

President Cregeau's Report, CTSSAR, to the New England District, NSSAR

Damien Cregeau

October/November 2020

CTSSAR Membership: 554 Compatriots, including 34 new Compatriots in 2020 (34 new, reinstated 12, dual 1 for 47 total; versus 6 deceased and one transfer out; net gain of 40)

Summary Highlights of Summer-Fall 2020 CTSSAR Events

Despite the fact that the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has caused various challenges for our Connecticut Society, the CTSSAR, including the ongoing closure to the public of our three museum properties that make our state society so unique, we have been able to achieve a remarkable set of events and projects - all in compliance with CDC and State of Connecticut public health guidelines. This has largely been achieved by having our awards ceremonies and other special events held outside in weather that thankfully cooperated.

Most recently, Past State President Ethan Stewart, who also serves as Alternate Trustee for NSSAR meetings, hosted a very successful public patriot grave-marking ceremony attended by 65 people. It was held on sunny Saturday, October 17th at the Old Uptown Burial Ground in Derby, Connecticut. Compatriot Stewart's event was an event of his General David Humphreys Branch #1. It honored **54 Revolutionary War Patriots** buried at the historic cemetery. The program included a posting of the Colors and musket volley salute by the Connecticut Line. Remarks were made by Compatriot Stewart, who also serves as branch president. CTSSAR's First Vice President Stephen Taylor provided greetings from the state society. Although he could not attend, a proclamation was read and received by Richard Dziekan, Mayor of Derby. Greetings were also provided by CTDAR's State Regent Christy Hendrie. Past Vice President General of the New England District Russ Cumbee was among those who attended. A new, vertical marker list the names of the 54 Patriots (see photo) was installed and dedicated. A newly written song was performed by Tom Callinan.

Compatriots of the CTSSAR attended the **239th Anniversary of Battle of Groton Heights** in September 1781, with an annual commemoration on Sunday, September 6th. This a NSSAR **Silver Color Guard event**. **Bob Walsh**, New England District Vice President General, attended. VP Walsh and State First Vice President/Captain Hale Branch President Stephen Taylor laid the wreath at the site of Colonel William Ledyard's untimely death by a British saber inside Fort Griswold in Groton. VP Walsh also attended the annual wreath laying and grave marking ceremony at the grave of Colonel Ledyard at the nearby Ledyard Cemetery.

The trend of outdoor ceremonies in favorable weather allowed for the presentation of **Eagle Scout Awards** throughout the state during the summer. On Sunday, July 26th, two Eagle Scouts were recognized for their participation in the Eagle Scout Contest at a ceremony at Putnam State Park in Redding, site of the winter encampment of the Continental Army under Major General Israel Putnam. This event also allowed for the swearing in of a new Compatriot.

Similarly, on Saturday, June 6th, two other Eagle Scouts were recognized by the Captain Nathan Hale Branch No. 6 at the **CTSSAR's Nathan Hale Schoolhouse** and property overlooking the scenic Connecticut River in East Haddam. This event was also an opportunity for the Hale Branch to place a NSSAR grave marker at the grave monument of Maj. Gen. Joseph Spencer, located on the CTSSAR's Hale Schoolhouse grounds, about 200 feet from the schoolhouse. Compatriots Stephen Taylor, (1st VP) Tim Wilkins (2nd VP), as well as Hale Branch leaders Tyler Smith, Jim Rothgeb, Dave Packard helped organize the ceremonies and make the presentations, including an overview of the accomplishments of General Spencer.

Another creative use of 18th-century, historic property in Connecticut was made on Saturday, June 27th when an Eagle Scout as well as the **state winner of the Knight Essay Award Contest** were both recognized at the home of CTSSAR President Damien Cregeau. The Patriot Samuel Hanmer House, built in 1765 and located in scenic Wethersfield, provided the backdrop for the awards presentations by Compatriots Tim Wilkins (2nd Vice President), Knight Essay Chair John Morgan and Wadsworth Branch No. 7 President Bruce Donald.

Color Guard/The Connecticut Line

The Connecticut Line led by Colonel David Perkins, Past State President, participated in several important events in 2020. Most notably was the annual, aforementioned 239th anniversary of the **Battle of Groton Heights** in early September. Thirteen members of the Connecticut Line participated this year. This ceremony included the reading of the names of the **88 Patriot defenders who died in defense of Fort Griswold** when attacked by British forces. Those names were read by both Dave Perkins as well as Vice President General Bob Walsh. A three-volley musket salute was also fired by the Connecticut Line from the platform inside Fort Griswold. In addition the graves of five Patriots buried near Colonel Ledyard in the nearby ceremony were newly marked with SAR gravemarkers.

A dozen members of the **Connecticut Line helped honor the 54 Patriots** marked and celebrated at the aforementioned ceremony in Derby in October, including a three-volley musket salute. The Connecticut Line also participated in the grave marking ceremony hosted by the Captain Nathan Hale Branch and its president, Stephen Taylor, on Independence Day. The graves of 5 Patriots were marked at the Crary Cemetery in Groton.

250th Pins

In a special agreement between NSSAR's American 250th Committee and CTSSAR, the CTSSAR BOM approved for the CTSSAR to market and sell **NSSAR's first 250th anniversary lapel pin - the 1776-2026 pin**. This creative effort has been spearheaded by Past Presidents Dave Perkins and Ethan Stewart, and the lapel pin is already selling quite well with initial orders in the hundreds. A graphic of the pin's design, pricing and ordering information can be found here: <https://www.connecticutsar.org/pdf/NSSAR%20250th%20Anniversary%201776%20-%202026%20Lapel%20Pin.pdf>

Challenge Coins

Past President and Alternate Trustee Ethan Stewart has spearheaded and chaired the CTSSAR's Coin Committee, which has created and successfully marketed and sold several challenge coins to promote the rich, patriotic history of our American Revolution-related sites in Connecticut.

1. **2018 War Office Coin**. We have sold 150 coins. Properties bought 50 this year and I have been buying some from them to take care of my online sales. We did extremely well with our first Challenge Coin.
2. **2019 Invasion of New Haven Coin**. We bought 100 coins because of the event the Humphreys Branch had to recognize that invasion. We have sold 65 of those coins, some were give a ways to the speakers at the event. We need to sell 4 more to break even.
3. **2020 Washington & Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Coin**. We have sold 35 coins out of 50 with 1 free to PG Manning, We need to sell 3 more to break even.

Ethan is working on a new coin for next year and are looking at the 240th anniversary of the Battle of Groton Heights at Fort Griswold. I am working on the layout of the fort.

State Meetings

June 4th Annual Meeting (normally held in April and in-person) via Zoom only

September 19th BOM Meeting via both Zoom and in-person at the Griswold Inn, Essex, CT

November 14th All-Member Meeting via both Zoom and in-person at the 2nd Co. Governor's Foot Guard Armory, downtown Hartford, CT

Respectfully Submitted,

Damien Cregeau

President, CTSSAR

Generals Jedediah and Ebenezer Huntington House

23 East Town Street

Norwich, Connecticut 06360

damien_cregeau@hotmail.com