kay and I attended Fall Leadership in Louisville.

There are exciting things happening in our society. The fall Board of Managers was held on Oct. 6 with all chapters but one represented. It has been many years since that kind of representation was present. OUTSTANDING! During the BOM, the society approved a project for the American Village. We will be donating and installing three large flag poles to be installed on top of the hill past the Concord Bridge along with three bronze plaques.

At that location in December, American Village will be installing a large statue of George Washington kneeling. Our flagpoles will be an integral part of the display and will be able to be seen from the village and Concord Bridge. Thousands of visitors and children will see this display each year. Stand by for more word on this project.

Our convention is scheduled for Feb. 22-23, 2019 in Hoover at the Embassy Suites. Make plans to attend and there are many new activities scheduled. Our guest speaker at the banquet on Saturday night will be our National Secretary General Jack Manning. You can read Jack's history blog every day on our web site.

—Bob Anderson

## ALSSAR partners with American Village Trust

The Alabama Society held its fall Board of Managers meeting at the American Village in Montevallo on Oct. 6, with 15 of the state's 16 chapters attending the event.

The most important topic of the meeting was a proposal, which was approved, to establish Alabama SAR as a prominent participant in carrying forth the mission of the American Village Citizen Trust.

As the American Village is the premier site in Alabama for educating our youth about the American Revolution with an average 30,000 children having visited the site each year and as the Alabama Society has endeavored to become a major part of the American Village, this is a major achievement.

Look from the main campus of the American Village, across the Concord Bridge to the statue entitled the "Embattled Farmer," and up the crest of the hill, you will see the Alabama SAR contribution to the children of Alabama. Our proposal includes a series of three flagpoles to be erected. There will be a Betsy Ross, George Washington's Headquarters, and Alabama flag.

The American Village is preparing to have a statue of a kneeling Gen. George Washington placed with the flags in December.

There are plans for a dedication plaque from the Alabama Society and two quotation/memorial plaques (one on each flagpole base). The plan is to have the dedication on George Washington's birthday (Feb. 22 2019) in a ceremony at the American Village.

The ladies auxiliary of the Alabama Society made the first contribution to this project in the amount of \$1,000.

The 2019 Alabama Society convention will be held at the Embassy Suites in Hoover on February 22-23. The banquet is being streamlined. We will have a youth awards luncheon where we will announce the various winners and all students will be encouraged to attend and be recognized for their outstanding work.

The 2019 financial forecast was approved. The Alabama Society also endorsed candidates for the National Society.

With nearly all of the chapters attending the event — only the Etowah chapter failed to send a representative — the forum offered an opportunity for chapter presidents to discuss new ideas and projects they are pursuing with representatives of other chapters in the state.

Many of the new ideas should help other chapters with their recruiting efforts. The reports for the chapters are in the Board of Manager's book which is on the ALSSAR Web site for your review.

—Fred Olive

## Billings

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Rigel Sr. and Robert A. Sapp, both of the Georgia Society, and John D. Sinks of the District of Columbia Society.

Billings, a member of the Tennessee Valley chapter, was escorted by President General Stephen A. Leishman (Minuteman Class of 2008), passing through the Alabama Society Color Guard formed in his honor.

In the normal ceremony at Congress, a Minuteman who previously received the honor escorts each of the honorees.

Alabama Society president Bob Anderson participated in the ceremony by reading the citation.

The following is his citation for receiving the Minuteman Award: "Compatriot Billings has served the National Society as a member of the Executive Committee. He has served as a National Trustee and Alternate Trustee for the Alabama Society.

Billings has served on the following committees: the Investment Committee for nine years serving five as chairman; the Strategic Planning Committee for six years, serving two as vice-chairman and three as chairman; the SAR and SAR Foundation Organizational Structure Committee; the Finance Committee for two years, serving as vice-chairman for those two years; the SAR Implementation Committee for three years; the Risk Management, Naming Rights and Donation Compliance Committees for one year each.

Billings has sponsored 23 new members and organized the creation of a chapter in the Alabama SAR.

He completed an in-depth Financial Analysis of the SAR Museum plan and also did a complete study of the SAR and SAR Foundation



—Photos by George Royer

***Past Minutemen on hand for the July ceremony include, from left: Mike Wells, Warren Alter, Bruce Pickette, Larry Guzy, Billings and Steve Leishman.***

organizational structure.

