



# George Washington Chapter Sons of the American Revolution



## Newsletter

[Visit us online at www.gwsar.org](http://www.gwsar.org)

Volume 10, Issue 2

February, 2010



### **Chapter President Bob Carr Opens the January 9 Gala Evening in Mount Vernon's Smith Auditorium**

From L to R: Chapter President Carr, Past Chapter President Dave Walker, General Shinseki, NSSAR Genealogist General Joe Dooley, VASSAR President Bill Simpson, Chapter Chaplain Don Reynolds

### **Highlights of the January 9 Gala Evening**

Over 100 Chapter members and distinguished guests gathered at Mount Vernon for a Gala Evening of awards presentations and good fellowship. Bob Carr presided over his first meeting as Chapter President and after the opening formalities proceeded by introducing our many guests which included both state and national SAR officers, general and flag officers of our military services, representatives of

other SAR chapters, and representatives of DAR chapters.

The first award, the SAR Meritorious Service Medal, was presented to our immediate Past President Dave Walker by Kenan Torrans. Our Chapter also gave Dave a framed copy of Gilbert Stuart's "Unfinished Portrait of George Washington" in recognition of Dave's outstanding service not only to the George Washington Chapter but to VASSAR, NSSAR and to the United States.

One of Dave's most recent contributions is the publication of his book *Comeback America*. See [www.comebackamericathebook.com](http://www.comebackamericathebook.com) for information on the book and Dave's related activities. All royalties resulting from this publication will go the Peter G. Peterson Foundation.



Past Vice President Vern McHargue presents Portrait to Dave Walker

The major item of business was the presentation of the SAR Gold Good Citizenship Medal to General Eric K. Shinseki. This National SAR award recognizes the General's long and dedicated service to the United States. The presentation was made by Dave Walker, NSSAR Genealogist General Joe Dooley, and VASSAR President Bill Simpson, who were involved in processing the nomination of General Shinseki for the award and promoting its ultimate approval by NSSAR.

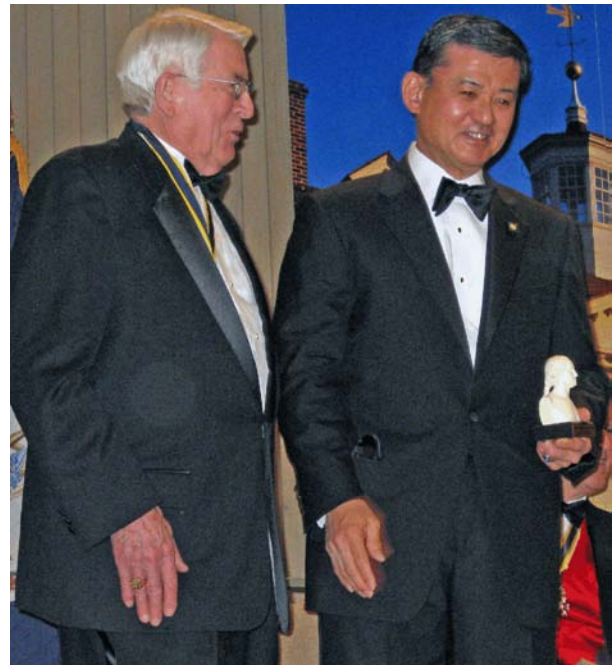
General Shinseki responded with an inspiring speech. The General reviewed the experiences of his 38 years of US Army service and described how those experiences had nurtured and strengthened his love of our country and the freedoms its citizens enjoy.

He concluded with a discussion of his present responsibilities as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the important goals he has established for the organization. He spoke of his special concern for



General Shinseki receives the SAR Gold Good Citizenship Medal

L to R: Dave Walker, General Shinseki, NSSAR Genealogist General Dooley, VASSAR Bill Simpson



Chapter President Carr presents the traditional bust of George Washington to General Shinseki

homeless veterans and his goal of ensuring that no veteran should be without a home. Veterans health care, job opportunities, education and claims processing are other areas that will receive special attention.



Editor's note: See the latest issue of VASSAR's *Virginia Bulletin* (2009-2010, Vol XXXIII, No. 4) for more information about Dave Walker's book and other recent activities of our chapter. The *Virginia Bulletin* is available only on the VASSAR web page, but can be accessed directly from our own web page, [www.gwsar.org](http://www.gwsar.org). Click on "LINKS" and you will find the *Bulletin* in the drop-down window.

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### President's Column

At the beginning of the first millennium of the year 2010, the sixty-seventh year of the existence of the George Washington Chapter, Virginia Society and the ninth day of your new president's term in office, over one-hundred compatriots and guests joined together on the hallowed grounds of the founding father of this great nation, General George Washington, to celebrate the accomplishments of one of our modern day patriots, the Honorable Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Retired General, US Army and former Chief of Staff, United States Army. Through the efforts of Dave Walker and Joe Dooley, Genealogist General NSSAR, the chapter was privileged to award the Gold Good Citizenship Medal to General Shinseki. Congratulations to Dave Walker, Paul Briggs, Mike Elston, Vern McHargue, and Don Kraft for the spectacular event. Dave, you could not have gone out on a higher note. Those of you that were unable to be there were missed and hopefully you can attend a similar event for which planning has begun for 2011.

