

New Member Manual



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Welcome

To the Sons of the American Revolution

We congratulate and welcome you to the Sons of the American Revolution. As a new Compatriot, we look forward to your involvement in our Chapter and our many activities.

Our Chapter meetings are open to ALL, especially family members. We have speakers and programming on a variety of historical topics at our meetings and your active participation is highly encouraged. As a member of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution you have joined the largest male lineal society in the United States which is dedicated to furthering understanding of the American Revolution and its significance past, present, and future.

This handbook is your guide to understanding the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (NSSAR), the Tennessee Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (TNSSAR), and your local Chapter.

SAR is chartered by the United States Congress, signed into law by Compatriot President Teddy Roosevelt. You are encouraged to actively participate in the brotherhood and patriotic service of the society.

The Tennessee Society was organized December 3, 1899, one of several state societies which predate the incorporation of the National Society. Within the Tennessee Society are currently 23 Chapters located throughout the state.

Brief History of SAR

The first effort to organize descendants of Revolutionary War, occurred in San Francisco, in 1875. This was in anticipation of the centennial of the revolutionary War. The first official meeting was June 29, 1876. The group attracted about 80 men and the group named themselves “Sons of the Revolutionary Sires”. They marched in the July 4th, 1876, parade in San Francisco. The organization fell in numbers over the years.

In 1883, the New York Society of the Sons of the American Revolution was organized by John Austin, this could be traced as the founding of the Sons of the American Revolution.

William Osborn McDowell with Josiah Pumpelly and William Stryker, all who were members of the New York Society, organized the New Jersey Society of the

Sons of the American Revolution in 1889. They refused to accept being subordinate to the New York Society. After approaching other states to organize societies, the Sons of the American Revolution were organized at the Fraunces Tavern in New York on April 30, 1889, the centennial of George Washington's inauguration.

The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution was incorporated on January 17, 1890, in Connecticut, with the first National Congress on April 30, 1890, in Louisville, Kentucky. A congressional charter was granted on June 9, 1906, and signed by President Theodore Roosevelt, a member of the SAR.

Brief Summary of Organizational Structure

The National Society is organized into State Societies. **Membership** in the National Society Sons of the American is through a State Society—there are no National at-large memberships in SAR! State Societies are organized into Chapters which is the level through which membership is attained. State Societies receive their charters from the National Society which is chartered by an act of the United States Congress (36 U.S.C. Chap. 1533). State Societies and Chapters which are chartered by State Societies must comply with all National Society policies which are outlined in the multivolume *SAR Handbook*. State Societies are further organized by the National Society into Districts for cooperation and mutual support of the National Society's mission. All members are required to pay annual Chapter, State, and National dues to retain membership.



Objectives of the SAR

The objectives of this Society are declared to be patriotic, historical, and educational, and shall include those intended or designed to perpetuate the memory of those patriots who, by their services or sacrifices during the war of the American Revolution, achieved the independence of the American people:

- ❖ to unite and promote fellowship among their descendants;
- ❖ to inspire them and the community-at-large with a more profound reverence for the principles of the government founded by our forefathers;
- ❖ to encourage historical research in relation to the American Revolution;
- ❖ to acquire and preserve the records of the individual services of the patriots of the war, as well as documents, relics, and landmarks;
- ❖ to mark the scenes of the Revolution by appropriate memorials;
- ❖ to celebrate the anniversaries of the prominent events of the war and of the Revolutionary period;
- ❖ to foster true Patriotism;
- ❖ to maintain and extend institutions of American Freedom and to carry out the purposes expressed in the preamble of the Constitution of our country and the injunctions of Washington in his farewell address to the American People.

The SAR Pledge

The SAR pledge is not a pledge to the organization, but to liberty and our Constitutional Republic.

Pledge of the SAR

We descendants of the heroes of the American Revolution who, by their sacrifices, established the United States of America, reaffirm our faith in the principles of liberty and our Constitutional Republic and solemnly pledge ourselves to defend them against every foe.

