



Compatriots,

We have had a busy six months since our last newsletter. We inducted new members Ken Gilbert and Daniel Smith at our Fall Dinner at Chapel Grille, and enjoyed a presentation by local author Robert A. Geake titled *The Call to Arms: Rhode Island Prepares for Revolution*.

In October I presented a wreath commemorating Rhode Island's delegates to the First Continental Congress at the 250th anniversary event sponsored by Pennsylvania SAR. The event was held at Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia, where the delegates had met 250 years before to develop a unified response to the Intolerable Acts of parliament. Rhode Island was represented at the First Continental Congress by Stephen Hopkins of Providence and Samuel Ward of Westerly.

In November, RISSAR supported the dignified return of U.S. Army Sergeant Hagop Jack Zarifian, 19, killed in action in Germany during World War II on April 6, 1945. He was initially listed as missing in action (MIA) and later, killed in action. Sgt. Zarifian's body was recovered and buried with dignity by local German residents with his rifle and uniform. His grave was found in 2024 by construction crews in Germany.

RISSAR was contacted by David Van Hoof of the NSSAR POW / MIA Committee, and registrar Chris Krajacich took the lead. After contacting the VFW and the State Veterans Affairs office, he realized that no one in those organizations was aware of Sgt. Zarifian's imminent return. Thanks to the notification that NSSAR provided, RISSAR was able to mobilize local government and veterans' organizations. Chris Krajacich and David Melchar represented SAR, along with representatives of the VFW and Scouting organizations, at the dignified transfer the week before the funeral, and Chris and I attended the visitation and paid our respects to the family (including Sgt. Zarifian's sisters, aged 97 and 100). The Governor of Rhode Island also attended the visitation, and provided a State Police escort from the funeral home to the cemetery.

At the visitation, I saw a young man in the front row sitting with the family who was wearing an American flag pin. I slipped him a RISSAR challenge coin and thanked him for showing his patriotism. It turns out he was one of Sgt. Zarifian's grand-nephews, and his mother later sent a note through the "Contact Us" link on our website thanking us for the gift and talking about how much it meant to him. RISSAR extends our thanks to the NSSAR POW / MIA Committee for letting us know about this event in time for us to make a meaningful contribution.

In December RISSAR held our annual Holiday Party at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet. We inducted three new members, John Homer III, Nicholas DelSesto, and Joseph Davis Jr., and enjoyed a holiday singalong, skillfully accompanied by 2nd VP Ben Nacar on piano.

(cont'd)

Finally, on Sunday March 2, SAR, DAR, and CAR joined the Rhode Island 250 Commission to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Providence Tea Party. This event, which recalled the women of Providence organizing the burning of three hundred pounds of the “needless herb,” was hosted by Secretary of State Greg Amore in the library at the Rhode Island State Capitol, after forecasted extreme cold forced the event indoors. CAR provided miniature tea crates and a mock “bonfire” that attendees could use to dispose of the offending article.

The coming months are full of America 250 events, including the 250th anniversary of Lexington & Concord on April 19, the American capture of Fort Ticonderoga on May 9, and the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17. I look forward to representing RISSAR at the upcoming commemorations, and hope that the members of RISSAR will support our neighboring state societies in their efforts.



Yours in patriotic service,

Alan W. Head, President
Rhode Island Society
Sons of the American Revolution

In Memoriam

David Patrick Deignan, Jr (1939-2024)
Carlen Phillips Booth (1930-2024)
Ronald Hillegass (1938-2025)
Robert L. Chase (1942-2025)

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Calendar of Upcoming RISSAR Events

