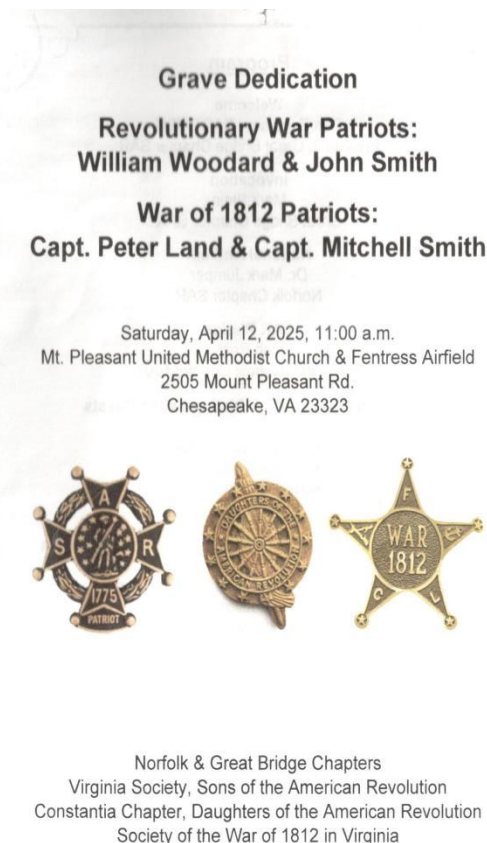
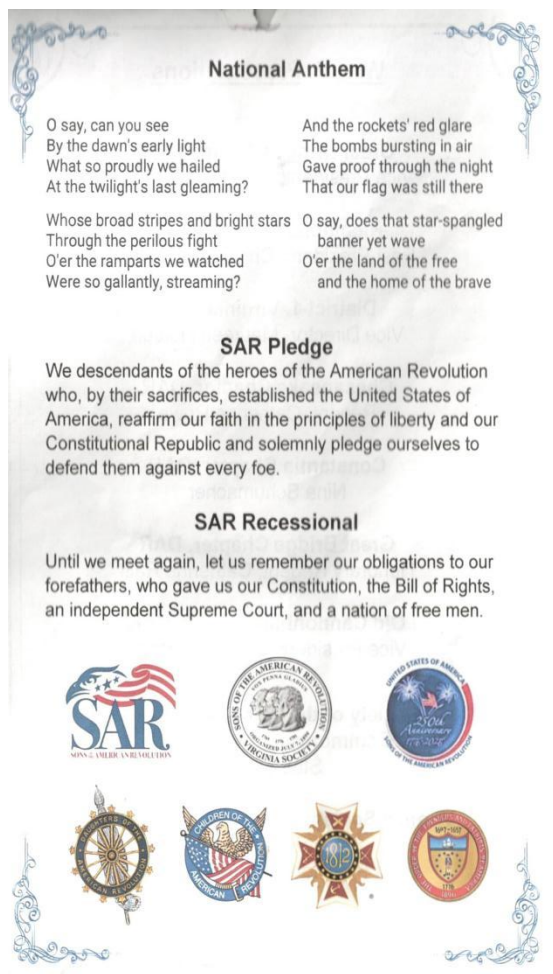


**PRESIDENT BUTLER ATTENDS JOINT SAR AND SOCIETY OF WAR OF 1812 WREATH
LAYING EVENT IN CHESAPEAKE, VIRGINIA, APRIL 12, 2025**

