



Compatriots,

I hope you are well and looking forward to the end of the pandemic as it appears there is light at the end of the tunnel. As you will see by this newsletter your society has been busy and we've recently planned events now into December of 2022. The Board of Managers had continued to meet virtually until July 10th when we had an in-person meeting. Some 20 board members attended. You will see dates in this newsletter for a fall dinner at Chapel Grille in Garden City, grave marking ceremonies in November, a Christmas Party at Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet – yes, the old building is making a comeback, an Annual Meeting in February, and... another one of our famous RISSAR bus trips. May 14th next year we will be taking a luxury motorcoach excursion to historic Plymouth Mass. Sites we will visit include Plymouth Rock, Mayflower II ship, Pilgrim Hall Museum, and more. We will have lunch at the Plymouth Yacht Club which was chartered June 5th, 1890. Details on that will be published next year.

I trust you received your copy of Prof. John Hattendorf's new book about the Battle of RI from the British side. It should be a most welcome addition to your library. Again, I thank him for his work to bring that to us. You should have also received the new Roster Book. Thanks again to Secretary Joe Brennan for getting this completed. It is no easy task. Also, a shout-out to 1st Vice President, Chris Sparks, who despite the pandemic kept our ROTC program going strong. You will read more about that in this newsletter.

As I mentioned in my letter that accompanied the book, we recently had a new members night at which we inducted and welcomed 10 new members into our society. This event was such a success that we will plan a New Members night annually. Next year it will be in June again on or about Flag Day... two reasons to celebrate.

We have created a committee that will be looking into marching in the parade commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the Burning of the Gaspee next year. This will be a big event and will probably be the kickoff for the RI Revolutionary 250 celebration. We have already secured our spot in the line of march.

We will be creating a committee to enact two poster contests next year. One will be SAR National's Poster contest which we participated in this year. The National society picks a person or event, alternating each year, that the poster must be about. You will find a story in the newsletter about this year's RI winner. The second contest will be solely a RISSAR state-wide poster contest about the burning of the Gaspee. These are great opportunities to bring our history into our schools. We are eagerly looking forward to both for next year.

In conjunction with bringing history into our schools and the burning of the Gaspee, Benjamin Nacar, Editor of this Newsletter, and pianist extraordinaire, created his own musical composition and added an animated story of the Gaspee to it. We think this would be a great addition for some of the future historians in RI and will work to get this to the younger elementary school classes. You can check it out by going to: <https://bennacar.com/gaspee>.

I hope you all have a great summer. I look forward to seeing you at one of our events later this year!

Patriotically,

Ron Barnes  
President, RISSAR

# Calendar of Upcoming Events

## **Thursday, September 23rd, 2021**

Dinner, starting at 5pm  
Chapel Grille, Cranston

## **Saturday, November 13th, 2021**

Veterans Day Observance (Details TBA)

## **Saturday, November 20th, 2021**

Grave marking ceremony with the CAR  
Westerly (Time and details TBA)

## **Wednesday, December 15th, 2021**

Christmas Party  
Rhodes on the Pawtuxet, Cranston

## **Saturday, February 19th, 2022**

Annual Meeting and Luncheon, starting at 11:30am  
Rhode Island Yacht Club, Cranston

## **Saturday, May 14th, 2022**

Bus Trip to Plymouth, MA  
(Includes luncheon at Plymouth Yacht Club)

## **Thursday, June 16th, 2022**

New and Prospective Member Dinner, starting at 5pm  
Squantum Association, East Providence

## **In Memoriam**

William Adams (March 6th, 2021)  
Joseph Brearley (April 1st, 2021)  
Sidney Clifford Jr. (June 3rd, 2020)  
George Hart Jr. (April 13th, 2020)  
Alexander Magro (February 2nd, 2021)  
Richard Olney (December 31st, 2020)  
Charles Ormsbee (May 31st, 2020)  
John Ouderkirk (December 29th, 2020)  
Peter Young (April 20th, 2021)

*The Independent Man is compiled and distributed annually  
by the Rhode Island Society of the Sons of the American Revolution.*

Editor for the 2021 issue: Benjamin Ewing Nacar

## Spotlight: Dennis Cosmo

Dennis Cosmo is one of RISSAR's newest - and most enthusiastic - members, having joined in November 2020. He joins us here for a brief interview.