Billings has attended nine Congresses and fourteen National Leadership Meetings. He is a George Washington Fellow and a contributor to the SAR Center for Advancing America's Heritage."

Since its establishment in 1951, a total of 407 compatriots have been honored with the Minuteman Award, including 13 from the Alabama Society.

Previous winners of the Minuteman Award from the Alabama Society include Robert H. Smith (1953), William T. Carpenter (1955), Robert P. Gordon (1959), Ryall S. Morgan (1968), John L. McConnell (1984), Horace R. Jordan (1995), O. Lee Swart (2001), P. Rod Hildreth (2003), John R. Wallace (2008), Larry P. Cornwell (2012), Michael C. Wells (2013), and C. Bruce Pickette (2017).



***Dr. Dave Billings, right, is escorted through the Color Guard by 2008 Minuteman honoree Steve Lesihman.***

# *In Memory...*

## Robert Kenneth Hayes

The Gen. Richard Montgomery chapter lost a former chapter officer when Col. (Ret.) Ken Hayes passed away at the age of 88 on Aug. 1.

**ROBERT KENNETH HAYES** was born on Aug. 27, 11929 in Bristol, Tenn. When he was 5, he moved with his family to Salisbury, Md., but Montgomery had been his home ever since he arrived for duty at Maxwell Air Force Base in 1975.

He attended the University of Maryland and was a graduate of Arizona State University and the Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell.

His service in the Air Force spanned nearly 28 years, including Korean War air combat duty as an F-86 Sabre Jet Fighter

pilot and duties in Vietnam, Taiwan, Alaska and Iran.

After leaving the Air Force, he served as a vice president at SouthTrust Bank in Montgomery and worshipped at First Baptist Church in downtown Montgomery.

He was predeceased by his wife of 61 years, Elizabeth Satham Pegues. Survivors include his brother, Col. William Haskell, and children Elizabeth Leigh Wiatt, Robert Kenneth Hayes Jr., and Anne Pegues Gass, along with grandchildren James Streeter Wiatt III, Elizabeth Owen Wiatt, Emily Alston Wiatt, Elizabeth Anne Gass Lytle and William Daniel Gass and great grandchildren Charlotte Camellia Wiatt and James Streeter Wiatt IV.

Services were held on Aug. 4 at Leak Memory Chapel.



—Photo by Diane Seales

### *Southern District breakfast*

*The suave and debonair group of Southern compatriots attending the Southern District breakfast at the 2018 Congress in Houston includes, standing from left: Edmon McKinney of the Gen. Galvez chapter, Michael Schenk of Mississippi, Henry Grace of Louisiana, Bobby Joe Seales of the Cahaba-Coosa chapter, Bill Stone of the Gen. John Archer Elmore chapter and Mark Norris of Tennessee. Seated is outgoing Southern District Vice President General Tony Vets of Louisiana and incoming Vice President General Colin Wakefield of Tennessee. The NSSAR Southern District is comprised of Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana.*

## Congress

*(Continued from Page 1)*

floor for President General Guzy was defeated. Secretary General Warren Alter, Arizona Society, was elected as President General for 2018 – 2019. Alabama SAR compatriot Bruce Pickette was elected to another term as Registrar General.

- A proposed change to the Constitution to define two additional classes of membership was referred back to the Bylaws committee for further work.

- The word “residence” was removed as a requirement when listing the Patriot Ancestor.

- A new section was added to the Membership bylaw that described a National Life Membership.

- The fee and dues for a Memorial application were made the same as a Regular application (i.e., a total of \$115).

- A paragraph was added to Bylaw No. 22 which noted that “any new Junior Member application submitted to the National Society in which the new Junior Member will attain the age of 18 prior to December 31st of the year in which the application is registered shall submit National Dues in an amount equal to the Regular Member dues as set by the Annual Congress in recognition of the change in membership status that will occur for this new Junior Member as of December 31st.”

- A new section was added to the Fees and Dues bylaw that defined a National Life Membership.

- It was agreed that the Spanish flag will be posted in the National meetings; the order of precedence is U.S., France, Spain.

- Americanism Committee: Poster Contest students are allowed to use either a standard piece of 22” X 30” poster board or a 20” X 30” foam core. Both are off the shelf and will prevent disqualification like last year when we lost over 60 posters.

