



Muskets & Broadsword

Orange County Chapter Sons of the American Revolution
October 2007

Editor Jim Blauer

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MEETING INFORMATION

When: October 13, 2007

Where: The Sizzler Restaurant
1401 North Harbor Blvd.
Fullerton, CA

Time: Set up and Social begins at 11:00am

Meeting: Called to Order at 11:30am

Website: www.orangecountysar.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I'd like to thank Danny Cox for speaking at our September meeting and sharing some encouraging thoughts, ideas & insight for success & personal fulfillment he has learned over the years. Some of it passed on through his friend & mentor James D Newton. Jim Newton in turn learned from some of the most uncommon personal friend's including; Thomas Edison, Harvey Firestone & Charles Lindbergh among others. You never know whose life you will touch along the way & who will touch you. A very insightful presentation.

The month of October has some interesting dates to note such as: The battle of Germantown, Pa. Oct 4, 1777. Although the Americans were repulsed it was still considered a psychological success due to the boldness of it. Then there's Oct 17, 1777 with the American victory at Saratoga. How about the battle at Kings Mountain on Oct 7, 1780 and of course the surrender at Yorktown, Va. on Oct 19, 1783. I am especially proud of my 5th great grandfather who was at Yorktown. He was Pvt. Richard Spires of the 3rd Maryland line & a part of Baron Von Stuben's division. He proudly states in his pension affidavit that he was a witness to the surrender. Finally an often unnoticed date from literally the final moments of the Revolution just days before the disbandment of the American army was a key decision when a Virginia resolution passed on Oct 23, 1783 that emancipated any slaves who had fought for independence during the Revolutionary War.

We are in the final quarter of this year & need to be thinking of officer elections & the many other positions that need to be filled to keep our chapter running smoothly & effectively for the coming year. I will not be able to

continue for an additional year as Chapter President due to a change in my work schedule which will preclude me from several meetings this coming year. As a result I am also giving up my position as Medals & Awards Chairman as well as the JROTC Awards Chairman. I have held these positions for the last few years after Walter Davis passed me the torch and have been honored to do so. If you have an interest in serving in one or more of these and any other officer capacity please advise myself or Hugh Richards or John Dodd as we'll be compiling a list for the coming election a couple of months away. One last thought as I encourage all who can possibly attend, to be at the Oct 13th luncheon & meeting to hear our speaker Mr. Walter Ehlers a true American hero as a recipient of our nations highest award for valor the Medal of Honor. He deserves a full crowd & a reception most deserving for his heroic WWII service & equally so to remember his brother Rowland's sacrifice immediately upon landing at Omaha Beach on D-day June 6, 1944. Come, hear & meet the real deal and a true American patriot.

Yours in patriotism,

Dan Henry

WALTER EHLERS--AMERICAN HERO

This is the story of seven June days in 1944 in the life of Walter D. Ehlers. For his bravery, he would receive the nation's highest military honor. To understand the impact of those seven days -- June 4 to June 10 -- this is his story. Ehlers, born in Manhattan, Kansas, joined the Army in 1940 with his brother Rowland. Four years later, they were both noncommissioned officers and veterans of two amphibious landings -- North Africa and Sicily. After the fighting in Sicily ended, their unit, the 1st Infantry Division, was sent to Dorchester, England,

about 35 miles from Weymouth. Ehlers, then a noncommissioned officer, said, "We had more amphibious training." The reason for the six-months of rigorous training was the arrival of so many replacements for men who had been wounded or killed in the fighting in those two campaigns. "They had never seen combat before. We had to train them" for what would be the invasion of Normandy. Along the southern coast of England and Wales, amphibious training centers were established. The major base was at Slapton Sands, south of Dartmouth. Its topography resembled Normandy's coast-line. During this time, "I was separated from my brother. I went to L Company and he stayed in K." The reason for the separation was to spare families the loss of two or more brothers in a single incident. This change due to the loss of the five Sullivan brothers on the USS Juneau in 1942.

On the night of June 4, "we were on LCIs, heading for the assault on Omaha Beach. The 116th Infantry Regiment was attached to us." Aboard the crowded transport, the "soldiers were scared; their leaders were scared" not knowing what would be happening in a matter of hours, Ehlers said. The delay of a day because of bad weather did not help to allay the soldiers' fears. Walter's older brother would be in the second wave. "The first wave got pinned down" and soon Walter and his men "joined the chaos on the beach. We didn't have any exact orders as to who we were to be with," but "we landed where we should be." His men followed the newly promoted staff sergeant into the water when the Higgins boat they were in grounded on a sandbar. "We were about 100 yards out. I was up to my neck in water. For some, it was over their heads." But, Ehlers said, they all had their weapons. It was clear to Ehlers that they had to keep moving to stay alive. The Germans "were firing all around us. We'd drown if we stayed

