



Columbaria made in Crookston will house remains of several Revolutionary War soldiers

Crookston-based Eickhof Columbaria is creating granite vaults for the remains of 43 Revolutionary War soldiers discovered near Lake George, N.Y.



Ben Fleener of Eickhof Columbaria in Crookston prepares one of the vaults that is headed to Lake George, N.Y. The vaults will be part of Battlefield Park there. A huge ceremony will be held next week when the remains are interred as part of America's 250th. Abby Makay/WDAY

By Kevin Wallevand

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CROOKSTON, Minn. — What an honor for a longtime Crookston company.

Eickhof Columbaria creates vaults and granite memorials for churches, memorial parks and communities around America.

But the company's latest project involves the creation of vaults for the remains of dozens of Revolutionary War veterans found near Lake George, N.Y., in 2019. It is believed they died from disease in 1776.

Eickhof will haul the Columbaria vaults to Lake George for a special interment at Battlefield Park there next week.

Usually, the crews at Eickhof Columbaria are busy preparing orders for customers in the region and some from across the country.

But lately, Eickhof employees have been working on an incredible project nobody could've predicted.

Ben Fleener described how the vaults will soon house the remains of 43 Revolutionary War soldiers who were discovered near Lake George in New York.

"Presumably, those soldiers passed as part of a smallpox epidemic that occurred in a Revolutionary War battle near Montreal," said Charles Eickhof, sales manager.

"It is an epic situation. These remains could've remained in an archaeologist's storage facilities and that's that," said Dean Henney, Eickhof outreach specialist.

As a respected leader in the columbaria industry nationwide, Crookston's Eickhof was selected for the honor of fabricating and soon installing the granite vaults.

"It is really cool to be a part of this portion of American history, I suppose," Fleener said.

The interment of the Revolutionary War soldiers comes as America marks its 250th anniversary.

In a few days, workers from Eickhof in Crookston will load up the vaults and head to New York. The workers will also be there for the sure-to-be emotional motorcade when the remains of the Revolutionary War soldiers arrive at Lake George.

A rendering shows the granite columbaria vaults Eickhof Columbaria built for the planned May 22, 2026, interment of 43 Revolutionary War soldiers at Battlefield Park in Lake George, N.Y.

"To see them installed and the procession and the remains interred will be pretty special," said Peter Tollefson, Eickhof CEO.

"It will be a memorable event for all," Charles Eickhof said.

The special ceremony will take place May 22 at Battlefield Park at Lake George.