

# Sons of the American Revolution



Lt George Ewing Chapter (Athens, Gallia, Jackson, Meigs, Vinton Counties, Ohio) Summer 2017

## Officers and their contacts for 2017-2018

|                                 |  |  |
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| Chaplains                       | Dale Colburn and Scott Moody                   |  |
| Sergeant at Arms                | Benz   |  |
| Color Guard                     | Tom Romine, Jim Smith, Scott Moody, Andy Chiki |  |

**WEBSITE, please visit:** <http://www.sar-ewing.org>

**Chapter Meeting Dates and Presentations:** evening meetings usually begin at 6:30pm

**Sept 28<sup>th</sup>** Athens Community Center Room C (will need you to RSVP so George can order dinner)

We are hoping to make presentations of Heroism Certificates and Medals to the two Athens Police Officers involved in rescuing a boy from drowning in the Hocking River last summer. See the article below.

**Oct 6-8<sup>th</sup>** Point Pleasant Battle Days Encampment and Festival, Tu-Endie-We State Park on the River

**Sat 7<sup>th</sup>** Battle Days Parade (Main Street Point Pleasant, 11:00 am)

**Sun 8<sup>th</sup>** – Memorial Service at the Monument (President Scott will present our wreath)

**Oct 26<sup>th</sup>** TBA, this will be a JOINT meeting (our turn) with the Marietta SAR Chapter

Location and speaker yet to be determined.

## Heroics on the Hocking River rescue of boy

### Police officers, victim fought to save a young boy

By Dennis E. Powell, Staff, Athens News July 13, 2017 [https://www.athensnews.com/news/local/heroics-on-the-hocking/article\\_099266ce-6720-11e7-8f69-9f02c459de27.html](https://www.athensnews.com/news/local/heroics-on-the-hocking/article_099266ce-6720-11e7-8f69-9f02c459de27.html)



Last Saturday started out calm in Athens. Warm and sunny, the humidity seemed to have blown away with the strong storms of the night before.

Athens Police officer Justin Boggs was on patrol, accompanied by a new member of the department not long out of the academy. They had been on duty since 7 a.m., working a 16-hour shift ending at 11 that night. There was no reason to think it would be anything other than a long, slow tour of duty – until they received a call a little after 2 p.m.

“We’d just turned from West Union down Herrold (Ave.) when the call came in,” said Boggs, who has been with the APD for a year and a half and was with the Ohio University Police Department for several years before that. “The call came in as kayakers in the (Hocking River) needing help getting out. We went to the Habitat house (on West Union just down from White’s Mill), where we got out and could see four individuals in the water.”

An extended family group had decided to take advantage of the gorgeous day by paddling kayaks on the Hocking River in western Athens, swollen and fast from the previous night’s storm. Rounding the bend above White’s Mill, watery terror faced them. Some of the group managed to reach shore, but several weren’t able to escape the roiling water

at a drop-off where decades ago a dam had powered the mill.

According to officer Boggs, four people – Steve Lippson, 40, of Racine in Meigs County, his sister and brother-in-law, and Lippson’s young son – were now caught in the churning blender of muddy water immediately below the remains of the dam.

“Mr. Lippson was holding his son up out of the water midway out into the river,” Boggs said. “We saw him keep going under. There was no way to get down on the shore on (the north) side. So we got back into our car and moved over to White’s Mill. We made our way on the path down to the shore.”

Lippson’s brother-in-law had made it close to the shore, according to Boggs. “Mr. Lippson’s sister was upstream, closer to the falls, 20 or 30 feet out into the water. Where we had seen Mr. Lippson, his son was out in the middle of the river, right at the end of the rough water. We could no longer see Mr. Lippson. The man who was close to shore told us he had gone under and hadn’t come back up.”

At about this time, Lt. Nick Magruder, a seven-year APD veteran whose 12-hour shift had begun at 11 a.m., arrived.

“I dropped my gunbelt, dropped it there on the bank,” said Boggs. “Mr. Lippson’s sister had swum out and gotten the little boy, his son, and I swam out to the log, which wasn’t nearly as far out, and she was able to bring the son back to the log. That’s when I took him from her and swam in towards the bank.

“Lt. Magruder threw a catch pole out, that we use on animals, and he was able to pull us back in.”

Magruder was in the water, but not in the eddy where the large floating log had been slowly spinning for hours or days – it would be there until dragged away by a boat from the Athens Fire Department the next day. The current was fierce, especially near the dam and in the eddies.

“I didn’t go too far out at all, Mr. Lippson’s sister is the one who did most of the work,” said Boggs, who sat down with Magruder for an interview late Monday night. “I just swam out to the first log, and she brought him to me, and I just had to get him

ashore, and Lt. Magruder threw the catch pole out to me.”

Magruder spoke as if he thought Boggs was being too modest. “He was in water up to his chest, up to his neck – he wasn’t able to touch bottom at most points,” Magruder recalled. “I was trying to get around to where I could get a good angle on them in the water. There was a log that was going out, and I tried to get out on that to get the catch-pole to them, but I ended up having to get in the water with them and helping to get the child out of the water.

