

**Patriot Index/ Revolutionary War Graves Register
(aka RevWar Graves) Committee of the
Nat'l. Society of the
Sons of the American Revolution (NSSAR)
Louisville, KY, Headquarters
December 12, 2014**

Submitted by James Edward Mitchell, Chairman
Texas Society SAR RevWar Graves Committee

During the 119th Congress of the NSSAR held at Atlanta, GA from Jul 4-8, 2009 the RevWar Graves Committee was composed of 24 listed, dedicated SAR compatriots that attended the national Congresses committee meeting, where first became enthralled over identifying Revolutionary War soldiers, whose names had been neglected and almost forgotten recorded and found recently in a file cabinet at the Louisville, headquarters. Several listed members that I wish now, to mention who attended & deserve special attention are Rev. Forrest Chilton, KYSSAR; Steve Leishman, MDSSAR; Joe Harris, Executive Director NSSARHQ; Comm. Chairman, Gerald J. Burkland, MISSAR; LtC Rob't. "Bob" F. Galer, Charlie Newcomer III, George Thurmond, and N. Walker Chewing of GASSAR; Dennis Boyer, Kansas Society SAR and, Texians like, Larry Gene Stevens, Rev. Jas. Taylor and Peter Baron.

This hallmark* committee meeting, above, resulted in a dynamic shift of Nat'l. Society SAR attention to request funding for a team volunteer approach that might organize to register hundreds and thousands of names of Revolutionary War Patriots subscribed upon *Patriot Graves Registry Forms* found "back logged" and long ago, filed away at headquarters with no action! Also, this congress and committee meeting resulted in an official review of a Proposal for awards for presentation to society members that are outstanding in finding and/or dedicating graves of revolutionary War Patriots.

Aside –for a few brief minutes consider the Apr 18, 1906 San Francisco Great Earthquake & Fire that reportedly by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors caused the deaths of over 400 unnamed, individuals. In the late 1990s a San Francisco librarian named Ms. Gladys Hansen, observed an increase in the number of individuals and families appearing at her library inquiring, where they might observe, "a list of people killed in the 1906 earthquake and fire."

Ms. Hansen would advise them to leave their names and contact addresses, as she would conduct on her own volition, a search of records available to her for the purpose of identifying and recording their missing kin. She explained to families, that no official list of the dead was ever recorded by the City of San Francisco Board of Supervisors following their official approval record of slightly over 400 killed accidentally by the earthquake & widespread fire(s)!

She made it her mission to account independently for as many names of families that had missing relatives as a result of 1906 unparalleled, devastating disaster. She kept dozens of pages of names surpassing 3,000 individuals! During 2001, Ms. Hansen wrote a book annotated with family identities and name variations of those individuals who logically, died as a result of the, "Great Fire" and earthquake however, she regretted that, there was no known legal proof of their fatality. As you might imagine, reviewers

called her book, "Disaster! The Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906" a doubtful history, a wasted effort to pass off a work of fiction despite the pages of original notes that supported the research.

The RevWar Graves Committee during a Fall Leadership Meeting held at Louisville, KY on Sep 28, 2012 had a new chairman, Michael L. Keen of Delaware and, Delbert B. White of Kentucky, Vice Chairman who turned their attention toward allocating funds and committee volunteers to support and to load data for the *Patriot & Grave Register Project*. Next, Keen turned his attention toward approving the *Patriot Grave Marking Medal* for members attributed with a prominent role, such as researching, obtaining funds for a marker, submitting burial information and, paying for research of records to obtain a new headstone. Earlier that day details had been approved by a meeting of the Nat'l. Society Medals and Awards Committee by Chairman Keen's presentation with the hopes of approval by the Executive Committee during the days to come.

The RevWar Graves Committee even turned its attention to publishing a draft version of a *Grave Marking Guidelines -Manual*, which at some future date might be approved and submitted for online dissemination by headquarters for Revolutionary Patriot Grave Marking.

During Feb. 1, 2014 the initial separate phases of the *Patriot & Grave Register Project* had resulted in Phase III volunteers having entered over 73,000 records of which 38,000 were new member lineages. Thirty-six active volunteers had worked feverishly to complete Phase III. Delbert B. White, now, the NSSAR RevWar Graves Committee Chairman, reported that the conclusion or end of the *Patriot & Grave Register Project* in reality had moved. From the submission of "Layout" data, and "Lineage" data volunteers were amassing 55,000 new data entries following the initial 43,000 original number of initial Patriot Grave Forms that were found before July 2009.

During the 124th Annual Congress held between Jul 19-23, 2014 at Greenville, SC, RevWar Graves Committee Chairman, Delbert B. White met with National Society committee members identifying 86,000 Patriot & Grave records entered since the 2010 launch of the *Patriot & Grave Registry Project*. Twenty (20) Grave Marking Medals had been approved from the initial eight applicants on May 6, 2013, among the earliest, was mine; although I would wait many months to receive the coveted, Patriot Grave Marking Medal that as a Nat'l. Society committee member I had directly observed the medal's carefully crafted requirements and initial shepherding through the Nat'l. Society, Medals and Awards Committee.

As always, the chairman stated that continuous improvement was a committee goal. Suggestions, comments and criticisms were needed as well as eager volunteers! E-mail suggestions might be forwarded to patriotgraves@sar.org

Consider for a moment, individuals like San Francisco's librarian, Gladys Hansen's desire to remember so many 1906 Great Fire fatalities. Kindly, know that Nat'l. Society SAR Past Pres., Stephen Leishman as well as Rev. Forrest Chilton were primary movers and significant organizers present together at the 119th Congress held in Atlanta that began the promotion of hallmark* ideas and funds that would remember thousands of individuals, buried now, proven Revolutionary War soldiers, sailors and marines, even Civil Servants, Citizens that were Jurors and, recorded Publick Service volunteers that might have gone unremembered be it not for so few, so helpful and many unselfish SAR data entry volunteers from home.