



The Independent Man

NEWSLETTER OF THE RHODE ISLAND SOCIETY OF
THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
131 SPENCER WOODS DR, EAST GREENWICH RI 02818



Presidents Message:

Summer greetings to all SAR members and their families.

As you read this, we are now in the heat of the year and I hope you all are able to stay cool and refreshed.

Since our last communiqué we have been involved in several events. April saw six members attend the New England District Council meeting in Concord, MA. It was heartening to see that the smallest state society had the largest attendance of the six New England States. I see this as a testimony to your dedication to our society.

We also had a well attended Board of Managers Meeting on April 7, and at the April 28th Nathanael Greene Homestead Association Annual Meeting, the RISSAR honored Tom Greene on the occasion of his retirement as Chairman of the Nathanael Greene Homestead.

In May, I represented the RISSAR at a DAR function to honor Chuck Azzinaro, US Army Air Corps, of Westerly in Ashaway. My guest for the day was my step-son S/SGT Joseph Voccio, US Army who attended in his Dress Blues. This gesture was very well received by Mr. Azzinaro and other attendees who went out of their way to thank Joe for his service and for attending.

June saw another record turnout of SAR, DAR and guests at the Flag Day luncheon at the Dunes Club. Those who attended were treated to an excellent lunch and an insightful discussion about the Battle of Bunker Hill by author James L. Nelson.

In July we held the most recent BOM meeting which was also well attended. I am happy to report that these meetings are very cordial and positive. I continue to be pleased that, despite the number of distractions and alternative activities around, we still have members dedicated enough to attend our gatherings.

My biggest disappointment has been the lack of response by several organizations to our plans to increase the diversity of the RISSAR by inclusion of those minorities eligible for membership. The Newport County NAACP, The RI Black History Assn, The Narragansett Indian Tribe, and even the RI Historical Society have been curiously unresponsive with regard to our offer of involvement. Now that we are in the second half of the year I have decided that their silence speaks volumes and I will cease my efforts along those lines.

Another disappointment is the decision by the Veterans Administration to reject my application for a headstone for Captain John Peck Rathbun. Citing the fact that I am not a next of kin, I am deemed not eligible to make this application. However, I have been in contact with David Rathbun who is a member of the Rathbun Family Assn, and he is going to take up the cause on our behalf. It appears that in 2014, the Rathbun Family Assn will be holding a family gathering in Newport. I think it would be a wonderful thing if we could acquire the headstone and dedicate it with many of the family members in attendance.

In conclusion, Dot and I wish all of you and your families the best and hope you all have a happy and enjoyable rest of the year.

Respectfully yours,

John "JC" Collins
President
RISSAR



President John Collins (right) presents the Distinguished Service Medal to Thomas Enoch Greene.

On a side street in an older section of Coventry RI, sits a house among many. On its face it's no more or no less remarkable than other homes in the neighborhood. But what sets it apart is its connection to our common heritage here in New England.

Here lived Nathanael Greene and his wife Caty. Born into a Quaker Family, Nathanael, never the less, became one of the most important soldiers of the Revolutionary War. Despite a lack of education and owing to his voracious reading of military history and tactics, he rose to be General Washington most trusted subordinate. Many have surmised that the war in the southern states would have failed, if not for his superb leadership.

Nathanael and Caty left RI after the war and settled in South Carolina. Back at home, his house, now occupied by his brother Jacob, stayed in the family for generations. Then, in the early 20th century, it was purchased by a dedicated group of men, who were determined that this link to our history should not pass into oblivion.

Now, nearly one hundred years later, we gather to honor the latest in a series of men whose stewardship has kept the house alive and viable for others to enjoy.

Thomas Enoch Greene has been the "face" of the Nathanael Greene house for over 26 years. And it is through his staunch leadership that the NGH continues to be a beloved jewel in the historical record of Rhode Island.

What motivates a person to devote so much time and energy to such an endeavor? Clearly, it is a love of history and a feeling that we all must act to preserve as much of our heritage as possible while there is still time.

Many historic homes and locations have been razed or otherwise obliterated in the name of progress. Too often greed, in the guise of "public good", has resulted in the destruction of a priceless artifact to be replaced with some kind of marker that commemorates the location without being able to truly tell its story.

But thanks to Tom Greene and other like him, Rhode Islanders can still visit and learn about one of the true heroes of the war that set us free. Free to be independent and free to engage in public discourse without fear of retribution.

Therefore, it is with a great deal of pride that, on behalf of the Rhode Island Society, Sons of the American Revolution, President John Collins presented the Distinguished Service Medal to Thomas Enoch Greene.

