

MINUTEMAN

THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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JUNE 2026



President's Notes

President Silva & Registrar Brown present L.E. Medal to Jerry Whiting

I would like to thank everyone who attended the May meeting and I hope you enjoyed Jerry Whiting's presentation on his father's World War II adventures. We had a good turnout from members, prospective members and DAR guests, and had two new members inducted. Asher Borkow attended his first meeting and will hopefully be inducted soon. We gave out a few awards and I encourage all of you to submit your America 250 points to Derek Brown to ensure that you receive your medal awards. Many of you have already qualified for the Bronze and Silver Medals. Derek and I can help if you are unsure of all your dates, but you will be required to submit your own forms.

As we move into the summer, there will be lots of exciting patriotic events, from Memorial Day, various

dedications, and presentation events. All of this will culminate on July 4, our Nation's 250th birthday, when some of you will be representing your Chapter in color guards and in parades. Others will be traveling to Philadelphia for a very memorable America 250th Anniversary event. And later in July, the SAR National Congress will be held in Greensboro, North Carolina, with some of our Chapter members attending. If you are in the area this summer, you should attend.

I would like to thank all of you for your participation in SAR Chapter events, including school and award presentations to members and guests, Eagle Scouts, NSCC, JROTC and ROTC. A special shout out to those of you who attend our meetings in uniform and colonial attire. You all make the Thomas Jefferson Chapter SAR one of the best in California today, so thanks for that.

250
Years
1776-2026



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The Thomas Jefferson Chapter Minuteman is the official newsletter of the Thomas Jefferson Chapter, California Society Sons of the American Revolution. The opinions expressed herein are the opinions of the authors, and not necessarily those of the Chapter or the SAR, unless specifically stated.

CIVIS AMERICANUS SUM



We will have a special fun and informal June 20th "picnic" event at the Mare Island Brewery, with a tour of the historical core of the former Naval Base. Following that, we will be having a joint Thomas Jefferson Chapter – DAR picnic at Biddle Park in Dublin on July 2. Come on out and have some fun, and a hot dog or hamburger, cooked by Derek or me.

After the summer break, we will return on September 19, 2026 at the Old Spaghetti Factory. Bob Sada will be talking about the history of the Veterans Memorial Halls in Danville and Pleasanton. Have a great summer!

— Tom Silva, President

Secretary's Notes

The Thomas Jefferson Chapter held a regular meeting on Saturday, May 16, 2026, at the Old Spaghetti Factory in Concord, California. We had 21 members and guests at the meeting.

President Tom Silva called the meeting to order, and he introduced our VIPs and guests: Guest Speaker Jerry Whiting, Councilmember Jeff Nibert of Pleasanton, CASSAR Vice President North Dan Shurtz, Derek Brown (past VPG, past chapter and state president, and chapter registrar), Robert Ebert (SF Chapter, past VPG and state president), DAR members Pat Everette, Maggie Kane, and Staci Kendrick, new members Asher Borkow, Kurt Snyder and James C. Wood, and potential members Jeff Conway and Bill O'Brien.

Derek Brown presented the Registrar's Report. In 2026, we have 20 new members so far, with one awaiting approval at NSSAR. He noted that the Thomas Jefferson Chapter won the Col. Richard F. Locke Award from CASSAR for membership growth.

Compatriot Jim Griesemer presented the America 250 Minute, speaking on Thomas Paine, and the speech that changed the war. By Fall of 1776, General Washington and his army had lost both Fort Lee and Fort Washington to the British Army, just north of Manhattan. They had lost over 100 canon, thousands of muskets, and 400,000 cartridges — all irreplaceable. About 3,000 American soldiers had been killed or captured.

The British were ecstatic that American soldiers were fleeing to New Jersey. British General Howe gave the Americans another chance to surrender. He offered New Jersey citizens a Royal Pardon if they would denounce the rebel cause. In two weeks, 3,000 Americans accepted the offer, including a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

By December 1776, all of New Jersey was in the hands of the British, who were garrisoned along the northern bank of the Delaware River, and Congress had fled from Philadelphia to Baltimore. General Washington had retreated from New Jersey to Pennsylvania, and the winter was bitterly cold, for which his Army was ill-equipped. With Christmas approaching, the fate of the United States rested upon Washington and his 6,000 men.

Traveling with the weary, exhausted soldiers was Tom Paine,

the brilliant British writer whose pamphlet, *Common Sense*, had convinced many Americans to embrace Independence. On a drumhead, he wrote one of the most quoted essays in the English Language – *The American Crisis*. It began,

“These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated. Britain, with an army to enforce her tyranny, has declared that she has a right (not only to TAX) but “to bind us in all cases whatsoever” and if being bound in that manner, is not slavery, then is there not such a thing as slavery upon earth. Even the expression is impious; for so unlimited a power can belong only to God.”