- History Teacher Committee: Past PG Tom Lawrence announced a change to the History Teacher Award. Instead of one award there will be 3 each. One for each level, Element-

tary, Middle and High School. Each will receive an all expense trip to the seminar of their choice plus material for their classes. Each award will be worth \$5000 each.

The Alabama Society was recognized for several awards during “Recognition Awards Night” at the event:

- Alabama was one of 21 societies receiving a CAR Activity Award and Streamer, presented to those groups that have documented work with the Children of the American Revolution over the past year.

- Alabama was one of 19 societies recognized for its participation in the Americanism Poster Contest.

- Alabama was one of 18 societies honored for its participation in the Sgt. Moses Adams Memorial Middle School Brochure Contest.

- Alabama was one of 30 societies that received a participation streamer for the ROTC/JROTC contest. Utah won the John C. Haughton Award as the winner.

- Alabama was one of 28 societies that received a participation streamer for the George S. and Stella M. Knight Award. The entry from the Texas Society won the annual essay contest.

- Alabama was one of 45 societies that received a participation streamer for the Marian L. Brown Eagle Scout Award. The entry from the Missouri Society was the winner.

- The Birmingham chapter was the runner up in the Carl F. Bessent Award, which includes a cash award for the best single-sheet production of a chapter newsletter.

- The Alabama Society won the Genealogist General’s Award, which is presented annually to the three state societies with the lowest percentages of pending applications for the year.

- Alabama was one of 25 societies receiving an Officers’ Streamer Award in recognition of the president and national trustees’ attendance at both the preceding trustees meeting and preceding Congress.



—Photo by Diane Seales

### ***Southern District award***

***NSSAR Southern District treasurer Bobby Joe Seales, left, receives the district silver Roger Sherman Medal from Southern District Vice-President General Tony Vets at the annual Southern District breakfast during the 128th Congress in Houston. Seales will serve as the Southern District secretary in 2018-19.***

## Wiregrass chapter hosts 18th Constitution Week luncheon

The Wiregrass chapter of the Sons of American Revolution and the John Coffee chapter of the Daughters of American Revolution joined forces on Sept. 20 for the 18th annual SAR-DAR Constitutional Week luncheon in Enterprise to celebrate the signing of the U.S. Constitution.

More than 80 people attended the event, representing various SAR and DAR chapters throughout the Wiregrass area and the Florida Panhandle.

This is also the chapter event where the ALSSAR state president is invited and provided the opportunity to bring greetings while meeting SAR and DAR members from the southeast corner of the state and ALSSAR president Bob Anderson and his first lady Kay attended the event.

While at the meeting, Anderson installed Dr. Gary Daniel as the newest member of the Wiregrass chapter. Dr. Daniel is a professor at Troy University and has already collected the necessary documents for his first supplemental!

The guest speaker for the day was H. Sonny Reagan, an Enterprise attorney who will be taking a position on the 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court bench in January.

He discussed his philosophy on how the constitution would guide him in decisions. Reagan will be replacing Judge Tom Head who was the speaker at the chapter's first SAR/DAR luncheon.

This luncheon is not only designed to celebrate the constitution but also recognize first responders and individuals who have made a positive impact on the area.

The John Coffee chapter recognized Mr. and Mrs. Johnson for their work with the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) along with the Elba Director of Recreational Services, Greg Hanchey, for his work in the creation of a splash pad for children in Elba following the permanent closure of the



—Photo courtesy of John Wallace

***The Wiregrass chapter presented an SAR Heroism Award to Sgt. Jace Holley, left, as his wife Sarah, father Dwight and Coffee County Sheriff Dave Sutton look on at the Constitution Week luncheon on Sept. 20.***

municipal pool.

The Wiregrass chapter presented Life Saving Medals to city police officers Kenneth Shiver, Michael Darbro and Mark Anderson, who were involved in getting an elderly gentleman, along with his dog, out of a sinking car in one of the ponds at the city park.

The officers were also instrumental in coordinating backup Fire and Rescue Services while aiding the gentleman once he was brought to shore by Shiver.

A SAR Heroism Award was presented to Coffee County Sergeant Jace Holley who was a first responder to a two-car vehicle accident which claimed the life of two adults and one child on Highway

167 between Troy and Enterprise.

