

How Chapters Can Tell Better Stories

Turning chapter activity into mission-driven content that inspires, educates, and connects.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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You're Already Doing the Work

Every chapter in the SAR holds meaningful events — grave markings, education programs, award ceremonies, and community service. These activities preserve Revolutionary history and strengthen American values. But here's the challenge: **most chapter posts read like event reports, not stories.**

What We Often Post

- Meeting held on Tuesday
- Wreath was placed at grave
- Chapter attended ceremony

What Audiences Actually Connect To

- Why this patriot's story matters
- Who showed up and what they discovered
- How this connects to our community today

SAR's Brand and Engagement Guide is clear: audiences connect through storytelling, not announcements. The good news? The stories are already there — we just need to tell them better.



Why Storytelling Matters

Stories are how human beings make sense of the world. They help audiences **care, remember, and respond** — three things that announcements rarely accomplish. When SAR chapters tell stories, they don't just inform; they build genuine connection, raise awareness, and make membership feel meaningful.

Care

Emotional stories create empathy.
Readers feel connected to the people
and history involved.

Remember

Facts fade. Stories stick. A patriot's
name is remembered far longer
when paired with a compelling
narrative.

Respond

Stories drive action — likes, shares,
comments, event attendance, and
ultimately, new memberships.

SAR's guidance specifically states that storytelling builds awareness, increases engagement, and strengthens the organization's presence. This is not just communication advice — it is mission strategy.

What SAR Wants People to Feel

Before writing any post, ask yourself: *How should someone feel after reading this?* SAR's Brand and Engagement Guide points to four emotional outcomes every piece of content should aim for.



Inspired

Moved by the sacrifice of Patriots and the dedication of today's members.



Informed

Educated about Revolutionary history, local significance, and SAR's mission.



Interested

Curious to learn more — about a patriot, a chapter event, or SAR membership.



Connected

Positively linked to the organization, its values, and its community.

These four feelings are your content compass. If a post doesn't accomplish at least one of them, it's worth rewriting.

From Report to Story

The same event can be shared in two very different ways. One informs. The other **connects**. Here's what the difference looks like in practice.

✗ The Report Version

"The Jefferson Chapter held its monthly meeting on March 12th. A wreath was placed at the grave of Patriot James Hargrove. Twelve members were in attendance."

This tells us what happened. It says nothing about why it mattered.

✓ The Story Version

"James Hargrove answered the call at age 19. Two hundred forty-seven years later, twelve members of the Jefferson Chapter made sure he wasn't forgotten — placing a wreath at his grave on a cold March morning and speaking his name aloud for the first time in decades."

Same event. Completely different emotional impact.

① SAR's guidance asks: "Is there an engaging story to tell?" The answer is almost always yes — if you look for people, purpose, and emotion.

The Storytelling Mindset

The most important shift isn't learning new tools — it's asking new questions. When you prepare to post about a chapter activity, stop starting with *"What happened?"* and start with these instead:

→ Why does this matter?

What is the larger significance of this event to American history, to the community, or to SAR's mission?

→ Why would someone care?

Who outside of SAR would find this meaningful — a student, a veteran's family, a local historian?

→ Whose story is this, really?

Is there a patriot, a member, a student, or a community partner whose personal connection makes this real?

This mindset shift is the foundation of every great SAR post. It takes practice, but once you start thinking this way, you'll never run out of stories to tell.

The Core Story Formula

Every strong SAR post follows a simple, repeatable framework. You don't need to be a professional writer — just answer five questions and you'll have a compelling story every time.

1

Who?

Name the person — the patriot, the member, the student, the descendant. Give the audience someone to connect with.

2

What?

Describe what happened in one or two vivid sentences. Be specific — include a detail that makes it feel real.

3

Why It Mattered

Connect the event to a larger truth — historical significance, community impact, or SAR's mission.

4

What Was Learned

Share one insight, discovery, or takeaway that came from the event. This gives the audience something to think about.

5

What's Next?

End with a call to action: follow along, attend the next event, learn more, or share the post with someone who cares.

Meetings as Stories

A regular chapter meeting might not seem like headline news — but it almost always contains a story worth telling. The key is identifying the most interesting *moment* inside the meeting and building your post around it.



The Speaker

Who presented? What did they teach the chapter? Share one surprising or moving detail from the talk.



An Award

Who was recognized and why? Tell their story — their service, dedication, and what they mean to the chapter.



A New Member

Welcome them publicly. What drew them to SAR? What patriot ancestor are they proud to honor?



