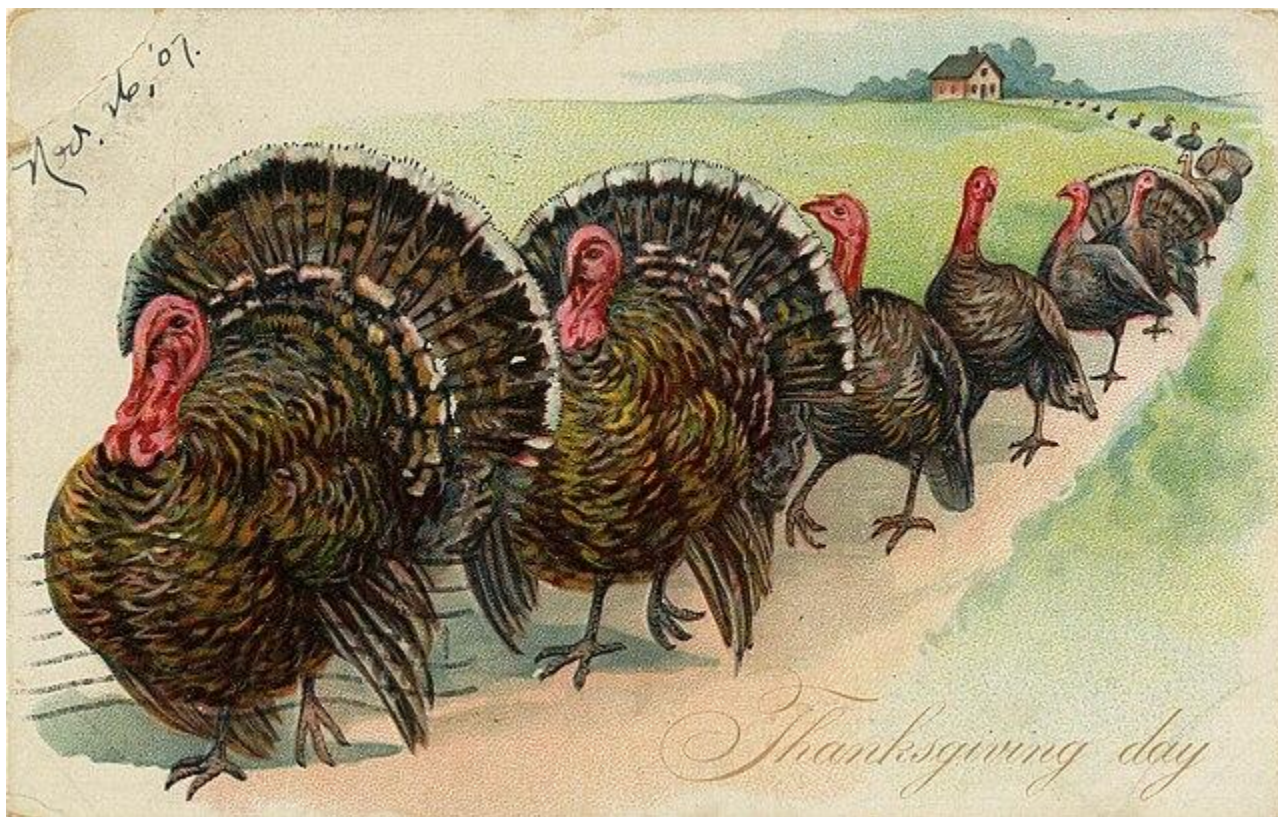


## Solemn Thanksgiving and Praise



**George Washington's General Orders – November 30, 1777. proclaiming December 18, 1777, as a day of Solemn Thanksgiving and Praise** “...to inspire our Commanders both by Land and Sea, and all under them, with that wisdom and fortitude which may render them fit Instruments, under the Providence of Almighty God, to secure for these United States the greatest of all human blessings, independence and peace.”



# The Bell Ringer

page 2

Mark your calendar: Winter Park Elks Club,  
**Wednesday, December 10, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

## From the President,

Dear CFLSAR Compatriots and Friends,

As Thanksgiving approaches, we give thanks for many things: family, freedom, full bellies—and the fact that our ancestors had the good sense to rebel before winter set in. Imagine trying to dump tea in Boston Harbor with frostbite. Not ideal.

This season, we celebrate not just the harvest but the fruits of your dedication. Whether you're planting Liberty Trees, mentoring new members, or just showing up with a smile and a pocket full of Revolutionary trivia, you help keep our chapter thriving. You're the reason our events run smoothly, our history stays alive, and our newsletter doesn't consist entirely of dad jokes (though we're not ruling that out).

Let's also be grateful for the camaraderie we share—because nothing says "brotherhood" like debating whether George Washington's dentures were really made of wood, or coordinating a ceremony that involves flags, flintlocks, and folding chairs. May your turkey be tender, your pie plentiful, and your family arguments limited to whether Hamilton was overrated.

With patriotic pride,

Central Florida Chapter SAR  
49th Chapter President (2025 – 2027)

## 2025 – 2027 Officers

**President/Historian** – Robin Preston

[rlpreston0306@gmail.com](mailto:rlpreston0306@gmail.com) – (832)655-4173

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President** – Don LaJoie

[grazingbuffalo94@gmail.com](mailto:grazingbuffalo94@gmail.com) - (912) 580-9433

**Treasurer** – William “Billy” Morgan

[wsmorganv@outlook.com](mailto:wsmorganv@outlook.com) - (407) 427-9692

**Corresponding Secretary** – Gary Smith

[trekker01@gmail.com](mailto:trekker01@gmail.com) - (214) 437-3577

**Member-at-Large/Chaplain** - Randal Allen

[aerospace321@outlook.com](mailto:aerospace321@outlook.com) - (407) 909-9649

**Member-at-Large** – Burt Fairchild

[burtfairchild@gmail.com](mailto:burtfairchild@gmail.com) - (407) 415-5655

**Immediate Past President** – Scott Cook

[mousephone2@gmail.com](mailto:mousephone2@gmail.com) - (407) 579-1612

**Sergeant-at-Arms** – Michael Meyer

[meyermi1775@gmail.com](mailto:meyermi1775@gmail.com) - (407) 452-2666

**Patriot Medal Winner/Color Guard Commander**  
– Phil Markoe

[markoevikingsfan@aol.com](mailto:markoevikingsfan@aol.com) - (407) 350-8143

**---OPEN POSITIONS---**

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Recording Secretary,  
Genealogist, Registrar, Webmaster

*If you are interested in any of the above vacant positions, please get in touch with one of the officers and let him know.*

***Volunteer today and make your Patriot proud.***



# The Bell Ringer

page 3

## Committee News, CFLSAR Committees

The following are chapter committees. Some need Chairmen, all of them need members.

