

The Thomas Jefferson Chapter

MINUTEMAN

THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

VOLUME XXXV : NUMBER 7

JULY 2026



NSSAR Color Guard at Independence Hall, Philadelphia

President's Notes



On July 4th, we celebrated our country's semiquincentennial anniversary, our American Independence, and our constitutional republic that has endured for 250 years. In July, we honored our patriot ancestors, who through their courage, fortitude and self-sacrifice, forged this great nation of ours. And we the Sons of the American Revolution strive to honor those patriot ancestors by promoting patriotism, serving our communities while educating and inspiring future generations about the founding principles of this great nation of ours.

The activities of our National Holiday on July 4th honored the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Great celebrations were held across this nation, most notably in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where the original

document was signed in Independence Hall. Independence Square was the site for additional festivities attended by members of the Thomas Jefferson Chapter to commemorate the event. Stephen and Joy Javellana, along with Stephan Bowman and Staci Kendrick, have wonderful stories of this incredible event.

I want to thank each of our members for your dedication and contributions to the chapter this year. I also want to thank those of you who have attended meetings and events around the State, and those of you who have submitted your points to Derek Brown to receive recognition with America 250 medals and awards. You have all done an incredible job in promoting patriotism, and educating the public on our mission to preserve and foster the legacy of the Sons of the American Revolution.

250
Years
1776-2026



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CIVIS AMERICANUS SUM



I am also pleased to see the expansion of our Color Guard with Derek Brown, Glenn Martin, Rawn Rhoades, Michael Black, Tim Ernst, Jeff Nibert, Stephen Bowman and Staci Kendrick. It's nice to see you at events in your uniforms and colonial attire, including the Danville Town Parade on July Fourth, and at other events.

It was wonderful to see a great turnout of 40 members and guests for the Mare Island picnic event. Unfortunately, I was laid up and could not attend, and very disappointed to miss the great event, with an America 250 moment, induction of a new junior member, American 250 awards presentations, and a tour of the key sites of the former Mare Island Naval Base. A big thank you to Stephen Renouf for organizing the event.

We had a great July 2nd DAR/SAR Picnic Event at Don Biddle Community Park in Dublin this week. Thanks to everyone who participated! I hope everyone took a moment during the Independence Day festivities to think of the founding principles of this country and honor its legacy. Enjoy your summer and we look forward to seeing you all again when we reconvene our meetings on Saturday, September 19th at the Old Spaghetti Factory in Concord again!

— **Tom Silva, President**

Secretary's Notes

The Thomas Jefferson Chapter held a special field trip meeting

on Saturday, June 20, 2026, at Mare Island, California. We had a great showing of 39 members and guests in attendance, including DAR members from Jose Maria Amador and Mt. Diablo Chapters: Heather Brillart (Vice Regent), Kathy Javdani, Staci Kendrick, Denise Lytle (Director District IV), Sue Manners, Suellen McPhee, Virginia Rood (Registrar), Debbie Vandenbroek (Regent), and Susan Vardakis (Recording Secretary). We were very happy to have our DAR sisters at our event! We also had Joy Javellana and Erin Wong from the Ladies Auxiliary. We even had our webmaster, Gary Bohannon, all the way from Texas!

We all met at 11:30AM at the Mare Island Brewing Company, which is located in the historic coal sheds, where Naval steam ships were fueled for decades. The coal sheds were built between 1898 and 1906 alongside the Napa River. We had picnic tables set out for us looking out on the Napa River. As an extra treat, the National Park Service relocated the tall ship Balclutha, and the lumber schooner C.A. Thayer from San Francisco to Mare Island – mere steps from the Mare Island Brewing Company – for three to five years, while the National Park Service rebuilds the Hyde Street Pier in San Francisco. So we had a great view of the ships!

We ordered our lunch and liquid refreshments at the bar, and picked up the food minutes later at the adjacent food truck. After a quick meal, and some great conversations, we were met at 12:30PM by Kent Fortner, co-owner of the Mare Island Brewing Company at the Coal Sheds of Mare

Island, and President of the Mare Island Historical Park Foundation. Kent was our guide to the history of Mare Island.

