President's remarks:

Compatriots,

Although I have only been president of the Rhode Island Society for a little more than two months, I can honestly say it is one of the more enjoyable positions I have ever held. The support I have received from the Past Presidents and Board of Managers has been outstanding. I am proud to be associated with such a fine group of gentlemen.

Last Saturday I had a thoroughly enjoyable day when the Society took a bus trip to Boston where we visited the U.S.S. Constitution (aka "Old Ironsides"), the Union Oyster House and the armory and museum of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts at Faneuil Hall. A good time was had by all in attendance. I had an especially wonderful day because I have been very fond of the Constitution since my early childhood, enjoy excellent food and love to see historic military artifacts. Many thanks to Ron Barnes and Captain Dan May of the Ancients for making this great day a reality.

I would also like to remind those who may be able to attend it that the SAR National Congress will be held in Boston this year from July 8th through the 13th. It is rare that a National Congress is held so close to Rhode Island so this will be an opportunity to expose yourself to the SAR on the national level. I am well aware that those of us who value history and embrace what may be called traditional American ideals may feel out of place in modern world. This, however, will be an event where you can enjoy the camaraderie of "kindred souls" in a location rich in sites related to the American Revolution.

Lastly, if you know a gentleman who has Patriot ancestors who would enjoy what our organization does and believes in what it stands for, please ask him to consider joining the SAR. I have seen far too many good organizations become shadows of their former selves because they failed to recruit their next generation of members and leaders. The RISSAR is a strong organization today because each of us, at some point, made the decision to join it. Let us help others to decide to join one of our nation's largest hereditary and patriotic organizations so its ideals and values can be perpetuated for generations to come.

Patriotically,

John T. Duchesneau
President
RISSAR

Admiral Furlong Award:

This National SAR award is presented annually at the SAR Congress to the state societies that have fulfilled the qualifications during the previous year.

To qualify each state society and the majority of its chapters must present, during the previous year, at least one NSSAR Flag Certificate to a person or organization who qualifies.

The first year, a certificate and streamer will be awarded to the state society. Each succeeding year that a society qualifies, it will receive a certificate and a white star to be placed at the top of the streamer.

Thanks to John Adams taking the initiative for us to be able to qualify, The Rhode Island Society will be receiving this award for the first time this year.
Forty-five Compatriots and guests spent the day in Boston on the first RISSAR sponsored bus trip in many years. Thanks to Compatriot Ron Barnes, the day was filled with a never ending whirl of activity and enjoyment. I am not sure if he can take claim for the amazing weather day though as the sun was out all day, the sky was clear, and the temperature was a perfect 60 degrees for walking around.

The first stop of the day was at the Charlestown Navy Yard for a Navy sponsored private tour of the USS Constitution, the oldest commissioned warship in the world (1797) still afloat. Here we were greeted with a tour guide (Navy), who knew the history of the ship from beginning to end and even took us deep into the 'orlop deck' where the general public is not allowed. Although the ship is in dry dock for restoration, that did not discourage anyone from enjoying the experience. We also had an opportunity in the Constitution Museum to sign one of the copper plates that will be fitted onto the ship as part of the restoration.

From the Navy Yard to the Union Oyster House by bus--now that is style. Unloading from the bus parking area, we had to travel through the Haymarket Square open-air market to get to the Union Oyster House. Now, talk about getting your senses assaulted by the vegetables, fruits and sellers of such--quite an experience.

Joe Milano owner of the Union Oyster House

Our tour guide Seaman Rico with President Duchesneau

When we arrived at the Union Oyster House, we were ushered into the private Webster Room for our 'order off the menu'. Ron had arranged through Past Capt. Dan May of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, to speak with Joe Milano, owner and fellow Past Capt. of the Ancients, to have us in this private dining room. Although the Union Oyster House was mobbed to overflowing, we had a wonderful meal with great service. After ordering our meals, Joe Milano gave a speech on the history of the Union Oyster House (he named it after Union Street where it sits) and his personal involvement with the restaurant, Norwich Academy in Vermont and his love of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company.
Without skipping a beat, once the meal ended, we headed to Faneuil Hall to take the elevator to the 4th floor where the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company has their home and where they have their museum, not open to the public without Lt. Chuck Fazio being present as he was with us that day. More importantly, he had the key to the elevator to get us to the 4th floor, or you could walk up the 77 steps.
After walking the room and seeing all of the exhibits, Lt. Fazio gave us a speech on the history of the Ancients and his role in the Museum. Not normally seen by anyone, Lt. Fazio even showed some of us the archives that are hidden in a room behind his office. None of us that saw that room will ever forget it.