The award was presented at the Annual Meeting of the Greene Homestead Association, on Saturday April 28, 2012 at the 1149 East Restaurant in Seekonk, MA. In attendance trustees and officers: Richard Siembab, Treasurer; Guy Lefebvre; Mike Hebert; Jonathan Farnum; David Procaccini; Thomas E. Greene, President; Dan Harrop; Janet Uhlar; John W. Adams; Henry A. L. Brown; Rep. Lisa Tomasso; Sen. Glen Shibley, as well as guests: Carlen Booth, SAR; John Collins, President Rhode Island SAR; Barbara Greene, Shirley Lefebvre, Anne Browne, Sandi Farnum.

"Rhode Island at War" at the R.I. Historical Society

September 6 - Film viewing: **Tim Gray's** "D-Day: The Price of Freedom"

September 9 - Gallery Night: **Roberta Mudge Humble**, "The Historic Armories of Rhode Island"

October 13 - What Cheer Day 2012

- At the Aldrich House, 110 Benevolent Street, Providence: Take part in academic roundtables focused on the RIHS theme for 2012, Rhode Island at War. The keynote speaker for the day will be **Bruce MacGunnigle**, past president of the RI Society of the Sons of the American Revolution.
- At the Library, 121 Hope Street, Providence: Learn about Portsmouth Grove, the Civil War Hospital, and Rhode Island colonial broadsides. There will also be "sneak peek" tours through Collections storage.
- At the John Brown House, 52 Power Street, Providence: Meet here to partake in a walking tour of Revolutionary War sites, enjoy a Civil War mitten "knit-a-long" as well as children's activities, and witness living history and Revolutionary War demonstrations with local reenactors.
- At the Museum of Work & Culture, 42 South Main Street, Woonsocket: The culminating event of What Cheer Day will be an evening Gala at the Museum of Work & Culture to celebrate the museum's 15th anniversary.

October 18 - Gallery Night: **Janet Uhlar**, "Freedom's Cost: The Story of General **Nathanael Greene**"

In addition to the lectures on September 9 and October 18 Gallery Nights, the first floor of the John Brown House Museum will be open to Gallery Night participants from 5 p.m. – 8 p.m. Visitors will be able to view the rooms on the first floor of this impressive home, and speak with guides about its history and inhabitants.

Free. Reservations requested for the lecture. For more information or to RSVP, please contact Caitlin Murphy at 401-331-8575 x 28 or cmurphy@rihs.org

Malarial mosquitoes helped defeat British in battle that ended Revolutionary War

By J.R. McNeill, Monday, October 18, 2010; WASHINGTON POST

Major combat operations in the American Revolution ended 229 years ago on Oct. 19, at Yorktown. For that we can thank the fortitude of American forces under George Washington, the siege craft of French troops of Gen. Jean-Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, the count of Rochambeau - and the relentless bloodthirstiness of female *Anopheles quadrimaculatus* mosquitoes.

Those tiny amazons conducted covert biological warfare against the British army. Female mosquitoes seek mammalian blood to provide the proteins they need to make eggs. No blood meal, no reproduction. It makes them bold and determined to bite.

Some *Anopheles* mosquitoes carry the malaria parasite, which they can inject into human bloodstreams when taking their meals. In eastern North America, *A. quadrimaculatus* was the sole important malaria vector. It carried malaria from person to person, and susceptible humans carried it from mosquito to mosquito. In the 18th century, no one suspected that mosquitoes carried diseases.

Malaria, still one of the most deadly infectious diseases in the world, was a widespread scourge in North America until little more than a century ago. The only people resistant to it were either those of African descent - many of whom had inherited genetic traits that blocked malaria from doing its worst - or folks who had already been infected many times, acquiring resistance the hard way. In general, the more bouts you survive, the more resistant you are.

Malaria was all over the American South but especially prevalent in the warm, humid coastlands from Georgia to Maryland, where the climate suited mosquitoes and there were plenty of people (and other mammals) to bite.

In 1779 the British chose a "southern strategy" in their war against rebellious Americans. Since 1775, they had fought inconclusively, with the British controlling the main ports but unable to hold the countryside. To break the deadlock, they sent an army of 9,000 men, British and German (known as Hessians to the Americans) to besiege Charleston, S.C. A few victories in the South, they hoped, would inflame Southerners loyal to King George III, causing them to rise up and allow London to "Americanize" the war.

But in the South, *A. quadrimaculatus* were more numerous and more determined than Loyalists. South Carolina's irrigated rice plantation economy had made good mosquito country better by creating excellent breeding habitat. Every summer, hungry mosquitoes injected malaria parasites many times into almost everyone in the Lowcountry. As one German visitor put it, "Carolina in the spring is a paradise, in the summer a hell and in the autumn a hospital." The death rates, especially among small children, spiked every year from August to October as a result of malaria. Those who survived to adulthood were highly resistant.

