

Compatriots,

I welcome you to the warm days of summer and we are happy to share with you your Society's Summer edition of the RISSAR Newsletter. Our Annual Meeting is now in the rearview mirror emerging into another active season and it is my hope you enjoy reflecting on numerous memories of our events and activities.

Fresh off of our 2023 Annual Meeting, five hereditary Societies of Rhode Island gathered for a joint dinner event at the Squantum Association on May 3rd. Speaker Paul O'Shaughnessy was entertaining and spoke on the events that led up to the Boston Tea Party.

Our Society continues to share common interests with the Daughters of the American Revolution. I was honored to attend and represent RISSAR and to provide greetings at the RIDAR dinner event to kick off their 129th State Conference on May 13th. The highlight of the meeting was NSDAR President General Pamela Rouse Wright firing off the historical cannon on site.

The RISSAR Flag Day Celebration Dinner was at the Squantum Association on June 14th. We were honored to have the United States Army Cadet Command Bluewave JROTC Battalion Hope High School to post the colors. We were also treated to a presentation on the newest digital access projects from the Rhode Island Historical Society, including the Revolutionary War Papers Database Project.

I am extremely proud of our focus on our Youth Award Programs. For the academic year 22-23 RISSAR recognized and presented awards in the following SAR award programs: the JROTC / ROTC Award Program; the JROTC Enhanced Award Program; the Arthur M. & Berdena King Eagle Scout Essay Contest; the George S. & Stella M. Knight Essay Contest; the Americanism Elementary School Poster Contest; and the Children of the American Revolution. I especially had the distinct honor of presenting the 1st place state winner of the RISSAR "Outstanding JROTC Medal," along with a monetary award, to Cadet PSG Samantha G. Vernancio on May 19th. She has since placed 5th in the SAR National competition.

Following the West Greenwich RI Memorial Day Parade, RISSAR presented to Dan Hebert, the owner of a local restaurant called "Dan's Place," the SAR Certificate of Commendation in recognition of Exemplary Patriotism in the display of the Flag of the United States of America.

On June 17th, RISSAR was honored to keep our Patriots' spirit alive by recognizing four Patriots at the Smithfield Friends Meeting Cemetery, with the installation of the Sons of the American Revolution burial markers.

I joined fellow Compatriots on July 29th attending the 281st Anniversary of Major General Nathanael Greene's birth, at his Homestead in Coventry.

Our focus on the Youth Award Programs, honoring grave sites of patriots, and recognizing exemplary patriotism in the display of the United States flag, makes me proud to be a member of RISSAR.

Patriotically yours,

Christopher C. Sparks
RISSAR, President

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Thursday, September 21, 2023

Fall Dinner
Chapel Grille, Cranston

Saturday, October 7, 2023, 9am

Board of Managers Meeting
Brewed Awakenings, Warwick

Monday, October 16, 2023, 6pm-8pm

SAR/BORIA Library visit
Portsmouth Public Library

Saturday, October 21, 2023

New England District Council Meeting
Location TBD

Sunday, November 5, 2023, 1pm

Salute to Veterans
featuring the Bourbonnais & Second RI Regiment
North Burial Ground, Providence

Saturday, November 11, 2023

RIDAR Veterans Day Memorial
RI Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Exeter

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Christmas Party and Dinner
Rhodes on the Pawtuxet, Cranston

Saturday, January 6, 2024, 9am

Board of Managers Meeting
Brewed Awakenings, Warwick

Saturday, April 13, 2024, 9am

RISSAR Annual Meeting (and Board of Managers Meeting)
East Greenwich Veteran Fireman's Association

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Editor for the Summer 2023 issue: Benjamin Ewing Nacar

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Photos: Robert Butler, Sherry Connelly, Kevin England, Benjamin Ewing Nacar, Christopher Sparks

Spotlight: Christopher Allen Krajacich

Chris joined RISSAR four years ago, and now serves as our State Registrar.

