



## THE LONG KNIFE

Quarterly Newsletter of the Genl George Rogers Clark Chapter  
Illinois Society Sons of the American Revolution

*"Serving Madison County"*

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Ten of the 16 high school students who received the annual Outstanding Citizenship Awards from GGRCC were at the ceremony April 11 at First Christian Church, Edwardsville. The certificates and pins were conferred by GGRCC President Ronnie D. Hicks (top left). The recipients and their schools were (top row, from left) Kelly McLaughlin, Bunker Hill; Zachary Logan, Gillespie; Corey Hardin Jr., Madison and Eian McClure, Alton. (bottom, from left) Jordan Bruns, East Alton-Wood River, Danelle Garner, Mt. Olive; Aliyah Brooks, Roxana; Irene Zollars, Bethalto Civic Memorial; and Matthew Augustin, Edwardsville. Honored but not present were Samuel Holdeman, Highland; Johnny Wilson, Marquette Catholic; Hannah Thomas, Triad; Seger Laures, Granite City; Marissa Zirges, Staunton; and Michael Bednara, Collinsville. Compatriot Robert E. Stegemeier coordinated the event as he has in recent years. Lola DeGroff was speaker. The students were nominated by their schools based on dependability, cooperative spirit, leadership, service to their school and community and evidence of personal values and patriotism.

### **GGRCC Members Participate in Revolution Monument Dedication at McKendree**

Several GGRCC compatriots, including Vice President James A. DeGroff Jr., took part in the dedication May 18 of a three-piece Revolutionary War monument at McKendree College.

The monument at the Lebanon campus, containing inscriptions symbolic of the war, was donated by Kent Worley, a member of the Lewis and Clark Chapter SAR, and Illinois Society of the War of 1812.

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*The Long Knife* is a quarterly publication of the Genl. George Rogers Clark Chapter, Illinois Society, Sons of the American Revolution.

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Luncheon meetings third Wednesday monthly.

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## President's Letter

By Ronnie D. Hicks

GGRCC was invited to attend the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Presidents Day Celebration by the Lewis and Clark Chapter at Fisher's Restaurant Feb. 20. Guest speaker was George Rogers Clark portrayed by Robert Blanchard. The entertainment was very informative as Bob described how Clark defeated the British forces at Vincennes, IN with only a few of his own soldiers.

At the Highland Knights of Columbus Hall on April 1, I presented Eagle Scout Joshua Case with a certificate, letter, and the SAR Eagle Scout patch. GGRCC Vice President Jim DeGroff assisted with the presentation. I appreciate the assistance and participation from Jim DeGroff, and special thanks to Lola DeGroff for taking pictures at the court of honor ceremonies.

GGRCC members Jim DeGroff, Jim Hicks, Bill Nix, Lloyd Schwarz and I attended the Collinsville City Council meeting on April 9 to present a Hero Award to Austin Roberts, 10, of Collinsville for performing the Heimlich maneuver three times on a classmate who was choking on a corn dog.

GGRCC conducted the annual Outstanding High School Citizen Awards program at First Christian Church in Edwardsville April 11 (see page 1). Compatriot Bob Stegemeier continued his outstanding coordination of the annual event. Certificates and pins were presented to 16 outstanding high school students from Madison, Jersey and Macoupin counties. It was the second year the program has been expanded beyond Madison County. Thanks to compatriots Marvin Meng and Sam Akeman for providing and distributing the refreshments.

I presented the ROTC Bronze Medal and certificate to Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville cadet Richard Rothenbach April 26 at the Edwardsville American Legion Post 199.

The AF-JROTC Bronze Medal and certificate were presented April 28 to Cadet Nicolas Hartman at the Alton High School. An ILSSAR check for \$200 and a Bronze Good Citizenship Medal was presented to Cadet Evan Buenger. Cadet Dalton Cobb also received a certificate and Good Citizenship Medal for entering the ILSSAR essay contest.

GGRCC is very appreciative for the recruiting of new members by Vice President Jim Degroff. Public awareness is very essential to the survival of the chapter. Please ask your friends and relatives if they would like to become a member of the GGRCC.

Mel Jones and Tim Raymer are still convalescing; please keep them in your thoughts and prayers. I am saddened to convey word of the death of Anna Belle Jones on May 4. Mrs. Jones had been ill for a long time. I extended my condolences from the members of GGRCC to Compatriot Mel Jones.

The spring trip was conducted May 9 to the ERTC facility on the campus of Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, through the efforts of Harry Windland. (see page 4) Everyone who participated enjoyed the presentation by director Paul Shetley.

GGRCC Chapter meetings are conducted on the third Wednesday of each month, (pending possible location change), at the Edwardsville Moose Lodge located on Rt. 143 in Edwardsville. The luncheon begins at 11:30 a.m. (the actual meeting begins around noon or shortly thereafter). If you are unable to make the luncheon, perhaps you can attend the business session.

## Joe Hill's Memories of World WAR II Revived on Honor Flight

*(Long-time GGRCC member and officer M. Joseph Hill participated in a 2011 Central Illinois Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. Following is a portion of his account of the experience.)*

They picked me up at 1:30 a.m. to take me on the Honor Flight, and dropped me off at home close to midnight the next day.

During those 48 hours, I would experience the extraordinary kindness of people who helped all of us along the way; the bittersweet feeling of sudden recall of many long forgotten friends, some lost in the war, most just gone, and then those few who are left; the sobering trust of all those lives severely damaged or lost and the despair of all of those families whose kids didn't come home; then the magnificent memorials which always left the proud feeling of success in a great cause and then the haunting feeling of isn't there a better way; and finally the profound aches, pains and fatigue of two days of on-the-go stress.