The British army, commanded by Gen. Charles Cornwallis, consisted of lads from Britain and Germany. Very few had grown up with malaria. Most were highly susceptible. Cornwallis's army, although a superior fighting force, suffered from a malaria-resistance gap.

Eating spider

Doctors and medicine were little help. To treat malaria, military physicians normally recommended venesection - draining 20 ounces of blood, about 10 percent of an adult's supply - sometimes supplementing that with doses of mercury or opium, and in one case applying freshly killed pigeons to the soles of patients' feet.

Fortunately, doctors were almost as scarce as hen's teeth. On their own, soldiers could try English folk remedies for ague (as malaria was known) such as eating cobwebs and spiders, drinking one's urine or tying one's hair to a tree trunk and yanking one's head so violently as to leave their hair - and illness - with the tree. These measures did no good but surely did less harm than venesection or a swig of mercury.

Only one thing 18th-century doctors prescribed against malaria did any good: bark. Powdered bark from the cinchona tree, found only on the eastern slopes of the Peruvian Andes, contained alkaloids that checked malaria. But the bark was expensive, and by 1779 it was increasingly hard for the British to get: Spain controlled the supply and had entered the war against Britain. The bark was a strategic good.

Cornwallis's army won most of its battles but suffered heavily from malaria in the summer and fall of 1780. After recovering their health in the winter, the British fled the Carolinas in April 1781 for Virginia, a move that Cornwallis believed might allow him to "preserve the troops from the fatal sickness, which so nearly ruined the Army last autumn."

He headed for healthier upland regions, but his commander in New York ordered him to the Tidewater - malaria country. Cornwallis objected, wondering about the logic of occupying a "sickly defensive post in this Bay." But orders were orders, so Cornwallis started to dig in around Yorktown in midsummer.

A speedy surrender

By late September he was besieged by a Franco-American army, recently arrived from New York and New England. After 21 days, Cornwallis surrendered a quarter of the British forces in North America, quashing British hopes in the war. A British fleet arrived five days later - too late. Cornwallis explained to his superiors that with his "force daily diminished by sickness," he could not resist the siege. He claimed that half his men were too sick to stand duty.

Why didn't the French and Americans fall ill, too? Some did, but far fewer and too late to matter. With malaria it takes about a month between infectious bite and the onset of symptoms. The British had been absorbing the parasite since June, but the Franco-Americans arrived in the Tidewater only in September. So malaria had two extra months to work its mischief in British ranks.

Moreover, most of the Americans had grown up with malaria, those who had not suffered heavily in the week before the surrender. Malaria felled French soldiers, too, most of whom were just as vulnerable as the redcoats, but mainly after Oct. 19.

Once committed to Yorktown, Cornwallis faced a biological warfare campaign he could not counter. Mosquitoes helped the Americans snatch victory from the jaws of stalemate and win the Revolutionary War, without which there would be no United States of America. Remember that when they bite you next Fourth of July.

McNeill is a Georgetown University professor of environmental history and author of many books, including "Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914."

On the book shelves...

R.I. 1781 Regimental Book now available for \$10 for Library donations!

RISSAR members and friends may now make a donation of our new book: *Regimental Book; Rhode Island Regiment for 1781 &c.* to any library in the United States for \$10 post-paid. Simply send \$10 for each book you would like to donate, list the names and addresses for each library, and a copy of this important book will be mailed to those libraries.

One of our active members has already donated \$30 to send books to three libraries in Ohio (Including the prestigious Western Reserve Library), in memory of his father who spent many pleasant hours there searching his family tree. There is no limit on how many books that can be donated. The \$10 covers the book, postage and packaging. There is no sales-tax, as the book is a donation to the libraries.

Consider donating books to your hometown library, and the libraries where you, or a member of your family have a personal connection. This is a wonderful way for members of the SAR, SR, DAR, Society of Cincinnati and other historical and genealogical groups to honor their families. Consider donating a book in honor of your father, mother, or a Revolutionary War veteran.

How can the RISSAR make this unusual offer? Due to the generous donations that were made toward the publication of the R.I. 1781 Regimental book, and the number of books sold at retail prices, the RISSAR Board of Managers determined the best way to put the RI 1781 Regimental Book into the hands of historians, genealogists and scholars was to make sure the books was made available to all libraries in an affordable way.

What is this book? The *Regimental Book First Rhode Island Regiment for 1781 &c* was compiled by Bruce C. MacGunnigle (a 40 year RISSAR member, and state president 2008-10), and it has a comprehensive introduction by Cherry Fletcher Bamberg, FASG.