### AMERICA 250 COMMITTEE – Robin Preston Chairman

We are seeking volunteers with 250 America points to present the America 250 minutes over the next year. Presenting the short A250-minute earns you 10 points, and attending the meeting adds an extra 3 points, totaling 13.

### FLAG COMMITTEE – Chairman Randal Allen

The Flag Committee is the custodian of the Chapter flags, except those flags assigned to the Chapter Color Guard.

The Flag Committee shall present SAR Flag Certificates to homeowners and business owners who have noteworthy American Flag displays.

The Flag Committee shall present SAR Flag Certificates to homeowners and business owners who properly dispose of flags.

### NEW MEMBER COMMITTEE – Chairman Milton Mersinger

## Committee News, continued

### JROTC/ROTC COMMITTEE – Chairman Phil Markoe

Purpose - Provide patriotic outreach to the Senior and Junior ROTC programs that exist in Florida schools.

### PROGRAM COMMITTEE – Chairman TBD

This is the committee that arranges the meeting and program, and, as required, special meetings. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please contact Robin Preston.

### VETERANS COMMITTEE – Chairman Phil Markoe

### YOUTH EDUCATION OUTREACH COMMITTEE – Phil Markoe, Chairman

He will try to run as many SAR youth programs as possible each season.

These programs include, but are not limited to, the Eagle Scout Program, Joseph S Rumbaugh Oration Contest, George S & Stella M Knight Essay Contest, Sgt Moses Adams Memorial Middle School Brochure, Youth Video, Elementary School Poster, Car Activity Award, and Good Citizenship Awards.

**Mission Statement:** The Sons of the American Revolution honors our Revolutionary War patriot ancestors by promoting patriotism, serving our communities, and educating and inspiring future generations about the founding principles of our country.

### Cash Award Amounts

Place	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
History Teacher	300	200	100
Poster Contest	100	75	50
Brochure	150	100	50
Video	150	100	50
Essay	250	125	75
Oration	400	250	125

**BECOME AN ACTIVE PART OF THE CHAPTER and JOIN A COMMITTEE TODAY. YOUR CHAPTER NEEDS YOU. *Make your Patriot Proud.***



# The Bell Ringer

page 4



## Certificate Holder

Do you have Certificate Holders with no certificate to hold, and you need something to do with them? Return them to the chapter for reuse.

## Americanism Report



Every year, we, as a chapter, are required to submit a report to the State and National Societies detailing our activities. We are graded in the following categories.

- Media Publicity,
- Speakers Bureau,
- CAR-DAR Support,
- Youth Programs,
- Public Service Programs,
- Historic Sites,
- Grave Markings,
- Color Guards,
- Medals and Awards,
- National Society Service,
- Membership,
- Meeting attendance.

The total points across the 12 categories in 2024 were 6,060.

As of November 24, we have accumulated **7,415** points toward the 2025 report.

## America 250

### Compatriots

(16.3% of Chapter Membership have medaled)

- Bronze – 13
- Silver – 5
- Gold – 6



### Non-Compatriots

- Bronze – 1
- Silver – 2
- Gold – 3

## How do I get Points?

Attending the following events will earn you 3 points. If in colonials, you get an extra five points.

- Chapter Meetings
- Honor Flights
- Chapter Book Club Meetings
- Most SAR activities

## Mentoring Program

**“I’ve joined—now what?”** Exactly. What *do* you do?

The Mentors for the Central Florida Chapter are:

If you’re interested in becoming a mentor to a new Compatriot, please reach out to Milton Mersinger. Your experience could be the key to helping someone else find their place in SAR.

The current mentors for new members are:

Randal Allen

Milton Mersinger

William Morgan

Robin Preston

Harry Rinker

Gary Smith



# The Bell Ringer

page 5

## December 10 Chapter Meeting

**Where:** Winter Park Elks Club

4755 Howell Branch Road  
Winter Park

**Meal Cost:** \$25 per person (payable at the door)

**Topic:** Christmas at Mount Vernon – Harry Rinker

**Dress Code:** Business Casual (not shorts, not t-shirts, not nasty old blue jeans)

**If you plan to attend, RSVP to Phil Markoe** – by voice or text **407.350.8143** or by email at **markoevikingsfan@aol.com**

## CFLSAR Dues are DUE

The FLSSAR for the second year is using a billing system provided by the company "Club Express". You can pay your dues through Club Express using a credit card. You can also update any information as needed.

**To renew online,** [click here](#). If you do not remember or know your Username and Password, please use the "Forgot My Username/Password"

Members wishing to pay by check, make the single check payable to **Central Florida Chapter SAR, or CFLSAR,** and mail it to:

William Morgan  
c/o The History Center  
65 E Central Blvd – 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Orlando, FL 32801

If you have already renewed your membership, we appreciate your continued support.

CFLSAR Chapter Dues	\$20.00
FLSSAR State Dues	\$20.00
NSSAR National Dues	<u>\$50.00</u>
<b>TOTAL DUES</b>	<b>\$90.00</b>



## CFLSAR Book Club

The readings for December are *March to Independence: The Revolutionary War in the Southern Colonies* by Cecere and *The Battle of Great Bridge" Boys, Stand to Your Arms* on Kindle. For questions, please contact Randal Allen.

The book for January is "Our Lives, Our Fortunes, Our Sacred Honor: The Forging of American Independence" by Beeman

Zoom call details will be emailed out prior to the meeting.

## Social Media

**Facebook Page** – [www.facebook.com/cflsar](http://www.facebook.com/cflsar)

The CFLSAR Facebook page has something new every day. Take a look at our page for yourself and encourage your family and friends to do the same.

Total Posts since inception (15NOV2023) - **1059**  
Views since inception (15NOV2023) – **35,743**  
Views in 2025 – **26,825** (as of November 24)  
Average views per day – **82**  
Average views per post – **33.8**



# The Bell Ringer

page 6



## Service to our Vets

If you have done something in the service of a veteran or veterans, no matter how small you believe your contribution may have been, please let us know. Small contributions add up to big points by the end of the year. We were the second-ranked chapter in the state in total points. Please email Phil Markoe or Robin Preston and inform them of your actions.