Current president of the Society of the War of 1812 in the Commonwealth of Virginia, Stuart Butler, joined several SAR chapters to lay wreaths in honor of two Revolutionary War soldiers, Private John Smith and William Woodard, and two War of 1812 veterans, Maj. Mitchell Smith and Capt. Peter Land. The site was the Smith cemetery located on the Fentress Auxiliary Naval Field in Chesapeake, Virginia. Over forty individuals from the Great Bridge Chapter, Richmond Chapter, Norfolk SAR chapters attended the event, as well as members of the Chesapeake, Constantia, Great Bridge, DAR, and Olde Cannonball Society, CAR. Also attending and helping during the ceremonies, was Scout Troop 5259, under supervision of Dr. Mark Jumper. Photos and the details of the ceremony are described in the program entered below for further information about the event. Also present was Kenneth Hawkins, representing Order of Founders and Patriots of America, and also a member of the Virginia Society of the War of 1812. Don Ferguson (Capt. USN-Ret), president, Great Bridge Chapter, served as MC. Photos are from the Great Bridge Facebook page, and Stuart Butler.



John Smith

Patriot John Smith was likely born in the 1750s and died in 1802 in Norfolk County, Virginia. All males ages sixteen to fifty were eligible for militia call up and he may have served as a member of the Norfolk County Militia, serving in the Norfolk County troop in 1777. However, John Smith provided material support to the government of Virginia and the revolutionary cause as documented in records available at the Library of Virginia. Several surviving records indicate he provided labor and material to build or maintain a Fort at Portsmouth. Lord Dunmore, Virginia's last royal governor, was driven from his post on Tucker's Point (today Hospital point) Portsmouth in late May 1776. The Patriots then occupied the position. Before departing, Dunmore burned the buildings requiring construction and improvements. Records reflect Smith supporting this rebuilding effort. The area changed hands several times during the war as British forces raided and occupied Tidewater Virginia before Portsmouth reverted to permanent Patriot control in August 1781.

John Smith owned a plantation of over 200 acres in Norfolk County that he willed to his son Mitchell Smith upon his death in 1802. This plantation is undoubtedly the same land where we are gathered here at the Smith family Cemetery, now part of Naval Auxiliary Landing Field Fentress. John Smith and his wife Julin Philips Smith had at least three children, Mitchell, Sarah, and Julin. Sarah Smith married (unknown) Mathias and the couple had at least one child, John S. Mathias, born before 1802. Mitchell Smith (b. 1781, d. 1816) married (1806) Olive Woodard (b. May 3, 1785, d. 1856). Olive Woodard was the daughter of William Woodard and Olive Butts. This explains why these two Patriots are interred together at the Smith Family Cemetery.

Capt. Peter Land

Capt. Peter Land of Lynnhaven Parish was probably born no earlier than 1771 according to U.S. census, 1810-1840, although his tombstone states 1763. Peter was the son of Jeremiah Land (died January 1805) and Ann Woodhouse (died after 1805), daughter of Maj. Jonathan and Mary Woodhouse. On September 13, 1794, he married Elizabeth Keeling (1764-1808), daughter of William and Anne Keeling of Lynnhaven Parish. Peter Land was the sixth generation of the Land family in Princess Anne County, the progenitor of which was Francis Land (1604-1656) who settled in Lower Norfolk County in 1630 and amassed over a thousand acres at the time of his death. Francis Land is believed to have been from Devon, England.

Peter Land's military career began as an ensign in 1806, lieutenant by March 3, 1810, and captain on June 1, 1812. Land's company was part of Princess Anne County's 20th Virginia militia, commanded by Lt. Col. James Robinson. Land's company was called out for active service from February 5-14; March 9-15, July 13-August 11, September 24-30, 1813. Land was stationed at Lynnhaven Inlet under Major William Nimmo in September 1813. The company was attached to Lt. Col. Francis Boykin's 3rd Virginia Militia, June 23-July 13, 1813, at Moran's Ropewalk. He was called out once more from August 13-October 24, 1814, with the 8th Virginia Militia, under the command of Lt. Col. Bernard Magnien of Norfolk, where his company was stationed at Plum and Smith's Creek batteries near Brambles.

Peter and his wife are believed to have had at least seven children: Elizabeth, William K., Jeremiah T., Lovey, Edward Cannon, Mary, and Sarah.

