The most historic event of 2019 for our CTSSAR occurred on October 5th, when we welcomed President General Jack Manning and his wife, Sheila, from Massachusetts. Jack was the first PG to visit Connecticut since PG Tom Lawrence visited in May of 2017 to present the Alexander Hamilton Award at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. We are the only state society to own historic properties - and we own not one but THREE 18th-century properties as museums open to the public: the Captain Nathan Hale Schoolhouses in East Haddam and New London, and the Governor Jonathan Trumbull War Office on the large green in Lebanon.

Thanks to the efforts of past CT President Todd Gerlander, the CTSSAR was approved by NSSAR to create the Governor Jonathan Trumbull Branch #13 as an honorary branch to recognize the incredible, important contributions of Gov. Trumbull in his efforts to supply the Continental Army at both Valley Forge and General Israel Putnam’s encampment in Redding, CT in the winter of 1778-1779, as well as official head of the CT Committee of Correspondence and Committee of Safety, as well as official commander-in-chief of the militia of colony then state of Connecticut. He was the only governor of any of the 13 colonies to serve as governor before, during and after the American Revolution. For these reasons he is one of the two (the other being Roger Sherman, the only person to sign all four key “founding” documents) statues representing Connecticut in the U.S. Capitol’s statuary hall.

Like PG Lawrence, PG Manning and his wife Sheila were given a reception at the home of President Damien Cregeau, which was also the home of Patriot Brigadier General Jedediah Huntington of Norwich. PG Manning enjoyed an extensive, guided tour - led by Past President Dave Perkins - of our CTSSAR’s three museum properties, beginning with the Hale Schoolhouse in downtown New London. The caravan of cars then headed west over to scenic East Haddam, where the other Hale Schoolhouse owned by our CTSSAR sits on a high hill and overlooks the Connecticut River. Property Steward David Packard provided an entertaining and informative overview and guided tour of the property. Following a fine lunch at the historic Gelston House attached to the 19th-century Goodspeed Opera House, the caravan resumed its driving tour over the hill and through the woods on back roads up to rural Lebanon.

Standing in front of the War Office are Lt. Col. Paul Selnau, DAR State Regent Christy Hendrie, CTSSAR President, Damien Cregeau, President General Jack Manning, and Color Guard Commander David Perkins.
President Manning Visits—Con’t.

Many thanks go to the impressive array of The Connecticut Line who massed in front of the Gov. Trumbull War Office to welcome PG Manning his wife, including organizer, co-host and Past President Colonel Dave Perkins, commander, State Secretary and Lt. Colonel Paul Selnau, deputy commander, as well as the various spouses and public, who totaled about 75 in all!

PG Manning presented his newly signed charter for the Trumbull Branch to President Cregeau and installed the honorary branch officers. The CTDAR leadership, including State Regent Christy Hendrie, as well as President Cregeau, and Past President Perkins offered remarks, and the entire ceremony was emceed by Past President and event organizer Todd Gerlander. Many memorable moments occurred and recorded by both photos and digital videos for archives and social media.

The historic event closed with PG Manning’s attendance at the CTSSAR’s dual grave marking ceremonies of two Patriot officers’ graves in the Lebanon Burying Ground, where musket volleys were fired by the Connecticut Line following their grave markings with wreath-laying at their graves by PG Manning and President Cregeau both at their graves as well as at the graves of Governors Jonathan Trumbull Senior and Junior in the same cemetery. It is our hope that President Cregeau’s photo to the left of the Companions of the Connecticut Line formed in a line with hats raised and cheering “Huzzah!” will do well in the NSSAR photo contest!