Saturday, April 26th, 2025

Annual Meeting
East Greenwich Veteran Firemen's Club
East Greenwich, RI

Thursday, May 8th, 2025

Six Societies Dinner
Squantum Association
Riverside, RI

Wednesday, May 14th, 2025

Recruiting Event
Westerly Library
Westerly, RI

Saturday, June 28th, 2025

Board of Managers Meeting
Brewed Awakenings
Warwick RI

Thursday, September 18th, 2025

Fall Dinner
Circe Prime (formerly Chapel Grille)
Cranston, RI

Saturday, October 4th, 2025

Board of Managers Meeting
Brewed Awakenings
Warwick RI

Sunday, December 7th, 2025

Holiday Party
Rhodes on the Pawtuxet
Cranston, RI

Other Events of Interest

Saturday, March 29th, 2025

New England District Council Annual Meeting
Wayside Inn
Sudbury, MA

Saturday, April 5th, 2025

General Nathanael Greene Homestead Opening
Weekend
Coventry, RI

Saturday, April 19th, 2025

Lexington and Concord 250th Anniversary
Lexington, MA and Concord, MA

Saturday, May 10th, 2025

Capture of Fort Ticonderoga 250th Anniversary
Ticonderoga, NY

Saturday, June 14th, 2025

Gaspee Days Parade
Warwick, RI and Cranston, RI

also Saturday, June 14th, 2025

Bunker Hill 250th Anniversary Ceremony
(actual anniversary June 17th)
Boston, MA

Saturday, July 12th – Friday, July 18th, 2025

SAR Congress
Mohegan Sun
Uncasville, CT

Editor's Note

Here at RISSAR we always enjoy thumping our chests at the expense of the other twelve colonies – as well we should. Throwing tea into a harbor to avoid paying taxes on it? We went and set a customs ship on fire, a whole year and half prior to your stupid little Tea Party! Declared independence on that hot July day? We were two months ahead of the rest of you! That Virginia dude George Washington leading the continental Rebel Alliance in the field? It was ultimately our own homeboy, Nathanael Greene, who wore the Empire down!

Of course the other State Societies will be eager to heckle you about how the movement for independence *ackchyually* began in *their* state, or that the *really* important players in the Revolution are *their* homeboys.



At least we can all agree Massachusetts ought to be taken down a peg or two, right? Except for the awkward fact that when war came – unmistakable War, not sporadic violence – the fighting *did* break out in Massachusetts, and a lot of the key players *were* Bostonians, from Hancock, Warren, and the Adamses, all the way down to your newsletter editor's own childhood favorite, Paul Revere.

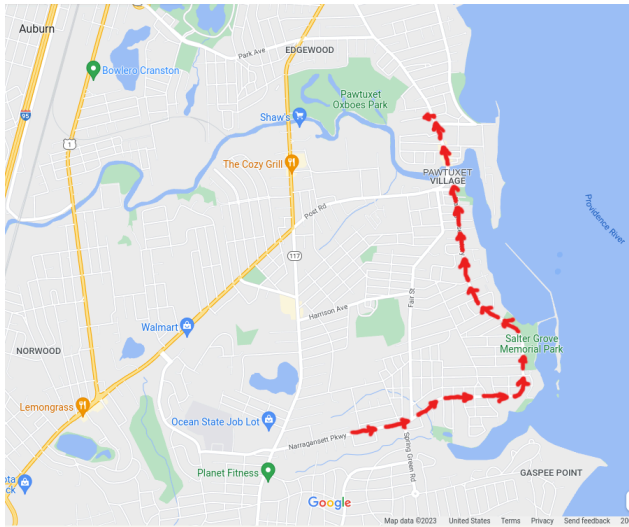
It's easy to roll one's eyes at such one-upmanship between the former colonies. The important point is not which state "wins" – because we all know Rhode Island does. What matters is that the more all of us from all the former colonies engage in advocacy efforts for our own states' contributions and our own local heroes, the more we foster a healthy appreciation for our shared roots.

As historian Edmund S. Morgan observes in the opening paragraphs of *The Birth of the Republic, 1763-89*, our ancestors "seemed to their contemporaries – and even to themselves – as unlikely a group as could be found to join in any common enterprise. The American colonists were reputed to be a quarrelsome, litigious, divisive lot, and historical evidence bears out this reputation." (He gives us a shout-out: "Newport, Rhode Island, was at odds with Providence, and the rest of New England looked upon the

whole of Rhode Island with undisguised contempt.") Nevertheless, Morgan goes on to point out, one thing the American colonists had going for them was a strong sense of common heritage, and that did much to bind the squabbling colonies together under the Continental Colors.

Keeping that sense of common heritage alive is precisely what we're about, every chapter and every state society of SAR. So, to echo Alan's sentiments earlier in these pages, with the 250th anniversary celebrations just around the corner, go ye forth and attend the other former colonies' commemorative exercises. They all deserve our support. Even those Boston blowhards.

Calling all RISSAR Compatriots - The Gaspee Days Parade, Saturday, June 14th



(Left) The parade route (Right) RISSAR in the 2022 parade, photo by Ron Barnes

We will be marching in this year's Gaspee Days Parade in Pawtuxet Village.
The parade steps off at 10am, rain or shine,
and follows a two-mile stretch of Narragansett Parkway.