This careful transcription of the original manuscript at R.I. State Archives provides rich material for the study of the First Rhode Island Regiment and the men in it. Enlistment records for over 500 soldiers allow the reader a glimpse of height, hair color, age, and occupation, as well as details of birth place and enlistment. An additional 380 men are listed in other records in the Regimental book. This regiment, sometimes called the Black Regiment, is well known for its diversity, and these records are particularly revealing. In addition to the core of Rhode Islanders we find a Spanish-born fan maker, a printer's assistant born in Africa, men from other colonies, and — more unexpectedly — soldiers from across Europe and the Caribbean. We find tiny soldiers (4 ft. 9 in.) and ones over six feet tall, teenage boys and men in their sixties. The appendix offers tables of information derived from the enlistment records.

Also included in the book are a register of "casualties" (injury, death, desertion, promotion, and transfer), honorary badges of distinction, and furlough details. Records go far beyond the year 1781 mentioned on the title. Introductory material, including a detailed chronology, places the book in the context of the Revolutionary War, and each section is introduced with an explanatory paragraph. A meticulous index makes it possible for the reader to find records of each individual quickly.

Honor your family, and your favorite libraries, and donate copies today! Concerned that your library may already have a copy? Simply e-mail Bruce MacGunnigle at k8bcm@cox.net and ask him.

ORDER FORM

Regimental Book Rhode Island Regiment for 1781 &c.

Number

_____ \$10.00 donation per copy, post-paid, with no sales-tax

_____ TOTAL ENCLOSED.

Return order form with your check, payable to RISSAR, to:

RISSAR, 202 Kent Dr. East Greenwich, RI 02818

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BE SURE TO INCLUDE LIBRARY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)!

Your State Registrar Carlen Booth reports the following:

Raymond (Skip) Ashley Peck, Jr., East Providence, RI, admitted April 12, 2012, national number 183193, state number 1764. Skip is descended from Abraham Ormsbee, Sr. 1725-1802 Rehoboth MA - Private, Massachusetts Militia.

Elijah-Brent Alan Monroe, joined as a dual member (primary Hawaii), national number 155190, state number 1762. He is descended from Daniel Colby, 1752-1831 Haverhill MA - Private in Capt. James Sawyer's Co, Col James Frye's Rgt. MA.

Harry Joseph Curran, reinstated April 2, 2012 (originally Florida), national number 172652, state number 1763. Harry is descended from George Shilling - Private in the 1st Company, 6th Battalion, West Moreland County Militia, PA.

Aydin Candas, San Diego, CA, admitted June 28, 2012, national number 184046, state number 1765. Aydin is descended from David Shields 1752 - 1841 Augusta City, VA - Private, Virginia Line.

Robert Nelson Tyrrell, Leesburg, FL, admitted July 5, 2012, national number 184114, state number 1766. Rob is descended from David Lyon 1754 - 1778 Fairfield, CT - Private CT

This date in Rhode Island History: August 1776

Rhode Island Privateer Sloop *America* was owned by prominent citizens of Providence, Rhode Island. Joseph and William Russel owned a foundry or shipyard, Nicholas Brown was a preeminent merchant who was involved in Continental contracts and the foundry business; both the Russels and Brown were on the Rhode Island Frigate Committee. *America* was commissioned in August 1776 under Commander Nathaniel Packard, with her owner listed as "Abram" Page.¹ She was ordered to sail to St. Croix for cargo on 21 August 1776.² She sailed the same day and was back in Providence by 30 September 1776.

RISSAR ROTC / JROTC AWARDS FOR 2012

CADET	SCHOOL	PRESENTER	DATE
Michael Tagliaferro	URI	Carlen Booth	5/6/12
Dylan Thompson	PC	Jon Farnum	4/26/12
Brittney Melise	Woonsocket HS	Gene Clauss, Sr	5/11/12
David Gonzalez	Hope HS	Rev Charles Smith	6/4/12
Jose Colon	Rogers HS	John Descesneau	5/24/12
Carlos Vasquez	Cranston East HS	Ron Barnes	6/15/12
Cori DeRita	Coventry HS	Warren Kaye	5/11/12

Upcoming SAR events:

- RISSAR Board of Managers – Saturday, July 7
- RISSAR Fall Luncheon – Monday, September 10 (Cooke House)
- RISSAR Board of Managers – Saturday, October 6
- England District meeting, October 27, 2012, Manchester, NH
- RISSAR/OFPA/Dar Veteran’s Day memorial – TBD
- RISSAR Veteran’s Day Luncheon – TBD
- RISSAR Christmas Luncheon – Friday, December 7
- RISSAR JPR memorial CPT Thomas Cole – Saturday, December 8
- RISSAR Board of Managers – Saturday, January 5 2013

Other events of note:

C.A.R. event:

DATE: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2012

TIME: 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

PLACE: HOPKINTON, RI

(further details to follow) Wreath Laying Ceremony In Honor of Revolutionary War Patriot General George Thurston 1741-1827 (There is a tall gravestone and an S.A. R marker in the Cemetery.)

Bill Weaver Senior Society President Colonel Samuel Ward Society, NSCAR