

***California Society, Sons of the American Revolution***  
***2024 Board of Managers Meeting***

Double Tree Hotel (by Hilton) – Bakersfield, CA  
Friday, October 25<sup>th</sup> – Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Call to Order:** 9:04AM by Don Littlefield

**Presentation of the Colors** – Brandon Villardi

**Pledge of the Allegiance** – Executive Vice President John Ferris

**SAR Mission Statement** – Terry Briggs

**SAR Pledge** – M. Scott Brooks

- Greetings by US Forest Service Officer – Chris Scott
- Greetings by Scott Nichols, Yosemite Chapter – noted that this is the first meeting in the San Joaquin Valley in recent memory

**Roll Call** – Don Littlefield (Quorum declared at 9:08 AM)

**Introduction of Guests** – led by Don Littlefield; introduced Sue Fitzpatrick, CA Society of the Children of the American Revolution (CAR)

**Past CASSAR Presidents Introduced:**

**National and State Officers**

- **Secretary General Michael J Elston, Esq.** – gave brief greetings as well as regards on behalf of the President General of the NSSAR, Dr. Addington; encouraged members to engage the local community, talk about the SAR with the aim of recruiting new members, as well as getting other current members to get more involved in their respective chapters; encouraged members to have simple America 250 events, at a minimum, so that no major event goes uncelebrated; presented gift to CASSAR as a token of appreciation for our hospitality.
- **Past President General John Dodd** – reminded members of collectible merchandise for sale, stocks running out fast; proceeds go to the SAR Foundation.
- **Past President General Joe Dooley** – gave brief greetings, thanked everyone for hospitality.

- **Vice President (Western District) Brian Stephens**– gave brief greetings; encouraged members to stay behind to attend the Western District meeting.
- **Treasurer General William Alan Greenly** – Treasurer General arrived in the afternoon and gave a short introduction and asked if there were any questions; there being none, he returned to his chair.
- **Genealogist General Gary Green** – recognized Terry Briggs for his dedication and hard work as CASSAR Registrar; noted the current problems on backlog (in July, it was 19 weeks for new members; 16 weeks for supplementals; today at 15 weeks for new members – though supplemental application back log has gotten longer and is now approximately 60 weeks. Gary is currently recruiting other members to help with supplemental application processing; there was a training program in July and realized how many genealogical staff members were making mistakes. Gary is actively working on addressing the training issue and bringing in new staff.
- **Registrar General T. Brooks Lyles** – gave brief greetings on behalf of fellow Registrars from State Societies; reminded the members of the importance of retention and to get members to pay their dues for the coming year; encouraged Chapter Presidents (or alternative member from the Chapter) to contact members who did not renew by December and ask them why.
- **Historian General Jeffrey D. Thomas**– brief greetings; identified three (3) areas that he is currently working on:
  - 1) Planning & Executing America 250 events (e.g., Fairfax Resolves, Lexington & Concord) that have full programs, sometimes spanning multiple days
  - 2) Execution of 2026 Operational Plan; Planning for Independence Day 2026; each State Society to have a Historical Director
  - 3) encouraged state societies to form partnerships with state and local 250 commissions to optimize planning

He also noted an upcoming trip to Shenandoah University to explore the facility and resources to leverage for upcoming America 250 events.

- **Librarian General Keith A. Weissinger** – reminded members of the importance of the NSSAR library, noting that there are currently more than 60,000 items available to the public; reported that there has been an 80% increase in foot traffic since last year; about 70% of the institutional archives have been digitized; 13 off-site/virtual events attended by more than 4,700 attendees; several items from NSSAR Library on loan to the U.S. Army Museum to support their own commemoration/exhibit of America 250; reminded that the Museum does accept donations to their collection.