## Actions that Count

- 1) Member of a VA Hospital Council, Voluntary Service, or Center of Development or Civic Engagement
- 2) Each hour served in VA Hospital Volunteer Service
- 3) Visiting a Veteran in a Hospital, Nursing Home, or private home, or taking one or more Veterans on an outing where the hours aren't recorded in 2.
- 4) Personal care items donated to veterans through an organization whose primary clients are veterans.
- 5) Cash donations to an organization whose primary clients are veterans.
- 6) Each publication whose primary clients are veterans.
- 7) Participation in the SAR Wounded Warriors Program.
- 8) Activities supporting VETS (Honor Flight)

9a) Decorating Veterans' (Wreaths Across America) graves and attending funerals.

9b) Participation in a Veterans Funeral.

10) Donating New or Used men's or women's clothing to an organization whose primary clients are veterans.

11) Furniture Donation – New or used, but working items to an organization whose primary clients are veterans.

**2024 Points over 22,000**

**2025 Points to date are 23,086**

## Attention Vets

*If you are a veteran and have not received a Service Medal, please notify Robin Preston so that we can obtain the medal you have earned through your service to America.*



# The Bell Ringer

page 7

## Wreaths Across America

Saturday, December 13, 2025

Help honor  
Veterans this  
Christmas by  
donating to  
Wreaths Across  
America

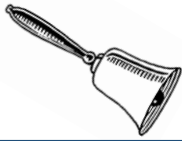


The Central Florida Chapter will be doing Wreaths Across America at Piney Woods and Palm Cemeteries.

**Piney Woods Cemetery** is located at South Lakewood Ave and Greenridge Way in Winter Park.

The **Palm Cemetery** is located at 1005 N. New York Avenue in Winter Park.

The program starts at 11:00, and the wreath laying begins at noon.



# The Bell Ringer

page 8

## The Villages Honor Flight

October 29



We had an outstanding Honor Flight reception on Wednesday, October 29, at the Orlando-Sanford Int'l Airport. Those who attended were Cara Elder, Linda Rinker, Robin Preston, Kathy Rinker, Maria Preston, Andrew Sechler, Phil Markoe, Bill Elder, (Daytona-Ormond Chapter), Kelly Crumley (Daytona-Ormond Chapter), Michael Meyer, Harry Rinker, Rob Patton, Gary Smith, Art Bullock, Jane Bullock, and Randal Allen. Look for announcements on future flights.



It truly is humbling to have American Heroes who served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam request pictures with the Color Guard. They are extremely grateful to everyone who turns out to welcome them home from their trip to Washington, D.C.



# The Bell Ringer

page 9

## The Orlando Veterans Day Parade

November 8



We had an outstanding turnout for the inaugural Orlando Veterans Day Parade in its new location, Lake Nona. Robin Preston, Michael Meyer, Andrew Sechler, Kim Cullars, Gary Smith, Randal Allen, Harry Rinker, and Phil Markoe.

## The Orlando Veterans Day Parade

November 8, 2025  
from the Orlando Sentinel



Members of the Sons of the American Revolution take part in the 2025 Veterans Day Parade in the Lake Nona neighborhood, Saturday, Nov. 8, 2025, in Orlando, Fla. (Phelan M. Ebenhack for the Orlando Sentinel)



# The Bell Ringer

page 10

## The Orlando Veterans Day Parade

November 8, 2025

The following email was sent to Pavla Paul, coordinator of the Orlando Veterans Day Parade on November 14. To date, there has been no response from the city.

**Subject:** Withdrawal of SAR Chapter from future Orlando Veterans Day Parades

Dear Ms. Paul,

On behalf of our Central Florida Sons of the American Revolution (CFLSAR) chapter, I regret to inform you that we will no longer be participating in future Orlando Veterans Day Parades.

While we deeply value the opportunity to honor our nation's veterans, our chapter was assigned the 69th position in this year's lineup, behind a group of Mustang vehicles, which placed us near the very end of the parade. Before our group even reached the starting point, our members stood in the heat for nearly three hours, with temperatures reaching 87 degrees. This created conditions that were unsuitable for our members, many of whom experienced significant discomfort and health risks during the extended wait.

At the conclusion of the parade, our group was directed to turn left, while nearly all other participants were directed to the right toward the end-of-parade festivities. This further reinforced the sense that our chapter was not afforded the same consideration as other groups.

As representatives of America's first veterans — the patriots of the Revolutionary War — we believe our chapter should have been given a more prominent position in the parade. With the upcoming **semiquincentennial in 2026**, marking the 250th anniversary of our nation's independence, it is especially important to recognize the foundational role of those earliest veterans in securing the freedoms we celebrate today.

We appreciate the effort that goes into organizing such a large event and understand the challenges of coordinating many participants. However, given these circumstances, we believe it is in our members' best interest to withdraw from future parades.

Our chapter remains committed to honoring veterans through our programs, commemorations, and community outreach, and we look forward to continuing that mission in ways that better reflect our history and ensure the well-being of our members.

Thank you for your understanding.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robin Preston'.

Robin Preston,  
President, Central Florida Sons of the American Revolution Chapter

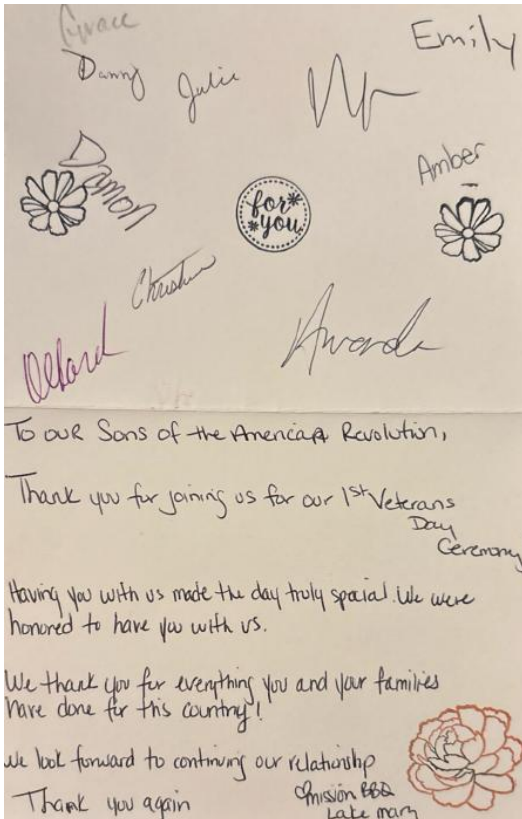


# The Bell Ringer

page 11

## Veterans Day Ceremony – Mission BBQ – Lake Mary

November 11, 2025



A Thank You Note from  
Mission BBQ – Lake Mary  
November 11, 2025



# The Bell Ringer

page 12

## Mary Virginia Cabell Chapter Meeting

November 11, 2025

From left to right – Harry Rinker, Burt Fairchild, Robin Preston, Michael Meyer, and Color Guard Commander Phil Markoe.