Recessional

Until we meet again. Let us remember our obligations to our forefathers, who gave us our Constitution, the Bill of Rights, an independent Supreme Court, and a Nation of Free Men.

Col. Anthony Bledsoe Chapter

The Col. Anthony Bledsoe Chapter had its origin in 1990 when efforts began to form a chapter of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (NSSAR) in Sumner County, Tennessee. Larry D. McClanahan, later President General NSSAR 2001-2002, through his related family and knowledge of the families in Sumner County, was able to begin the chapter formation process.

Initial contact was made with Taz Ann (Upshaw) Ford, past Regent of the Jethro Sumner Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Through Mrs. Ford and others, a roster of the Jethro Sumner membership was obtained and contact made with prospects - husbands, sons, grandsons, and nephews.

Organizational meetings were held at the old Gallatin Country Club facilities and invitations sent to the identified prospects. Through the support of the Tennessee Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (TNSSAR), former TNSSAR Presidents Robert Ragland, Huey King with Sarah King, Honorary President General James Hofsted and their wives attended the initial meetings to help instill enthusiasm in the prospects and new members. Members of the Andrew Jackson and Stones River Chapters TNSSAR provided active support. Russ Campbell and Troy Woodbury, members of the Andrew Jackson Chapter and the Masonic Sojourners Color Guard wore Revolutionary War Uniforms to the meetings and other events to help encourage new members in formation of a Color Guard.

The initial goal was to enroll enough new members to charter the chapter in 1991. This goal was met, and exceeded, with the enrollment of fifty charter members and issuance of the charter upon approval by the Tennessee Society. Compatriot McClanahan was elected the Charter President of the new chapter. Having been the primary sponsor of the fifty new members, President McClanahan was awarded the Florence Kendall medal for sponsoring the most new members for the year by the National Society. The new chapter was named the Sumner County Chapter.

In 2010 the chapter was renamed to honor Col. Anthony Bledsoe. The chapter meets every month on the third Thursday. Meetings include speakers and/or programming highlighting varying historic eras and events. Chapter meetings are open to ALL and normally include a catered meal and social time prior to the program.

Biography of Anthony Bledsoe

Anthony Bledsoe, pioneer, surveyor, and early settler of the Cumberland region, was born in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, and became a product of the rolling frontier of his day. He was a justice of the peace for Augusta County in 1769, Botetourt in 1770 and 1771, and Fincastle in 1773 and 1774. He served on the Fincastle Committee of Safety in 1775-76, and in 1777 Bledsoe was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates and reelected in 1778.

In 1779 Bledsoe became a surveyor with the commissioners of Virginia and North Carolina to establish the line between the western lands of those states. In 1780 he served as justice of the peace for the new county of Sullivan, North Carolina, and in 1781 and 1782 was its state senator. In 1783 he was one of the commissioners selected to survey the North Carolina military land grant reservation. He became a justice of the peace for new Davidson County in 1783, and in 1785-86 he represented the county in the state Senate. When Sumner County was created in 1786, Bledsoe assumed the same duties there, becoming chairman of the county court in 1787.

He shouldered military responsibilities wherever he was. He volunteered for Lord Dunmore's colonial army in 1764 in the French and Indian War and was captain of militia in Botetourt in 1770. After taking up the cause of independence, he commanded the patriots at Fort Patrick Henry on the Long Island of the Holston in 1776. He served as lieutenant colonel commandant of Sullivan County in 1781, Davidson County in 1783, and Sumner County in 1787.

A recognized leader of the Cumberland settlements, Bledsoe brought his wife, Mary Ramsey Bledsoe, and their ten children to settle near Bledsoe's Lick in 1785. He and his family paid dearly for their relocation, however. Anthony Bledsoe died at the hands of Indians in 1788, as did his brother Isaac five years later. The same fate befell Bledsoe's sons, Anthony Jr. and Thomas, his nephew Anthony, and his brothers-in-law, Henry and William Ramsey. (biography written by Compatriot David Miles Vaughn, now deceased).