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

I was born in Cleveland, OH and grew up in Richmond, VA. I enlisted in the Marines in 1991 and served as an Infantryman and Combat Engineer. I was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in 1995 and served as a UH-1N helicopter pilot, Information Operations Officer, and Operations Planner before retiring in 2016 from the Naval War College as a Lieutenant Colonel. I was in Afghanistan from 2001-2002, Iraq in 2005, and Qatar in 2008. I was also stationed in Okinawa, Japan from 2011-2015. Now I'm the director of the Maritime Staff Operator's Course at the Naval War College. I've been married for 28 years to Deb Krajacich, and we have four kids, ages 15, 17, 20, and 24.

- What led you to join the SAR?

My mother's a member of the Daughters of the Confederacy, and I grew up hearing lots of lore about family history. But I didn't pay much attention to it at the time, and I regret that now. I only got started down the SAR path in 2015 when I was in the process of moving back from Okinawa and staying with my parents, and my mother gave me this article to read that highlighted one of our direct ancestors, Billy Whitley, who had lived to be 115 years old (!) and how one of his most prized possessions was an old musket that his father had from the American Revolution. So I started trying to trace down the genealogy, to see what I could find out about Billy's father's role in the Revolution.

- How much research did you have to do?

My mother gave me a lot of information on family history to start with. The hard part is always parsing out what information is correct and what isn't. [Former RISSAR Registrar] Glenn Russell was really helpful here. I ultimately found out that Billy's father George Whitley didn't actually participate in the fighting, but he is recognized by SAR as a Patriot because he did take an oath of allegiance and provided material support. I also found about a dozen other ancestors who are recognized as Patriots. I didn't go through the trouble of verifying those ancestors with SAR because I didn't really need to, but I verified them for my own satisfaction. Turns out my mother's family goes way back here, on her mother's side they were among the early settlers of Virginia, and on her father's side they were part of the Dutch settlement back when New York was New Amsterdam.

- How did you end up becoming Registrar?

I'd been talking with Glenn after I joined, about how I was looking for ways to get more involved with RISSAR, and I asked him if I could be Assistant Registrar and help out that way. And he said why don't I just be the new Registrar? He was already looking to retire, so he'd submit his resignation along with a recommendation for me as successor. I've got to say though, Glenn's been tremendous to work with, even now after he's formally retired. Someone will submit a membership application and even before I see it in the system Glenn will have sent me all the documents. I don't know if I can speak for him, but I think he just really loves doing the research. I still feel like I'm taking credit for his work.

- What are some other highlights of being a member of RISSAR for you?

The social aspect is a big one. My wife and I have made quite a few friends through RISSAR, for example we went to the Christmas party and met a bunch of people, and at the very next event we found they'd saved us seats. I also enjoy all the historical presentations and outings, such as our visit to the Armory, and our kids enjoy those too. I would like to find a way to help increase RISSAR's profile in the broader community. I don't know how yet, but we really should be better known.

NSSAR 133rd Annual Congress

as reported by Ron Barnes, VPG New England District

The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution held their 133rd Annual Congress in Orlando, Florida from July 14 through July 19. I attended as well as RISSAR member Ron Morneau. Because Ron part times in Orlando, we did not do the tourism event (Kennedy Space Center) and opted not to do the early National Society committee and board meetings.

We arrived in Orlando on Sunday and prepared for the Monday morning opening of Congress. When you arrive at Congress, and you are a delegate (RI was allowed 6) you must check in at the credentials desk to get your voting card. You must have that card to vote – no exceptions!



PG Pickette and NE District VPG Barnes

SAR President General Pickette called the Annual Meeting to order at 9:00am. I will note that all meetings and events started promptly on time. After the opening ceremonies, greetings were brought from many organizations to include the DAR, CAR, Descendants of Valley Forge and others. Then it was down to business. The preliminary report of the credentials committee was presented stating the number of delegates as of that morning. I think it was around 240. Then the rules were adopted and a Parliamentarian appointed. If the Parliamentarian was paid, he would have earned his keep ten times over!

Next, the reports of the various officers are called for. All reports were previously submitted, so when called upon as VPG of New England, I simply stated "It's in the book." A few officers had some timely information to add. They only call for a select few reports from the numerous committees.

There are a number of optional breakfasts and lunches that can be attended for an additional cost. For example, Youth Awards Luncheon, Southern & New England Districts Breakfast, etc..