Washington immediately ordered all of his officers to read it to their troops. He hoped that its words would inspire them to hold on just a little longer. The soldiers’ terms of enlistment would expire on December 31, and Washington would be a general without an army. However, Tom Paine’s words work. On Christmas Eve, Washington led



his troops in the most famous event of the Revolutionary War – The Crossing of the Delaware. The Hessian troops in Trenton, employed by the British, were taken completely by surprise. In stark contrast to the Hessians, no American soldiers were killed in Trenton – a stunning outcome for an 18th Century battle. Washington followed it up with the defeat of a British Brigade in Princeton.

Suddenly, the psychological picture of the war had changed. As the news spread to all the colonies, there was a feeling that victory was possible. New Jersey civilians who had signed a loyalty oath to the king, returned to support the Revolution. Volunteers from all thirteen states rushed to fill the ranks of the dwindling army. And Washington, whose very command had been in doubt only a few days before, became a national hero. It is not hyperbole to state that without Tom Paine’s drumhead essay, the victory at Trenton would not have happened. And without the victory at Trenton, the United States of America would not have survived.

Registrar Brown presented the George Washington Endowment Fund Fellow Pin to Tom Silva for his \$1,000 donation to the GWEF, which helps underfunded SAR programs, and he presented the Patron Award to Past President Glenn Martin for his contribution to the Knight Essay Contest Fund. President Silva presented the SAR Law Enforcement Commendation Award to Jerry Whiting for his exemplary service in

Bay Area law enforcement. President Silva commended Stephan Bowman, Staci Kincaid, Michael Black and Jeff Nibert for attending in colonial dress and uniforms.

President Silva inducted new members Kurt Snyder and James C. Wood, and James accepted the certificate for his son, James H. Wood. **Kurt A. Snyder** of El Cerrito descends from patriot ancestor Johann Nicholas Snyder (1749-1821), who paid the supply tax in Pennsylvania in 1781-1782. Johann Nicholas Snyder married Anna Marie Bortner, and he died in 1821 in Northumberland County, PA. **James C. Wood** of Pleasanton (and his son **James H. Wood**) descends from patriot ancestor James Alexander (1750-1814), who served as a corporal in Col. Charles Harrison’s 1st Artillery Regiment, Continental Troops in Virginia. James Alexander married Isabella Erskine, and he died around 1814 in Monroe County, Virginia. The new members received a certificate, a rosette, and the new *Thomas Jefferson Chapter New Member Handbook*.

Following lunch, President Silva introduced our guest speaker, Jerry Whiting. Originally from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Jerry moved to Pleasant Hill as a teenager. He had a long and distinguished career in law enforcement, including working as a detective, and as a hostage and crisis negotiator. He traveled to Europe to help police agencies there, and also worked with the Sioux tribal police in South Dakota. He retired to Walnut Creek, and now is an accomplished author of military non-fiction books.

Jerry Whiting described an

incident when his father's squadron, the 831st Squadron of the 485th Bomb Group, hit incredibly bad weather after returning from a bombing mission in Europe, and was unable to return to their regular base in eastern Italy. They found a safe haven at the Red Tail's 332nd fighter base at Ramitelli, Italy, in late December 1944. The runway was extremely short, but all the planes managed to land safely. The bomber pilots learned that the Red Tails were piloted by Black pilots, and that the entire organization supporting them was also Black.

Col. Benjamin O. Davis was the commanding officer – he commanded the Tuskegee Airmen, and later went on to become the first Black brigadier general in the USAF. The Tuskegee airmen took in the bomber crews over New Year's, which was an incredible thing, since the Army Air Corps was segregated at that time, and an event like this would have been unprecedented back in the states. The bomber pilots slept in a Quonset hut while they were there. Charles Porter, the lead pilot, said they were treated very well by the Red Tail group. Art Kain, a nose-gunner on the bombers, shared cinnamon rolls and coffee with the Black mechanics. Jerry's father, Tail Gunner Wayne Whiting, wrote to his mother that, "I stayed in a tent with Negro mechanics. They treated us very nice and all of them were very educated. We had a big time listening to their stories." Co-Pilot Leeland Larsen said they were fed very well – especially the New Year's Day dinner. Co-Pilot Jim Scheib was quartered with a Black pilot from



Kansas City, who shared his own rations with the bomber pilot. Col. Davis noted that "such a mixing of the races would never have been allowed to occur in the United States." Pilot Bob Friend noted, "we were just American airmen taking care of each other."

