

New Member Manual



Official SAR Logo

Contents

Welcome.....	3
On-Boarding.....	3
Mission Statement.....	3
SAR Pledge and Recessional.....	3
Brief History of SAR.....	4
Brief Summary of Organizational Structure.....	4
Common Terms Defined.....	5
Compatriot	
Membership Categories	
SAR	
SAR Member Badge	
SAR Rosette	
Annual Congress	
General Officer	
Trustee	
Board of Trustees	
State Society	
Chapter	
District	
Leadership Meeting	
SAR Education Center and Museum	
SAR Color Guard	
Ladies' Auxiliary	
Basic Protocol.....	6
Attire	
Insignia	
Medals and Awards	
Opportunities	7
Activities.....	7
Resources and URL Links	9

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

On-Boarding

When your application was approved you would have received a welcome letter from the Registrar General. The letter announced your application approval and provided you with a link to an on-boarding video. See New Member On-Boarding in the References section page 9 to access this video. The video provides directions on registering to gain access to member portions of the SAR website sar.org. You are encouraged to attend your next chapter meeting to be inducted and meet fellow compatriots. The video also provides information on how to contact your chapter if you have not already been contacted by them.

Mission Statement

The Sons of the American Revolution honors our Revolutionary War patriot ancestors by promoting patriotism, serving our communities and educating and inspiring future generations about the founding principles of our Country.

SAR Pledge and Recessional

All SAR meetings begin with the SAR pledge. It is not a pledge to the organization but to liberty and our constitutional republic. It is recited, *without modification, as follows*:

“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.”

The SAR Recessional is recited at the close of every meeting. It is recited, *without modification, as follows*:

“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”

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 declined in numbers over ensuing 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. The New Jersey Society approached other states to organize societies, this led to the Sons of the American Revolution being organized at the Fraunces Tavern, the same location where Washington gave his farewell to the troops in New York on April 30, 1889 which was also the centennial of his inauguration.

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

A Brief Summary of the 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 the SAR! State Societies are organized into Chapters, the level through which membership is attained. State Societies receive their charters from the National Society. State Societies and Chapters, chartered by State Societies, must comply with all National Society policies outlined in *SAR Handbooks*. State Societies are also organized by the National Society into Districts to foster cooperation and mutual support of the National Society’s mission and strategic and operational plans. All members are required to pay annual Chapter, State, and National dues to retain membership. The National Organization and some State Societies offer Life Memberships.

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**, **National 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 at <https://store.sar.org/storefront.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 is usually presented to a new member at his induction into SAR at a Chapter meeting. It may be purchased from the SAR Store at <https://store.sar.org/storefront.aspx>.

Annual Congress, sometimes simply called “Congress,” is the yearly convention of the National Society hosted by a State or District Society. State Societies select delegates based upon their membership size, 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. Members declare candidacy for office for the following year after Congress and a nominating committee selects a slate of officers at the Spring Leadership meeting. Nominations can also be made from the floor of Congress if nominees have filed appropriate documents.

The **President General** is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Society, followed in descending rank by Vice President General, (Second to President General in VPG’s District), 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.

SAR Handbook with its 8 volumes contains all the regulations governing the SAR organization. See Resources and URL Links on Page 9 to access the handbook.



Trustee is the member nominated by his State Society to serve a one-year term to represent their society and is elected at Congress to serve on the Board of Trustees; General Officers, Executive Committee Members and former Presidents General are also considered 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.

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

District is group of State Societies served by a Vice President General to strengthen the constituent State Societies in meeting the mission and operational plan of the SAR.

Leadership Meeting is held each fall and spring at SAR's headquarters in Louisville, KY where National committees meet to make recommendations. The Board of Trustees also meets to manage the business affairs of the National Society.

SAR Education Center and Museum located at 809 West Main, Louisville, KY. SAR is active in education and introducing visitors to a journey that spans the American Revolution introducing them to pivotal people and events of the period.

SAR Color Guard are compatriots who attend SAR meetings and events properly uniformed as either Continental Soldiers or Militiamen or attired as Revolutionary-era clergymen. Guardsmen are the "face" of the SAR.

Ladies' Auxiliary provides support to SAR at Chapter, State Society, and National Society levels. Membership is open to ladies who wish to support the SAR and its mission.

SAR University is the compatriot learning center. Established in 2025 it is growing with videos on a wide variety of compatriot training experiences including a module with four new member training videos. See Resources and URL links on Page 9.

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, shirt, and tie. State and National meetings include formal banquets which should indicate Black Tie or White Tie on the event 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 which can be purchased from the store at sar.org.

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 SAR members can attend the Annual Congress held in various locations and the spring and fall Leadership Meetings held 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, Patriot Records and Youth Programs. A complete list of committees and their goals can be found under the Members tab and sub-tab Committees in the SAR website, sar.org.

Activities

At National, District, State and Chapter levels there are numerous activities members can 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. A current list of National Color Guard events is found in the Color Guard magazine. There is also a separate Color Guard handbook that is used to educate the protocols, guidelines and instructions to their members. See Resources and URL Links page 9.

Compatriots may participate in supporting youth award programs, such as ROTC/JROTC, Eagle Scouts, Rumbaugh Oration, Knight Essay, Poster, Brochure, Video and History Teacher. These committees conduct patriotic education contests through which youth may earn monetary awards and medals relating the significance of the American Revolution to current day issues. Refer to the National website (sar.org) or your state and/or chapter website for more details regarding the youth programs supported.

Educational programs are presented to compatriots in SAR Speakers Bureau about the Revolutionary War in schools and other venues.

Public Service medals are awarded to members and non-members 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.

Compatriots support The Children of the American Revolution (C.A.R.) and their activities by becoming senior advisors, donating to their programs and inviting them to SAR events. SAR Junior members may also be members of C.A.R.

DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution-formed 1890) and SAR work together to promote common goals and mission. Joint meetings and participation in local patriotic events are encouraged. SAR also provides services to DAR such as Color Guard support.

Compatriots can award Flag Certificates to local citizens and businesses who fly the American Flag in a respectful way.

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.

Continue research of your family using the Patriot Research System (PRS) and add to PRS and your family legacy by writing and submitting biographies of your patriot ancestors. You can also become a PRS volunteer assisting SAR in building the PRS.

Historical, Patriotic and Education objectives all come together by participating with your chapter in Patriot and Compatriot Grave Marking. Marking the graves of Patriots began in 1894 making it one of the oldest SAR activities.

Resources and URL Links

The best source of information is the SAR web site: www.sar.org . You need to register an account setting up your private login to access the member only resources at: https://members.sar.org/login?_redirect=//sar.org and click on “Register”

SAR Handbook, Volumes I-VIII <https://www.sar.org/nssar-handbook/> (log in required)

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

New Member On-Boarding:

<https://www.sar.org/new-member-onboarding/>

Color Guard Handbook:

<https://www.sar.org/committees/color-guard-committee/>

Color Guard magazine (current and past issues)

<https://www.sar.org/committees/color-guard-committee/>

Education: <https://education.sar.org/>

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/> (log in required)

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

SAR University: Video training programs are provided in SAR University..

<https://www.sar.org/sar-university/>

Patriot Research System (PRS):

<https://sarpatriots.sar.org/>