in the water. We'd be dead if we stayed on the beach." The bulk of the 16th Infantry Regiment and the 116th were to the east on Omaha Beach. "All we did was follow the beach master, telling us to follow the path." The path was blocked by barbed wire. "Two bangalore torpedo men said they were pinned down." Ehlers and his soldiers were firing toward the bluff "trying to move the Germans out of the way." One of the bangalore torpedo men was wounded before he got off his round at the wire, but the second one hit the obstruction, blasting it clear. Now on the top of the bluff, Ehlers saw an American soldier trying to force a satchel charge into a German pillbox. The soldier was killed before he could get to the Germans. Ehlers then "immediately got into the trenches" that connected the German positions. Four Germans surrendered and the rest fled. When night fell, he slept by the hedgerows. "I got all 12 men off the beach without a casualty." Ehlers said 50 percent of the first wave became casualties, as did 30 percent in the second wave. His older brother died in the second wave attack. "I just think God was with us." For his actions on June 6, Walter would receive the Bronze Star with Valor Device. The next evening, Ehlers and his platoon from E Company pulled back during a German counterattack. The American lines ran -- zigzag -- he told author Flint Whitlock in his book, "Fighting First." To avoid shooting U.S. soldiers, he withdrew. Later, Ehlers and his men were on a night patrol when they captured several German soldiers. In a satchel that one of the Germans had dropped were maps of the second and third lines of defense away from the beaches near Goville. They took the satchel back to battalion headquarters for closer examination. With daylight, soldiers from Ehlers regiment pressed the edges of those lines that ran through the hedgerows.

Although his squad was in the lead crossing an open field the morning of June 9, the unit to his left began taking fire. He yelled: "Come on guys we got to get to the hedgerow to get some cover." This was a situation that could not remain static as Germans began firing from another hedgerow. "I went down to the hedgerow where I heard the machine gun" and came upon a patrol on the other side of the hedgerow. "I shot all four before they could shoot me." Ehlers was firing from a small opening in the middle of the hedgerow. The .30 caliber machine gun was still firing. The three Germans "couldn't see me" as he continued crawling along the hedgerow. He took out the first machine gun with his rifle. I "was exposed but they didn't see me." Ehlers then opened up on a second machine gun across the square field and eliminated it. "They were exposed." After hearing more noise, Ehlers scrambled up an embankment. There he found two mortar positions, "protected by the crossfire of two machine guns," Medal of Honor's citation reads. His squad was moving up with him. "I had the men fix bayonets." The Germans "became horrified when they saw the bayonets. We shot over 10 of them." The Germans made no effort at surrendering. The squad continued moving down the hedgerow toward another mortar position and took it out. Ehlers was covered by the squad, advancing on the third machine gun nest. "When he was almost on top of the gun, he leaped to his feet and, although greatly outnumbered, he knocked out the position single-handed," the citation reads. The assaults on the German defenses continued into the next day when Ehlers squad moved into one of the rectangular-shaped fields formed by the hedgerow. "We didn't know the Germans were there," obscured but in a rough "U" formation. Ehlers and his men were still advancing when their company commander "passed up the word to withdraw." Ehlers stood "up firing in a

semicircle and the automatic rifleman saw what I was doing and supported me. I saw three guys setting up a machine gun nest. I got hit in the back and shot the guy in the hedgerow." The soldier with the Browning Automatic Rifle was also shot in the back. "I got the wounded automatic rifleman" and "then I went to get the weapon." As Ehlers told author Larry Smith in his book "Beyond Glory," "the bullet hit my rib it went into my pack, hit a bar of soap, which turned it straight through the back of the shovel. It went through the edge of my mother's picture." He had his wound dressed. He refused to be evacuated. In December 1944, after recovering from another combat wound while fighting in the Hurtgen Forest, "I read about the Medal of Honor in *"Stars and Stripes"*." When he arrived at the command post to report back to duty, a colonel came up to him and said, "Sergeant Ehlers, you're supposed to be back in the states getting the Medal of Honor." Ehlers answered that he had read about it in *"Stripes"*. A few days later, he was commissioned a second lieutenant at a press conference. Maj. Gen. Clarence R. Huebner said to him after the ceremony, "You handled the press troops better than any one else," so he deserved the promotion. Among his other decorations are the Silver Star for his actions in Germany, Bronze Stars for service in Africa and Sicily, as well as Normandy, and three Purple Hearts. Ehlers returned to the United States in October 1945. "A lot of things happened in my five-year stretch in the Army." Ehlers retired after 29 years with the Veterans' Administration and later worked eight years for Disabled American Veterans. His son "spent eight months in Bosnia" as a Major in the Army National Guard. Walter continues to speak at a number of events & was featured in the

September issue of the American Legion. He has also been featured on the History Channel as part of their WWII shows.

