



# The Connecticut Line

*The Connecticut Society of the Sons of the American Revolution*

## CTSSAR Re-enactors

Your CTSSAR Re-enactors and Color Guard work very long and hard to give publicity to your Society and to inspire patriotism with the public. Those members who are not in the color guard but who regularly attend state meetings know what I am talking about, as Hillary would say. I will tell the rest of you about one event this year that especially inspired me, a rookie to the re-enactor part of our organization.

The event was the 225th anniversary of the burning of New London and the fall of Fort Griswold by Benedict Arnold. Each of us wondered if the event was going to really happen because tropical storm Ernesto was scheduled to arrive in New London at the same time that we were. We went anyway on a Friday to set up our tents. The American camp was in a park very near Fort Griswold in Groton. I was astounded to see a sea of canvas, as the SAR was just one of many units in this American camp of militia. The British camp was very near us. That night we camped in our tents expecting Ernesto to arrive soon.

Reveille was at five AM. The commanders, including our commander Todd Gerlander, met in the dark at headquarters. When the officers returned we were told that the British re-enactors were too few

## Massing of the Colors

The Massing of the Colors is an annual event that has been held for decades each fall. It brings many of the hereditary and patriotic societies in Connecticut together for a wonderful procession of flags, a short service and then a social time for everyone to mingle.

This year the Connecticut SAR was the host and we had a great turnout of compatriots and other societies. It was held at St. James' Episcopal Church in Glastonbury.

Our committee of Jerry Carroon, Ken Roach and Stephen Shaw put it all together. Thanks to all the compatriots who helped with this great event.



## Nathan Hale Schoolhouse Project

Tremendous progress has been made over the last few months. There are two main pieces of this project. The main part is for new modern exhibits in both the East Haddam and New London Schoolhouses. The Planning Grant from the Connecticut Humanities Council has helped greatly to create these exhibits, which are now scripted and designed. We have a grant writer working with us to complete this project and who will be writing the implementation grant to finish the project in 2007. A draft of one of the panels is on the last page of the newsletter. The exhibits aren't going to cost as much as expected, so those funds can be used for the second piece.

The second main piece of the project is additional museum space at the schoolhouse in East Haddam. This great need was pointed out even further during the planning grant. We had been donated a small cottage

## The Connecticut Line October 2006

[www.ConnecticutSAR.org](http://www.ConnecticutSAR.org)

### Editor

Stephen Shaw  
[stephen@whoistheoldguy.com](mailto:stephen@whoistheoldguy.com)

### Contributors

Todd Gerlander  
Stephen Shaw  
Russ Wirtalla

### Submissions

Please send any material to:  
Stephen Shaw  
PO Box 411  
East Haddam, CT 06423  
860-916-1804  
[stephen@whoistheoldguy.com](mailto:stephen@whoistheoldguy.com)

### Deadlines

Jan. 1st	Mar. 1st
Aug. 1st	Oct. 1st

## Christmas Formal

Can any of you remember the last time the Connecticut SAR had a formal function? Well none of the planning committee could either, so we decided it was time!

The formal will be held on December 5th at 5:30pm at the new Hartford Marriott Downtown, which is next to the new convention center.

The menu we have selected is sure to please. We have a band as well, so be ready to dance. It's time to dust off your tux and gowns.

Invitations are on the way. Please RSVP as soon as possible as seating will be limited.



Debbie Shaw, Charles Lucas, Stephen Shaw and Dana Gowen at a formal function for another society.

## President's Report

Dear Compatriots,

Since my last report that I wrote in August, the CTSSAR has been very busy promoting and participating in Revolutionary War events throughout the State. I attended the Roger Sherman Branch meeting in Westport, and found a very active Branch with many programs to further our society's objectives. This month I plan on attending the Joint Luncheon of the Gen. Israel Putnam Branch and Gov. Samuel Huntington Branch. I hope to visit all the Branches this year, so please send me invitations and meeting announcements.

The Society's Color Guard/Living History Unit, "The Connecticut Line" has also been very active in September. The unit participated in the last of the 225th Anniversary Battle commemorations of the American Revolution in the North East, The Battle of Groton Heights and the Burning of New London, September 6, 1781. Events included a Revolutionary War Encampment in Washington Park, a street battle in Downtown New London, and a recreation of the Battle at Fort Griswold. In the evening, a dinner was provided as well as a colonial dance. On Sunday, the CTSSAR posted the colors during the Annual Commemoration ceremonies and provided the wreath, and as President, I spoke on behalf of the Society (see speech below).

The Connecticut Line also participated in the 200th Anniversary Celebration of the Town of Burlington, and marched in the "Connecticut Day Parade" at the BIG E, carrying the CTSSAR banner before thousands of people.

The CTSSAR has some great activities coming up, on Sunday, October 29, 2006 the Society is hosting the Annual Massing of the Colors in Glastonbury, on Saturday, November 18, 2006 we will be holding a State Meeting/Luncheon in Torrington, and on Tuesday, December 5, 2006 we will be holding our First Formal Christmas Party in Hartford. I hope to see everyone at an upcoming event.

