

Robin Starr Day

Dear Cornwall Board of Selectman,

We the 7th grade class of 2027 would like to propose the idea of a day dedicated to Robin Starr.

Coming to Connecticut and becoming a soldier: Robin Starr was born around 1751 in Guinea Africa. He was enslaved as a child and came to America to be a slave for the Starr family of Danbury. When the Revolutionary War started he enlisted in the 2nd regiment but would end the war as a soldier for the 7th regiment. His first battle was The Battle of Danbury, with his last battle being The Battle of Yorktown. While also fighting in important battles like The Battle of Saratoga, The Attack on Stony Point (in which he was handpicked by Anthony Wayne himself to fight in), Monmouth, and Germantown. Starr ended the war having been injured in his first and last battles. Serving 6 years, from 1777 to 1783.

After the war: Robin Starr was still not a free man. Not having served the entirety of the war he was not granted his freedom. This meant Starr would have to purchase his freedom, paying \$40 then, paying approximately \$1,250 now. Starr married a woman named Lily Starr who already lived in Cornwall. He moved to Sharon, CT after serving and buying his freedom. With his wife Lily Starr purchasing property on Guinea road. Though Starr was a resident of Sharon he still spent a lot of time in Cornwall, likely shopping there.

Military Medal of Merit: Robin Starr served in the Revolutionary War for 6 years. In those years he was wounded twice, in his first and last battle. After serving he received the Military Medal of Merit which now is called the Purple Heart. Starr was the first ever black soldier to receive this medal! Fighting valiantly through his 6 years of service. *“Private Robin Starr was the first black soldier to receive the Badge of Military Merit, although his name is missing from most historical accounts of military decorations.”* from the Record Journal on Sunday, June 3, 1990. He is mentioned in the book Connecticut's Firsts by Wilson H. Faude & Joan W. Friedland and African American Patriots in the American Revolution by Judith L. Van Bushkirk.

Robin and Lily Starr's burial in Cornwall: Robin and Lily Starr were most likely buried in Cornwall's Calhoun Cemetery (At the time known as Puffingham Cemetery). We know that other members of his family were buried there with his son and grandson buried there. We contacted the Veterans Affairs to see if we could get him an honorary gravestone since it is believed he lies there.

Robin Starr Day: Our 7th grade class wants to spread Starr's story. Making sure that Starr is remembered as the brave man he was. We want to propose the idea of a day dedicated to Robin Starr, this would spread his story to a whole town, from young to old. We researched to see if any other towns had dedicated a day to an important historical person and we found Venture Smith day. The town of East Haddam CT dedicated a day to Venture Smith an African-American slave & was a Revolutionary War veteran. With East Haddam being his final resting place. They decided to dedicate a day to his bravery and fight to freedom. We would like to dedicate the day February 8th 2026, The 245th anniversary of Starr providing his final payment to become a free man.

Robin Starr's Connection to Cornwall: In the Revolutionary War Robin Starr fought for Heman Swift of Cornwall. He also married Lily Starr who was from Cornwall. We know that his son (Abel Starr 1791-1881) and grandson (Josiah Starr 1825-1898 Civil War veteran, CT 29th regiment) are buried in Calhoun Cemetery. We believe he is buried there with Calhoun Cemetery being the most likely place he is buried since he lived across the river and had many connections to Cornwall. Starr shopped and did most of his business in Cornwall as well.

Why Robin Starr should receive a day dedicated to him: Robin Starr was a brave man. Fighting through 6 years of the Revolutionary War and continuing to fight even after being wounded twice. He was the first African-American Soldier to receive the Military Medal of Merit. A prestigious award given to those wounded in battle. He is buried in Cornwall and is a part of Cornwall's history. We should account for 100% of Cornwall's history, not just half. Robin Starr should receive recognition for his service and bravery.

So as the CCS of 2027 we would like February 8th 2026 and here on forward as Robin Starr Day.

We thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,

the CCS class of 2027.