After discovering that one of the vehicles on fire contained three other children, Sgt. Holley broke out the back window and was able to rescue all three children before the car was totally engulfed in flames.

The ladies of the local John Coffee chapter are to be commended on their outstanding decorations and efforts in setting up for the luncheon. They always do a superb job when called upon to assist.

The event ended with the raffling off of more than 25 door prizes – one of the highlights at each year's luncheon.

—John Wallace

## Volunteers needed to upload Patriot biographies

During the September Leadership meeting, Jim Wood, chairman of the Patriot Records committee, asked for volunteers to assist in uploading Patriot biographies into the Patriot records.

The Patriot Records Committee has initiated a project to update the database of Patriots to include grave locations and biographies of the patriots and now the lineages from the member to connect to the patriot. The biography and grave information can be used to direct others toward connection to their own patriot. The lineage input is a project that requires keying in data from approved applications.

Please review the web site for Patriot Records and observe the different portions of the revised Patriot Records on the SAR Web site at <http://sarpatriots.sar.org/>

- Search your own (Member Search) information and see if

you have included all of the data you have for your patriot.

- If you are interested in volunteering to help the Patriot Records committee in this project, ask your state society's contact, who would need your assistance in keying in lineages of members in your state's society.

- Initially, I would ask you to load the lineages of your own patriot(s). Subsequently, I would feed you Record Copies of other compatriots from your Society.

- The end goal is to have projects going in all societies. Eventually, you would need to determine a way to garner Record Copies from your own society and build a team of volunteers to upload those lineages.

For more information on how to get started, e-mail Wood at [jwood7@carolina.rr.com](mailto:jwood7@carolina.rr.com)

## A few pointers on the SAR's Patriot Research System

### Patriot Research System (PRS)

<https://sarpatriots.sar.org>

The PRS was exhumed from the Patriot Index System and placed on a safe, stable and independent web location in November 2017.

The PRS consists of three categories: the original Patriot Grave Registry, the addition of the Patriot Biographies and currently the update of the Patriot Lineages.

None of the categories is complete; all require continual update.

Cells for updating of the PRS were initially located in Louisiana, Arkansas, Virginia and New York. New cells were started in North Carolina and California. Subsequent cells have begun in Illinois and Georgia with potential new cells in Florida, South Carolina and Tennessee.

At this point, the North Carolina Society is more than 55 percent complete which represents about 95 percent of the active membership; the next steps are to update the lineages on the deceased membership and then the dropped membership.

The data for time required to update the lineage data has been forwarded to the Genealogical Research Committee to determine the time necessary to update

the entire SAR database. Preliminary data suggests it takes about 30 minutes to input a lineage and about 15 minutes to review the input plus update the Patriot Record and Grave information.

Success in updating the PRS has been a result of state society and local chapter pride; volunteers were requested to update the lineages for their chapter; the state society volunteer was requested to review the lineage input as well as update the patriot record, grave registry and biography, if available, using application information, DAR collaboration and Find-a-Grave locations to update the Patriot Records.

Patriot Biographies updates continue but need to be reemphasized to ensure they receive as much effort as the patriot lineages and grave registry.

As noted above, compare the situation with the PRS to the pre-PRS era when projects were effectively "dead." (e.g., one year ago, these projects were effectively nonexistent and look at us now).

We've unified the data for patriots with the PRS (info on the patriot, patriot graves, patriot bios, lineages, member associations to patriots, etc.) are now all in one place.

We get regular updates from National's DB, which is a huge win and keeps our

data current for brand new members and keeps them engaged.

Over the last six months, we've closed a significant gap in record copy availability from National. We used to be two years behind, and now we're in the four-to-five-month range.

We do need to see about getting National to more regularly commit to scanning and posting them. Perhaps a regularly defined schedule where every three to six months, they post new ones or some such?

From a usage perspective, we're approaching 650,000 page views since the PRS went live, and while utilization is good, I think the real focus needs to stay on the "data improvements."

We are providing a state-by-state metric now, so we can show how close/far each state is towards being current and this can be used to encourage new states to join the effort to improve their records as well.

—Gary O. Green

*Editor's Note: From an ALSSAR perspective, there are 3,394 applications entered and 2,411 patriots linked, but only 288 lineages entered. The number of lineages entered ranks 13th nationally but that is only 8.5 percent complete. Only 17 societies have a lower percentage.*

## Black Warrior River presents award to local educator

The Black Warrior River chapter presented Central High principal Clarence Sutton with the SAR's Silver Good Citizenship Award in a July ceremony at the school.