Both sides gained a great deal of respect for each other after this experience. When Jerry heard the story from his mother, he set out to talk to the crews and the men stationed at Ramitelli. He got some assistance from his niece Megan, and her employer, *Lucasfilm*, and coordinated a reunion in 2011. A number of former airmen came, and everyone was adamant to make sure that that the occasion be identified as an "airmen's reunion" honoring that New Year's Eve night in far-away Italy so long ago, and not make it about race! President Silva thanked Jerry, and presented him with the SAR Law Enforcement Commendation Medal, and a chapter 100th anniversary coin.

On May 8, Past President Glenn Martin presented the SAR Silver ROTC Medal at UC Berkeley to Air Force Cadet Nathaniel Whitmire, Army Cadet Joshin Shiraishi, and Navy Midshipman Siena Fusco. On May 12, President Silva and Past President Glenn Martin presented the SAR Bronze ROTC Medal at Heritage High School to an Air Force Cadet. Past President Greg Owens will present the SAR Bronze ROTC Medal at Jesse Bethel High School to a Navy cadet. President Silva and Registrar Brown will represent the

SAR at the San Ramon Genealogical Society on May 19, and Registrar Brown will also attend the luncheon of the San Francisco Chapter SAR on that day. On May 30, President Silva and Registrar Brown will represent the SAR at a DAR America 250 Marker ceremony in Pleasanton. President Silva will represent the SAR at De Anza 250/America 250 celebration at the San Francisco Presidio on June 27. President Silva then adjourned the meeting.

— **Stephen Renouf, Secretary**

June Special Meeting

The June Special Meeting will be a no-host, offsite, voluntary participation picnic lunch and tour of Mare Island on **Saturday, June 20, 2026, at 11:30AM.**

We will meet at 11:30AM at the Mare Island Brewing Company's Coal Shed Brewery, 850 Nimitz Avenue, Vallejo, CA. We will order lunch from the food trucks (order whatever you want, and pay the vendor directly), and have a picnic lunch on a shaded table overlooking the Napa River. At 12:30PM, we will be met by our tour guide, Kent Fortner (the guest speaker at our March Meeting), and we will caravan to the Historic Core of Mare Island, for a 30-minute tour. We will then caravan to St. Peter's Chapel, for another 30-minute tour. We will have a SAR America 250 Minute (for those collecting points for the Medal). By caravanning to the Historic Core and St. Peter's Chapel, we will reduce the walking component of the tour.

Please invite family and friends for this special summer picnic and tour!



Awards Chairman Brown presents GWEF Pin & Certificate to President Tom Silva



Registrar Brown, President Silva and VPN Shurtz with new members Kurt Snyder and James C. Wood



Jerry Whiting speaks on his father's experiences in World War II

The vets together at the reunion



Reunion of Bomber Crew and Red Tail fighters

JUNE 2026

SPECIAL PICNIC MEETING

Saturday, June 20, 2026

Mare Island Brewing Company

850 Nimitz Avenue, Vallejo, CA



11:30AM—Picnic Lunch

**12:30PM to 2:00PM—Tour
of Mare Island**

Programme:

No-Host Picnic & Guided Tour of Mare Island. We will have a picnic (ordering from food trucks) at a reserved shaded table at the Mare Island Brewing Company on the Napa River. We will caravan to the Mare Island Historic Core for a 30-minute tour, and then caravan to St. Peter's Chapel for a 30-minute tour and America 250 Minute. Come join us for a great picnic meeting! Invite family and friends for our special summer event!

MENU

***Order What You Want from the Food Trucks . . .
Pay directly to the Vendor.***

Deadline: 17 June 2026

Questions? Contact Stephen Renouf at usina@aol.com

Please RSVP by e-mail or snail mail to: **Secretary Stephen Renouf, 16123 Paseo del Campo, San Lorenzo, CA 94580 / Usina@aol.com**

Name: _____

Guest3: _____

Guest: _____

Guest4: _____

Guest2: _____

Guest5: _____



THOMAS JEFFERSON CHAPTER

SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Thomas E. Silva
President

S. Rawn Rhoades
Vice President

Stephen R. Renouf
Secretary/Treasurer

Th. Jefferson

Quote of the Month

"It having pleased the Almighty Ruler of the universe propitiously to defend the Cause of the United American States, and finally raise up a powerful Friend among the Princes of the Earth, to establish our Liberty and Independence upon a lasting foundation, it becomes us to set apart a day for gratefully acknowledging the divine Goodness, and celebrating the important event which we owe to his benign interposition."

— General George Washington, 1778.



You can download the full version of the *Minuteman* at <https://www.tjsar.org/index.php/minuteman>

The Thomas Jefferson Chapter

MINUTEMAN

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