NSSAR Color Guard Change of Command Ceremony



The business that was conducted included the proposed dues increase and improvements to the SAR Headquarters building. Both proposals passed. There are two formal dinners – the President General’s and the other the Installation Banquet. The installation dinner is formal, tails and white gloves, for incoming officers of the society. Many members wear colonial attire throughout the congress. At both banquets, many awards were given to various members for their commitment/contributions to the SAR.

I would strongly recommend to anyone that has an interest in the SAR and the inner workings to attend a congress. You will learn more about how the SAR operates and who the key players are.

Ron Barnes
VPG New England District 2022-2023



New England District members at Congress



Doings of the Compatriots

April 15th, 2023 – The 133rd Annual Meeting of the Rhode Island Society Sons of the American Revolution was held at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet in Cranston. The main order of business, as always, was the election of officers and Board Managers. The following were nominated from the floor and elected to office: Christopher C. Sparks, President; Jeffrey Harrington, 1st Vice President; and Alan Head, 2nd Vice President.

Below, from left to right: David Butler, Joseph Brennan, Chris Sparks, Bob Butler, Michael Deignan, Chris Krajacich, and David Davies III take the oath of office.



At right: Michael P. Deignan, flanked by Secretary Joseph Brennan and President Chris Sparks, is presented with the Certificate of Admission to the 1890 Society. As stated in the Society By-laws, “For a payment of a sum set by the Board of Managers – by an active member in good standing – shall constitute the person paying such sum – a life member. This RISSAR life membership shall be known as the *1890 Society*. Such person shall thereafter be exempt from payment of annual dues of RISSAR. The prerequisite for a member in good standing applying for *1890 Society* membership is having an NSSAR National Life Membership and being a full active member in the Rhode Island Society.”



Past President Robert H. Midwood (at left) was presented with a Service Award for 55 years of membership.

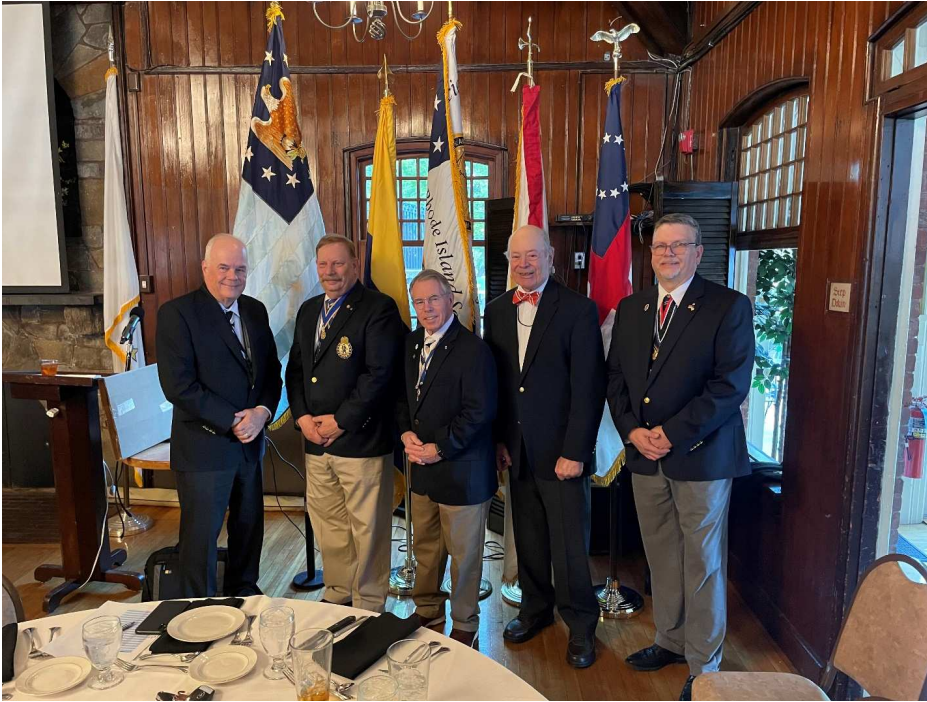


The 133rd Annual Meeting was also the occasion for the presentation of the Arthur M. & Berdena King Eagle Scout Contest award. The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) invites all Eagle Scouts interested in the American Revolution to participate in the Arthur M. & Berdena King Eagle Scout Contest. The application consists of three parts: the Eagle Scout Contest Application, a Four Generation Ancestor Chart, and a 500-word Patriotic Themed Essay. This year's 1st place winner was Eagle Scout Emma Davis from Troop 2 of the Narragansett Council. Emma was recognized for her essay entitled "Importance of the Gaspee Affair," and her leadership qualities, demonstrated in her position of Sr. Patrol Leader of Troop 2.