The Gov. Oliver Wolcott, Sr. Branch awarded the SAR Flag Certificate to American Legion Post 44 in Bantam, Connecticut on September 7th. The occasion was the 359th consecutive Veteran of the Month ceremony performed by Post 44 and it coincided with the Town of Litchfield’s 300th anniversary celebration. In honor of all veterans of the American Revolution from Litchfield and Morris, the Betsy Ross Flag was flown over the Litchfield Green. The Veteran of the Month program was conceived in November 1989 and formalized in a ceremony designed by Art St. John was taken to the National American Legion Convention in 1993, where it was adopted as a nationwide Americanism program of the American Legion. The SAR Flag Certificate is awarded in recognition of exemplary patriotism in the display of the Flag of the United States of America.
The Gov. Oliver Wolcott, Sr. Branch #10 conducted a grave marking for African-American patriot Private Jeff Liberty at the Old Judea Cemetery in Washington, CT. Jeff Liberty was born into Slavery in 1725 and was offered his freedom if he would enlist, so at age 55 he did just that, joining the all black 2nd Company of the 4th Connecticut Regiment of the Continental Line and served until November of 1782. Following the war, Jeff was granted land in Washington, CT and farmed there until his death in 1797. He was survived by his wife and 2 daughters. Proclamations were read by CT State Senator Eric Berthel, and CT State Representative Pat Wilson Pheanious. Following an unveiling of the new headstone supported by the GWEF and a wreath laying, the Connecticut Line gave a 3-volley musket salute, which was followed by taps.

An excellent article by Maurice A. Barboza outlines some of the lesser known facts about African-American participation in the Revolutionary War in Connecticut. “At least 820 African-American soldiers, and seamen (patriots) served in the Revolutionary War from Connecticut. (This does not include those who provided civilian assistance or demonstrated a personal desire to be liberated from enslavement. Many men, women and children ran away or filed freedom petitions with courts and the General Assembly.) Connecticut’s 820 patriots represent 16 percent of the known 5,000 who served from the 13 colonies and territories. Some estimate that up to 10,000 African Americans served in the Revolutionary War. At least 562 African American patriots are connected by birth, enlistment or residence to a town. At least 258 African American patriots are not associated with a town. Of Connecticut’s 169 towns, 80 are connected to an African American patriot. At the time of the Revolution, African Americans accounted for 2.6 percent of the population of Connecticut, not including American Indians. According to the Connecticut census of 1774, 2,883 African American males of all ages resided in six counties in the state. (Middlesex County and Tolland County were created in 1785.) If, for example, 50 percent of the African American male population under 20 was over 16 and 80 percent of those over 20 were under 40, the level of eligible African American male participation in the Revolutionary War would be nearly 43 percent.” The Hometowns of Connecticut’s African American Revolutionary War Soldiers, Sailors and Patriots.
CTSSAR Fall Board of Managers Meeting—Abigail’s, Simsbury November 2nd

President Damien Cregeau presided over the Fall BOM at historic Abigail’s in Simsbury CT on November 2nd. The business of the CTSSAR was conducted followed by an excellent lunch and a talk by President Cregeau, which was enthusiastically received.

Connecticut’s Valley Forge Day of Celebration—November 3rd Redding

An all-member State Meeting and Encampment took place in honor of the 240th anniversary of the Winter Encampment of the Continental Army at Camp Reading, 1778-1779, upon what was ultimately known as “Connecticut’s Valley Forge”. From 10:00 to 11:00 a Member’s Meeting took place. At 11:10 President Damien Cregeau introduced the guest speaker, Robert Hubbard, retired Professor at Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, and author of a new biography: *Major General Israel Putnam: Hero of the American Revolution*. The presentation was enthusiastically received, and afterward, members and guests met at the Spinning Wheel in Redding for a luncheon and social gathering. Then all were invited to tour the Putnam Memorial State Park in Redding to interact with the encamped re-enactors and enjoy the afternoon.