## Central Florida Chapter Meeting

November 12, 2025



GREAT turnout at the first evening chapter meeting of the year.



# The Bell Ringer

page 13

## Central Florida Chapter Meeting

November 12, 2025



From left to right – Robin Preston (presenter), Jane Bullock, Kim Cullars, Michael Neal, and Andrew Sechler received America 250 Bronze certificates.



Donald Irely received a Military Service Veterans Corps certificate.



Kathy Markoe received a Certificate of Appreciation for service above and beyond the call of duty during the November 8 Veterans Day Parade. And she might have saved a dog.

Michael Meyer made a presentation on Science in the Age of the American Revolution.



Randal Allen presented a flag-retirement certificate to Compatriot Robert Kelchner through his daughter, Kathy Markoe.





# The Bell Ringer

page 14

## Lafayette Volunteer Service Medal

November 17, 2025



**Harry Rinker** was awarded the Lafayette Volunteer Service Award by Phil Boyd, the SAR Executive Director. Harry's volunteer work was all genealogy-related, mainly working at conventions where the SAR had recruitment tables. CONGRATULATIONS HARRY!

*According to Volume V of the NSSAR Handbook, the National Society presents the Lafayette Volunteer Service Award to an individual for volunteer service performed at the NSSAR Headquarters in Louisville, KY, or other significant volunteer work as determined by the President General. The award is presented upon accumulation of forty (40) hours of volunteer service.*

## Florida Council of Independent Schools Convention

November 20 & 21, 2025

Phil Markoe and Kevin Shurte (from Ft. Lauderdale Chapter) man a table at the two-day conference in Jacksonville. Their main goal was to encourage participation in SAR Educational Outreach competitions.





# The Bell Ringer

page 15

## Wreaths Across America

### Wreath Sales Drive – Longwood Arts and Crafts Festival

Saturday and Sunday, November 22 - 23, 2025



Harry Rinker, Michael Meyer, and Phil Markoe worked at the festival on Saturday, November 22, taking photos with festival goers and participants while also selling wreaths.



On Sunday, November 23, Harry, Michael, and Phil were joined by Randal Allen.

The total number of wreaths sold using the chapter QR code, to date, is 36.



# The Bell Ringer

page 16

## A How-to Guide for the Color Guard

### Proper Commands for Posting Colors and other Indoor Events

Posting the Colors & Other Indoor Events. The most common Color Guard activity will be the posting of the Colors at a meeting or other indoor public event. Given the wide variety of locations, meetings, and other details, there is no single program that can serve as an example. However, the basic commands that will be used in such an event are provided. In all commands where direction is given, the command should be timed so that the execution of the command begins on the left foot.

- **Color Guard, Attention.** Guardsmen come to attention with flags and firearms on the floor to their right.
- **Carry Arms.** Flags and firearms are lifted into position so that they can be carried.
- **Color Guard, Mark Time March.** Guardsmen march in place, starting with the left foot, to establish the tempo for subsequent commands.
- **Color Guard, Forward March.** Guardsmen move forward, starting on their left foot.
- **Color Guard, Mark Time March.** Front ranks halt their forward progress and continue to march in place, allowing subsequent ranks to catch up to the final position if necessary.
- **Color Guard, Halt.** All marching ceases within two beats or steps.
- **Color Guard, Left / Right Face.** Guardsmen face the appropriate direction to face the audience as ordered by the Commander.
- **Present Colors.** All flags except the National are dipped, and firearms are brought to the Present Arms position for pledges and the National Anthem.
- **Color Bearers, About Face.** All color bearers will turn to face toward the flag stands.
- **Post the Colors.** Color bearers place the flags on the flag stands and dress them appropriately. Color bearers are free to move forward and back one step as necessary. Musketeers continue to maintain the present arms position.
- **Present Arms.** Color bearers salute the posted Colors.
- **Order Arms.** All guardsmen return to the attention position.
- **Color Guard, Center Face.** All guardsmen face the appropriate direction to move out of the room in a single or double column.
- **Color Guard, Post (or To your post).** All guardsmen move to a previously designated location or post.



# The Bell Ringer

page 17



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY COMPATRIOTS

It's time to party. These Compatriots are celebrating a birthday during the next month.

**November 30** – Samuel Jones & Louis Lovstrand

**December 3** – Charles Grist III

**December 6** – Frederick Gaines III

**December 9** – Stephen Atwood & Mark Owens

**December 11** – Robert Cline & Milton Mersinger

**December 12** – Robert Patton

**December 14** – Luke Cardinal

**December 16** – Jack Cooper

**December 18** – David Townsend

**December 22** – John Esler

**December 25** – Charles Wilklow

**December 26** – Timothy Roniger

**December 27** – Howard Marshall & Daniel Coughlin Jr.

**December 29** – Daniel Garris



# The Bell Ringer

page 18

**Your Gift is APPRECIATED!**

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement

Orlando VA Healthcare System  
(675)  
13800 Veterans Way,  
Orlando, Florida, 32827

November 17, 2025

In Reply Refer To: 675/135 A

Robin Preston  
8691 Bayview Crossing Dr.,  
Winter Garden, Florida, 34787

Dear Robin Preston:

On behalf of the Orlando VA Healthcare System (675) patients and staff, we would like to extend our appreciation to you for your 94 groceries and toiletries on November 17, 2025.

It is through the efforts of community partners like you that allow us to continue the quality care and services that we seek to provide for our deserving Veterans. We look forward to the opportunity to work with you again for future events.

Thank you for your continued support and advocacy.