At the time of his death, probably in August 1845, Land owned over 1,700 acres and 18 enslaved persons. His will, probated on September 3, 1845, showed that his estate was appraised at nearly \$9,000. In his will, he gave much of his land to his children and sold the balance.

Maj. Mitchell Smith

Mitchell Smith's tombstone indicates that he was born in 1781. His obituary in the *Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald* for February 14, 1817, states that he was thirty-seven at the time of his death, which comports with the date on his tombstone.

Mitchell Smith was the son of John Smith and Julin Philips Smith as the biographical sketch for John Smith has indicated. Mitchell Smith married Olive Woodward, daughter of William Woodward and Olive Butts, on September 23, 1802.

At the time of the War of 1812 Mitchell Smith was a captain of a militia company in the 95th Virginia Militia, commanded by Lt. Col. Thomas Lee, one of two Norfolk County regiments. Smith was commissioned as a lieutenant on July 26, 1808, captain on May 17, 1809, and major on May 2, 1816. Captain Smith and his company saw service in the War of 1812 when his company was called up for active duty on June 23, 1813, and remained on duty until August 11, 1813. He was likely called up in response to the British sack of Hampton on June 25, 1813, and the threat that the British posed in Hampton Roads during the summer of 1813.

Major Smith died on February 11, 1817, leaving his wife, Olive, and four children. Though unnamed in the obituary, these children were: Dr. Napoleon John Mitchell Smith, 1809-1884; Edwin James Smith, 1815-1889, and Elizabeth C. Smith, 1807-1837. Dr. Napoleon Smith moved to the Midwest, where he died in Woodson County, Kansas; Edwin J. Smith and his sister, Elizabeth, remained in the area and are buried in the Smith Cemetery. Elizabeth married Edward Cannon Land, the son of Capt. Peter Land. The fourth child alluded to in the obituary may have died very young.

At the time of his death, Mitchell Smith owned 227 acres in the Mount Pleasant area and one town lot in Great Bridge. He also owned nine enslaved individuals. The appraised value of his land and personal items after settling debts was \$3,245.

William Woodard

Patriot William Woodard, sometimes spelled Woodward, served as a private in the Company of Captain Thomas Massie, 6th Virginia Regiment, from February 1776 through February 1778. Massie's Company is often credited to New Kent County, Massie's home. The company formed and trained in Williamsburg, then joined Washington's Army and operated in New Jersey in 1776 and 1777. Based on Massie's pension statement the company crossed the Delaware River in the Christmas 1776 attack on the Hessian garrison at Trenton, and recrossed the Delaware with Washington and fought at Trenton and Princeton in January 1777.

During this period, several men who were ill remained in Virginia, records reflect high mortality in the ranks of Massie's Company. Many others were ill from smallpox and related illnesses and recovering in various locations along the route from Virginia to New Jersey. William Woodard joined his unit in New Jersey on or about 1 April 1777. Woodard and the men remaining in Massie's company likely fought with the 6th Regiment at the Battles of Brandywine (September 1777), Germantown (October 1777) and possibly Fort Mifflin (November 1777). Woodard and most of the men in his company were enlisted for two years, established the winter camp at Valley Forge, and were discharged in February 1778. Details of William's life outside military service link him to Norfolk and Princess Anne Counties. Woodard returned to Virginia and is listed on the Princess Anne County census for 1783.

William Woodard and his wife Olive Butt had at least one child, Olive Woodard (b. 3 May 1785, d. 1856). Olive married Mitchell Smith (b. 1781, d. 1816). Mitchell Smith is the son of John Smith (b. 1750s, d. September 1802) and Julin Philips Smith. John and Mitchell Smith are also interred here in the Smith Family Cemetery.



President Butler describes the War of 1812 service of the two veterans and a brief history of the two families in the area.



Dr. Patrick Hannum of Norfolk Chapter providing accounts of the Revolutionary War service of the two veterans.



Wreaths on display at the Event



Tombstones L to R: Capt. Peter Land and Maj. Mitchell Smith