An amazing story. One can only look forward to his appearance at our chapter meeting on October 13th. Should be very interesting.

4TH ANNUAL BARBECUE

On August 25th we held our 4th Annual Barbecue at the home of John & Karen Dodd.

There were 28 members and guests in attendance. Besides our own chapter, we had members from South Coast, General George Patton, Riverside, San Diego and Harbor Chapters.

Once again John Dodd took on the role of Master Chef, having manned the barbecues and cooking our burgers, weiners, ribs and turkey. Members and guests supplied the salads and desserts for all to enjoy. Karen Dodd worked her magic in the kitchen.

Following the lunch Lou Carlson spoke of the National Congress in Williamsburg and the effort to raise money for the Center For Advancing America's Heritage. As at the Congress, Lou passed around a container for members to place money in. We raised \$50. It has been asked of chapters that at their meetings they pass the hat for this fund raiser to get more donations for the new library in Louisville.

President Dan Henry then made 2 presentations. First was the presentation of the Bronze Baron Von Steuben Color Guard Medal and Certificate to Lou Carlson for the many activities he has participated in over the years for our chapter. Secondly he presented the Silver Good Citizenship Medal and Certificate to John Dodd for his service to the chapter over the years.

State President Karl Jacobs then made the second presentation of his Presidential Citations. The first had been presented back in July to the Sons of

Liberty Chapter for their sponsoring of the Massing of the Colors at Forest Lawn.

Though as he read the Citation he left out the name of the recipient, it became obvious who the recipient was when it was noted that this person had been responsible for having issued over 7000 Eagle Scout Certificates to Eagles in the Orange County area. He also noted his work as both Chapter and State Historian. That's right. It was our very own Jim Blauer.

Following then presentation President Jacobs asked members that if they feel there is a chapter or Compatriot you feel is deserving of a Presidential Citation to please contact him with your suggestion.

EAGLE SCOUT PROGRAM

At our September meeting, Eagle Scout Chairman Jim Blauer presented to Andrew Gregory the SAR Eagle Pin. This pin is for those members who are Eagle Scouts. Others who have been presented this pin are Jim Shadwick, Jim Blauer, Walter Davis, Wade Shannon and Warren Oakes.

Of the over 7000 certificates, Andrew was number 6547 back in March 2006. Jim had Andrew's father Compatriot Kent Gregory do the honors of pinning his son.

It is ironic that with Compatriot Blauer having received the Presidential Citation for his work in issuing the Eagle Certificates of Recognition, that there is the possibility of this program coming to a halt.

By the end of June we had issued 7163 Certificates in Orange County. Compatriot Blauer was contacted by the Scout office and told they were in a money crunch and could no longer mail out the Certificates. In an effort to save money a letter listing all those who want to honor the Eagles with a Certificate was to be placed in the Eagle

packet and it was up to the Scout or parents to contact these people to get them. No requests were received throughout July and by mid August Compatriot Blauer was in contact with the Scout office to try and get the names and addresses and have the chapter cover the postage. A couple days later the Scout office called and said they can no longer give out names or addresses due to the Federal Privacy Act. We will keep you advised on this situation.

MARCHING THROUGH HISTORY

On October 20-21 the 2007 Marching Through History Exhibition will take place at Prado Regional Park, 16700 S. Euclid Avenue, Chino.

This two day event of reenactments educates hundreds of visitors about the American Revolution as well as other wars in our history. Some of those who will be participating are the Sons of Liberty, Riverside, and Redlands chapters as well as Morgan's Rifle Rangers and the Delaware Regiment of foot. They will be opposing the British 23rd and 33rd Regiments.

You are invited to partake of the activities of this event by enjoying and learning from the encampments, battles and exhibits.

Tell your schools about this as it makes for a great getaway weekend for the family. Bring a picnic lunch and make a day or weekend of this event.

Should you wish to be a participant, the Sons of Liberty Chapter has uniforms and is looking for a few good men to fill out their Color Guard. If interested you may contact Don Moran at dmoransar@lightspeed.net for more information about the color guard.

THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR

Also known as just the Medal of Honor this award was established during the American Civil War. It

was on December 9, 1861 that Senator James W. Grimes of Iowa introduced Bill S82 in the Senate and was designed to "promote efficiency in the Navy" by authorizing the production and distribution of "medals of honor". 200 such medals were authorized to be produced with the passage of the bill on December 21st. It was noted "they shall be bestowed on such petty officers, seamen, landsmen and mariners as shall distinguish themselves by the gallantry in action and other seamanlike qualities during the present war(Civil War)." With the signature of President Lincoln, the Medal of Honor was born.