General Israel Putnam Branch #4 Fall Meeting—October 26th

Held at the Booth & Dimock Memorial Library in Coventry, with a casual lunch at the Bidwell Tavern afterward, 7 branch members attended and we welcomed new branch member, Com-patriot Todd Unkefer as a dual member with Wadsworth Branch #7. The business of the Branch was discussed and a slate of Officers was nominated as follows: President: Mark Sheldon Vice President: Todd Unkefer Secretary: Bruce Lyon Treasurer: Michael Juhase Registrar: (vacant) Chaplain: Lee Gerlander Historian: Todd Unkefer The slate will be voted on at the branch annual meeting, Saturday April 4, 2020.
Wreaths Across America—December 14th in Milford

Every December, DAR member Barbara Stewart gets a little closer to honoring all the veterans buried in the Veterans Circle of Kings Highway Cemetery. Stewart chairs the Wreaths Across America effort for the Frelove Baldwin Stow chapter of the Daughters of the America Revolution, based in Milford. Each year they raise money to buy wreaths to place on the 370 graves in the Veterans Circle. Since 2008 the project has bought more and more wreaths. This year, the chapter was able to place wreaths on 210 of the graves in the circle. “This (project) is getting more and more popular,” said Stewart, 67, of Stratford. “And it should be. This is for the vets, to honor all the sacrifices they’ve made for us so that we can live in freedom.” To the right is a member of the Disabled American Veteran’s Post 15.

CTSSAR Johnson Day Stratford Town Hall October 7th

Johnson Day in Stratford, CT honored Founding Father William Samuel Johnson, one of only two Connecticut signers of the US Constitution. The town observed William Samuel Johnson Day with a brief ceremony 9 a.m. Monday, Oct. 7. The ceremony, conducted on the steps of Town Hall, was followed by refreshments served in the Council Chambers. Many local citizens attended. William Samuel Johnson (1727-1819) of Stratford was an American statesman, clergyman and attorney noted for his early contributions to the United States. He participated in the Constitutional Convention, and was one of Connecticut’s two signers of the United States Constitution in 1787. He represented Connecticut in the first U.S. Senate and also served as the first post-revolutionary president of King’s College (later Columbia).

Col. Jeremiah Wadsworth Branch #7 Fall Meeting—November 16th

The Fall meeting of Wadsworth Branch #7 was held in the historic 1st Co. Governor’s Footguard Armory in Hartford, CT. Eight members established a quorum and the old business of the Branch was discussed. Officers were installed by CTSSAR President Damien Cregeau: Bruce Donald, Branch President, Bill Baldwin, Vice President, Justin Ankerman, Secretary, and Lee Tryon, Treasurer. New business included the Branch award of the President General’s Education Outreach Banner and installation on the Branch Flag. Discussion of possible future events for 2020, and the induction of new Compatriot Todd Unkefer, who not only secured the Armory (as a member of the 1st Co. Governor’s Footguard) but was also responsible for the subsequent luncheon catering; The “Battle of Fort Washington Buffet” with all proceeds benefiting the Trustees of the 1st Co. Governor’s Footguard. The First Company Governor’s Foot Guard (1GFG), the nation’s oldest continuously serving military unit, provides ceremonial escort to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and other Elected Officials of the state as well as providing The Adjutant General a supplemental force for supporting the National Guard. We were pleased that MAJ Loren Schave gave a fascinating tour of the Footguard Museum after lunch. At 2PM President Donald led the Compatriots in the SAR Recessional, Closing Prayer, and Adjournment.
President’s Report—Year End 2019

As we turn to another cold winter filled with snow, let us remember our Patriot ancestors who froze in the winter encampments - not only at the famous Valley Forge in Pennsylvania (see page 4), but also at Jockey Hollow outside Morristown, New Jersey as well as our own General Putnam Encampment of the Connecticut regiments in Redding in the winter of 1778-1779. Those soldiers were the military ancestors of the U.S. Army of World War Two. This December marks the 75th anniversary of the Patriots of our U.S. Army who served and suffered during the terrible cold-weather fighting in what became known as “The Battle of the Bulge” in the Ardennes Forest near Bastogne, Belgium.

Furthermore, as we turn the calendar from 2019 over to 2020, let us also remember that the 250th anniversaries of two civilian riots (the first, which should be famous; the second which almost every Compatriot can recite the basics of) the Battle of Golden Hill in lower Manhattan occurred on January 19th, and the Boston Massacre of March 5th. It is my plan as your state president to attend the 250th ceremonies in both New York and Boston for these historic anniversaries.

Sincerely Patriotic,

Damien Cregeau
President, CTSSAR