Compatriot David W. Pickering, RISSAR Eagle Scout Award Program Co-Chair, presented the Eagle Scout Award Medal and Certificate to Emma along with a monetary award. Emma's mother Michelle pinned the Eagle Scout Medal on Emma's uniform. Both Emma and Michelle were also presented with a RISSAR "Gaspee Challenge Coin" which they loved and said would remind them of this occasion forever. Below: RISSAR President Chris Sparks, Stephen M. Davis, Michelle L. Davis, Emma R. Davis, and Compatriot David W. Pickering.



May 3rd, 2023 – The previous year’s Rhode Island Independence Day Joint Societies Dinner had been such a resounding success – on that occasion Prof. Steven Park had spoken on the Burning of the Gaspee (a month in advance of the Gaspee Affair’s 250th anniversary) with members of four of Rhode Island’s hereditary societies in attendance – that we decided to do it again. So, on Wednesday, May 3rd, in observance of Rhode Island Independence Day (May 4th), members of no fewer than *five* Rhode Island societies came together at the Squantum Association in Riverside, RI for good food and historical edification.



Left to right, the presidents of the five societies standing in front of their organizations’ respective flags: Walter Reed, President of The Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations; Roy Lauth, President of The Rhode Island Society of the Sons of the Revolution; Chris Sparks, President The Rhode Island Society of the Sons of the American Revolution; Avery Seaman III, Governor of The Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations; and Ron Barnes, Governor of The Order of Founders and Patriots in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. Ron also served as the emcee for the evening.



Our featured speaker on this occasion was Paul O’Shaughnessy (at left) of the Boston Tea Party Museum and His Majesty’s 10th Regiment of Foot. Since the big anniversary coming up this year is the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party in December, Paul elaborated on the backstory of the Tea Party, filling in our 100+ attendees on many lesser known details such as Parliament’s specific motivation for passing the Tea Act, the colonists’ rejection of British tea at multiple major port cities and why Boston was the only city where the tea ships didn’t just sail away with their cargo, and how as late as 1773 it was Parliament, rather than the King, that was seen by most American colonists as the villain.

June 14th, 2023 – RISSAR returned to the Squantum Association to celebrate Flag Day and welcome new members. We were honored to have the United States Army Cadet Command Blue Wave JROTC Battalion Hope High School to post the colors.



Participating cadets: Maria Gutierrez, Luiz Lopez, Isaiah Methu, Renee Reyes, Diana Torrez, and Enrique Us. As part of the evening's ceremonies, Compatriot Ensign and US Army Cpt. Paul Fetter III presented a RISSAR Challenge Coin to 1st Sgt. (ret.) Dary Jent and each of the participating Blue Wave Cadets in the traditional military tradition. Compatriot Kevin England also offered a brief history of the history and tradition of Challenge Coins and their significance from Roman Army era to Vietnam to the present day.

RISSAR President Chris Sparks presented the "SAR Certificates of Commendation" for Knight Essay Education, which were awarded to 1st Sgt. (ret.) Daryl Jent and Col. (ret.) Peter Parente. Col. Parente was unable to attend due to Blue Wave Training for the JROTC Leadership Challenge, so Cadet Renee Reyes (our Knight Essay 1st Place winner) accepted the award on behalf of Col. Parente. The Blue Wave Color Guard also received a Certificate of Appreciation from RISSAR.

Pictured at right: RISSAR Secretary Joseph Brennan and President Chris Sparks lead the inductions of Compatriots David Moore and Greg Schneider.

The featured speakers for our Flag Day dinner were Phoebe Bean, Associate Director of the Mary Elizabeth Robinson Research Center, and Dana Signe K. Munroe, Cabinet Keeper & Library Collections Manager at the Rhode Island Historical Society (RIHS) and Project Leader of RIHS' Revolutionary War Papers Database Project. Phoebe and Dana gave us a detailed presentation on the newest digital access projects from the RIHS including the Revolutionary War Papers Database Project and the Rhode Island Digital Newspaper Project.