- **Vice President (International District) Derek Brown** – gave brief greetings; noted there are several chapters overseas and extended greetings.
- **Spain Trustee Stephen Renouf** – gave brief greetings and welcomed all of us to the former Spanish Province of Alta California; if any member would like to visit Spain, let him know and he can assist in preparations to meet other SAR members there.
- **California Trustee Jim Klingler** – was happy to report that CASSAR was one of the few State Societies that participates in all of the youth programs; noted that there are plenty of ways for CASSAR members to celebrate America 250 events (e.g., marking the graves of Revolutionary Era *soldados* buried here in CA).
  - Past President General Joe Dooley – gave brief supporting remarks, reminding that CA does have an America 250 connection; the Presidio of San Francisco (Mission Dolores) was founded in 1776, for example.
- **Museum Director Dr. Kent Gregory** – reported on recent donations and the attendance of several auctions (e.g., procured Revolutionary Era pistols); thanked the Riverside Chapter in procuring a historical cutlass (sword); obtained a 1789 George Washington Inaugural button and thanked Compatriot and Mrs. Elston for their donation that facilitated that procurement; thanked Chris Cerillo for his donation that allowed the museum to procure continental uniform button noted a new “mannequin program” where members can donate and sponsor uniforms that mannequins will wear as display in the museum (e.g., Bill Nye recently sponsored a Revolutionary War Era Marine uniform).
- **Vice-Chairman Education Center & Museum Construction Dan McKelvie** – reported on the construction’s progress (currently called “Phase 0” -- fitting out the infrastructure of the building for the exhibits; completed HVAC, fire system, and noted that the installation will complete in late January); reaffirmed how Kentucky’s 5 million dollar donation will be put to good use in the coming phases of construction; expects to have a soft opening by July 2026; the museum will be interactive with at least 6 interactive displays projected to be completed by the time of the soft opening; reminded members that the Museum still needs funding; thanked CASSAR again for the donation made last year toward the museum’s construction.
- **CASSAR President Don Littlefield** – wanted to give brief remarks about the recent accomplishment of Hon. Jeffrey Prang of the Sons of Liberty Chapter in facilitating a CA Senate Resolution in honor of the First Continental Congress; Don read from the framed Resolution that was issued by the CA Senate.

### **Introduction of CASSAR Past Presidents**

- Robert D. Ebert (2006-07)

- Stephen Renouf (2008 – 09)
- John L. Dodd, Esq. (2011-12)
- Jim L. W. Faulkinbury (2014-15)
- Dr. M. Kent Gregory (2015-16)
- Derek J. Brown (2018-19)
- Robert L. Taylor (2019-2020)
- Donald B. Littlefield (2020-2021)
- Brian Stephens (2021-2022)
- Jim Klingler (2022-2024)

--- Recess called: 10:08 AM ---

--- Called Back to Order: 10:20 AM ---

**Roll Call by Ex. VP John Ferris, calling state officers and chapters.** A quorum was declared at 10:24 AM.

### **Reading of the Minutes**

- Don Littlefield noted that the minutes are posted on the website; a motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as posted; the motion was approved unanimously.
- **CASSAR President Don Littlefield** – noted how he visited 24 Chapters; participated in a re-interment for ceremony for PFC Marcus A. Engesser, Co. L, 31st Infantry Regiment following the Bataan Death March; noted that he plans to visit more Southern California Chapter-level events; participated in numerous Color Guard events.
- **CASSAR Executive Vice President John Ferris** – noted on how he has enjoyed visiting different Chapters; reported on the progress of the CA Compatriot e-magazine and encouraged Chapters to read and submit to the Compatriot as a way to document Chapter-level activities.
- **CASSAR Vice President (North)** – Randy Dhindsa was absent due to work obligations.
- **CASSAR Vice President (South)** – Brandon Villardi has reported that he has been able to visit many Chapters in Southern CA and to three (3) Children of the American Revolution (CAR) events; participated in 28 color guard events this year (e.g., commemoration of soldado graves in San Diego).
- **CASSAR Vice President (Membership) Scott Whitman** – recapped his role, noted that recently he was not getting any new messages about prospective members from the NSSAR online platform; reported that there has been a technical issue that has stopped forwarding the prospective member messages to him (referrals). Chapter with the highest number of referrals was the Sons of

Liberty Chapter (29 referrals so far, this year); NSSAR is actively working on resolving the issue; meanwhile Scott looked through the databases to get a “follow-through” rate (from prospective member to approved application). He reported that statewide, the follow-through rate is approximately 13%. Often prospective members do not have supporting documentation and that is a major reason why many prospective members do not become members.

