

Wm. Martin Roberts, "a hero of the War of 1812" honored by Daughters of 1812

With a perfect day courtesy of Mother Nature, Saturday, Sept. 25, Dunlap's Pleasant Hill Cemetery was the setting for a ceremony honoring the lone veteran of the War of 1812 interred there.

Representing the United States Daughters of 1812 Society were Mrs. Victor D. Smith, state president; Mrs. Louis Schmitz, state chaplain; and Mrs. David (Connie) Campbell, Missouri Valley, honorary state president. Assisted by former Harrison County Assessor, Dayle Purcell, the ladies unveiled and dedicated a cast bronze marker at the gravesite of William Martin Roberts, identified on the day's program as "A Hero of the War of 1812."

County Supervisor Rolland A. (Rollie) Roberts (R-Dunlap), a great-great grandson of William Martin Roberts, spoke about the War of 1812 and his ancestor:

"The War of 1812, sometimes called 'our 2nd war of independence', lasted until 1815. President James Madison asked Congress for a declaration of war against England in response to British attacks on U.S. ships on the high seas. These attacks resulted in many of our sailors being taken prisoner and forced into service for the British. The British, showing no respect for our young country, and hoping to reverse their loss of the American colonies in the Revolutionary War, landed on our shores, burned the ships in the naval yard along with the capitol building and the president's home in Washington D.C.

"The white paint that was used to cover charred areas of the home led to it being referred to as 'The White House' long before the title was official. U.S. forces were finally able to mount a defense when Baltimore was attacked. The unsuccessful British bombardment of Fort M'Henry in Baltimore Harbor inspired Francis Scott Key to write the words to the national anthem. By 1815, the British had been forced to accept the sovereignty of the USA.

"William Martin Roberts, the son of a Welsh father, Jonathan Roberts, and his Scottish wife, was born in 1791 in Vermont. He served in the 37th Infantry Regiment, United States Army in the War of 1812. Another great-great grandson, Franklin William Roberts of California, has the sword he carried in battle along with the diary he kept during those years.

"After the war, Martin moved to Connecticut, married Maria Mack, and started a family. He served two terms in the Connecticut State Legislature and managed the Buckland Hotel there. Around 1850 he moved his family to Iowa where he established a farming business and started the Masonic Lodge in Dunlap.

"One of his sons, Benjamin Franklin Roberts, farmed where Elizabeth Schwab now lives south of Dunlap, served with the Union Army in the Civil War, and served in the Iowa State Legislature. His daughter, Maria, became Dean of Mathematics at Iowa State College (now University) where a women's dormitory was named after her.



Rolland (Rollie) Roberts

on that farm they worked together nearly forty years to establish and improve. My dad died in 1983 and was always proud of having served his country.

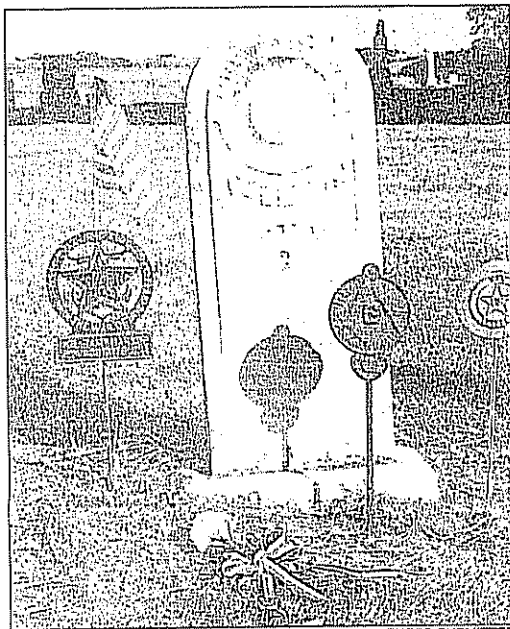
"His sister, Margaret Roberts Achenbach, and young brother, Franklin Eugene Roberts, are the oldest living descendants of William

Martin. Margaret was a schoolteacher through most of her adult life and served as a missionary in several locations after her marriage to Fred Achenbach.

"Frank served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He was sent to the Aleutian Islands where they dispatched the Japanese forces that were threatening Alaska and the west coast. Post-war, Frank married Eula Jeanne Rannels and they have farmed together since.

"Among other descendants of William Martin here at the ceremony today are another great-great grandchild, Zona Claire Howorth Saunders; her son, Keith, daughter Nancy, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, who are seventh generation descendants of fifth great grandchildren!"

The ceremony concluded with a benediction by the chaplain; Twenty-One-Gun Salute by the Bob Lance Squad, Julius Muller Post, American Legion, Missouri Valley; and "Taps" played by Larry Emswiler Dunlap.



Pleasant Hill site of William Roberts' grave, Dunlap.

"Another son of Martin was Arthur St. Clair Roberts (named after a commanding officer his father served under in the War of 1812). He farmed in the Dunlap area and was town marshal for a time. He married Maggie Bentley in 1875. Their son, C.E. (Gene) Roberts, born in 1879, was my grandfather. He married Matilda (Tillie) Lunau and they farmed in the Dunlap area.

"Gene's elder son, named Arthur S., was my father. Art served five years in the U.S. Army; entering service before Pearl Harbor and being discharged in 1946 after returning from the Philippines. He and my mother, Ruth Rannels Roberts, started farming southeast of Dunlap in March of that year. Mom still lives