Sincerely,

Cristina Mercado Acevedo  
CDCE Chief  
CDCEP 3374058

In accordance with VHA Directive 4721, we are required to state, "The Department of Veterans Affairs did not provide you, the donor, any goods or services in consideration in whole or part for your contribution."



# The Bell Ringer

page 19

## The Drive Continues!



**CENTRAL FLORIDA CHAPTER**



*Orlando VA Fisher House Donation Drive*

*SUPPORT OUR HEROES — SUPPORT FISHER HOUSE*

Bring some or all of the items listed below to the next Chapter meeting on December 10

### Items Requested

#### Most Needed Items

- Bottled Water
- Fabric Deodorizer Spray
- K-cups (regular & decaf)
- Bathroom cleaner spray

#### Cleaning/Laundry Supplies

- Lysol Kitchen Pro spray
- Scentiva Multi-purpose
- Laundry scent beads
- Laundry detergent pods
- Laundry bleach
- Dishwasher pods
- Dryer sheets
- Lysol disinfectant spray

#### Food & Miscellaneous Items

- Ensure (various flavors)
- Pop-Tarts
- Clorox or Lysol wipes
- Tea Bags
- Gatorade (different flavors)
- Pastries (individually wrapped)
- Snacks/Chips/Cookies (individually wrapped)
- Belvita breakfast snacks
- Napkins/Paper towels
- Microwavable soups, chili, etc.

**IF YOU ARE MAKING A DONATION IN DECEMBER PLEASE ITEMIZE BY NUMBER OF ITEMS AND COST PER ITEM on paper for Randal**



# The Bell Ringer

page 20

## The First Amphibious Assault Memorial Pompano Beach, Florida

**Dedication is set for March 14, 2026**



## Donate to the Cause

First Amphibious Assault Website - <https://1776landing.org/>



# The Bell Ringer

page 21

## November History Lesson

### First Thanksgiving in the United States

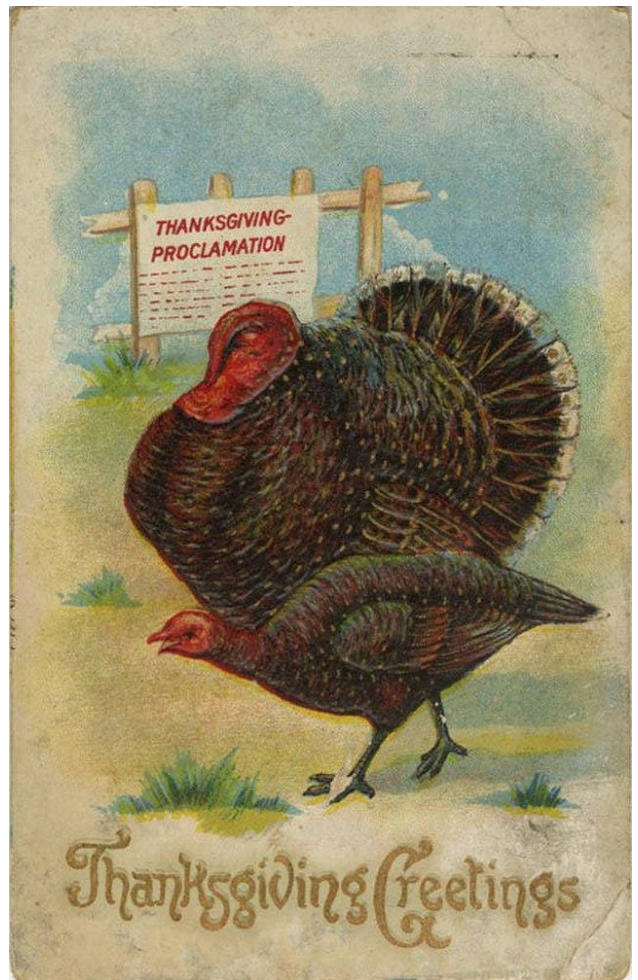
**Date:** December 17, 1777

**Occasion:** The Continental Congress declared a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to celebrate America's victory at the Battle of Saratoga, a major turning point in the war.

**George Washington's Role:** General George Washington issued General Orders for the observance across all Continental Army camps.

**Observed by all 13 States:** It was the first time all 13 states united for a national day of Thanks

This Revolutionary Thanksgiving wasn't about turkey and stuffing—it was a deeply spiritual and patriotic moment, thanking Providence for military success and praying for continued strength and unity. It laid the groundwork for future proclamations, including Washington's 1789 Thanksgiving as president



**1863 – Lincoln's Proclamation:** During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln declared a national Thanksgiving Day to be celebrated on the last Thursday of November. He hoped it would unify a divided nation

**1941 – Fixed Date Established:** Congress officially made Thanksgiving a federal holiday, setting it on the **fourth Thursday of November**, where it remains today



# The Bell Ringer

page 22

## Looking for Something to Do

DATE	WHAT	WHERE	COLOR GUARD
4 DEC 2025	Naturalization Ceremony	Orlando – 401 West Central Blvd	Y/N
6 DEC 2025	100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lakeland DAR Chapter	Lakeland, FL	Y
10 DEC 2025	CFLSAR Chapter Meeting 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.	4755 Howell Branch Road Winter Park	N
13 DEC 2025	Wreaths Across America	Multiple Locations	Y
17 DEC 2025	CFLSAR Book Club Meeting 8:30 – 9:30 p.m.	ZOOM – March to Independence War in the Southern Colonies	N
10 JAN 2026	CFLSAR Chapter Meeting 11:00 – 1:00 a.m.	4755 Howell Branch Road Winter Park	N
17, 18 JAN 2026	Central Florida Scottish Highland Games	Central Winds Park – Winter Springs	Y
31 JAN 2026	Liberty Tree Dedication Fort Lauderdale Chapter	City of Tamarac – Veteran’s Park 10:00 a.m.	y
13, 14 FEB 2026	CAR State Conference	Gainesville – University Hilton	Y/N
14 FEB 2026	CFLSAR Chapter Meeting 11:00 – 1:00 a.m.	4755 Howell Branch Road Winter Park	N
28 FEB 2026	Liberty Tree Dedication St Augustine Chapter	Palatka, Putnam County, FL	Y
5 MAR 2026	American Revolution Musical	OMNI Hotel – Championsgate, FL	N
5, 6, 7, MAR	FLSDAR State Conference	OMNI Hotel – Championsgate, FL	Y
11 MAR 2026	CFLSAR Chapter Meeting 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.	4755 Howell Branch Road Winter Park	N
14 MAR 2026	1 <sup>st</sup> Amphibious Assault Memorial Dedication	Pompano Beach, FL	Y
19 MAR 2026	Inheriting the Revolution: The Modern Legacy of 1776	Florida Atlantic University Boca Raton, FL	N