June 17, 2023 – RISSAR held a Graves Marking Ceremony at Smithfield Friends Meeting Cemetery, Woonsocket, RI, to honor the following Patriots: Joel Bradford, James Brayton, John Earle, and Chad Smith.



According to Wikipedia, the “original Meeting House, built in 1719, was connected to a chain of Quaker Meeting Houses that were built along Great Road destroyed by fire in 1881 and replaced by the current structure, a simple wood-frame clapboarded structure with Greek Revival features. The forested area directly to the north of the meeting house is a natural cemetery.” The photo at left is from Wikimedia Commons.

RISSAR Compatriot Richard Keene, also serving as the President of the Smithfield Historical Society, organized and led the SAR Grave Marking Ceremony. The Ceremony was opened with posting of the colors by Lily St. Pierre from Slatersville Cub Scout Pack 7 (at right).



At left: the Invocation was offered by Deacon John Regan of the St. Joseph Church. Greetings were brought by Woonsocket Historical Society President Iene Blais, Kathy Malin of the Smithfield Friends Meeting House, and Rebecca Fairbank, Regent of the Beacon Pole Hill Chapter of RIDAR. Speaking on behalf of RISSAR, President Chris Sparks said that we were honored to keep the spirit alive by recognizing each of the Patriots with the installation of the Sons of the American Revolution burial marker.

President Chris Sparks handed the American Flags to Lily St. Pierre, to be placed at each Patriot burial site, accompanied by a salute from RISSAR Ensign Paul Fetter III.



July 27th, 2023 – Members of RISSAR and RIDAR and other genealogical societies attended Major General Nathanael Greene’s 281st birthday party held at Forge Farm, home to 10 generations of Greens including the General from his birth in 1742 until 1770. Below, Col. Theo Aschman, Commanding Officer of the Kentish Guards, cuts the cake with Nathanael Greene’s own ceremonial sword – which by now has probably dissected more cakes than humans.



The Greens of today remember the Greens who came before: Kate A. Greene, Esq., and her daughters, Hailee Migneault Greene and Casey Migneault Greene.



July 29th 2023 – The Nathanael Greene Homestead held its own celebration of the General's birthday, complete with a Living History Encampment. At right, the Kingston Reds fire a cannon salute. RISSAR Compatriot and newly elected Trustee to the Nathanael Greene Homestead Ben Nacar (behind the camera) gave the order to fire.



Below, Homestead Vice President Brian Zinszer (standing, rightmost) delivers a 15-minute rundown of Nathanael Greene's life and military career. Next to him is Compatriot and Homestead President David Procaccini.





At left: Kiley Knott and Lauren Rossi of the Ladies of the Greene lend an appropriately fashionable air to the proceedings at the Homestead.

Below: in a bit of unscripted melodrama, Christian Jacob Wolanski of His Majesty's 56th Regiment of Foot has been captured by rebel forces and made to sit in the stocks for allegedly having wounded Josh Wojnar of the Kingston Reds. Josh (off-camera) is loudly proclaiming "I'm dying! I'm dying!" while Christine Barney of the Ladies of the Greene (leaning out the window) begs for vengeance to be wrought.



