**Joint Grave Marking by Virginia Society SAR and Society of the War of 1812 in Virginia for Patriots Buried in the Wren Darne Cemetery, Falls Church, VA**

On June 29, 2019, the Fairfax Resolves Chapter, Virginia Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (VASSAR), and the Society of the War of 1812 in the Commonwealth of Virginia, held a joint grave marking of the graves of Revolutionary War Patriot Colonel James Wren, Fairfax County Militia, and War of 1812 Patriots John S. Wren (5th Regiment Virginia Militia) and Robert Darne (1st Corps d’Elite Virginia Militia). These patriots are buried in the Wren Darne Cemetery in Falls Church, Virginia. Tim Dioquino, President of the Fairfax Resolves VASSAR served as Master of Ceremonies. The VASSAR Color Guard added to the solemnity by posting and retiring colors, as well as giving a 21 musket salute. Pete Green, a neighbor who led the effort to restore the cemetery and make it the attractive park setting that is now, talked about the history of the property. Details are on his website: <https://wrendarnecemetery.org/> . . Paul Walden, Secretary of the Society of the War of 1812, discussed the biography of War of 1812 Patriots John S. Wren and Robert Darne. Other Society of the War of 1812 in Virginia defenders who participated were Pete Davenport (President, VASSAR) and Dale Corey (President, Col. James Wood II Chapter VASSAR).

John S. Wren was born in Virginia in 1766 and died at the Longview estate in 1821. The Longview manor house, adjacent to the Wren Darne Cemetery, was built by his father Col. James Wren and has been restored by the current owner. John married Sarah Hite in 1790 who died at Longview in 1843. John was the son of James Wren, the architect of Christ Church in Alexandria and the Falls Church nearby. He built and operated Wren’s Tavern, located nearby on Broad Street. This tavern hosted two presidents: Thomas Jefferson and later James Madison, during the flight from Washington DC when it was burned by the British in 1814. John served in the 5th Regiment of the VA Militia in the War of 1812. This unit helped defend the Northern Neck against the British incursions during the war. There is also a record of a John Wren being commissioned in the Fairfax Militia in 1793. He was the father of Verlina Wren, wife of the other War of 1812 Veteran interred at this cemetery, Robert Darne. The Wren family has a long history in Virginia: the ancestor of John Wren is believed to be Nicholas Wren, who arrived in Virginia in the middle 1600s.

Robert Darne was born in 1778 in Fairfax County, Virginia and died at the Longview estate on 22 Aug 1873. At his death, the Alexandria Gazette stated that he was probably the oldest man in Fairfax County at 95 years of age. Robert was a private in the 1st Corps d’Elite, which was a group of cavalry and light armed infantry that was formed in the fall of 1814. It was to be a rapid moving flying camp created out of the massed militia units around Richmond called there by Virginia Governor Barbour because of the threat of British invasion based on the large number of ships entering the capes of Virginia on their way to support British Rear Admiral Cockburn and the later planned assaults on Washington and then Baltimore. Virginia authorities guessed the armada was aimed at Virginia and thus a large numbers of militia were called out for defense. There were two elite corps created, each existed for only a few months. The 1st Corps d’Elite was commanded by Lt. Col. Thomas Randolph, Thomas Jefferson’s son-in-law and operated in the New Kent County area from September to October 1814.