“But Justin (Boggs) went above and beyond. He went far out and really helped that lady. At that point she was pretty exhausted, and so was the man who was on the shore already – he said he was pretty beat up from just being in that water.” The woman was Lippson’s sister; the man, her husband.

Witnesses spoke in admiring tones later as they described the arrival of Boggs and Magruder.

“They didn’t hesitate for an instant,” said Jesse Dexter, who had been at a family celebration nearby when shouts and the screams of children drew them to the overlook at Habitat for Humanity House on West Union Street, the place where Boggs and the probationary officer had first surveyed the situation. “They didn’t slow down or take off their gunbelts or anything – they just went in after the little boy.”

Boggs and Magruder had in fact taken off their belts – besides holding a gun in its holster, police belts carry a lot of other equipment, and entering the water while wearing one would be like diving in tied to an anchor. But it’s true, Boggs and Magruder said, that there was no time to think it over before plunging into the fast-moving water.

“Once we got down to the bank, Lt. Magruder and me, we heard Mr. Lippson’s son scream, so we knew we were going to do what we had to do to get to him,” said Boggs before adding a detail that makes the story even more remarkable.

“I just learned to swim last month on vacation,” he said. “So I’m not too good in water to begin with, and I can’t tread water. I saw that log and I knew I had to get there, because if I stop I’m in trouble. Once I got there, the current was still kind of

pushing me and laying me flat. But I was able to make it to where I needed to be.”

Everyone in the water at that point was wearing a vest – the little boy and his aunt were wearing flotation vests, while the police officers were wearing their tactical protective vests. “I didn’t take my vest off,” said Boggs, “which was a mistake on my part because it’s extra weight.”

“It was pretty stressful, seeing him in the water,” said Magruder. “I only had to get in about thigh-deep, but it was still stressful for everyone.”

The new officer who had been riding with Boggs did her part, too. She took care of Boggs and Magruder’s gunbelts and relayed information to other officers and agencies. “At one point I yelled to her to request OU to get down on Richland Avenue in case anybody were seen heading down the river,” said Boggs. They had no idea how many people were involved or how many might be missing. “She was essentially our communications.”

“It was an eye opener for her, how fast it happened, how quick decisions have to be made, how you don’t have a lot of time to think about things,” said Magruder.

How quickly did it all unfold? “We were at Habitat for about 30 seconds, then we went around to White’s Mill, and from the time we got out of the car to the time we got into the water, less than a minute,” said Boggs. “At that point Mr. Lippson was already under water. We could see him when we were at Habitat House, and by the time we got to White’s Mill he was already under.

“We kept seeing him holding his son up when we were at Habitat House, and he kept going – we could see his head going under.”

Once everyone who could be rescued had been, a sad scene unfolded on the shore below the mill.

“The little boy was bleeding a very small amount on his lip,” said Boggs. “I think he just bit it. I don’t think it really hit him what was going on. The sister and brother-in-law were well aware of the seriousness of it.”

“They were pretty exhausted, too,” said Magruder.

As reported elsewhere, after a three-day search the body of Steve Lippson was recovered 200 yards downriver Tuesday morning.

His young son will grow up without a father, but perhaps will one day know that his dad died to save

him, his aunt risked her life to take up the struggle where his father left off, and two Athens Police officers risked their lives to see him finally to safety. It was a tragedy, but it had its share of heroism, too.



Compatriot Scott attended the formal opening of the visiting Vietnam War Memorial in Bicentennial Park, Richland Avenue, Ohio University, Athens. I hope that all of you came to pay your respects as well.



July 13, 2017: The Ohio Society SAR, Marietta Chapter Registrar Jean Yost hosted the 230th Anniversary Celebration of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 that was held at the "Start Westward Monument" in Muskingum Park, Front Street, Marietta, OH. The program included:

- “Education in the Northwest Ordinance” by Marietta College President William Rudd
- “Legal Provisions of Ordinance” by Ohio Supreme Court Justice Judith French
- Slavery Prohibited in Northwest Territory” by Denver Norman

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787, officially titled “An ordinance for the Government of the Territory of the United States Northwest of the River Ohio”, was adopted by the Confederation Congress on July 13, 1787. It established a government for the Northwest Territory, outlined the process for admitting new states to the Union, and guaranteed that newly created states would be equal to the original thirteen states. Considered one of the most important legislative acts of the Confederation Congress, the Northwest Ordinance created the building blocks and model of what became our United States Constitution and Bill of Rights. The document guaranteed protection of civil liberties, prohibited slavery, recognized religion and morality as necessary for good governance, and outlined that education should be forever encouraged in the new territories. The Territory included Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and parts of Minnesota. Scott Moody represented our chapter and served with the Color Guard.



The Ohio Society and dozens of SAR Chapters from Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Virginia, the DAR and the CAR presented wreaths and paid their respects to the Unknown Patriot at the site of Fort Laurens, the only American Revolutionary Fort in Ohio. Scott Moody represented the Lt. George Ewing Chapter and attended the BOM meeting held on the same day, NB, I am standing behind the rock.