Dr. Sutton, an educator in the Tuscaloosa area for the past 24 years, is a visionary leader in the field and pushes both teachers and students to excel. During Dr. Sutton's tenure at Southview Middle School, he opened a new facility, implemented technology in every classroom and was noted for taking the school out of school improvement status.

At Central, he has implemented his vision with the philosophy of the old Central High School, "Continuing a Tradition of Excellence." Dr. Sutton pushes every student and teacher to apply themselves and do their very best each day in order to improve student achievement.

He has strategically made partnerships with local post-secondary institutions such as Stillman College, Shelton State Community College, University of Alabama and the University of West Alabama. He has also partnered with local business and community leaders. These partnerships have allowed Central High School to expand its academic, leadership, and athletic opportunities.

Tangible examples of this vision are the grade level academies (Freshmen, College Prep, and Graduation), JumpStart Freshmen Summer Orientation, Central Scholars Dual Enrollment Program, Blended Learning/Project Based Learning, and



—Photo courtesy of David Jones

### **Chapter president David Jones, left, presents award to Clarence Sutton.**

most recently, the "Ready to Work" work force readiness program. With these programs, Central High School is able to offer their students wonderful opportunities for rigorous learning, college and career ready skills, and networking skills through a variety of avenues.

Not only does Dr. Sutton lead the way for student achievement, he also grooms the faculty in leadership roles, building and fostering their growth. He welcomes

interns from the University of Alabama, University of West Alabama, Alabama State University and Samford University. This mentoring program offers him an opportunity to "showcase" his vision for education and what takes place at Central High School. Those mentored from this program have gone on to be very successful leaders in education and openly express their gratitude for Dr. Sutton.

In addition to his mentoring program, Dr. Sutton has hosted the Samford Leadership Cohort serving three cities on several occasions where he discusses turnaround schools. His expertise is regularly sought to discuss how to develop faculty and implement programs to increase student achievement by improving school culture and active engagement. He also had the opportunity to speak to a leadership cohort in West Virginia where he discussed turnaround schools, curriculum and instruction, and the process of sustaining a positive culture at the secondary level.

For several years he has served as a speaker at the Mega Conference in Mobile where he discusses the process of turning around schools as well as the programs and academies that he has implemented.

Among his many accolades, Sutton was honored with the Excellence in Educational Leadership Award from the University of Alabama's College of Education after improving the graduation rate at Central from 41 percent to 86 percent in five years.

## Black Warrior River honors tow truck driver with heroism award

**By Kelvin Reynolds  
WBRC-TV**

Andre Harris thinks of himself as a country boy.

But these days he's being hailed as a hero for helping a family in a life-or-death situation. The Black Warrior River chapter of the Sons of American Revolution gave Harris the SAR Medal for Heroism for civilians.

In July, Harris, who is a part-time tow truck driver, found a car that had rolled down an embankment and caught fire on Highway 171 and Mount Olive Road. A woman made it out of the car. But her child was still trapped inside.

Harris went down a hill, broke out the glass and pulled the child to safety. Weeks later he's being hailed as a hero.

"Sometimes, 911 isn't fast enough," Harris said. "Everything is time sensitive, in this case a life. And I just thank God that he put me there at the right time where I had enough time to get down the hill."

David Jones, President of the Black Warrior Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution explained why they decided to honor Harris.

"Mr. Harris did a heroic deed. He needs to be recognized," Jones said.



—Photo courtesy of David Jones

### **Chapter president David Jones, left, presents SAR Medal for Heroism to Andre Harris.**

## Saga on early America gives new meaning to independence

Alan Taylor. *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804*. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016.

Award-winning author Alan Taylor continues his examination of early America in *American Revolutions*. He views the crisis between England and her American colonies as being much broader and as an extension of wider difficulties among the imperial powers. Taylor successfully attacks the traditional notion that the revolution produced little chaos and proved to be an orderly event, inevitably leading to independence, stability, and prosperity.

While Kathleen DuVal broadened the geography of the conflict, she used case studies to present her argument. Taylor paints a much broader portrait of the effect of the war on whole groups of people.