# The Bell Ringer

page 23

## Looking for Something to Do

DATE	WHAT	WHERE	COLOR GUARD
21 MAR 2026	Last Naval Battle Commemoration	Merritt Island, FL Veterans Memorial Center	Y
28 MAR 2026	Battle of Thomas Creek Commemoration	Jacksonville, FL	Y
4 APR 2026	Liberty Tree Dedication Jacksonville Chapter	Jacksonville, FL	Y
11 APR 2026	CFLSAR Chapter Meeting 11:00 – 1:00 a.m.	4755 Howell Branch Road Winter Park	N
15 APR 2026	The Villages Honor Flight	Sanford Airport – 9:15 p.m.	Y/N
2 MAY 2026	American Revolution Musical	Orange County History Center	N
2 MAY 2026	America 250 Event – Flag Raising by Color Guard	Orange County History Center Orlando, FL	Y
2 MAY 2026	Naturalization Ceremony	Orange County History Center	Y
8 MAY 2026	Battle of Pensacola Commemoration	Pensacola, FL	Y
8 MAY 2026	America 250 Ball Desoto Chapter DAR	Tampa Yacht and Country Club 7:00 p.m. – Tampa, FL	N
13 MAY 2026	CFLSAR Chapter Meeting 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.	4755 Howell Branch Road Winter Park	N
15, 16 MAY 2026	FLSSAR Board of Management	Kissimmee, FL – Embassy Suites	Y/N
27 MAY 2026	The Villages Honor Flight	Sanford Airport – 9:15 p.m.	Y/N
6 JUN 2026	American Revolution Musical	Orlando Garden Club	N
20 JUN 2026	Battle of Alligator Creek Bridge - Commemoration	Callahan, FL	Y
27 JUN 2026	Liberty Tree Dedication CFLSAR Chapter	Longwood, FL	Y



# The Bell Ringer

page 24

## Looking for Something to Do

DATE	WHAT	WHERE	COLOR GUARD
10, 11, 12, 13 SEP 2026	FLSDAR Fall Forum	OMNI Hotel – Championsgate, FL	Y/N
30 SEP 2026	The Villages Honor Flight	Sanford Airport – 9:15 p.m.	Y/N
28 OCT 2026	The Villages Honor Flight	Sanford Airport – 9:15 p.m.	Y/N
FALL2026	John Clark Historical Marker Dedication	Panama City, FL	Y



# The Bell Ringer

page 25

## It Happened 250 Years Ago

### Winter 1775 – Siege of Boston

As winter set in, both sides faced challenges. The Patriot had a severe shortage of gunpowder, so some soldiers were assigned pikes in case of a British attack. Another issue for Washington was the expiration of many soldiers' enlistments in December, most notably on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

Washington implemented several measures to retain soldiers. He granted furloughs and extra supplies to those who reenlisted. He promised two dollars and a blanket if they stayed, even allowing them to keep it when the war ended.

The British situation wasn't much better. Scurvy and smallpox had broken out in the city, and both sides suffered. The British troops were hungry and in desperate need of firewood. So scarce was the wood that they began dismantling wooden buildings to use as fuel.

**Trivia Alert:** The British did not suffer from gunpowder shortages like the Americans. An infantry regiment typically received 42,000 powder charges yearly, enough for each soldier to fire 60 to 100 lead balls. This allotment increased during times of heavy combat.

**DEC 1, 1775** – The *Prohibitory Act* went into effect, marking a declaration of economic warfare by the British Parliament against the thirteen colonies. It forbade all trade between Great Britain and the colonies and removed British trade protection.

### DEC 1, 1775 – Quebec Campaign

American Brigadier General Richard Montgomery arrived outside Quebec City with about seven hundred men. He also brought much-needed clothes and food for Colonel Benedict Arnold's men, which had been taken from British ships captured while he was escaping from Montreal. Additionally, Montgomery brought artillery, which the Americans desperately needed.

Along with other supplies, four cannons and six mortars were brought to Quebec, a valuable addition for the attacking forces. However, a minor issue made them less effective than the British cannons. Quebec was situated on a hill, so the Americans had to shoot their cannons upward, while the British fired downward, giving the British a range advantage.

Arnold, who was still over three years away from becoming a traitor, was not well-liked by most of his subordinates. When Montgomery arrived, several of Arnold's captains requested to serve under Montgomery's command.



# The Bell Ringer

page 26

## It Happened 250 Years Ago

**DEC 5, 1775** – The British vessel *HMS Scorpion* captured the ships *Hetty*, *Thomas* & *Stafford* at the mouth of the Charleston Harbor. The *Hetty* was converted into a British warship and renamed *General Clinton*, bolstering the British fleet in Charleston Harbor to six vessels.

**DEC 5, 1775** – Colonel Henry Knox arrived at Fort Ticonderoga.

**DEC 6, 1775** – The Continental Congress responded to the British *Proclamation of Rebellion* by affirming its loyalty to the King and clarifying that its grievance was with Parliament, not him. They argued that Parliament had no authority over them since the colonies lacked direct representation. Congress believed this non-representation violated the British Constitution.

### DEC 6, 1775 – Quebec Campaign

Following Colonel Benedict Arnold's example, Brigadier General Richard Montgomery sent a note to the British requesting their surrender. Unlike Arnold, Montgomery entrusted the note to a woman. Governor Guy Carleton burned the note without reading it, but spared the messenger. Ten days later, Montgomery tried again, with the same outcome.

Montgomery also launched a propaganda campaign aimed at Quebec City residents, claiming their situation was hopeless and encouraging them to turn against the British.

Even though the American chances of success seemed weak, Montgomery began bombarding the city with mortars. At the same time, he had snipers attempt to shoot British soldiers off the walls of the city.

Montgomery was racing against time. He needed to capture Quebec City by December 31 or risk being stranded without soldiers. Many of his troops had enlistments expiring on December 31 and, despite Montgomery's efforts to persuade them otherwise, they were determined to head home.

**DEC 6, 1775** – Officials in East Florida held a two-day congress with Florida Indian tribes, solidifying an alliance with the British throughout the war.

