

Country Squires of New London, NH
Minutes for the Meeting on Thursday, November 14, 2019 at Eastman

Welcome: Co-President Joe Watts welcomed members, guests, and our guest speaker Dr. Richard Schneider, PhD, President of Norwich University in Northfield, VT. Joe noted that this is the 714th meeting of the Squires, covering 59 years and 6 months of continuous monthly meetings.

Invocation: Co-President Joe Watts asked Squire Tom Cooper to give the Invocation: Tom noted that our meeting was almost coincident with Veterans Day, in which we honor those who have served our nation. He asked those in the room to stand if they had served in the Army, then the Navy, then the Marine Corps, then the Air Force, and then the Coast Guard. Their service assures that future generations will know what it means to be free. Veterans carry forward love, honor and duty to succeeding generations. Veterans tell us that we must never waiver from the path of freedom and democracy.

Lunch: We then enjoyed our luncheon of pot roast and vegetables followed by a dessert of a brownie topped with chocolate sauce and vanilla ice cream.

Introduction of Guests: At 1:00 O'clock Co-President Watts began the meeting by asking members to introduce their guests.

Phil Langsdorf introduced Todd Tobin, a retired attorney who now lives in Eastman.

Paul Bidwell introduced Wayne French, a Dartmouth graduate (1959), a retired commercial banker and EMT.

Morris Edward introduced Bob Lyon, who moved to New London from Trumbull, CT where he had a career with Proctor and Gamble in the pharmaceutical industry. He is a skier, a scuba diver, and a volunteer at ALL, Ausbon Sargent and at the area food pantry.

Steve Seamans introduced Scott Bemis, who retired from the US Army after 21 years, which included three combat tours of Iraq with the Rangers, Pathfinders, and as a helicopter pilot. He is currently a Human Resources Officer at Dartmouth College.

Hank Otto introduced John Major, Dan Webb, and Chris Pagnette, each of whom was a graduate of Norwich University.

Speaker: Squire Hank Otto was asked to introduce us to our guest speaker, Dr. Richard Schneider, PhD, the President of Norwich University.

One of the longest-seated college Presidents in the nation, Dr. Richard Schneider proudly carries on the tradition Norwich University's founder Captain Alden Partridge began 200 years ago of preparing "citizen soldiers" to serve our nation. Through his experience in the military and academia, Dr. Schneider epitomizes Norwich's unique position in American higher education as a senior military college and birthplace of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps.

A native of Queens, New York, Dr. Schneider is a 1968 graduate of the US Coast Guard Academy. He was commissioned as an ensign in the Coast Guard and served eight years of active duty, including a tour of Viet Nam. Dr. Schneider retired from the Coast Guard Reserve as a Rear Admiral in July 1998.

In July 1992, Dr. Schneider became the 23rd President of Norwich University. Since then, he has championed Norwich's charge to distinguish the University in the higher education marketplace by educating students to be global leaders in the private sector, government and in the military.

Dr. Schneider described the history of the University. In doing so, he explained the mission of the school.

Captain Alden Partridge was educated at Dartmouth. He then graduated from West Point in one year and was commissioned a First Lieutenant. He became the Point's first engineering professor and was a Captain and Superintendent of the Academy five years later. He championed the idea of training "citizen soldiers" so he advocated for a more applied education that would be applicable to the problems encountered by the military as well as to grow the economy. He removed the study of classics from the curriculum and instituted an engineering curriculum. President Monroe was appalled by such changes, as were some of the Army officers. Before he could be fired, Captain Partridge resigned and moved back home to Norwich, VT.

In 1819, he opened Norwich University as an infantry school, since the British Army in Canada was considered the most important foreign menace to the US at that time. It is the 40th oldest university in the US. Outside of the military academies, most of the other universities were seminaries. After a few years, Captain Partridge moved the school to Middletown, CT to be a naval training college. The Connecticut River was deep enough there to be a port for training ships. However, the Connecticut legislature would not grant the school the right to grant degrees, so the school was moved back to Norwich. (The Middletown campus became Wesleyan University.)

During the Civil War, students and graduates fought on both sides. At that time, the campus burned down in what was probably a chimney fire. Farmers from Northfield, VT offered the school 14 acres of land and one building for a new campus. All

academic studies were applied. This may have been the educational model for Senator Justin Morrill's Land Grant University legislation, which was passed in 1862. The Senator lived in Strafford, which was nearby.

Currently, the school has 1600 students in the Corps of Cadets. There are also 800 civilian students. It has a very diverse student population which Dr. Schneider feels is a model for the public service academies. The school commissions graduates to all military services. All public service academies are engineering schools, which was the initial model of Captain Partridge. There are five other private schools with military corps: VMI, The Citadel, Virginia Tech, Texas A&M, and North Georgia. Along with Norwich, they produce 30% of the officers of the military service.

The school just celebrated its 200th anniversary. 6000 alumni returned to campus for a loving celebration.

Speaker's Gift: Following Dr. Schneider's talk, Co-President Joe Watts presented him with the often imitated, always envied, and most prestigious Squires Mug.

New Business: Co-President Joe Watts reminded those in attendance that the next meeting would be our annual Christmas Party. It will be held on December 12, and wives/partners will be welcomed. The invitation would be issued via email shortly. Please be sure to respond promptly and to send your reservation fee asap. Payments will not be accepted at the door. That way our treasurers can spend their time enjoying the party rather than accepting funds and checking registrations at the door. The party will include dinner, entertainment, and dancing.

Co-President Joe Watts wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving holiday and urged that we keep in mind and help however possible those less fortunate that we are during the holiday.

Adjourn: A motion to adjourn was called for and seconded, thus ending the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul Etkind, Secretary