- **CASSAR Secretary Chris Cerillo** – presented new member certificates to various chapters to pass on to their newly approved members; thanked his Assistant Secretary (Steven Andrews); passed the podium to Steven Andrews reminded Chapters that reconciliation is upon us and has sent to Chapters reconciliation forms for them to complete; indicated that he is available to assist Chapters with the process – it’s easier to get the dues in by the deadline than it is to fill out reinstatement paperwork/reports.
  - Don Littlefield reminded Chapters to keep November 15<sup>th</sup> in mind as a target date to get members to pay their dues.
- **CASSAR Treasurer Kevin Bidenkap** – reported (happily) that the finances were in good shape; (put copies of Treasurer’s report on the back table); noted a \$10,000 donation from Intel Corporation; encouraged members to see if their employers might have such contribution programs for non-profits like ours, noted \$2,000 donation from the Ladies Auxiliary; thanked the Investment Fund Trustees for their hard work in securing funding; noted how new membership is critical to secure financing for future activities and encouraged members to keep actively engaging local communities and participate in local events as a way to help grow membership.
- **CASSAR Chancellor Michael Hirman** – reminded that there is a silent auction in the back of the room; the proceeds go to Kern County Chapter; noted how most chapters are compliant with requirements (e.g., Youth Protection Training for School Guard members).
  - Brooks Lyle reported that the NSSAR is updating its Youth Protection Program.

Also reminded members of the need for Black Powder insurance; is exploring a policy that covers the “British Brigades” as a better coverage plan; CASSAR would need to develop a safety protocol and list all Black Powder events as part of the insurance carrier’s requirements; even if an unloaded musket accidentally drops and hits a child at an event, it may be considered a Black Powder device – Michael is still exploring a definitive answer to that question which will inform him on the best insurance plan to pursue for future events.

- **CASSAR Genealogist David Morrow** – on Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025, there will be an FAQ event that David will hold on Zoom for members, answering questions from

members and the National Office; David has noted he is a member of the National Genealogical Society and has access to resources that could be helpful to applicants.

- **CASSAR Registrar Terry Briggs** – reported that since the beginning of April 2024, there have been 127 applications he has reviewed from the 24 CASSAR chapters (all Chapters except Riverside and Santa Barbara); of all applications received, 122 sent on to National; has made a lot of progress at reducing number of pended applications; currently only 12 applications are pending; suggested coordinating with David Morrow to prepare for the aforementioned FAQ session that will be held in February 2025; reported that there are currently 2 Chapters who don't have Registrars (Monterey and Mother Lode); regarding the SAR Patriot Research System (PRS), there are 170 Approved applications from 2023-2024 that have not yet been added to the PRS; 70 current applications that are awaiting Record Copy data entry into the PRS (approx. 200-300 pre-1965 applications also awaiting data entry).
- **CASSAR Historian Scott Brooks** – encouraged chapters to continue documenting their chapter activities through newsletters and reminded them of the hardcopy archives in Roseville; reported on the state archives and the need for a few more plastic bins and labels to catalogue the contents of 3-4 cardboard boxes; indicated that he brought down a Ladies Auxiliary quilt, BOM Minutes in bound copies spanning from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; and Chapter-level historical documents compilation bin that he will bring to the Hospitality Suite for members to peruse.
- **CASSAR Chaplain Rev. Scott Elliott** – encouraged Chapters to stay informed about any members who may have passed away in preparation for the Necrology that will be held in April (Annual Meeting) – if members are not familiar with a recently departed member, they can check online for obituaries; reminded Chapters to duly inform the CASSAR Secretary and himself of any deaths by using the Compatriot Death Reporting System and submit reports.
- **CASSAR Surgeon Dr. Matthew Bowdish** – absent

## **Chapter Reports**

**Central Coast Chapter** – absent

**Coachella Valley Chapter** – Chris Cerillo reported that the Chapter is doing well with 35 active members.

**Delta Chapter** – Scott Elliott reported that they have been meeting in a new place that is more central; welcomed Andrew McClure (Exec. VP) from the Chapter and noted a higher level of engagement recently; the Chapter has been active with youth programs.

**George Patton Chapter** – Steven Andrews reported that the Chapter has been active in the local community, setting up a booth at the local fair, for example, and that more than 400 visitors came by the booth and engaged with SAR members about the SAR; the Chapter has been active in outreach and have made three (3) district contacts about youth programs (e.g., Poster Contest); has noted the positive reactions he has observed in the Chapter's many interactions in the local community; the Chapter has also been active in issuing Vietnam Service pins to eligible veterans.

**George Washington Chapter** – (absent)

**Gold Country Chapter** – (absent)

**Harbor Chapter** – Brandon Villardi reported in Jim Bunker's absence; the Chapter has grown by 19 members, with 4 more applications in the pipeline; 90% has already paid annual dues; the Chapter has had many distinguished guest speakers; participated in Armed Forces Day, USS Iowa commemoration event, and looks forward to continued partnership with DAR and CAR in jointly participating in upcoming local events.