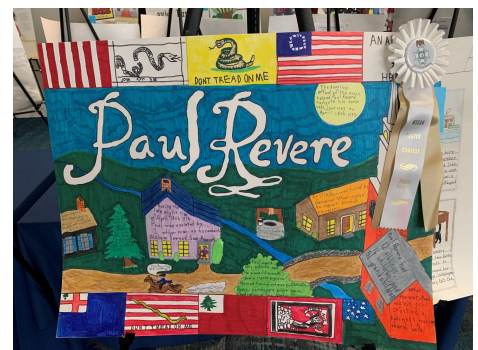
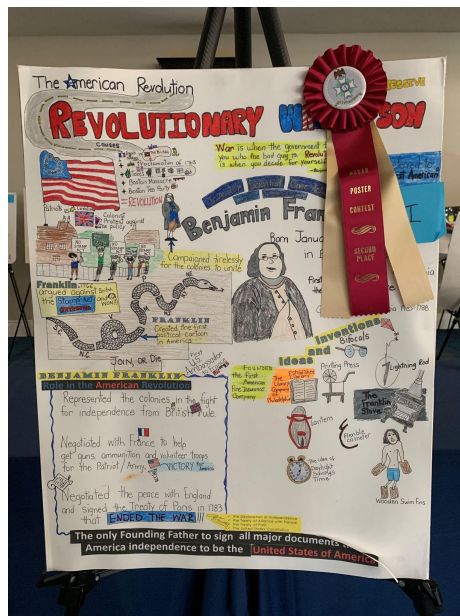
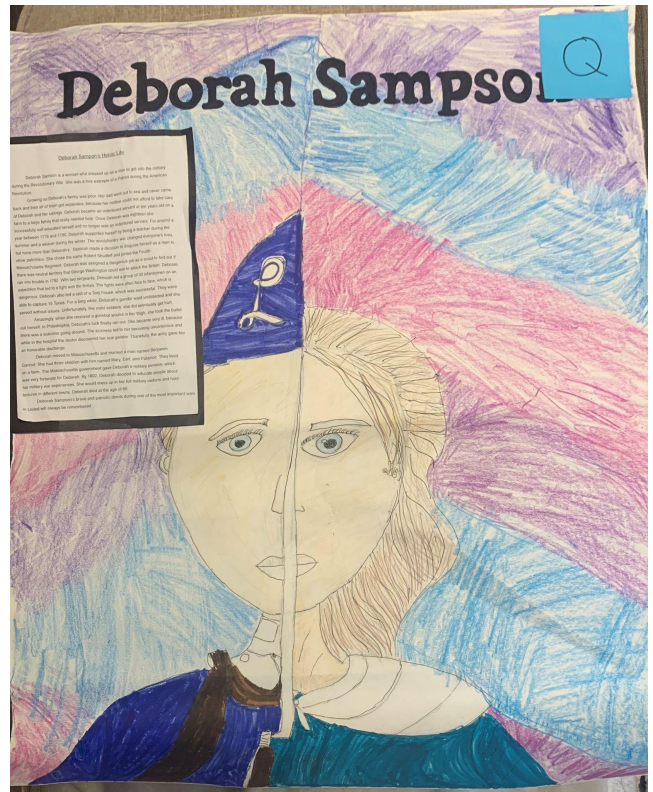
RISSAR Poster Contest

RISSAR held its second annual grade poster contest for the 5th grades in the Warwick and Cranston school departments and for Highlander Charter School in Providence. Some 35 or so posters were submitted this year, falling short of last year's 50. Only four submissions came from Cranston, so RISSAR will be reviewing their participation going forward.

This year's theme, as chosen by NSSAR, was a person alive during Revolutionary War times. Rhode Island's students turned in posters showcasing a fabulous variety of individuals from that period. Alas, factuality remains the biggest issue. Several of this year's submissions had factually incorrect captions and had to be disqualified outright, as also happened last year.

This year's Rhode Island state winner was Samray Browne from Ms. Hagopian's 4th grade class at the Highlander Charter School. Samray chose to feature Deborah Sampson of Massachusetts, who enlisted and fought for independence disguised as a man. The winning poster (at right) shows Deborah as half woman and half soldier with the halves being separated by a bayonet.

18 states in total participated in the National poster contest this year. The selection of the National winning posters (below) occurred at the NSSAR Congress.



2023 ROTC and JROTC Award Ceremonies

The award ceremony for Patriot Battalion, which encompasses Providence College, RI College, Brown, Bryant Univ., Johnson & Wales University, and Univ. of MA Dartmouth, took place at Providence College, May 7th 2023. Below: Cadet Colin Fulmer receives the RISSAR ROTC Award from Col. Jason Kneib and RISSAR Compatriot Kevin England.



RISSAR also awards the Bronze Good Citizenship Medal to those within the Battalion Administrative Civilian Staff who have provided superior meritorious service to the Battalion. This year, the Patriot Battalion recipient was Ms. Donna Cairo, Administrative Assistant to the Military Science Staff at Providence College. Awarding this medal and certificate is Col. Jason Kneib and Compatriot Kevin England, both of whom supplied written recommendations to RISSAR for Ms. Cairo's qualification for the award.