*- Tell us about yourself and your background prior to joining the SAR.*

I'm a native of Cranston, and I did JROTC at Cranston East, joining the Army right out of high school. I was in the 82nd Airborne Division in 2001, right when 9/11 happened, and my first combat deployment was as part of the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003. I then reclassified into intelligence and learned Arabic, and was stationed at Ft. Benning in Georgia when I was deployed to Iraq for the second time as part of Joint Special Ops. I came home to Rhode Island in 2015 and attended CCRI, where I was very active in Student Veterans of America. Then I went to Bryant where I founded the local chapter of SVA there, and got my bachelor's degree in Entrepreneurship there in 2019, and then I got my master's degree at URI just this year in Labor Relations and Human Resources.

*- What led you to join the SAR?*

I've always been interested in military heraldry, honors, and lineage. Both my dad and my uncle were in the Coast Guard, and both my grandfathers were in the Navy. Also when I was stationed at different forts there would always be military museums for the different divisions, and I always enjoyed visiting those. My regiment had been around since World War I, and I was really interested in who were those 18- or 19-year-old guys who made up my regiment back then. It made me wonder, who would have become close friends with whom, which people would have sat around the campfires together telling stories, and then in the present day, where are all their living descendants now? I don't have any kids, so I'm at the end of my family branch, and I really want to collect my family history and family records for all time. So when the pandemic came along, I had a lot of free time, and I just started doing research on ancestry.com.

*- How much family research did you have to do?*

Well, no-one in my family had really kept records before. They figured there were ancestors who had fought in the Civil War, they just hadn't bothered to look into it. But ancestry.com made it really easy, the legwork was pretty fun. I first did the research for joining the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, and that led me to some DAR records, and that led me to the SAR, so I submitted my paperwork, and now I'm a member. My patriot ancestor was one of those militia who got called up at Lexington - I think he marched, but he didn't end up firing a shot on that particular day. Living in New England, you just have this really visceral connection to the Revolution since it all started here. I'm also looking into whether I had family who fought in the Spanish-American War, or the War of 1812, but I haven't found anything yet. I do know that going way back my family has ties to the Hartwells of America, who are pretty big.

*- So far, what are some of the highlights of being in the SAR?*

I was excited to get the Military Service Medal from the SAR, as recognition of my time in the military. Also any time the SAR does anything at the Squantum Association, I'm all in.

*- What's next?*

I'm currently director of the Veterans Center at Bristol Community College, and one of the things I'm doing is trying to get student veterans to look into their family lineage with an eye to joining the SAR, or the Sons of Union Veterans, or other such organizations. A lot of what you learn in history is just lists of dates and names, so when you learn about your own family connection it makes history that much more real. I hope that will help to keep the SAR going.

## Doings of the Compatriots

**New Member Installation Dinner:** On June 17th, 2021, at the Squantum Association in East Providence, Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Society installed 10 new members - the largest single day installation in recent years. Altogether our State Society saw a membership increase of 34 over the past year, bringing our current total to 186. In attendance to help celebrate the event were the following senior members of the New England District Council: Bob Walsh, President; Tim Mabee, Vice President General; and Dan Harrop, Secretary (and former RISSAR President).



At left, New England District Council President Bob Walsh and RISSAR members David Butler, Herb Adams, and Skip Taylor enjoy a moment outdoors.



At right, the color guard arrives: Ron Barnes in uniform as Commander of the Pawtuxet Rangers, RISSAR members Denny Cosmo and Ron Morneau, and Adrian Beaulie of the Rangers.





Great food and camaraderie were had by all.



Left to right: Bob Walsh, NE District Council President; Tim Mabee, VPG of NEDC; Dan Harrop, RISSAR Immediate Past President and NEDC Secretary; Helenmary Lauth; and Roy Lauth, RI SR President





Secretary Joe Brennan becomes the newest member of the 1890 Society.