### 225th Anniversary of Groton Heights Speech

Greetings . . . my name is Todd Gerlander, I am the Commander of the New England Contingent – Sons of the American Revolution Color Guard/ Living History Unit. I am also the current President of the Connecticut Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. The SAR is an organization of men who are direct descendants of the Patriots who fought in the American Revolution, those men who secured our Nation's Independence. As one of our Nation's oldest Hereditary and Patriotic organizations, we continue to promote the history and ideals fought for and secured in the Revolutionary War.

Today, we remember the brave American Patriots who 225 years ago, on September 6, 1781, within this Fort defended their Liberty against the greatest Military power on earth, the British Empire.

Today we remember your Patriotic Service and Sacrifice to your Country. This Nation stands forever in your debt. Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park today stands without rival, Connecticut's foremost Revolutionary War Historic Site and Battlefield. For in Liberties annals, this is sacred ground, consecrated with Patriot blood, a monument of Liberty. The State and it's Citizens should spare no expense in preserving and in restoring this

precious Connecticut Revolutionary War site. It is the least we can do for so many who sacrificed everything so that their children and grandchildren could live free.

On this day, and every day, let us not forget what happened here. And let us not forget to tell future generations what happened here. Let us not forget the Patriots who died in Battle, or the Patriots who were massacred, wounded, or taken prisoner, and sent to the British prison ships in New York Harbor. Many would die there, and today their bones rest in the Martyr's monument at Fort Greene Park in Brooklyn, New York.

We should also remember the words spoken here on this battlefield 225 years ago. Words that were spoken by Lieutenant-Colonel William Ledyard of the Eighth Regiment of Connecticut Militia who was in command of the Fort, "I will not surrender this fort, let the consequences be what they may", Words that truly define the spirit and determination of American Independence. I would like to close with our own state motto which dates back to the seventeenth century at our state's puritan foundation. "Qui Transtulit Sustinet", or as translated by a Connecticut militia man marching off to war in April 1775, "God who transplanted us hither will support us".

We, the members of the Connecticut Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, Descendants of the Patriots who fought for, and secured our Nation's Independence, remember your service and sacrifice.

Thank You

Todd L. Gerlander  
President - CTSSAR

to make the event realistic so some of the American units must take the role of Loyalists, and ironically the SAR was one of those units.

We were taken by boat over to New London. Another of the units chosen as Loyalist was a unit of privateers who sang sea chanteys that made us all laugh. They were the clowns of the affair.

The first battle was on the streets of New London. We were divided into groups of three. The group that I was in included Todd Gerlander and eighteen year old Alex Pries, the president of New Hampshire CAR. We were given our orders, prime and load, prepare to fire, fire, fall to the rear. It moved fast. We each emptied our full cartridge box. It did not take long to get out of the rookie stage. It was like a freshman in college taking a post graduate course. When the British stormed the Shaw Mansion and threw plates into the street and set fire to the place while women depicting the residents ran from the house screaming. (I'm sure the plate came from the dollar store and the fire was probably dry ice.) The streets were lined with thousands of spectators.

After winning the battle we sailed back to Groton and attacked Fort Griswold. We took the fort in the same manner that is recorded in history. Again thousands of spectators viewed this event. After taking the fort we marched back to our camp where the Lebanon Militia distributed ample rum to everyone.

The re-enactors were treated to a chicken dinner at the Groton Town Hall which was followed by a colonial dance which was great fun. That night, back in our tents, Ernesto finally arrived but very few lost their tents. On Sunday there was a ceremony in the town hall, an event that CTSSAR participates in every year presenting the colors and a wreath for the monument.

A proclamation from Gov. M. Jodi Rell was read. There were a few short speeches including one from Congressman Rob. Simmons. The only thing missing was a large turnout of the CTSSAR membership.

Russell W. Wirtalla, Secretary

## Upcoming Events

### **Docent Appreciation Dinner**

Nov 15th, 6pm  
Bulkeley House  
New London, CT

### **Connecticut SAR Meeting**

Nov 18th, 10:30am  
Marino's Restaurant  
Torrington, CT

### **CTSSAR Christmas Formal**

Dec 5th, 5:30pm  
Marriott Downtown  
Hartford, CT

### **Conn Line Color Guard Meeting**

Jan ??  
J. Timothy's  
Plainfield, CT

### **Connecticut SAR Meeting**

Feb 17th  
Germania-Schwaben Club  
Bridgeport, CT

### **Spring Leadership Meeting**

Feb 24th & 25th  
SAR Headquarters  
Louisville, KY

### **Application Genealogy Workshop**

Mar 17th, 10am  
Connecticut Historical Society  
Hartford, CT

The complete schedule is at:  
**[www.ConnecticutSAR.org](http://www.ConnecticutSAR.org)**

We count on our members to let us know about events in your area.

a few years ago, which was pretty small. The cottage would have only provided 550 square feet of space and would have needed a lot of work to be usable. We have since sold the cottage to a local resident of East Haddam.

Because of the cost and condition of the cottage, the property committee has been pursuing a traditional post and beam barn which will be placed on the south end of the property and will provide over 1400 square feet of space between the first and second floor. The second floor can be used for storage since the SAR has our historic items spread around the state as we have never had a heated building where our relics would be safe.