The awards ceremony for Cramer's Saber Battalion, which encompasses University of RI, Roger Williams University, and Salve Regina University, took place April 20th 2023 at Edwards Hall, University of Rhode Island. Below: Cadet Davis Lee received the RISSAR Award from Col. Cornelius "Tad" Granai III and Compatriot Kevin England.



RISSAR additionally awarded the Bronze Good Citizenship Medal to Ms. Cassandra "Cassie" Barbado, Administrative Assistant to the Military Science Staff at the University of Rhode Island, for superior meritorious service to Cramer's Saber Battalion. Awarding this medal and certificate are Col. Cornelius "Tad" Granai III and Compatriot Kevin England, both of whom supplied written recommendations to RISSAR for Ms. Barbado's qualification for the award.



The Hope High School JROTC program took place on May 6th 2023 as a Dinner Awards ceremony at the Quonset “O” Club. Pictured below are Sgt. Tum (Aid to Maj General Reina), Maj. Gen. Reina (Guest speaker for the event), Col. (Ret) Parente, and 1st Sgt. (Ret) Jent.



Unpictured: Cadet First Lieutenant Isaiah Matheu was presented 2nd place state winner of the RISSAR Enhanced Award Program “JROTC Outstanding Cadet Medal”, along with a monetary award of \$250.



Cadet Major Rene Reyes was the recipient of the Unit Level Award. At left, RISSAR Secretary Joseph Brennan presents Cadet Reyes with the “Bronze R.O.T.C. Medal” by RISSAR Secretary, Joseph Brennan. Additionally, Cadet Reyes was also the state winner of the SAR “Knight Essay Program,” which was presented by Knight Essay Chairman Kevin England (not pictured).

The North Providence JROTC award ceremony took place on 18 May 2023 at the North Providence High School Library. This year's recipient of the RISSAR JROTC award was Cadet Eleni Sousa. The "Bronze R.O.T.C. Medal" was presented by Sgt. (Ret) Jose Lobo, and Compatriot Kevin England.



The North Providence Air Force JROTC program began in the fall of 2022 and completed its first year as a JROTC unit at this year's awards ceremony. Each cadet received a Commendation in a white leather presentation folder from the RI State Legislature. Pictured below are 14 of the 18 cadets currently in the first-year program at the school with Senior Military Instructor Sgt. (Ret) Jose Lobo.



At the Cranston East High School JROTC Award Ceremony on May 19, 2023, RISSAR President Chris Sparks presented the 1st place state winner of the RISSAR Enhanced Program JROTC “Outstanding Cadet Medal”, along with a monetary award of \$500, to Cadet PSG Samantha G. Vernancio. The judging encompassed the scoring of the endorsements of the school principal, and Sr. Military Instructor, along with the essay, and Application Form. Judging for the Enhanced JROTC program was conducted by RISSAR Compatriots Kevin England, Dave Pickering, and Joe Brennan.



(Left to Right) RISSAR Unit JROTC Award winner Cadet Daniel Perez, President Chris Sparks, Cadet Samantha Vernancio, Sgt. (Ret) Moises A. Moniz , and Col. (Ret) Jason Lafferty.



Photographs were not available at the time of publication for the following JROTC Units:

- The Rogers High School JROTC awards ceremony, held on May 24th 2023 at the Naval Academy Prep School (Naval War College). Cadet Gunner Ellerman was awarded the RISSAR JROTC Unit award, and Cadet Madden McNatt received a Certificate of Appreciation (for participating in the JROTC Outstanding Cadet Enhanced Program). Both awards were presented by Compatriot Kevin England.
- The Coventry High School Navy JROTC awards ceremony, held on May 26th 2023 at the Coventry High School Gymnasium. Cadet Kyle Corcoran was presented with the RISSAR JROTC award by RISSAR Board Member Dave Pickering.
- The Tolman High School JROTC awards ceremony, held on June 8th 2023 in the Marines JROTC Training facility, immediately following the Tolman High School Graduation (which took place in the high school auditorium adjacent to the training facility). Cadet Ephrem E. Okouta was presented the RISSAR JROTC award by Compatriot Kevin England.