**Kern Chapter** – Chris Scott reported that their Chapter has issued many America 250 certificates and participated in many local veterans' recognitions events, including the local VA's dedication of Armed Forces Branch Flags on the main campus of CSU Bakersfield. The Chapter also makes available the YouTube series to schools participating in their local programs; held a Constitution Day event and is preparing for the Wreaths Across America event.

**Monterey Bay Chapter** – absent.

**Mother Lode Chapter** – Steve Belden arrived in the afternoon and delivered a delayed report. Steve reported that the average age of membership is 85 years old and notes how the Chapter is still actively meeting (9 meetings this year); the Chapter has been active in the awards program; noted that Chapter member Olney has had an artifact in the family for generations that was passed down from Lafayette; has secured a new facility to hold meetings where they can also conduct hybrid meetings (Zoom-supported); the Chapter has been actively participating in DAR-hosted events, and in local community events.

**Orange County Chapter** – Michael Miller reported that there are currently 174 members, including 28 veterans in the Chapter; on average, at least 25 members present at meetings; many have received America 250 silver and gold certificates; often joins South Coast and Harbor Chapters for joint events and is active in youth programs.

**Redlands Chapter** – absent.

**Redwood Empire Chapter** – Bill Nay has reported that the current Executive VP of the Chapter has agreed to serve as Chapter President next year; Chapter members have been actively supporting the America 250 program, with AmVet and Marine Corps

league having had America 250 events at each meeting over the past year; has issued Flag Retirement certificates; they've also participated in many veterans recognition events, (e.g., a Purple Hearts Day event in San Francisco); presented a medal to a local Sea Cadet and has attended several Boy Scouts Courts of Honor; has been working on getting a placard for the burial spots of four (4) veterans who participated in the Bear Flag Revolt and are buried near the Sonoma Barracks.

**Riverside Chapter** – Michael Mann reported that one veteran member from the Chapter passed away on July 4, 2024 and spoke to the Chapter's donation of the cutlass to the Museum Collection; announced the upcoming Veterans Day Parade in Riverside; there will be an expo set up to display artifacts for the public after the parade; has reported that there is a 10-15 America 250 video or speech at every Chapter meeting; has reported that there have been several JROTC awards they have issued.

**Sacramento Chapter** – Jim Faulkinbury reported for Jon Wroten, noting 16 new members. The Chapter now has 174 members; the 1776 Book Challenge Program has been very successful; the Chapter has invited teachers who have participated in the program have also come to speak at Chapter meetings; issued several ROTC certificates and has participated in many youth programs; many members have been in contact with the American Legion Veterans Council as one way of expanding partnerships.

**San Diego Chapter** – Jim McAdory reported that SD Chapter participated in a soldado grave marker ceremony, recognizing 18 soldados buried in San Diego; noted the careful approach Chapters must take to message such ceremonies when communicating with Mission staff (i.e., refrain from calling it a grave marking; instead, call it a ceremony); noted how the Chapter will participate in next year's Lexington & Concord event near Balboa Park.

**--- Recess for lunch: 11:55 AM ---**

Public Service Awards Luncheon held.

**--- Called Back to Order: 2:01 PM ---**

**Sons of Liberty Chapter** – David Morrow reported that the Chapter will participate in Massing of the Colors event at the Forest Lawn Cemetery in Hollywood Hills; thanked Kent Gregory and Matt Bowdish for their visits and respective presentations; their next guest speaker is a USC professor who will talk about the "second Anglo-Palatine" war in Virginia.

**San Francisco Chapter** – no report.

**Santa Barbara Chapter** – absent.



**Silicon Valley Chapter** – Terry Briggs reported that there were currently 105 members in good standing; the Chapter had a Memorial Day Celebration and will have a Veterans Day Parade in San Jose.

**South Coast Chapter** – Barry Michaels reported that they will be hosting the next Annual Meeting in Costa Mesa; current membership is down since 2023 (noting that 22 members have been dropped from the rolls due to non-payment of dues); the Chapter has an America 250 speech/presentation at each Chapter meeting; many members have received Bronze and Silver America 250 members; the Chapter has been active in issuing awards to Sea Cadets; it will participate in the Wreaths Across America event this year; the Chapter's Color Guard has participated in at least 18 events this year.