Left to right: Joe Brennan, Glenn Russell, Ron Barnes. Glenn recently received, at the behest of the National Society, the State Meritorious Service Medal for his work in the Patriot Research System.





Bob Walsh, NEDC President, swears our new members in.



Moments after being sworn in, our newest members pose with their membership certificates.



**Bob Butler's quest to get one of his ancestors a VA grave stone:** At the time of his 2019 admission to the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati under the previously recorded propositus named Edmund Munroe, Bob committed to having a memorial headstone for Captain Munroe erected at the Old Tennent Cemetery in Monmouth, NJ, where a British cannonball took Edmund's life on June 28th, 1778. Edmund's cousin George, who was next to him at the moment he died, was also severely injured by the same cannonball.



Note the SAR Medallion in this picture, taken in May 2021.

**Patrick Donovan receives the SAR Good Citizenship Award:** Patrick was awarded this medal for his outstanding work as Vice President of the Varnum Armory.



Left to right: Ron Barnes, Patrick Donovan, David Butler, Carlen Booth.





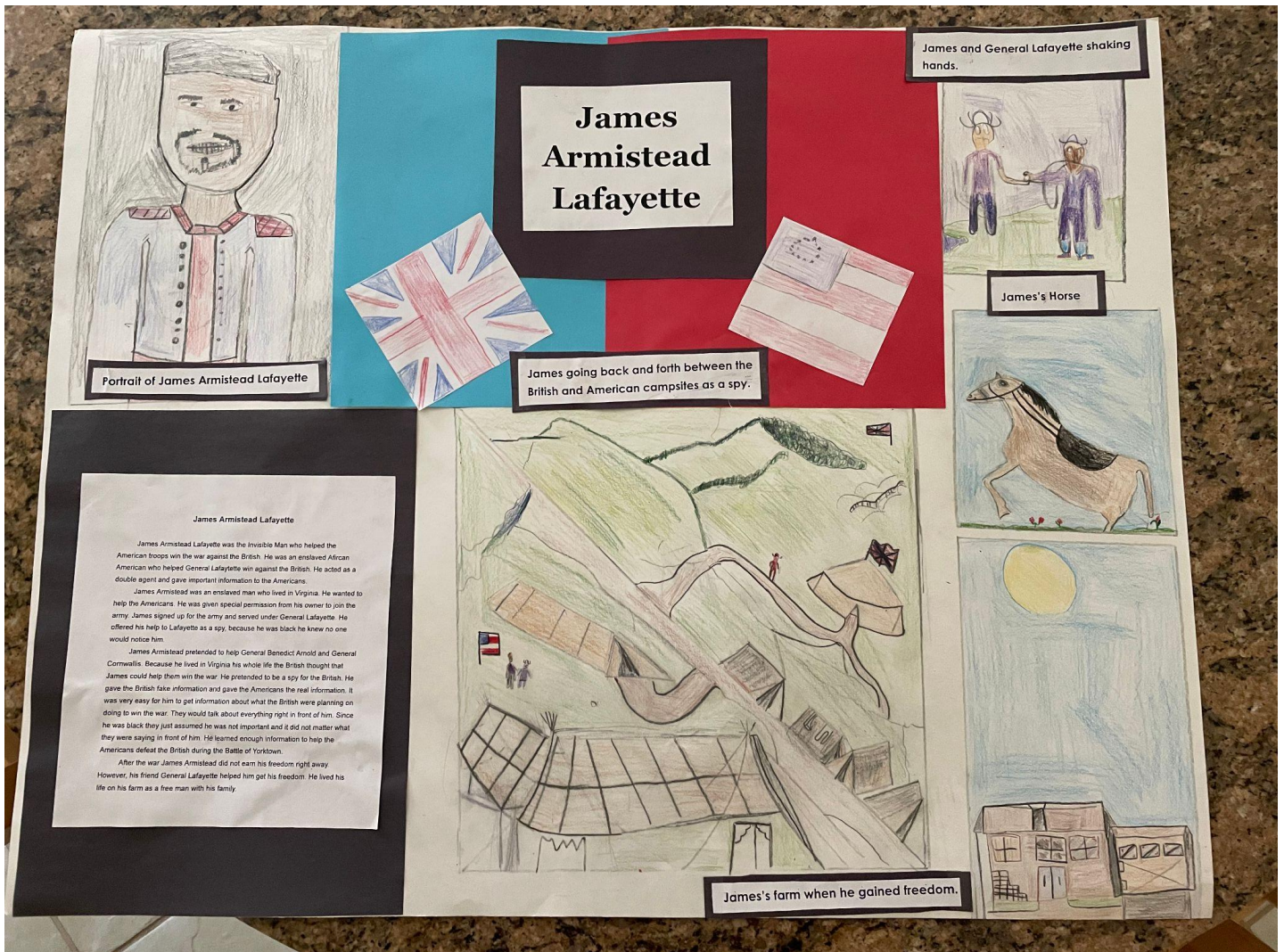
**(LEFT) Michael Cullen, RISSAR youth member, now at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD:** Michael was formally inducted Wednesday into the Naval Academy Class of 2025 on June 30th, 2021. He is seen here taking a 20 minute break before the beginning of six challenging weeks of basic midshipman training as part of “Plebe Summer.” Approximately 1,200 candidates are selected each year for the Academy’s “plebe” or freshman class, and each student is required to participate in Plebe Summer.