**DEC 7, 1775** – John Paul Jones was commissioned as a first lieutenant in the Continental Navy, serving aboard the *Alfred*.



# The Bell Ringer

page 27

## It Happened 250 Years Ago

### DEC 9, 1775 – Quebec Campaign

For his role in capturing Fort Saint-Jean, the Second Continental Congress promoted Richard Montgomery to Major General. Tragically, he died on December 31 during the Battle of Quebec, without ever learning of his promotion.

### DEC 9, 1775 – Siege of Boston

Colonel Henry Knox departed Fort Ticonderoga for Cambridge, Massachusetts, with thirty-nine field pieces, two howitzers, and fourteen mortars. The artillery was transported on forty-two specially designed sledges over three hundred miles, crossing several frozen rivers, including the Hudson and Connecticut Rivers. It required one hundred sixty oxen and several teams of horses to pull the artillery, which ranged in size from three-pounders to forty-two-pounders.

### DEC 9, 1775 – The Battle of Great Bridge

The Battle of Great Bridge was fought in, of all places, an area known as Great Bridge, Virginia. It was a victory for the Virginia militia, resulting in the departure of the Royal Governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore. His real name was John Murray, and he was the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dunmore.

Patriot forces were stationed on one side of the Elizabeth River, south of Norfolk, while Dunmore's forces occupied a fortified position on the opposite side. Dunmore ordered an attack on the Patriot location, but it was decisively repelled. The British, Loyalists, and enslaved people suffered around one hundred casualties, while the Patriots had only one wounded.

Dunmore and Loyalists evacuated Norfolk, taking refuge on naval vessels in the harbor. On January 1, 1776, Norfolk was destroyed, an act initiated by Dunmore and completed by Patriot forces.

Approximately 800 enslaved people had joined Dunmore in the battle to gain their freedom. Most of them ended up dying of smallpox or being sold in the Caribbean. Dunmore's actions before and after the battle convinced many locals, hesitant about cutting ties with England, to join the Patriot cause. They feared a slave uprising.

**DEC 11, 1775** – Martha Washington arrived in Cambridge, having not seen her husband since May. It is estimated that Martha spent nearly half of the war with Washington. Of the approximately 103 months the war lasted, Martha was with her husband for between fifty-two and fifty-four of them.



# The Bell Ringer

page 28

## It Happened 250 Years Ago

**DEC 14, 1775** – Patriot ranks in Norfolk, Virginia, had swelled to about 1,200. As the senior officer, Colonel Robert Howe assumed command of the occupying forces. He adopted a hard line toward Virginia's Royal Governor, John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore. He denied supplying supplies to the overcrowded British ships and demanded parity in the exchange of prisoners.

**DEC 17, 1775** – General George Washington received stolen letters indicating that the British were stockpiling ammunition and weapons in St. Augustine. From the letters, Washington concluded that the British planned to invade the southern colonies.

**DEC 18, 1775** – General Washington requested Congress to authorize an invasion of East Florida, which, although not an American colony, was held by the British. Washington made four more such requests between 1775 and 1780.

**DEC 19, 1775** – During the night, Patriot militia attacked a British encampment on Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, killing and capturing several British troops. With Sullivan's Island now cleared of British forces, the Patriots began constructing a defensive fortification. At 7:00 a.m., Captain John Allston and his 54 Indians surprised the British, burning the Pest House, destroying water casks, and burning Gunner George Walker's house. Four runaway slaves who refused to be taken were killed. The Indians captured four white men, four women, and three children, including three men and a boy from the *HMS Cherokee*. Several British sailors hid overnight and were fired upon by the Indians when taken off the island the next morning.

**DEC 20, 1775** – The British ship *Liverpool* arrived off Norfolk, accompanied by a store ship loaded with supplies and munitions. Lord Dunmore positioned four ships along the waterfront—the *Dunmore*, the *Liverpool*, the *Otter*, and the *Kingfisher*—in a threatening line. Once the vessel appeared, there was a mass exodus of people and possessions from the town.

**DEC 22, 1775** – While it's well-known that Washington was appointed Commander-in-Chief on June 15, he wasn't the only one. On this date, the Continental Congress appointed Esek Hopkins as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Navy.



# The Bell Ringer

page 29

## It Happened 250 Years Ago

Before the end of the year, Congress appropriated \$100,000 to purchase four existing ships converted into warcraft. Additionally, Congress allocated \$866,666 per vessel, or \$66,666 in total, to construct 13 frigates.

In 1775, the Royal Navy had 131 ships of the line and 139 smaller warships, although not all were stationed in the colonies.

**DEC 22, 1775** – Following the truce from the Battle of Ninety Six, a group of South Carolina militia and newly raised Continentals, commanded by Colonel Richard Richardson and Colonel William Thompson, moved into the region between the Broad and Saluda Rivers to break up gathering Loyalists. Richardson and Thompson were soon joined by 700 North Carolina militia under Colonel Thomas Polk and Colonel Griffith Rutherford, and 220 Continental regulars under Colonel Alexander Martin. These combined American forces totaled about 4,000 troops.

On December 22, the Americans launched an attack, and the Loyalist resistance quickly collapsed. Richardson's men captured several Loyalist leaders, including Thomas Fletchall, who was found hiding in a hollow sycamore tree. One Tory unit did not disband with the initial assault but was soon routed by part of Richardson's command.

**DEC 23, 1775** – Patriot forces departed from the South Carolina back country and headed toward Charleston. At the time, Charleston was a city of ten thousand people and the fourth-largest city in the colonies.

**DEC 24, 1775** – The captain of the *Liverpool* sent an ultimatum to the town, stating his preference to purchase provisions rather than take them by force. Colonel Robert Howe rejected the ultimatum and prepared for a bombardment.

**DEC 27, 1775** – A large British merchant ship, the *Adamant*, docked in London, carrying Ethan Allen as a prisoner. Also onboard was the famous Mohawk, Joseph Brant—though not as a prisoner. Known as Thayendanegea, meaning 'two sticks together,' Brant was in London to understand British intentions in America.



# The Bell Ringer

page 30

## It Happened 250 Years Ago

**DEC 30, 1775** – The captain of the Liverpool demanded that Patriot forces stop parading and changing the guard on the waterfront, as he found it offensive. He also suggested that the women and children in town should leave. Colonel Howe refused.