**Thomas Jefferson Chapter** – Danny Schurtz reported that the Chapter has gained 12 members since the Annual Meeting in April; the Chapter has issued 65 certificates to ROTC, JROTC, Sea Cadets, and Eagles; planning on having a 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Dinner in October 2025.

**Yosemite Chapter** – Scott Nichols reported that there are approximately 60 members in the Chapter with a regular turnout of about 16-17 members for each meeting (10 meetings a year); the Chapter will participate in the Veterans Day Parade and at the Wreaths Across America event; it gave out 9 ROTC and JROTC awards; it has also been active with the School Guard (Color Guard school visits).

## **Youth Program Reports**

- **Poster Contest** – David Gilliard (absent).
- **Brochure Contest** – Danny Schurtz reported that only one brochure has been submitted; is hoping to have a higher turnout by Spring.
- **Eagle Scout and MCL Young Marine Cadets** -- Bill Nay reported that he would like to form a committee to issue awards to Young Marine Cadets in a program that would be similar to the Navy League and Sea Cadets; regarding the Eagle Scouts, Bill reported that the Boy Scouts and Eagle Scouts are being rebranded as "Scouting America". Bill reported that the program will be recognizing Sea Scouts (Scouting America's equivalent to Sea Cadets); announced that Silver Medals for this program are reserved for the State-level awards; Chapters should use the Bronze Medal for their Chapter-level awardees; offered assistance to any Chapters that would like guidance on scout recognition programs.
- **Knight Essay** – Patrick Cecil: absent.
- **Orations Contest** – Mark Torres: absent.
- **NSCC/NLCC** – Kevin Forrest: Orange County Chapter issued two (2) awards to cadets who were accepted into the Naval Academy.

- **ROTC/JROTC** – new requirements are over a 3.5 GPA; encouraged members to check the CASSAR website for details.
- **Spirit of America High School Program** – Craig Anderson (absent).
- **Spirit of America Middle School Program** – Bob Taylor reported that 5 schools in the Pleasant Valley School District (Camarillo) participated in the program; the top winner gets a Good Citizenship Medal; the program has received a positive reaction from the local community.
- **Valley Forge Teacher Program** – Larry Brasher (absent) but Bob Taylor reported that noted that two awardees were sent back to Valley Forge and visited historical sites from the French and Indian War Era; encouraged members to approach their local schools to see if any teachers there would like to apply for the scholarship program.
- **Tom and Betty Lawrence Teacher Program** – David Gilliard (absent).
- **Youth Video Program** – Bruce Wearda reported that this was the first annual year for this program; this is becoming a nationally-sponsored program where 6-12<sup>th</sup> graders can participate; encouraged members to check the NSSAR website to get more information about the program and eligible submissions (3-5 minute videos that have a Revolutionary War Era theme); encouraged members to get prospective applicants to submit their videos early by January 1<sup>st</sup> so that they can arrive by the January 21, 2025 deadline.

## **Committee Reports**

- **America 250 Committee** – John Ferris noted the 250 anniversaries for US Army, Navy, Marines and the Lexington & Concord event; asked for volunteers to help plan for events that will recognize each of these events; encouraged members to continue promoting the America 250 program – especially to raise the number of Gold medals.
  - **Past President John Dodd** gave supporting remarks about the Liberty Tree planting program and encouraged Chapters to look into carrying out planting/dedication events in their local communities.
- **Americanism Program** – Duncan Campbell (absent).
- **Audit Committee** – John Ferris reported that the Audit Committee carried out its audit and concluded that the CASSAR records are kept in good order.
- **Budget and Planning** – John Ferris reported that he received a variety of responses from Chapters regarding the budget; noted that our state revenue increased by more than \$10,000, in great thanks to increased membership; expenses have also increased by approximately \$4,500, in great part to expanded award programs and award amounts; the surplus for this year will be

transferred to the appropriate accounts so that it will end up being a zero-base budget.