Common Terms Defined

Compatriot is the official designation of a member of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution.

Membership categories are **Regular Member** or **Regular Life Member** the age of 18 years and older, **Junior Member** under the age of 18 years, and **Memorial Membership** for a deceased male of the same family as current members.

SAR (always pronounced as letters, never as a one syllable term) is the acronym for National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution.

SAR Member Badge is worn by a compatriot at SAR functions and when representing the SAR. It is a Maltese cross of four arms and eight points with a bust of George Washington at its center and available from the SAR Store at <https://store.sar.org/sar-members-badge-p3.aspx> .

SAR Rosette is worn by a compatriot, at his discretion, on the left lapel of his jacket, but is not worn simultaneously with the SAR Member Badge. It may be purchased from the SAR Store at <https://store.sar.org/member-rosette-p166.aspx> .

Annual Congress, sometimes simply called “Congress,” is the yearly convention of the National Society hosted by a State Society. State Societies select delegates based upon its membership but every compatriot is welcome to attend; spouses and family members are also welcome.

General Officer is the term given to the National Society officers elected at the Annual Congress to one year terms. The **President General** is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Society, followed in descending rank by Secretary General, Treasurer General, Chancellor General, Genealogist General, Registrar General, Historian General, Librarian General, Surgeon General and Chaplain General. A Vice President General is nominated by each District (see below) and elected at Congress.

Trustee is the member nominated by his State Society to serve a one year term and is elected at the Annual Congress to serve on the Board of

Trustees; General Officers, Executive Committee Members and former Presidents General are also elected to the Board of Trustees.

Board of Trustees manages the business and affairs of the National Society and is the custodian of all National Society property; each State Society is represented by one Trustee.

State Society is chartered by the National Society in any State or Territory, including any foreign country, in which a Society does not exist.

Board of Governors is the governing body of the Tennessee Society and manages the business and affairs of the state society. Each chapter is represented by their current Chapter President.

Chapter is the local organization chartered by a State Society to promote growth in membership and interest in the objects of the National Society.

District is group of State Societies served by a Vice President General to strengthen the constituent State Societies. This term is also used in the Tennessee Society to strengthen the constituent local chapters, divided into six (6) districts across the state.

Leadership Meeting is each fall and spring in Louisville, KY at which National committees meet to make recommendations and the Board of Trustees manages the business and affairs of the National Society.

SAR Education Center and Museum is at 809 West Main, Louisville, KY. SAR is active in education and raising funds to complete the SAR Education Center and Museum.

SAR Color Guard is the compatriots who attend SAR meetings and events properly uniformed as either Continental Soldiers or Militiamen, or attired as Revolutionary-era clergymen. The Color Guard also participates in a variety of public venues and events to honor our Patriot ancestors, assist in education and outreach opportunities, honor our public servants, bring exposure to the SAR and for other purposes.

Ladies' Auxiliary provides assistance to SAR at Chapter, State Society, and National Society levels. Membership is open to ladies who are related by marriage or blood line to SAR Members in good standing.

Basic Protocol

Attire: Each chapter varies in expected attire at meetings influenced by their meeting location and/or climate. Period attire (Continental Army, Militia, and period civilian clothing) are always acceptable, including formal events. The basic attire for State and National meetings is coat (normally

navy blazer), shirt, and tie. State and National meetings often include formal banquets which should indicate Black Tie or White Tie on the schedule.

Insignia: Every member when attending an SAR event/meeting or representing the SAR at a public event is entitled to wear the National Society Sons of the American Revolution insignia which can be purchased from the store on www.sar.org (registering on the member web site is required). The insignia is worn on a blazer or suit coat (never an overcoat) on the left breast suspended on the included drape. Current and Former General Officers, State Presidents, and Chapter Presidents may wear the insignia suspended from the SAR Neck Ribbon.