The cost of the new barn, which will also include a bathroom is estimated at only \$90,000. This is a very achievable goal, considering we have already raised roughly \$12,000 over the last few years with little effort.

*"Upon Secrecy... Success Depends"*  
**SPIES IN THE REVOLUTION**

During the American Revolution, spies were employed to gather information. But, the extent of spying during the Revolution is underdiscussed, due to the importance of spies keeping their identities hidden; the destruction of their papers to keep their secrets; and the dishonor and humiliation (if caught) associated with spying. We only know of their existence through the diaries and correspondence of George Washington.

Of course, we do know the names of some spies, most notably, Nathan Hale, and John Andre. Why do we know their names? Not because of their successes, but because of their failures. Both of these men were executed because of their secret activities.

George Washington recognized early in his military career the importance of spies, but creating an effective intelligence organization was problematic during the Revolution. It was difficult to tell whom you could trust.

*The necessity of preserving good intelligence is apparent to need not be further said. All that remains for me to add is that you keep the whole matter as secret as possible. For upon success depends in most enterprises of the kind, and for want of it they are generally defeated, however well planned, executed, & favorable the issue.*

*I am Sir,  
 Your Most Obedt Servt  
 G. Washington  
 July 24, 1777*

**WASHINGTON'S EARLY SPY DAYS**  
 During the French and Indian War (1754-1763), Washington fought against the British General Edward Braddock. While fighting in Boston from 1765-1768, he was promoted to Major. He was also involved in the Battle of the Clouds in 1767, where he was captured by the British. He was held in a prison in London for several months. He was released in 1769 and returned to America. He was promoted to Colonel in 1775 and led the Continental Army to victory at the Battle of the Clouds in 1777.

**EARLY SPY IN THE REVOLUTION**  
 One of the earliest of the revolutionaries who spying was successful was John Jay. He was a member of the Sons of Liberty and was involved in the Boston Tea Party. He was also involved in the capture of the British ship the *Tea* in 1773. He was held in a prison in London for several months. He was released in 1775 and returned to America. He was promoted to Chief Justice in 1795 and served in that position until 1801.

**SPECIAL FORCES—"THE RANGERS"**  
 When the Continental Army moved to New York, Washington had to retreat to the city. He was held in a prison in London for several months. He was released in 1775 and returned to America. He was promoted to Major General in 1775 and led the Continental Army to victory at the Battle of the Clouds in 1777.

answer from CCCT until late winter.

Now the heavy fund raising begins. We see this as a project not just for the SAR, but one that will help revolutionary education for all.

The fund raising committee is as follows:

**Honorary Cochairs**

- Jay Jackson - SAR & Cincinnati
- Charles Riegle - SAR
- George Greiger - East Haddam
- More cochairs may be added.

**Core Committee**

- Stephen Shaw - Chair - SAR
- Tom Gorin - SAR
- Tim Curtis - SAR & East Haddam
- Jerry Carroon - SAR & Cincinnati
- Jennie Rehnberg - DAR
- Nancy Pexa - DAR

Expect to see more information as it is mailed out. Committee members will be meeting with the branches, individuals and businesses to help make this project a success.

**www.ConnecticutSAR.org**

TEMP - RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Connecticut Society of the Sons of the American Revolution  
 PO Box 411  
 East Haddam CT 06423-0411



# The Connecticut Society of the Sons of the American Revolution

## November Meeting/Luncheon

**Saturday, November 18, 2006**

In Remembrance of the Birth of Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Knowlton, who was born on November 22, 1740. Connecticut Hero of the Battle of Bunker Hill and Commander of Knowlton's Rangers, Killed while leading his Rangers at the Battle of Harlem Heights, New York, September 16, 1776.

**Marino's Restaurant  
12 Pinewoods Road  
Torrington, Connecticut 06790  
(860) 482-6864**

10:30 AM – Arrival

11:00 AM – Meeting (All Members Welcome)

12:00 PM – Social (Cash Bar available)

12:15 PM – Luncheon (Members and their wives are encouraged to attend)

Speaker: Rev. Paul F. Everett, President of the Gov. Oliver Wolcott Branch CTSSAR will present the program, "New Year Victory: Princeton, 1777".

Menu:

\_\_\_\_\_ Roast Sirloin of Beef with Mushroom & Cabernet Demi Glace.

\_\_\_\_\_ Roasted Chicken with Lemon, Garlic & Thyme.

\_\_\_\_\_ Crumbed Topped Scrod with Lemon Butter.

Chef's Choice of Fresh Vegetable and Potato

Dinner Rolls and Butter

Carrot Cake with Walnuts

Coffee or Tea

\$25.00 per person – Luncheon Reservations MUST be received by November 12<sup>th</sup>.

-----  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Entree \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Entree \_\_\_\_\_

Number in your party \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to: Bruce Lyon  
200 Luchon Rd  
Willington, CT 06279

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: Connecticut SAR

# Directions

Route 8 North: Exit 46.

At end of the ramp, take a left onto Pinewoods Road.