- **Past President Jim Klingler** gave supplemental comments that we should budget for growth; encouraged members to focus on growing membership and expand budgets accordingly; **Past President Stephen Renouf, Past President John Dodd, Past President Joe Dooley, Yosemite Chapter President Scott Nichols** also made supplemental comments in what become a spirited discussion on whether or not to budget a projected growth (10 was proposed) in membership. The proposal was rejected.
- **By-Laws Committee** – No By-Laws proposals reported.
- **California Compatriot Committee** – John Ferris reminded members of the importance of the California Compatriot and encouraged to read often and to share in the partnership of running the magazine by contributing more regularly.
- **CAR Liaison – North** – Randy Dhindsa (absent).
- **CAR Liaison – South** – Ben Hobbins (absent).
- **Chapter Activities Committee** – Brandon Villardi reported that he will be sending out the Outstanding Chapter Award after January.
- **Chief of Protocol** – Brandon Villardi had nothing to report.
- **Color Guard Committee** – Brandon Villardi reported that he has participated in 28 events (29 including today's presentation of the colors); encouraged Chapters to contact their regional Adjutant if they need assistance and get their color guard commanders in regular contact with local DAR and CAR Chapters for joint involvement; conveyed direction from NSSAR that Color Guard members should not wear medals on their uniforms in order to stay as accurate as possible with the attire of the period; reminded members that there is a Color Guard training video series available, if interested; noted that Riverside Chapter will have a Color Guard event on November 9<sup>th</sup> and Sacramento Chapter will have a kick-off event for Wreaths Across America event on December 9<sup>th</sup>.
  - **President Don Littlefield** encouraged other Chapters to consider having a kick-off event for Wreaths Across America.

Brandon Villardi closed his report by thanking Scott Nichols and Kevin Forrest for their service as Adjutants.

- **Compliance Committee** – Michael Hirman – noted that his report is “in the book”.

- **DAR Liaison** – Brian Stephens reported that there were 21 DAR “finder forms” submitted for DAR members who refer a prospective member to the SAR.
- **Ethics Committee** – Rev. Scott Elliott reported that due to charges of ethics violations (section 3 of the Code of Ethics), and that the CASSAR member charged has not responded to the charges as communicated by the Ethics Committee, that CASSAR censure and suspend a member (name redacted) from participating in all CASSAR activities until that member responds to the charges goes through formal proceedings.
- **Flag Committee Co-Chairmen** – Randy Dhindsa & Brandon Villardi – nothing to report.
- **Handbook Committee** – Derek Brown reminded that the CASSAR Officer Handbook is on the CASSAR website and is intended to provide high-level information as a resource to Chapter Officers, State Officers, and Committee Members; the Handbook is updated bi-annually; invited members to contact him if they have any suggestions for the next edition (remember the 3 R’s: Retention, Recruitment, and Reinstatement).
- **Information Technology Committee** – Greg Hill (absent).
- **Medals and Awards Committee** – Greg Owens (absent).
- **Media and Public Relations Committee** – David Gilliard (absent).
- **Membership Committee** – Scott Whitman reported that there was nothing new to add to his earlier report delivered under the VP – Membership slot.
- **Nominations Committee** – The Committee presented the following nominations:

President:	John R. Ferris
Exec. V.P. & President Elect:	Randy Dhindsa
V.P. South:	Brandon Villardi (2 <sup>nd</sup> yr of 2-yr term)
V.P. North:	Dan Shurtz (1 <sup>st</sup> year of 2-year term)
V.P. Membership:	Scott Whitman
Secretary:	Chris Cerillo
Treasurer:	Kevin Bidenkap
Registrar:	Terry Briggs
Chancellor:	Michael Hirman
Genealogist:	David Morrow
Historian:	Steve Belden
Chaplain:	Scott Elliott
Surgeon:	Mathew Bowdish
Investment Fund Trustee	Kevin Bidenkap (2025-2028)
National Trustee:	Dan McKelvie

Alternate National Trustee: John R. Ferris

- **Public Service and Heroism Committee** – Brian Stephens thanked members of the Committee for putting on the public service luncheon; noted that if a Chapter presents a Public Service Award, there is a national reporting form that is used to capture this information, and awardees' names are logged in a final report that is shared at the NSSAR Congress.
- **Patriot Research Project** – Randy Dhindsa (absent).
- **Spanish Patriot Research Project** – Paul Garcia (absent) but Phil Mitchell conveyed message from Paul: if there is a Spanish-related Revolutionary War Era site near a Chapter's area, the Chapter should make an effort to contact that site's staff to discern whether there are any Spanish soldados buried there.
- **Veterans Programs Committee** – Phil Mitchell reported that 7 veterans were acknowledged and encouraged Chapters to actively recognize their veteran members and have their veteran members sign up in the Veteran corps.
- **Wreaths Across America Committee** – Phil Mitchell reported that Chapters that are wanting to participate in the event but do not yet know which cemeteries they can participate in, they can visit the Wreaths Across America website and identify a local cemetery and point-of-contact to coordinate with.