OPEN-AIR RIDING OPTIONS AVAILABLE

If you are interested in marching (or riding!)
in the parade as a member of RISSAR,
or want more information,
contact Compatriot Ben Nacar at ben@bennacar.com.
The more the merrier!

The Gaspee Days website: www.gaspee.com

Doings of the Compatriots

September 19th, 2024 – After a summer hiatus, RISSAR reconvened for our usual Autumn Dinner at the Chapel Grille in Cranston.



At left, State Society President Alan Head and Registrar Chris Krajacich administer the membership oath to new member Ken Gilbert; at right, new member Daniel Smith poses with his membership certificate.



After we had enjoyed a sumptuous repast, historian Robert Geake provided the edification for the evening with his talk *The Call to Arms: Rhode Island Prepares for Revolution*, a survey of what the locals were up to exactly 250 years ago.

October 12th, 2024 – The 250th anniversary of the First Continental Congress was observed at Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia. The First Continental Congress, which met at this location from September 5th to October 26th, 1774, included delegates from twelve of the thirteen colonies. (The holdout was Georgia, still a bastion of Loyalist sentiment at this point, although they threw in their lot with the other colonies when the Second Continental Congress convened.) At left are Stephen Taylor, Past State President of Connecticut SAR, and Alan Head, State President of RISSAR; at right, the color guard for the twelve former colonies who participated.



Alan Head presented a wreath commemorating Rhode Island's delegates, Stephen Hopkins and Samuel Ward.



October 26th, 2024 – The Nathanael Greene Homestead invited RISSAR to set up a booth at their annual Historic Trick-Or-Treat Timeline. Below, mid-afternoon, Associate Secretary Skip Davis and 2nd VP Ben Nacar prepare to accost visitors. Chris Krajacich also manned our tent earlier in the day.



November 10th, 2024 – Compatriots Chris Krajacich (leftmost), Glenn Russell (next to Chris, dark sweater), and Dave Melchar (in the light blue shirt) joined fellow Marines at the RI Veterans Home, Bristol, RI, to celebrate the Marine Corps 249th birthday.



December 8th, 2024 – RISSAR returned to Rhodes on the Pawtuxet for another sumptuous repast and seasonal good cheer at our annual Christmastime party. Three new members were sworn in that evening: John Homer III, Nicholas DelSesto, and Joseph Davis Jr.



Ben Nacar provided musical accompaniment during cocktail hour, which concluded with a brief sing-along of three popular holiday classics.



March 2, 2025 – Members of SAR, DAR, and CAR attended the Rhode Island 250 Commission's ceremony commemorating the Providence Tea Party of March 2nd, 1775. This Tea Party, sadly less well-known than the Boston party, was conducted in true Rhode Island style following the torching of the HMS Gaspee two years prior: rather than simply throwing the tea into the harbor as the Bostonians did, the women of Providence set it on fire. Below, as members of the Pawtuxet Rangers look on, Dr. C. Morgan Grefe from the Rhode Island Historical Society recounts the story of the Providence tea party of March 2nd, 1775.



Updates from the Nathanael Greene Homestead

Dave Procaccini reports that the Homestead gang has been far from idle. They recently completed a full restoration of all the windows and associated rot at the Southern Gable end of Spell Hall, which has now received a full fresh coat of paint. They are now replacing all of the fixed Homestead storm windows with ones that can be opened, to allow the Hall to be better ventilated in the summer months and thus greatly reduce cooling costs.



Volunteers recently cleared the brush and trees from the end of the 1740 portion of Greene Street and the Forge Archaeological site.

Also, over the last six weeks or so, the Ford 2000 tractor financed by the late Dan Harrop (Compatriot and Past RISSAR President) was overhauled and restored to its place on the Homestead's roster of mowing tractors.



The replacement of the Homestead's 50+ year old heating system and 20 year old roof are high on the current list of priorities, and the Homestead is looking into fundraising options to support these efforts.

The Homestead will have their Opening Day on April 5th 2025, complete with Militia Inspection. This season will include classic Homestead events such as an observance of Rhode Island Independence Day on May 4th; Nathanael Greene's Birthday, observed July 27th (the date of his birthday by the Old Style calendar); the Historic Trick-Or-Treat Timeline on October 25th; Small Business Saturday on November 29th, with potential military maneuvers; and Christmas at Spell Hall on the first weekend of December.

As always, any additional volunteer help at the Homestead would be greatly appreciated.