

1 December 2007

Fellow Patriots:

The One Hundred-Thirteenth Year of our Society has been a good one.

Progress Against Goals

To begin with, 2007 has seen continued progress towards the goals set by the Board of Managers in 2005. A revived Finance Committee under leadership of Brooks Zerkel, with the strong involvement of our new Treasurer Bob Burke, has developed a revised Investment Policy Statement, reorganized our investment portfolios to better align with non-profit accounting practices, and improved our overall investment position. Further, our operating budget for the fiscal year continues to show flat against 2006. Expenses - we all but broke even on our two major Society events, and we are doing our bit by holding steady the annual dues and the Member's cost of the George Washington's Birthday Dinner. We all owe our Treasurer Bob Burke and Finance Chair Brooks Zerkel a debt of gratitude for their service.

I also want to commend the work of the Development Committee, guided by its Chair Glenn Webb, in laying the groundwork for the Society's first Capital Campaign, which began this year. Thanks to the generosity of our members, to-date we have raised over \$10,000 for The Patriot's Fund. It is surely past time to focus on endowing the Society for future generations. The Development Committee has done an exceptional job and I want to thank them for their efforts. For those of you who wish to make a contribution you may note the amount on your due's renewal notice and include with your payment.

The Year's Events

Mother Nature was kind to the Society twice this year. In May we enjoyed perfect weather for the General Membership Meeting at the Virginia House, and in October we stayed dry for Yorktown Day. My thanks to Tom Vance, Bev Mauck, Page Moffatt and Robert Barnes, for their work in making both of these events successful. It is my hope that we can add a family oriented Society function in 2008 – more to come on that.

Membership

All Past Presidents have chosen to emphasize certain aspects of the Society's mission, and I am no different. Sam was successful in updating the by-laws, streamlining the administrative functioning of the Board, and solidifying our financial position.

My goal is to see our membership grow beyond the 500 mark. For the past 10 years we have been between 450 to 475 members. Please help your Society by bringing in friends and family. In particular, let me emphasize the ease with which those of you with sons, nephews, grandsons, or brothers may convert your kinship to membership. The "Short Form" found on the Society's website (www.vssr.com) takes about ten minutes to

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complete as it is based on your membership. Our Membership Committee - Matson Roberts, Bev Mauck, and Peter Witt - are always available to help with new applications. They can be reached through our Secretary, Mary Stuart Cruickshank, at (804) 288-2937.

George Washington's Birthday Dinner

Now I turn to plans for our annual George Washington's Birthday Dinner, to be held at the Commonwealth Club on 23 February 2008. We will honor the memory and legacy of General Washington and the 276th anniversary of his birth. At this past year's well-attended dinner we enjoyed Major General Robert B. Newman's talk on the status of The Virginia National Guard and the important role they are playing in the war on terror. It is always a pleasure to have General Newman with us and, in particular, to hear more on the many roles our Citizen-soldiers play.

For 2008 we have invited the Commander of the Atlantic Area of the United States Coast Guard, Vice Admiral D. Brian Peterman to be our Principal Speaker, along with the usual complement of Armed Forces Flag and General Officer representatives. Vice Admiral Peterman we expect will talk about the port security aspects of Homeland Defense and the Coast Guard's ongoing natural disaster responsibilities, both very relevant topics. We will also be fortunate to have the VMI Pipes and Drums join us again this coming year. Please take time to talk with the cadets; they represent so much of what is good in today's youth.

Two housekeeping notes: First, again this year we ask that you please refrain from cigar smoking until the evening's program is completed. At the end of the night, the basement bar is the perfect setting to light up. Second, while we have kept the Member's dinner price constant at \$95, we must raise the guest fee to \$125. This represents the actual cost of the evening and allows us to maintain the members' rate.

Finally, I want to thank the Society's Officers and Board of Managers, past and present, for their contributions and dedication to moving us forward. Your work is greatly appreciated.

I close as Sam did last year, with the fond wish of the Officers and Board that each of you and your families enjoy "...The Merriest Christmas Ever, and the Happiest Possible New Year...".

Respectfully,

Roderick M. Gardner
President