## **Old Business**

Scott Nichols presented registration packets to two members who arrived in the afternoon.

## **New Business**

Don Littlefield noted how successful the 1776 Book Challenge has been at the Sacramento Chapter level and proposed that CASSAR establish a state-level fund to expand the book program throughout the state.

Don Littlefield also brought before the membership the topic of "failed chapters" where a long period has passed in which no meetings have taken place. Monterey Bay Chapter, for example, has had a difficult time holding meetings since the COVID-19 pandemic; so, Don has indicated that the Chapter may need some CASSAR-level support in 2025 as a trial period to assess continued viability. Discussion ensued on how best to address the needs of flailing Chapters, including probationary periods, how VPs can better support, and conducting tele-meetings (e.g., via Zoom).

**--- Adjourned at 4:39 PM ---**

**Saturday, Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>**

**Call to Order at 9:00 AM**

**Invocation** – Rev. Scott Elliott

**Pledge of Allegiance** – Chris Scott, Yosemite Chapter

**SAR Mission Statement** – Terry Briggs, CASSAR Registrar

**SAR Pledge** – Kevin Bidenkap, Treasurer

**Roll Call** – John Ferris called roll and declared a Quorum.

**Candidates Forum:**

The following candidates gave speeches in support of their election to the following offices:

- **Secretary General** -- Alan Greenley made his candidate statement, discussing income ideas for the SAR (record copy selling, bequests, etc.).
- **Treasurer General** – Brooks Lyles recapped the several different positions he has served in at the State and National level as testimony to his service and dedication to our Society; he highlighted his recent work on a Task Force that is focusing on improving the Society's operations and boosting its membership.
- **Chancellor General** – Hon. Peter Davenport noted his military service and his first assignment in California, as well as his legal career experience to underscore his work ethic that he would bring to the position; answered questions regarding his views on “Black Powder Insurance” and improved Youth Protection Program.
- **Genealogist General** – Gary Owen Green emphasized the importance of reducing the supplemental application backlog as well as utilizing the Patriot Research System (PRS); additionally, Gary invited members to support genealogical activities in support of new and supplemental application processing.
- **Registrar General** – Dr. Keith Weissinger focused on retention efforts and his recent experience at the National level; noted that NSSAR is going to host the National Genealogical Society's upcoming conference.

- **Historian General** – Jeff Thomas highlighted his work toward the America 250 program (e.g., marker program), as part of the 5-year Plan in his candidacy speech.
- **SAR Foundation Board** – John Dodd presented his recent experience as President General and is seeking to fill the Past President General seat on the Foundation Board and his vision on supporting the ongoing construction of the Museum in Louisville, KY.
- **SAR Foundation Board** – Dan McKelvie spoke to his recent work at the National level and his dedication to the NSSAR Education Center and Museum; noted current efforts to seek approximately \$15 million necessary to complete the planned construction of the Education Center and Museum.
- **Vice President General** – James Klingler summarized his State-level experience, work as Trustee and SAR Foundation Board Member, and his liaison work between CASSAR and NSSAR; pointed out that 90% of the Western District membership are CASSAR members; shared his goals to visit Nevada and Hawaii, as well as his desire to grow membership and fostering relationship between current members in addition to more involvement in youth programs.
- **Motion to endorse National Officer Candidates** that appeared and made comments in-person – Motion made by Jim Faulkinbury, seconded by Scott Nichols; motion carried by majority.
- Chris Cerillo was called to the Podium and presented with a lapel pin as a show of appreciation for his \$1,000 donation to the George Washington Endowment Fund; Derek Brown then spoke about the Endowment Fund and invited members to consider donating and, thereby, becoming a George Washington Endowment Fund Fellow; Don Littlefield gave supporting comments and noted how non-SAR members can also become Fellows by donating to the Endowment Fund.

## **Old Business**

- **Investment Fund Trustees Report** – Stephen Renouf, Dr. Kent Gregory, and John Dodd, Esq. gave the report (Stephen Renouf spoke at the podium and thanked Dr. Kent Gregory for his service on the Committee, noting that Dr. Gregory would not be seeking re-election to the Committee), see attached Investment Fund Trustees Report; Stephen noted that the Committee does not have any recommendations at this time.