**(BELOW) Chris Sparks keeps the JROTC / ROTC Award Program going strong:** Although COVID 19 had a significant impact on the 2020-2021 JROTC - ROTC programs, RISSAR was able to award 2 JROTC Cadets with the Bronze Medal, and 2 Cadets were awarded with the Silver ROTC Medal. Cadet J’ly Khea, of the Cranston East High School “Thunderbolt JROTC Battalion,” was presented with the RISSAR statewide “Outstanding JROTC Medal,” along with a monetary award of \$500. Christopher C. Sparks, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, made the presentation to Cadet Khea on 14 May, 2021. Left to right: Senior Army Instructor, John E. Murray, Lt. Colonel, Aviation, US Army (R); Sean T. Kelly, Cranston East High School Principal; Cadet J’ly Khea; Christopher Sparks, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, RISSAR -- *Chris Sparks*





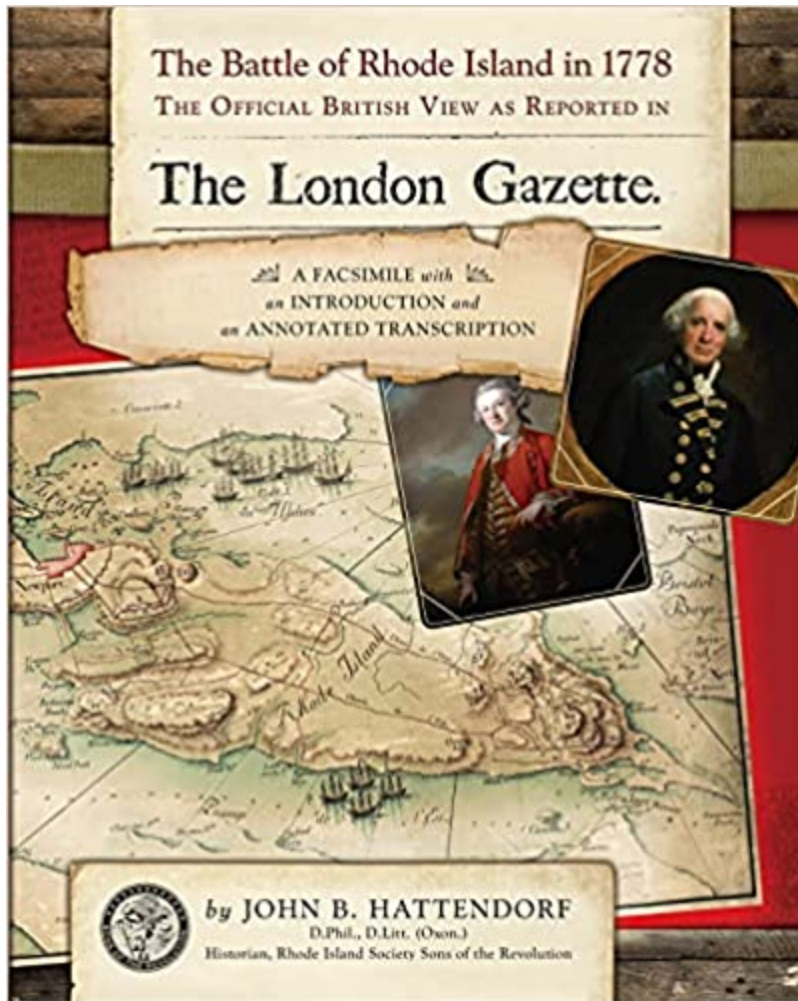
**RISSAR's entry for the National Society's Poster Contest:** On May 26th, 2021, Compatriots Ron Barnes, John Adams, and Joe Brennan visited the fourth grade class of teachers Alenoush Hagopian and Courtney Rand at Highlander Charter School in Providence to present Alexis DeDios a certificate and announce that his poster on James Armistead Lafayette - slave, spy, double agent, Revolutionary War hero, and freeman - would be the Rhode Island Society's entry to the SAR Americanism Elementary School Poster Contest. Samuel Santana was awarded an Honorable Mention certificate for his artwork on a different poster. Both Alexis and Samuel were given fifty dollar gift cards to Walmart.