At this point, there was still time for a quick run through Quincy Market for some shopping, or just enjoying the assault on the senses from the food hall—naturally, the place was wall to wall people and the watching was fun too.

The bus arrived back at the start point within 4 minutes of the scheduled time and everyone expressed deep appreciation for an amazing day to Compatriot Ron Barnes for planning such a wonderful experience that could not have been arranged without his many contacts.

Report by John W. Adams

Tour members and Chuck Fazio of the AHAC (blue sport coat) at lunch.

JROTC Presentation:

On April 29th, 2016, Rhode Island Compatriot David Butler presents a JROTC Certificate to Devin Amadon, cadet chosen by Col. Steve Buteau, JROTC Director at Coventry High School. The ceremony took place at the Coventry High School Auditorium and was attended by about 200 people.
La Gazette Francaise:
The French SAR are preparing to mount an exhibition commemorating the 240th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. It will open in Versailles on July 4 and run to October 8, 2016. One of the topics it will cover is the Gazette Françoise, the first newspaper published by the French army in America. They found an image of a plaque on the internet that they want to use but its resolution is too poor.

Patrick Mesnard contacted the Rhode Island Society to see if I knew somebody who could identify where the plaque was located and could provide a high resolution image. I, John W. Adams, Past State Society President, contacted Norman Desmarais who had translated the newspaper several years ago. My email arrived at a fortuitous time, as Norman was going to Newport that afternoon. He went a little earlier than planned so he could take the photo.

That evening, he sent the photo along with copies of the eight issues of the newspaper (November 17, 24, 30, 1780 and December 8, 15, 22, 30, 1780 and supplement) and his translation. The only known copies to exist are in the US.

This past winter, Norman was translating the Count de Lauberdiere’s diary (Lauberdiere was Count de Rochambeau’s cousin and aide-de-camp). He found the diary included an issue #91 of the Gazette Françoise. It was published in November 1781, 53 weeks after the first issue. This indicated that the newspaper did not cease publication after the January 1781 supplement as previously thought.

This raised the question whether issues 8 to 90 and issues subsequent to number 91 are held by any library in France. However, the French responded that no copies of the newspaper exist in France, even in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

The plaque is on the foundation of the Hunter House (54 Washington St. in Newport). It’s on the waterfront side, not the street side, of the house. The Hunter House was the headquarters of Adm. De Ternay and the French naval command during the French occupation of Newport. It is here that de Ternay died on Dec. 15, 1780. Most people think that the French press printed the Gazette Françoise here but others think the press was located in one of the houses across the street.
The text of the plaque reads:

Here in Newport was published, from 1780-1781, the first French newspaper in the United States "La Gazette Française edited by the French forces under Rochambeau who came to help America win its independence.

* * *

La Gazette Française was the first newspaper published in a foreign language in the United States and, as such, the forerunner of the foreign-language press in this country.

* * *

La Gazette Française was also the first service newspaper published abroad by an expeditionary force and, as such, the ancestor of "Stars and Stripes," the newspaper of the American Armed Forces in France during the two world wars.

This tablet has been presented by France Amerique, the French newspaper in the United States, on the occasion of the 175th anniversary of the arrival of Rochambeau's army in Newport, July 10, 1955.

Text of article from: Norman Desmarais, Professor Emeritus, Providence College

The next Board of Managers meeting will be held on Saturday, July 16 at 9:00am at the 1149 Restaurant.

Calendar:

June 11 – Flag Day Luncheon
July 16 – July BOM
September 26 – Cooke House Luncheon
October 1 – BOM/Society Steamship Museum visit
November 5 – North Burial Ground Ceremony - Tentative
November 6 – Salute to Veterans
December 10 – Christmas Party
2017
February 18 – Annual Meeting

Save the date – Saturday, October 1 - Steamship Museum Tour