A Historical Lesson

Was a historical topic discussed? Turn that into an educational post your followers can learn from too.

Grave Markings as Stories

Grave marking ceremonies are among the most powerful events SAR chapters hold — but their social media posts often undersell them. These moments connect us to real people who risked everything for liberty. Tell that story.

Elements That Make It Compelling

- **The Patriot's service** — rank, battles, sacrifice, and local significance
- **Descendants present** — a living family member adds powerful emotional depth
- **Community participation** — scouts, students, veterans make it bigger than SAR
- **The setting** — weathered stones and flags tell their own visual story
- **The act of remembrance** — speaking a name that hasn't been spoken in decades

Sample Caption Hook

"He survived the Battle of Brandywine — but until Saturday, his grave had gone unmarked for 60 years. The [Chapter Name] chapter changed that."

Lead with the human truth. The ceremony details can follow.

Education Programs as Stories

When SAR visits schools, sponsors essay contests, or hosts public programs, there's always a story at the center: a student who was surprised to learn something, a teacher who called it the best lesson of the year, a child who discovered they might have a Patriot ancestor. **Find that person. Tell their story.**



School Visits

Focus on student reactions. Quote a child's question or response. What did they learn that surprised them?



Youth Contests

Spotlight the winner — not just the award, but the student's essay topic and why they chose it.



Museum & Public Programs

Who attended? What did the audience discover? Share a specific takeaway that any reader can appreciate.

Patriot Events & Commemorations

Ceremonies and anniversaries are rich storytelling opportunities — but they're often posted as schedules rather than stories. The goal is to connect the historical moment to something that feels alive and relevant today.

Connect to the Revolutionary Theme

What did this date, battle, or founding principle mean in 1776? Why does it still matter in our community today? Ground the post in historical meaning before listing event details.

Highlight Local Significance

What makes your chapter's commemoration unique? Is there a local patriot, a battlefield site, or a community partner involved that gives this event a distinctly regional story?

Capture the Ceremony Itself

A raised flag, a moment of silence, a reading of names — these visual and emotional details transform an event announcement into a scene your audience can picture and feel.

Put People at the Center

Organizations don't inspire people — **other people do**. SAR's brand guidance specifically recommends spotlighting individuals: members, Patriots' descendants, students, veterans, community partners. When you build a post around a real person, the emotional connection is immediate.

Questions That Surface the Person Behind the Post

- Who traveled the farthest to attend this ceremony?
- Who has been a member for 40+ years — and why do they keep coming back?
- Whose ancestor fought at Lexington, Bunker Hill, or Yorktown?
- Which student asked the question no one expected?
- Which family finally learned their great-great-grandfather was a Patriot?

The Member Spotlight Formula

Name + Connection to SAR + One personal detail + Their why.

Example: "John joined the [Chapter] chapter 22 years ago after discovering his ancestor fought with Washington at Valley Forge. 'I wanted to make sure that story wasn't forgotten,' he says."

Use Stronger Visuals

On social media, your image is the first thing people see — and it determines whether they stop scrolling. SAR's guidance specifically recommends video content for stronger storytelling. Here's how to level up your chapter's visual game without a professional photographer or videographer.



Close-Ups & Faces

Faces create connection. A close-up of a member placing a flag, or a student's expression of discovery, says more than a wide group shot.



Flags & Settings

A weathered gravestone, a raised flag, a candlelit table — historical settings do visual storytelling before a single word is read.



Short Video Clips

Even 30–60 seconds of a member speaking, a flag being raised, or a name being read aloud outperforms static images in reach and engagement.



Action Shots

Capture people *doing* things — placing wreaths, shaking hands, receiving awards. Action is more compelling than posed group photos.

i SAR's guidance recommends short-form video for ceremonies, grave markings, and member spotlights. Even a 45-second clip filmed on a smartphone can dramatically increase reach.

Write Better Captions

Your caption is your story. Even the best photo falls flat with a weak caption. Follow this four-part structure for every post — and your engagement will improve immediately.

1

The Hook

Open with a bold statement, a surprising fact, or a question. Never start with your chapter's name. Example: *"He was 22 years old when he signed up. Two centuries later, we finally marked his grave."*

2

The Context

In 2–3 sentences, explain what happened, who was involved, and why it matters to your community or to American history.

3

The Vivid Detail

Include one specific, sensory detail — a name, a date, a quote, a location — that makes the story feel real and personal rather than generic.

4

The Call to Action

End by inviting the audience to do something: share the post, attend the next event, tag a history lover, or visit your website to learn more.