Two months later Senator Harry Wilson of Massachusetts submitted a similar bill on February 17th, to authorize "the President to distribute medals to Privates in the Army of the United States who shall distinguish themselves in battle." The bill took a couple of months to wind its way through Congress. When President Lincoln signed S.J.R. No. 82 on July 12, 1862, the Army Medal of Honor was born.

The earliest recorded citation was actually a forerunner of the Medal of Honor. It was on March 3, 1847 that Congress authorized a "Certificate of Merit" to be presented by the President when a private soldier distinguishes himself in the service, along with additional pay of \$2 per month.

The first heroic act occurred on February 13, 1861. Bernard J. D. Irwin, an Assistant Army Surgeon, rescued the 60 soldiers of 2nd Lt. George Bascom's unit at Apache Pass, Arizona. The Medal of Honor had not yet been created, yet it was the first heroic act for which the Medal of Honor would be awarded. It was finally awarded to Irwin in 1894.

Francis Edwin Brownell performed the first act of the Civil War to Merit the Medal of Honor on May

24, 1861.

John Williams was the first from the Navy to perform an act of heroism. On June 26, 1861 he was on board the USS Pawnee, where he showed courage despite his wounds and his refusal to leave any man behind and his "Love for the Flag".

The only woman to receive the Medal of Honor was Dr. Mary Walker. She was one of eleven who were in the Battle of Bull Run on July 21, 1861 that performed actions that would lead to them being awarded the Medal of Honor. Dr. Walker was involved in three major battles.

There were some twenty-five soldiers and five sailors who performed heroic acts prior to the actual establishment of the Medal of Honor.

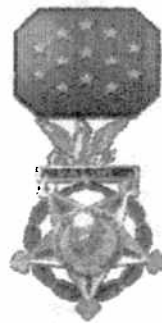
Those who are awarded this medal call themselves "recipients"(not winners), for what they received it for was not a game or contest. It was a time of "terror and death where their valor was tested then recognized by a grateful nation."

There are plans for a WALL OF HONOR, which will be the single largest planned exhibit for both the Hall of Heroes Museum and the "on-line version"

The WALL OF HONOR will contain a complete HONOR ROLL of American Medal of Honor heroes. The virtual Hall of Heroes will list the name and inspirational story of their heroism on the field and in battle.

For more information on the Medal of Honor, you

can Google "Medal of Honor" and several sites will come up with information about this highest award an American can receive from the United States of America. God Bless them all!!!***



THE CONGRESSIONAL
MEDAL OF HONOR

Photo Album

October 2007



At our 4th Annual SAR Barbecue, John Dodd continued his role as Master Chef. At left, Karen, Will and John Dodd once again hosted this event at their home. Below, Will and Karen survey the food set out for our pot luck lunch.



Above right guests Karen and Hugh Richards, Rex Shannon, Jim & Sue Shadwick, Mary Jo Shannon, Jim Quinnelly, Jerry Hereford(South Coast Chapter) and Kent Gregory(back to camera) enjoy a meal of Cheeseburgers, Ribs, Turkey, salads, and desserts.

Below left Jim Shadwick, Lou & Karen Carlson, Sandra & Karl Jacobs(Harbor Chapter), Jon & Marcia Rhoades (Harbor Chapter), and Francine & Travis Spears(San Diego Chapter). Karen Dodd Visits with Travis Spears, and Jim & Sue Shadwick lower right. A good time was had by all.



Photo Album

October 2007-2



At our 4th Annual Barbecue held on August 25th, President Dan Henry presented Lou Carlson(left) with the Baron Von Steuben Bronze Color Guard Medal. At right, President Henry presented John Dodd with the Silver Good Citizenship Medal .



Center left, State President Karl Jacobs presented the second of his Presidential Citations to Jim Blauer for his work in the Eagle Scout Recognition Program and as Chapter and State Historian.



At center right, Compatriot Danny Cox spoke to us at our September meeting. He received (below) a Certificate of Appreciation as well as a book on Alexander Hamilton.



Bottom left Compatriot Kent Gregory pins his son Andrew with the Eagle Scout Pin. This pin is for any SAR who is an Eagle Scout. Other Eagles who have received

this pin in our chapter include; Jim Shadwick, Jim Blauer, Wade Shannon, Walter Davis and Warren Oakes. Any other Eagles in our chapter who have not received a pin should contact Eagle Scout Chairman Jim Blauer.