## **New Business**

- **Failing Chapters – What to do?:** Don spoke about the need to establish a committee to support struggling chapters; discussion ensued about how to

establish this committee (e.g., one State-wide committee vs. one committee under VP North and one committee VP South); being unable to gain consensus on how the committee should be established at this time, Don Littlefield will make an executive decision on the form and composition of the committee at a later date.

- **CASSAR BOM Meeting Formats:** John Ferris then spoke about the CASSAR Annual and BOM Meetings Format; encouraged members to register for the upcoming Annual Meeting and indicated his desire to present ideas on how to lower the cost of meetings and make these more inviting to new and current members in order to increase attendance averages; John Ferris, Chris Cerillo, Dan McKelvie, Scott Elliott, Phil Mitchell, Brandon Villardi, and Kevin Forest will serve on a committee to draw up new ideas on how to conduct future meetings; Terry Briggs commented as Registrar and mentioned the high volume of recent applications (approx. 300 per year) and emphasized the importance of retention.

**--- Recess Called: 10:28 AM ---**

**--- Called Back to Order: 10:43 AM ---**

- Dan McKelvie presented a video on the SAR Museum Construction progress that included various areas of the site that will host different exhibits; a link to the video is included in the September issue of the California Compatriot; Brooks Lyles also noted how members can subscribe to the SAR YouTube Channel.
- Derek Brown spoke about the current challenges to membership and reminded the attendees of the three R's: Retention, Recruitment, and Reinstatement; Derek noted that growth has been flat over the past 5 years; noted 21,000 drops from the National Society and only about 6,000 have reinstated; approx. 950 drops over the past 5 years at the State-level; California has increased by about 10 members overall in the past year; Derek has asked what Chapters have done to contact dropped members and find out why they have not renewed their membership; he also asked attendees to think about how we can increase the number of junior members, past-CAR members, and how we can bring in relatives as members. Derek also encouraged members to continually think about how we can enhance member engagement; he quoted Past President General William Guest in support of the 3 R's. Discussion ensued on how Chapters can practically apply these principles to bolster their membership and enhance the new member onboarding process through existing resources (e.g., SAR University available on the NSSAR website).

## **New Business from the Floor**

- Scott Nichols gave comments regarding how Yosemite Chapter regularly calls members – including those who typically do not attend Stated Meetings – and



sends updates to members regarding Chapter activities as a way to keep them informed and involved.

- Michael Hirman noted how it's been a while since CASSAR has hosted a conference and proposed that CASSAR put in a bid to host the 130<sup>th</sup> Congress and announced how San Diego Chapter was prepared to lead that effort.
  - John Dodd replied to the proposal and informed the membership that upcoming Congresses will be connected to the America 250. commemoration events on the East Coast and in Texas and that previous efforts to identify an affordable hotel in the San Diego were unsuccessful.
  - Michael Elston described the hotel venue for the upcoming Congress which will be on Mohegan land in Connecticut.
  - John Dodd and Michael Elston then exchanged points of clarification on the venue for the upcoming Congress; Michael Elston also announced that we should not put in a bid for the 231<sup>st</sup> Congress, either, because it will be held in Yorktown, VA.
- John Ferris spoke about the venue for upcoming Annual Meeting in Costa Mesa and encouraged members to attend.
- John Dodd spoke about the Boston Tea Party anniversary celebrations in Boston, MA and noted how memorable that event was. Additionally, he spoke about the upcoming 250-year anniversary celebrations for Lexington and Concord in 2025 and projected that these celebrations will be even bigger than the Boston Tea Party celebrations and informed the membership that registration will open in February and the link will be sent out in the California Compatriot.
  - Jim McAdory gave supporting comments noting how there will also be a local re-enactment of the Lexington and Concord events in Balboa Park in San Diego and invited members to participate and support the celebrations.
- Don Littlefield announced that there are ongoing discussions to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Sons of Revolutionary Sires. John Dodd elaborated that in October 2025 there will be a social-type event in Orange County. Don suggested that another event should be held at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco as that was the actual venue for the SRS founding.

**--- Recess for Lunch: 11:54 AM ---**

Youth Service Awards Luncheon held.

**--- Call Back to Order: 2:01 PM ---**

- President Don Littlefield reconvened the meeting and asked if there was any new business from the floor; Bill Nay mentioned the upcoming Marine Corps League convention next year.

- Don asked if there was any more new business to be brought before the membership; there being none, he asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jim Faulkinbury moved to adjourn, Scott Nichols seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**--- President Don Littlefield adjourned the BOM at 2:04 PM ---**