Taylor's saga begins in the aftermath of the War of Austrian Succession focusing on continued rivalries among the great powers and their native clients and surrogates. While the Treaty settlements of 1748 returned the continent to the *status quo ante bellum* this period of time proved to be like the half-time of a modern football game: conflict among the imperial powers broke out in 1754 and 1755 in The Seven Years War or, in America, The French and Indian War.

At the war's conclusion, Britain gained an empire. Spain acquired all of the French territories from the Gulf Coast to Canada and the flag of France came down in north America.

While the prosperous "sugar colonies" of the Caribbean did not resist taxation to pay for the concluded hostilities, the original north American colonies did. This led to the chaotic opening of the revolutionary struggle. Taylor's story travels far beyond the traditional geography to focus on the area west of the Appalachians to the Mississippi River and south to the Gulf Coast.

All sides possessed a vision and a version of the war including natives of the Creek, Cherokee, Choctaw, and even Comanche and Apache nations. Eastern fighting ignited a seismic response all over the continent as trade with native people collapsed under the weight of the war and its conflicting messages. Taylor presents a convincing case for interrupted trade as far west as the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountain West.

As white Americans fought for liberty against the British, black Americans escaped slavery and enlisted in the British Army. The redcoats promised freedom. The paradox from the Declaration of Independence which trumpeted that "all men are created equal," except enslaved blacks, haunted the coun-

try as the war ended and the creation of permanent governments in most of the former colonies proceeded. By the end of the war, many former slaves who wore the red coat moved to freedom in Nova Scotia, Bermuda, and the West Indies.

Taylor emphasizes the importance of the French alliance, and Spanish support as well as Catherine the Great of Russia and her League of Armed Neutrality to eventual victory.

This contradicts the fiction in the generation after the founding of an isolated and outnumbered band of beleaguered tax resistors defeating the British juggernaut. Taylor's story corrects this view and elevates American diplomatic efforts to create an irrational alliance with the French monarchy. Fortunately, an educated French nobility and middle-class embraced the secular enlightenment of the *philosophes* and viewed the American revolutionary struggle as an important lesson in how to acquire liberty, fraternity, and equality.

Taylor portrays George Washington not as a brilliant tactician or even a competent strategist, but as a supreme politician and diplomat whose cunning use of talented foreign officers contributed to the success of his armies.

Though exceptions existed, Washington's character excited and thrilled French, German, and Dutch officers who served in America. By the force of his personality and his understanding of command, Washington held the forces of revolution together and with the French alliance, won the victory. By 1784, the British evacuated the former colonies in rebellion.

What the revolutionaries left remains difficult to assess. For years plots and counter plots swirled about roiling the west with its restless settlers hungry for wealth and land, natives who reached against encroachment, and agents of France and Spain dedicated to keeping the young country hemmed against the Appalachian Mountains. Secessionist movements raged and burned, tax rebellions roiled the young country, and even George Washington despaired of holding the vast republic together.

At the same time, other revolutions simmered and then exploded. St. Dominique's revolution, led by black men who had served against the British in French regiments, founded Haiti. The French Revolution devolved into chaos and the rise of Napoleon as dictator.

This book broadens our conceptions of revolutionary history and gives new meaning to independence. Anyone interested in the larger issues of the Revolutionary era will find Taylor's work useful.

—Bob England  
*Alabama Society Historian*

**ALABAMA SOCIETY, SONS OF  
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

**NEWSLETTER OF THE ALSSAR**

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***Please send in your chapter news for the next newsletter***

If you're submitting material for the next newsletter, please e-mail your pictures and information to [timgaylesar@gmail.com](mailto:timgaylesar@gmail.com) or send information about your chapter's activities or upcoming events by December 10 to Tim Gayle at 3104 Cabot Street, Montgomery, AL 36110.

—Photo courtesy of William Rozier

***New compatriot***

***The September meeting of the Cheaha chapter was held at the Anniston Room of the Anniston-Calhoun County Public Library and featured ALSSAR president Bob Anderson, right, who presented his program on "The Battle of Blackstock's Plantation: Tarleton's First Taste of Defeat." Anderson also inducted the chapter's newest compatriot, Mannon Bankson, left. Bankson is a proud descendent of Revolutionary War Capt. John Loving of the Amherst County (Va.) Militia.***