Medals and Awards: Medals are presented by the National, District, State, or Chapter level according to criteria published in *The SAR Handbook, Volume V*. They may be worn at an SAR event/meeting or when representing the SAR at a public event. Mounting medals when the compatriot has earned three or more is recommended according to the criteria in *The SAR Handbook, Volume IV*.

Opportunities

At the national level members can attend the annual congress and the leadership meetings held twice a year in Louisville, Kentucky. Delegates for congress are appointed from each state which enables a member to vote for new officers, bylaws and financial requests. There are also events for the ladies, tours of historical points of interest, banquets and the chance to meet compatriots from other states and countries.

Leadership meetings enable members to attend committee meetings and join committees. Trustees are elected from each state society and vote for SAR business matters. Committees are the working basis of SAR. Some of these committees are Education, Color Guard, Americanism, Veterans, Historic Sites and Youth Programs. A complete list of committees and their goals can be found on the SAR website.

Activities

At National, District, State and Chapter levels there are numerous activities to support. Color Guard presents a great opportunity for the SAR to be visible to the public. The Color Guard marches in parades such as July 4, Memorial Day and Veterans Day. They participate in Grave Marking for Patriots and other events such as History Day in some states. Points are awarded for events and Color

Guardsmen can earn medals.

Compatriots may participate with committees such as ROTC/JROTC, Eagle Scouts, Oration, Essay, Poster and History Teacher. These committees conduct patriotic education contests through which youth earn awards and medals relating the significance of the American Revolution to current day issues.

Educational programs are presented about the Revolutionary War in schools and other venues.

Public Service medals are awarded for outstanding service in Law Enforcement, Fire Safety, and Emergency Medical Services. Medals are also awarded to citizens for Life Saving and Heroism as well as Good Citizenship.

Wreaths Across America is a program to place wreaths on veterans graves at National Cemeteries.

Compatriots work with the Children of the American Revolution (C.A.R.) and support their activities.

DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution-formed 1890) is supported by the SAR in various ways such as providing a Color Guard.

Flag certificates are awarded to those who fly the American Flag in a respectful way. Flag Retirement Certificates are awarded to those who properly and respectfully dispose of damaged and worn American Flags.

SAR supports our veterans with Ancestor Search to help them discover their ancestors.

SAR, state societies and chapters have websites with information on dates, times and locations of activities to keep members informed of events. A more complete listing of activities can be found on their websites.

Resources

The best source of information is the SAR web site: www.sar.org . You will need to register an account with your private login to access the member only resources, look for the yellow LOG box at the upper right of the home page.

SAR Handbook <https://www.sar.org/nssar-handbook/>

Volume I, Governing Documents

Volume II, Organization

Volume III, Membership, Compliance, & Other Policies
Volume IV, Insignia, Protocol, Ceremonies & Rituals
Volume V, Individual Medals and Awards
Volume VI, Youth Programs, State Society & Chapter Awards
Volume VII, Summary History of the Sons of the American Revolution
Volume VIII, Historical Roster of SAR General Officers

Color Guard Handbook:

<https://members.sar.org/media/uploads/pages/201/E2YTwVFUMOkY.pdf>

Education: <https://www.sar.org/education/sar-outreach-education>

SAR Magazine (current and archived issues):

<https://www.sar.org/compatriots/sar-magazine>

Your State Society web site which can be linked from:

<https://www.sar.org/society-websites/> or

<http://www.tnssar.org/index.html>

Many State Societies have links on their web site to Chapter web sites.

Your Chapter Officers:

- President: Stew Roberson
- 1st Vice President: John Clark
- 2nd Vice President: James Hobbs
- Secretary: Carey Herdman
- Treasurer: Carl Garrett
- Registrar: Steve Gaines
- Chaplain: Stew Roberson
- Facebook/Media: Dennis Harris

