

New Hampshire



Minute Man

A bulletin issued in the interests of the New Hampshire Society, SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION and in tribute to the PATRIOTS OF THE THIRTEEN COLONIES, who pledged their lives and fortunes to establish the Republic.

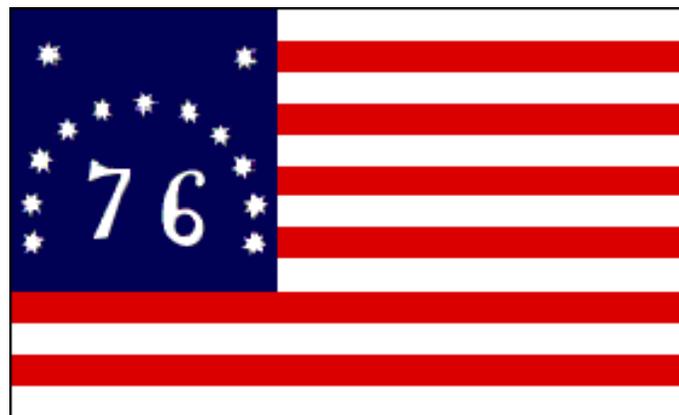
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1ST ANNUAL GENERAL JOHN STARK DAY IS A HUGE SUCCESS

The Society's first annual General John Stark Day celebrations took place at Stark Park in Manchester and at the New Hampshire State House in Concord on Monday April 26th, 2004. The day began with the mustering of the colors and the colonial militia (NHSSAR Rangers) at the gravesite of Major General Stark in Manchester. The day was overcast with a steady drizzle of rain falling, reminding the master of ceremonies of a day in August of 1777. NHSSAR President Benjamin H. Hampton, Jr. told the congregated spectators and officials that August 16, 1777, the day when Berkshire volunteers under the command of Lieutenant William Ford rode into Stark's camp with their chaplain prior to the Battle of Bennington, was likewise a day filled with rain. Upon his arrival in Waloomsac, NY, Reverend Thomas Allen, also known as the "fighting parson," sought out Brigadier General John Stark to discuss his trepidations about the men of Berkshire volunteering for any future service. Parson Allen addressed General Stark in substance as follows; "The people of Berkshire have often turned out to fight the enemy, but have not been permitted to do so. We have resolved that if you do not let us fight now, never to come again."



"Bennington 76" Flag

General Stark replied: "Would you go now in this dark and rainy night? No, go to your people; tell them to take rest if they can and if God sends us sunshine tomorrow and I do not give you fighting enough, I will never call upon you to come again." The storm continued until nearly noon on Saturday, the 16th of August. Suddenly the rain ceased, the clouds broke away and the sun came out in full splendor. As promised by the General, the Berkshire Militia saw "fighting enough."



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Stark's Brigade Standard

Immediately following President Hampton's opening statements relating the story of August 16, 1777, the rain ceased falling. General Stark, from a perch on high, may have been overseeing the day's events and provided weather befitting a day of remembrance for one of New Hampshire's greatest heroes.

The NH Rangers under the command of General Stark (Compatriot Richard Wright) brought the color guard to attention at the resting place of the General. A prayer written by NHSSAR Chaplain Dr. Gregory E. Reynolds was offered to the gathering. Alderman Mark A. Roy of Manchester's Ward 1 offered inspirational sentiments on the day and greetings from Mayor Robert A. Baines.

Following the speeches of dignitaries, wreaths were placed at the headstone of General Stark by the Molly Stark Chapter, NHSODAR; John Stark Society, Children of the American Revolution and the NHSSAR. President Ben Hampton offered words to dedicate the new SAR patriot grave marker that had been placed at General Stark's eternal resting place by the NHSSAR and John Stark Society, CAR. During the dedication, members of a student choral group from John Stark Regional High School provided inspirational songs.



SAR and CAR members pose with Representative David Lawton and Bob Lawton at the Statehouse in Concord.



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Picture to right:

Tribute to a New Hampshire Hero: Members of the NHSSAR and John Stark Society, C.A.R. at the grave of General John Stark in Manchester.



One hour later, on the grounds of the New Hampshire State House, the NHSSAR conducted another ceremony that included a flag raising at the General John Stark statue. The John Stark Regional High School choral group performed beautiful renditions of “The Star Spangled Banner,” “What A Wonderful World,” and “God Bless America.”

Guest speakers at the Concord ceremony included Representative David Lawton. Representative Lawton was in attendance with his father, who composed the 1969 legislation that placed New Hampshire’s state motto; “Live Free or Die!” (John Stark’s toast to the veterans of Bennington) on NH license plates. Representative David Lawton himself authored House Bill 753, signed by Governor Craig Benson on June 24, 2003, creating General John Stark Day (RSA 4:13-l). In recognition of his efforts, Representative Lawton was awarded the SAR Bronze Good Citizenship medal by President Hampton. Greetings and well wishes for a successful first annual General John Stark Day were forwarded by the NH Legislature, Mayor Michael L. Donovan of Concord, and the Office of the Concord City Manager. Governor Craig Benson was represented by a member of his staff who presented and read the Governor’s General John Stark Day Proclamation.

The NHSSAR would like to thank Compatriot Mark Preece and family for providing and planting a beautiful display of flowers in the sentinel urns that mark the entrance of General Stark’s burial plot. Additionally, the SAR would like to thank the John Stark Regional High School choir and staff for their enthusiasm and participation in the day’s events. Special recognition is due the John Stark Society, Children of the American Revolution for the placing of the bronze grave marker and clean up of the burial grounds days before the ceremony. Three huzzahs to all involved and “Live Free or Die, Death is not the Worst of Evils!”

