

Number 1, 2006

President's Annual Report for 2005

The Rhode Island Society continued its growth in membership during the past year. We inducted eleven new compatriots as well as three re-instatements. We are now approaching a total membership of 150. The even larger task, however, is to convince an increasing percentage of our membership to play a more active role in our activities.

State luncheon programs during the year included the following:

1. The spring meeting at the Wannamoisett CC featured Mr. Richard Seges with an illustrated talk on the design and construction of GTECH's new world headquarters in Providence.
2. Our annual joint meeting with the DAR at the Dunes Club included a well received talk by Mary Kay Salomone, the founder of Operation Support Our Troops.
3. The September meeting at the Clarke Cooke House was again preceded by a wonderful reception at the home of Past John Peck Rathbun Chapter President Walter Whitley.
4. Our "Salute to Veterans" luncheon at the Larchwood Inn featured an address by Major George E. Tromba on a "Native New Englanders Experience in the Military".
5. The season concluded with our annual Christmas Party at the Shriners Imperial Room in December. We also used the occasion to raise additional funds for Operation Support Our Troops.

Revolutionary War gravesite commemorations continued to play an important part in the activities of this Society.

1. In September, five members of RISSAR along with four Varnum Continentals and descendants of Solomon Southwick gathered at his gravesite in Newport's Common Burial Ground. Southwick was Commissary General for Rhode Island during the Revolutionary War and editor and owner of the Newport Mercury. He was an outspoken critic of British policy such that when General Clinton landed in Newport in 1776, he had orders to arrest Southwick and seize his printing press – they did not succeed.
2. We commemorated the life of Capt. Stephen Olney in November at Olney Park in North Providence. Capt. Olney served from May, 1775 to May, 1782 earning

eleven battle stars in the process. An article and picture appeared in the local newspaper, the North Star.

3. On a cold and snowy Sunday in December, we gathered along with DAR, CAR, the Varnum Continentals and other dignitaries to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the death of Capt. Thomas Cole of Wickford, "An Officer in the Revolution".

The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route (W3R) activities were certainly a highlight of 2005. These included a wreath laying at the statue of General Rochambeau, a parade through downtown Newport and a major encampment at Fort Adams to mention only a few. RISSAR, under the leadership of 1st VP Daniel O'Connell sponsored an American Heritage Merit Badge program at Fort Adams. For many of us the real highlight, however, was the dinner at the Clambake Club in Middletown at which we hosted compatriots of the French Society of SAR along with members of their families.

In early Fall, RISSAR participated in a Boy Scout Camporee in Uxbridge, MA where we helped more than 100 Boy Scouts increase their understanding of their American Heritage.

We made significant improvements in our ability to communicate with our membership

1. Our records have been upgraded so that we will issue a new roster early in 2006. This included adding email addresses wherever possible. In addition, the efforts of Bruce MacGunnigle have produced a listing of ancestral information that will also be included in the new roster.
2. Considerable efforts in 2006 led to our website coming on-line in February 2006. Check out www.rhodeislandsar.org.
3. We published three issues of our newsletter "The Independent Man".

Your Board of Managers approved in 2005

1. The establishment of a new life membership plan.
2. The creation of an endowment fund.
3. Significant improvements in financial reporting.

Our research into the RISSAR state seal led to the creation of a lapel pin based on the seal and we have since sold more than 80 at \$5 each so that we have nearly recouped our original investment. Once we reach that point, future sales will then flow into general operating funds.

CALENDAR

State Spring meeting: Wannamoisett Country Club, Friday, 28 April.

John Peck Rathbun Chapter: New Eng. Wireless and Steam Museum, Thursday, 25 May. Compatriot Robert Merriam and his wife Nancy were honored recently by Preserve Rhode Island for their efforts in establishing the Museum. The Merriams opened the Museum on their property in 1964 and continue to be involved in its operation.

Flag Day (Joint SAR/DAR meeting), Dunes Club, Wednesday, 14 June.

Town of East Greenwich Navy Day Celebration, Thursday, 22 June.

W3R Activities: commencing 6 May 2006 and continuing each Saturday through 17 June, RISSAR is sponsoring a staged re-enactment of the first steps in the march of French and American forces from Newport to Yorktown, VA that eventually led to Cornwallis' surrender and the successful conclusion of the Revolutionary War. We need as much participation as possible from RISSAR members. You do not have to march – we just need help with the logistics. If you are available for any or all of those Saturdays, please call Daniel O'Connell (401-828-7549)

Thank you for your support.

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