### DEC 31, 1775 – Quebec Campaign

This battle, on the last day of 1775, marked the Continental Army's first significant defeat. Unfortunately, it would not be the last or worst defeat before achieving independence. The silver lining is that it was the only substantial defeat during the first year of fighting.

The American side suffered significant losses compared to the British. An estimated 30 to 60 Americans were killed, and between 300 and 450 captured. British casualties ranged from 5 to 50, depending on the source.

Before the Americans could march on Quebec, the city was reinforced in preparation for an assault. British defenses were bolstered by around 15,000 Canadian militia and approximately 85,000 Indians from various tribes. Although supportive of the British, the Indians were not as dedicated to their cause as the Patriots were to theirs.

Even before the fall of Montreal, the British were reinforcing Quebec City under Lt Governor Hector Cramahé. Initially slow, the efforts became more urgent upon confirmation that Colonel Benedict Arnold was approaching. They accelerated even more after the fall of Montreal.

Quebec was divided into two distinct parts: the lower and upper cities, separated by a wall. The plan called for a two-front attack. Major General Richard Montgomery would lead one assault, while Arnold would lead the other. The objective was to capture the lower city first, then scale the walls to take the upper city.

The forces under Arnold's command were about half the size of the British. Some muskets were non-functional, and there were only about five cartridges for those that worked. Imagine the morale at that pre-battle pep rally.



# The Bell Ringer

page 31

## It Happened 250 Years Ago

*"Oy, mates, we are about to attack a city surrounded by walls, built on two levels. We're going to go after the city on top. Our few cannons will be ineffective in helping us breach the walls. I've picked the nastiest day of the year for our little mission to make it more exciting for everyone. I know some of you have muskets that don't work, and the others only have enough ammo to shoot five or so times. You're tired, you're hangry, you stink, most of you have rotten, snaggle-toothed teeth, and your clothes leave a lot to be desired if you have clothes. Many of you will be like rats on a sinking ship tomorrow when you leave to go home. BUT YOU CAN DO IT. Dismissed."*

*"Wait, wait, wait, I forgot something. I just wanted to remind you that we're against the greatest army on earth. Dismissed."*

*"Wait, wait, wait, if I don't get another chance to say this, HAPPY NEW YEAR. Dismissed."*

The American artillery, located 700 yards from the city walls, was ineffective in breaching them. With the ground frozen, the artillery couldn't be entrenched and was instead placed behind ice blocks. The British cannons took out two American mortars, prompting the Americans to pull back the remaining ones out of range.

A snowstorm began on the afternoon of December 30, bringing the heavy snowfall Montgomery needed to launch his attack. The assault commenced between 4 a.m. and 5 a.m. on the morning of December 31.

What started as a snowstorm on the 30<sup>th</sup> turned into a full-blown blizzard on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Defenders on the wall spotted lanterns from the advancing soldiers and sounded the alarm by ringing the bells of the Notre-Dame-des-Victoires church.

An advance party managed to breach the outer wall of the lower city. Montgomery and about fifty men went to a building part of the city's defenses, where they encountered British militia armed with muskets and cannons.

Montgomery, while waving his sword, was shot in both thighs and through his face, dying instantly as he led his men toward the building. Those near him were also killed or wounded when a British cannon, loaded with grapeshot, fired at them from point-blank range.



# The Bell Ringer

page 32

## It Happened 250 Years Ago

**Trivia Question:** *What is **grapeshot**?* Unlike a single cannonball, grapeshot consisted of multiple smaller metal balls packed together in a cannon, often inside a canvas bag or metal cannister. Effective for killing personnel in land and sea battles, grapeshot was also used at sea to damage rigging and sails, hampering the ship's ability to maneuver. Think of a cannon firing grapeshot as a large shotgun, only shooting larger pellets.



Many of Montgomery's officers were either killed or wounded. Those who remained ran towards safety, returning to their original staging area outside the city walls. In their haste, they left Montgomery's body behind.

Among those they didn't leave behind, but perhaps should have, was the unharmed Aaron Burr. If the name sounds familiar, it's because he became infamous for killing Alexander Hamilton in a duel, twenty-eight years later.

While Montgomery was being killed, Arnold was attacking a different part of the lower city, with his forces from Massachusetts, along with Canadians and Indians from the Seven Nations of Canada. They managed to pass the outer gates undetected, but their luck quickly ran out.

Soon, city defenders on the walls discovered what was happening and began their defense. They threw grenades and fired muskets down towards the attackers. Arnold's forces could not return fire to those on the walls.

While moving to a new location, Arnold's forces became disoriented in the unfamiliar streets and the raging blizzard. As Arnold prepared for a frontal assault, he was shot in the leg. Due to his injury, he transferred command to Captain Daniel Morgan and retreated to the rear.



# The Bell Ringer

page 33

## It Happened 250 Years Ago

Morgan's men had some success until their powder became damp, and their muskets could not fire. They held up in some buildings, trying to get their powder to dry. Unfortunately, their location was revealed, and their position came under more scrutiny. As time progressed, Morgan's situation became more desperate, and by 10 a.m., he and his troops surrendered. Morgan was the last to give up. He gave his sword to the Catholic priest who had been sent to ask for his surrender.

As expected, there was a mass exodus of Patriot troops on January 1. The Continental Congress refused to implement long-term enlistments or to offer re-enlistment bonuses. Washington worried that his failure to maintain troop numbers could end the rebellion. Distraught by Congress's inaction, he even threatened to resign.

Despite losing a third of the American army in Canada in just three hours, Arnold decided to continue the siege. Guy Carleton, however, was unfazed by Arnold's efforts. By early January, he believed Quebec had enough resources to last until May.

According to Governor Carleton, there were a total of 461 American casualties. Thirty were killed in action, 42 were wounded, and 389 were captured. Of those captured, three dozen died from either wounds or disease.

After receiving the defeat report, Congress ordered additional reinforcements to assist Arnold. Throughout the winter, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire troops arrived outside the city. Meanwhile, Arnold conducted periodic bombardments, though with little effect.

Here's a notable example of early biological warfare. Carleton ensured the Patriots became infected with smallpox by providing them with 'entertainment' in the form of infected prostitutes.

Besides the smallpox, the Patriots also faced a severe shortage of provisions. They struggled to purchase supplies due to a lack of gold coins, and once the gold ran out, providers no longer trusted the paper money.

**Thus ended 1775, marking the first year of the American Revolution.**