## The Battle of Rhode Island, as told by the British

During the War for American Independence, military and naval operations had been in progress for more than two years when the 1778 Rhode Island Campaign occurred. This volume, which was mailed to all RISSAR members, presents an introduction and annotated transcript of the official British reports of battle as they appeared in the British government's official publication, The London Gazette. The naval aspects of the confrontation are reported in great detail giving readers on-the-scene information as well as perspectives of larger operational concerns. Included in the work is a facsimile of reports from the Gazette.



Professor John B. Hattendorf, D.Phil., D.Litt., University of Oxford, is senior advisor at the U.S. Naval War College's eponymous John B. Hattendorf Center for Maritime Historical Research and Ernest J. King Professor Emeritus of Maritime History. Additionally, he is the Historian of the Rhode Island Society Sons of the Revolution and serves as Historian of the Rhode Island Society of Colonial Wars and Rhode Island Society of the Cincinnati. He is the author, co-author, editor, or co-editor of more than fifty volumes, including the four-volume Oxford Encyclopedia of Maritime History (2007).



## Report from the Nathanael Greene Homestead

Like many similar small museums, 2020 was particularly hard on the Nathanael Greene Homestead. We were finally able to begin our season 3 months late on July 4th. A skeleton crew allowed us to open two days a week through the end of the season in October. Thanks to our amazing volunteers we made it through 2020, and in April of 2021 we were able to open on-time and back to 4 days a week!!

In May of 2021, Homestead President David Procaccini was elected Colonel, Commanding of the Kingston Reds RIM, who make their Headquarters at the Homestead and support many of our events.

We have hosted many small events this season, including drills and demonstrations from Living History groups and members of the RI Chartered Commands, our 4th of July Open House, and Gen. Greene's Birthday Open House, which was supported by the Kentish Guards. Most recently, on August 14 we hosted living historians representing a 1st Century Roman Legion and late 19th Century Anglo-Zulu British troops. On October 30th, we will be hosting a Halloween themed historical timeline.



The Kingston Reds at the Greene Homestead - July 4th, 2021

Our current capital projects include:

- Drainage - In 2016 the Homestead acquired an unimproved 300' section of the former Greene St. of the Town of Coventry. As the Town had used this section of the road as the neighborhood storm drain, we have had severe flooding and erosion which the Town has been hesitant to remedy. In order to remediate the issue, Homestead Volunteers recently installed a drainage trench filled with 50 tons of crushed stone.
- The Barn - We anticipate breaking ground for an addition with a handicapped restroom for our barn. The addition will be separated into two phases due to the large cost increase of building materials. Phase two will be the interior finish for which we will be fundraising.
- The Cannon - We hope to commence the restoration of the carriage for our cannon during Winter 2021/22, with the aim of having the cannon back in front of the Homestead for the 2022 season after a two year hiatus.

-- David M. Procaccini, Gen. Nathanael Greene Homestead