Fifty-five World War II vets received the same treatment upon arrival at the St. Louis airport, where we met most of our assigned guardians or nurses for the flight. I was lucky enough to have a grown child acting as my guardian, my daughter, Kathy Hill-Miller, who joined the bus in Washington and proved to be a super guardian for me.

Earlier, when we landed at the Baltimore-Washington Airport, we were welcomed by an honor guard of 70 to 80 smartly dressed personnel from all U.S. military branches, who gave us thankful handshakes for our service.

After being bused to Washington, about 1 p.m. we began visiting memorials. We did the Air Force Memorial and changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, then we went to the Smithsonian History Museum. Then it was nap time, and dinner at McCormick and Schmiks, an excellent high-end restaurant.

In retrospect that first afternoon of rapid fire stops it became evident that our guardians had become our everyday support and our emotional support. Every stop at a memorial had high emotional content for me and, I think, for all the vets. All the memorials stirred long-suppressed emotions which were recognized and acted upon by guardians, things like assuring that each man had taken his medications, like answering a request on a moment's notice, like violating an old man's "ladies first" habit in favor of "safety first" for a vet. As you might know, most males and especially old ones, sooner or later, are plagued by the need for sudden and urgent visits to the men's room. This happened to me twice—both times at airports. Each time, Chris Erkle, a faithful guardian with her own stuffed backpack, picked up my ditty bag and heavy coat and waited patiently in the middle of the concourse for me to return. These selfless volunteers did all of this and paid their own airfare and they do it freely for all World War II vets.

The morning of day two included the formal ceremonies at the World War II memorial on Veteran's Day, Nov. 11. The day started as a picture perfect bright sunny day and we arrived at the memorial with the Marine Band playing in the distance. Just off the bus we were greeted by a snappy soldier in a dress uniform. It was Chris Ides, fresh from eight weeks of basic training, who was to be my escort for the ceremonies. On our short walk to the ceremony we noted a long line of chairs for Honor Flight veterans, along with the three or four other groups who would also place wreaths on the far side of the circular central area as a memorial to World War II veterans.

As the program started, the wind started too and soon became bitter. Officials rounded up blankets to put over our Honor Flight jackets and then provided stocking caps followed by gloves. My guardian used the time to take pictures of vets and their military escorts and then offered to send pictures to the escorts by e-mail. Most of the escorts commented that their mothers would welcome such a photo—a comment which was a startling reminder of how young they really were.

Next we visited the U.S. Navy Memorial. There was one life-size bronze sailor in a pea coat, standing with his duffel bag alongside. It reminded me of the last short voyage of my small vessel which required towing from Manila toward Okinawa for the anticipated invasion of Japan. A monster typhoon disrupted all communication for four days, during which time the war ended and we limped into Okinawa. I, quite literally, became that bronze sailor with a pea coat and a duffel bag who was dumped into a service relocation camp to wait for a ride to Manila. They told me that the airplane would be very crowded and I should leave my pea coat and duffel bag behind. It turned out that I was the only passenger on that flight. But luck was with me as my airplane was a C-46 of the same model I helped to manufacture just before leaving for the Merchant Marine 14 months earlier.

The afternoon of the second day, the group separated to visit outlying memorials dedicated to other wars, such as the Korean War Veterans Memorial where there is the inscription "Our nation honors her sons and daughters who answered the call to defend a country they never knew and had never met;" the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, where the engraved names of 58,000 American dead form a compelling litany of lost lives; and the Iwo Jima Flag-Raising memorial, a powerful sculpture of five marines and one sailor of World War II raising the American Flag on Mount Suribachi.

All of the above awakened my memory of those young kids of World War II, many of whom gave their all and many, many more gave three to four years of their lives and returned home to pick up the broken trail. But on second glance, the war memorials were also a powerful tribute to young people who, in their time, did the job required and died, and many

others who came home to pick up their version of the broken trail.

## Spring Trip Report

Eleven GGRCC members and guests attended the tour May 9 of a facility at one of our area's unique educational institutions.

The Environmental Resources Training Center, adjacent to the campus of Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, is the only facility in Illinois that trains operators of water purification systems. What a treat those present enjoyed.

ERTC director Paul Shetley discussed the background and purposes of the center. He then showed slides and a movie detailing the center's work. Also of great interest was a presentation about the center's generation of electricity with solar cells and a movie showing construction of a 120-foot tall wind turbine for generation of electricity.

The conference room presentations were followed by a walk-through of the training-scale water purification plant and wastewater processing plant.

The ERTC is thought to be the only facility in the United States that has operating treatment facilities to supplement the classroom training. The two-hour tour enlightened us about the role of the ERTC as well as two processes that affect the daily lives of all of us. ---Harry K. Windland

## Ronald F. Luebben Sr., Charter Member of GGRCC, Dies at 97

A 27-year member of GGRCC, Ronald F. Luebben Sr., one of three surviving members of the organization's charter group, died March 7 in Granite City. His membership dates from 30 April 1985.

Compatriot Luebben, 97, was particularly active in Boy Scout supervision in the area and statewide. He was a registered Scouter in area BSA Councils including service as council commissioner and in many other positions. He frequently recruited scouts to participate in GGRCC activities.

"He was always there to help whenever we were doing anything," said another charter member, Lloyd E. Schwarz.

Compatriot Luebben was born 16 February 1915 in Toledo Ohio He was employed as a mechanic by AO Smith and Nestle Inc. in the Granite City area.

He married Gertrude Meier in Toledo in 1936. She died in 2010. He is survived by two daughters, three sons, nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

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