Kent led our car caravan to St. Peter's Chapel – the first Naval Chapel in the Pacific, and the oldest extant Naval chapel in the United States. It has one of the largest collections of Tiffany stained glass windows in situ under one roof. Kent related the origin of the chapel. Rev. Adam McAlister was the chaplain for Mare Island, and would hold services wherever he could find space. He was not satisfied with the makeshift spaces, so he convinced his friend, US Senator George C. Perkins, to include \$5,000 in the 1900 Naval Appropriations Act for construction of a chapel on Mare Island. Rev. McAlister contracted with San Francisco architect Albert Sutton to draw up plans, and paid him \$50 from donations he had received. The chapel was built, and dedicated on October 13, 1991 to Simon Peter (Saint Peter), who was a fisherman. In the 1950's Catholic services were allowed, and it became an interdenominational chapel. There are two small wings on either side of the altar, a simple one for the Protestants and a more formal one with a confessional for the Catholics. There is also a cross at the altar that is unadorned on one side for Protestant services, and has crucified Jesus welded on the opposite side for Catholic services. Kent Forter noted that they had received funding to refurbish the exterior of the chapel, improve the landscaping, and refurbish the Admiral's Quarters. Congressman Mike Thompson helped them secure



an additional \$12 million in Federal funding. He was Catholic, so when he presented the check in the chapel, he asked them to turn around the cross so the Catholic side was showing. He said the Navy has a requirement that they cannot do Sunday services in a retired chapel, so they do baptisms, marriages, funerals, and community meetings. It is very heavily utilized. The piano is unusual, and there is only one other like it – at Grace Cathedral. The pipes behind the altar are fakes, but in a side room there are 100 different pipes that are fed by an electric motor. In the old days, there would have been young boys manning the bellows for the organ. They currently spend \$20,000 per year to keep the organ running.

Rev. McAlister ran out of money, so he had to install plain windows in the chapel. He encouraged donations in his sermons, and donors picked stained glass windows from a Tiffany catalog, the premier stained-glass producer in the world. After four weeks, he had raised enough money for the windows. Twenty-four of the twenty-nine stained-glass windows were manufactured by Tiffany. It took another two years to get them manufactured and installed in the chapel. The windows at the entrance are a triptych of Jesus recruiting Saint Peter, and dedicated to Admiral John Drake Sloat, Admiral David Glasgow Farragut, and Commodore Robert Field Stockton. There is a Tiffany Rose Window of the Ascendant Christ

behind the altar dedicated to sailors and marines serving in the Pacific Ocean. There were also commemorative tablets placed on the walls and ceiling for families, events, and ships. There is a memorial plaque for the USS Maine sunk in Havana harbor made from metal salvaged from the ship. There is a wooden plaque honoring Lt. Joseph Warren Revere (the grandson of Paul Revere), who lowered the Bear Flag over Sonoma and raised the Stars and Stripes there on July 9, 1846. This ended the California Republic, and marked the beginning of US military rule over California in the Mexican-American War. There is a wooden plaque recognizing 75 years of service by the chapel in 1976 presented during the Bicentennial.

While we were in the chapel, Awards Chairman Derek Brown presented the SAR Benjamin Franklin Youth Education Medal to Glenn Martin for more than 15 presentations on the American Revolution to school students. He also received a Campaign Bar for his SAR Thomas Jefferson Medal for Support of the Essay Contest for contributing \$1,500 to the SAR Knight Essay Contest Fund. Chairman Brown also presented the SAR Bronze America 250 medals to Staci Kendrick, Erin Wong, Michael Black, and Virginia Rood (accepting for herself and for her husband Bill Rood).

After the awards ceremonies, we had a few minutes to go through the chapel at our leisure to view the memorial windows and various commemorative plaques.

Then we caravanned by car past the Admiral's Quarters to the main plaza, named Alden Park after Commodore James Alden, who planted trees on the flat, treeless island in 1868. On the way, we passed a number of one story concrete cubes, which were personnel safety shelters designed after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. They were very claustrophobic, and female nurses complained about being confined in the dark and cramped space with young sailors. The obsolete shelters are now sealed shut.

The main focal point of Alden Park is the flagpole site. Kent Fortner noted that Commander David Glasgow Farragut arrived on the USS Warren, a second-class sloop of war. He utilized the ship for his living quarters while the base was being built. On October 3, 1854, Farragut placed the mast of the Warren in the main plaza as a flagpole. This officially marked the Navy's claim to Mare Island, and allowed him to expel the squatters encamped on the island. The flagpole was taken down after 167 years in 2021 due to its deteriorating condition and placed in storage. It will be refurbished and returned to service in the future. There is a bandstand that was erected in 1895, with monuments and weapons produced at Mare Island, including a nuclear tipped Polaris missile for submarines, a SUBROC underwater-to-air-to-underwater nuclear missile to destroy submarines, and a Civil War-era spar torpedo. There was once a 55-mm Hotchkiss revolving cannon, but it had to be moved into the



museum when someone attempted to steal it. There is an anchor from the HMS Centurion that was lost in a storm in 1742 at Juan Fernandez Island (Robinson Crusoe Island) about 500 miles west of Valparaíso, Chile, during a circumnavigation of the globe. In 1882, the USS Lackawanna was hauling in their anchor, and they snagged the lost anchor, which was brought to Mare Island. There is a "Pillar of the Future Built by the Pillars of the Past" monument noting significant milestones in the history of Mare Island. Kent Fortner concluded the tour by noting that by this time next year, the Mare Island Museum should be reopened.