Before & After: Real Examples

See exactly how the same events are transformed when you apply the storytelling framework. These rewrites take no more time to write — just a different way of thinking.

✗ Meeting Post (Before)

"The Washington Chapter held its monthly meeting. Treasurer's report was approved. Guest speaker discussed the Battle of Trenton."

✓ Meeting Post (After)

"Did you know Washington's soldiers crossed an icy Delaware River on Christmas night — and changed the course of the Revolution? Our guest speaker brought that story to life at last night's chapter meeting. Here's what we learned. 🎤 "

✗ Education Post (Before)

"Chapter members visited Lincoln Elementary School to talk about the Revolutionary War. Students received SAR bookmarks."

✓ Education Post (After)

"'I didn't know kids my age fought in the Revolution,' one fifth-grader told our member yesterday. We visited Lincoln Elementary to share stories of young Patriots — and left with a room full of questions we hope they never stop asking."

- 🕒 The after versions take roughly the same number of words — but every word is working harder to create connection and inspire sharing.

Think in Content Formats

One event doesn't have to produce one post. SAR's guidance recommends planning ahead and creating multiple pieces of content from a single activity. This approach maximizes your storytelling investment and keeps your chapter visible between events.



Plan these five formats before your next event and you'll have a full week of content from a single two-hour ceremony. That's strategic storytelling — and it's well within reach of any chapter volunteer.

Story Ideas Every Chapter Already Has

You don't need to wait for a major event. Every chapter has a steady supply of story-worthy content — it's already in your calendar, your membership roster, and your community relationships. Here's your standing story inventory:

People Stories

- New & long-tenured members
- Award recipients
- Youth contest winners
- Patriot descendants

History Stories

- Revolutionary anniversaries
- Local patriot profiles
- Restoration projects
- Unmarked graves discovered

Community Stories

- School and museum partners
- Veterans served
- Scout troop collaborations
- Public ceremonies attended

Mission Stories

- Why members joined SAR
- What patriotism means today
- How SAR impacts youth
- "This Is Why We Do This" moments



How to Stay Consistent

The biggest challenge for chapter storytelling isn't creativity — it's consistency. SAR's guidance specifically recommends content calendar development and regular analytics review. Here's a simple system any chapter can maintain without a full-time communications team.

The Three-Part System

- **A Simple Content Calendar** — Map your events 4–6 weeks out. Note which ones have the most story potential and plan content formats in advance.
- **Reusable Post Templates** — Create 3–4 caption structures you can adapt for each event type: grave markings, meetings, school visits, and ceremonies.
- **Assign a Chapter Storyteller** — Designate one or two members as your content leads. They take photos, draft captions, and post on a regular schedule.

Simple Monthly Posting Goal

4

Posts/Month

One per week is a sustainable, manageable baseline for any chapter.

1

Video/Month

Even one short clip per month significantly boosts reach and engagement.

How to Measure What Works

Storytelling improves when you pay attention to what resonates. SAR's Brand and Engagement Guide recommends tracking analytics and using that data to shape future content. You don't need to be a data analyst — just watch for these signals after every post.

Metrics Worth Watching

Likes & Reactions

A basic signal of emotional resonance. More reactions = the story connected.

Shares

The highest form of endorsement. People share content they feel proud to associate with.

Comments

Comments indicate a story sparked genuine feeling or curiosity. Read them carefully.

Reach & Saves

Reach shows how far the story traveled. Saves show people valued it enough to return to it.

What to Do With What You Learn

- Review your top 3 posts each quarter — what did they have in common?
- Note whether people stories outperform event announcements (they will)
- Check if video clips generate more reach than photos
- Repeat what works. Retire what doesn't. Adjust your calendar accordingly.

Analytics aren't about numbers for their own sake — they're about learning which stories your community values most.

Every Chapter Has Stories Worth Sharing

The history is real. The mission is urgent. The stories are yours.

Better storytelling isn't a marketing exercise — it's how SAR chapters fulfill their mission in the modern world. Every grave marked, every student taught, every Patriot remembered is a story that deserves to be heard beyond the chapter room.

Preserve History

Share stories that ensure Revolutionary Patriots are never forgotten by the communities they helped create.

Educate the Public

Turn chapter activities into history lessons that reach classrooms, families, and neighbors who never knew SAR existed.

Strengthen SAR

Compelling stories build membership, deepen engagement, and carry the organization's mission forward with pride.

"You already have everything you need. Start with one story. Tell it well. Then tell the next one."