Secretary Stephen Renouf announced that the Thomas Jefferson Chapter was paying the \$5 per person fee for the tour – \$200 – to the Mare Island Historical Park Foundation, and Kent Fortner had graciously allowed us to allocate the money to the restoration of the wooden flagpole at Mare Island.

Derek Brown and Dan Schurtz inducted our newest member (and possibly youngest member) Mark Wimmer-Bauman into the Sons of the American Revolution on the bandstand in the Mare Island Plaza.

— *Stephen Renouf, Secretary*

SAR Philadelphia

President General Michael Elston and the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution held special commemorations in Philadelphia,

Pennsylvania, for the semiquincentennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, under the guidance of Historian General Jeff Thomas.

The Thomas Jefferson Chapter was represented by Secretary Stephen Renouf, Ladies Auxiliary member Joy Javellana, Color Guardsman Stephan Bowman, and DAR member Staci Kendrick.

On July 2, we celebrated the 1776 vote for Independence with a public reading of the Declaration of Independence in Independence Square, behind Independence Hall. We also had a tour of the National Constitution Center, followed by an SAR Welcome Reception at Victory Brewing Company.

On July 3, the parade organizers were forced to cancel the parade due to extreme heat, so our SAR Color Guard marched around Independence Hall, and posed for pictures. In the evening, we had a black-tie gala dinner with special guest, Benjamin Franklin.

On July 4, the SAR had a showcase on Independence Mall. Mayor Charelle Parker and PG Elston spoke at our SAR Independence 250 Celebration. We also dedicated an SAR America 250 bench at the tomb of the unknown Revolutionary War soldier in Washington Square.

Finally, on July 5, the SAR held a church service at Christ Church, and went to the burial ground to mark the graves of five signers of the Declaration of Independence. We toured the American Revolution Museum, and had an SAR Farewell Dinner at Glory Beer Bar. It was truly a once-in-a-lifetime event.



Thomas Jefferson Chapter at St. Peter's Chapel at Mare Island



Registrar Brown and VPN Shurtz present SAR Benjamin Franklin Youth Education Medal to Glenn Martin



Virginia Rood receives the SAR Bonze America 250 Medal for herself and for Bill Rood



Michael Black, Staci Kendrick, Erin Wong and Virginia Rood are awarded the SAR Bonze America 250 Medal



Kent Fortner discusses the history of Mare Island in the Park



Registrar Brown pins SAR Rosette on Mark Wimmer-Bauman, our newest member



High School Seniors

J.R.O.T.C.



Cadet/SN Ava Byrnes

Cadet/1Lt. Noah Timothy



Cadet Nathaniel Whitmire



High School Onwards

J.R.O.T.C



Cadet Isshin Shiraishi



Midshipman Siena Fusco



De Wiza San Francisco 250

San Francisco, California



Terry Briggs and George Clark from Silicon Valley Chapter SAR



Tom Silva, John Dedo, Greg Winslow, and Dan Shurtz at SF Presidio



Los Californianos Soldados



Dan Shurtz with De Anza Re-enactor Dane Andrew



July 2nd Barbeque

Don Biddle Park, Dublin, California



Bronze SAR 250 Medals: Heather Brillhart, Patty Shaughnessy, Jane Lunn, Kathy Brennan & Diana Tanaka



Derek Brown (TJ) and John Dedo (SF) barbecuing food for DAR Picnic



July 4th Parade

Danville, California



TJ Color Guard Glenn Martin, Michael Black, and Jeff Nibert



250 Independence Day Celebration

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



NSSAR Color Guard at Independence Hall for 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence



Tomb of the Unknown Revolutionary War Soldier in Philadelphia



Stephan Bowman (right) with NSSAR Color Guard at Independence Hall



Historian Jeff Thomas reads the Declaration of Independence on July 2



NSSAR Color Guard takes over the Philadelphia Metro on July 3



NSSAR Color Guard prepares to March to Independence Hall



SAR Gala Independence Ball with Benjamin Franklin



SAR Showcase at Independence Mall on July 4



Having a Philadelphia Cheese Steak with PG John Dodd at Reading Terminal Market



Laying a Carnation on the Grave of Benjamin Franklin at Christ Church Burial Ground



Visiting the Museum of the American Revolution



SAR Farwell Dinner with Speaker Christ Coelho, Author of Matlack's Declaration



THOMAS JEFFERSON CHAPTER

SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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President

S. Rawn Rhoades
Vice President

Stephen R. Renouf
Secretary/Treasurer

Th. Jefferson

Quote of the Month

"The Second Day of July 1776, will be the most memorable Epocha, in the History of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance by solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more."

– Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, July 3, 1776.



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