In furtherance of one of the key goals set out for the chapter by Dave Walker last year and one which I will continue to emphasize during this year, I will work to increase participation of our members in chapter, VASSAR and NSSAR events. In order to keep to a minimum the functions we are encouraging you to attend, the February chapter meeting will be held in conjunction with the Virginia Society's 120<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Richmond. Last year we had the largest group at the general membership meeting. I encourage you to attend this year's general membership meeting which will be on Saturday, February 13, at 8:30 AM. See the following article for details.

On Monday, February 15, following the VASSAR meeting in Richmond, our chapter along with members of other chapters, will be participating

in a wreath-laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Revolutionary War Soldier and the George Washington Birthday Parade in Alexandria. It is a fun day so please come join us. Details for those events are also contained in this newsletter.

On February 18 – 20, the 229<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration of the Crossing of the Dan (River) in South Boston, Virginia, during the Revolution will be held in South Boston. This event is co-sponsored by the Berryman Green Chapter, DAR; Dan River Chapter, SAR; Halifax County Historical Society; and Halifax Middle School. I plan to attend this event and will be laying a wreath on behalf of our chapter on Saturday, February 20 at 10:00 AM. Please come join us there.

One of the goals set out for the chapter in my first column in the January newsletter was to complete a review of the chapter's By-Laws by the end of April and subsequently to publish a new chapter handbook and roster. I have asked Jack Shawn, a 2005 member, to chair a By-Laws Review and Update Committee. Jack is looking for several compatriots to work with him on the committee. If you would like to participate in this work, please contact Jack Shawn at 703-780-4752 or [jwshawn@verizon.net](mailto:jwshawn@verizon.net). I will also be asking several of you to work with Jack.

I look forward to seeing all of you in Richmond and at the Washington Birthday activities in Alexandria on February 15.

Bob Carr

Chapter President

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### DETAILS ON IMPORTANT CHANGES TO THE FEBRUARY MEETING

This year, like last year, everything is happening on Presidents' Day Weekend. The VASSAR Annual Meeting begins on Friday evening, February 12; the VASSAR Business Meeting and Awards Ceremonies are scheduled for Saturday, February 13 — which is also the date of our Chapter's normal "second Saturday" luncheon meeting. Alexandria's Washington Birthday Parade will be held on Monday, February 15.

The conflicts on Saturday, February 14, (also Valentines Day) are the most vexing. Because we are

the largest chapter in Virginia, it is important for our Chapter to be well represented at the VASSAR business meeting.

To accommodate both the VASSAR meeting and our regular chapter meeting, your Board of Managers voted to support a Road Trip to Richmond like the one that was so successful last year. Here are the details:

1. All members are encouraged to attend at least the VASSAR General Membership Meeting. This portion of the Annual Meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m. in the Shenandoah C Room of the Holiday Inn Select in Richmond, Virginia.

2. Those who wish to attend only the Saturday sessions may join a car pool which will be organized at the Belle Haven Country Club. Please arrive at the club at 6:45 a.m. Our convoy to Richmond will depart at 7:00 a.m.

3. During the VASSAR meeting's mid-day break, George Washington Chapter members will assemble for a no-host lunch and hold the Chapter's February business meeting. Location of this Chapter meeting will be announced during the Saturday morning session.

4. George Washington Chapter members will re-join the VASSAR meeting for the Annual Awards Presentation which will begin at 1:45 p.m. in the Virginia State Capitol.

5. After the presentation of VASSAR's Annual Awards, George Washington Chapter members who traveled by car pool will return to the Belle Haven Country Club, where we expect to arrive around 5:30 p.m.

The agenda of the VASSAR Annual Meeting is attached to this newsletter and is also posted on the Society's web page which you will find at [www.sar.org/vassar](http://www.sar.org/vassar). Please consult the agenda and recognize that other modes of participation are available. Some members may wish to attend more of the meeting than just the General Membership Meeting and the Annual Awards Presentation. Hotel information is attached to this newsletter and is also available on the VASSAR website.

Here is what you need to do if you wish to participate:

1. Notify Chapter President Bob Carr by e-mail at [Capt7Cs@aol.com](mailto:Capt7Cs@aol.com) if you plan to attend the

VASSAR event and if you are willing to drive in the car pool caravan leaving Belle Haven Country Club at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 13. Also, indicate whether you plan to attend only the General Membership Meeting and Annual Awards Presentation or if you will also attend any of the other events during the VASSAR meeting.

2. Using the attached 2010 Annual Meeting Registration Form, register for the event. The Registration Form can also be downloaded from the VASSAR website. The registration fee is \$35. **Your registration must be received by VASSAR not later than Thursday, January 28, so time is of the essence.** This is particularly important if you plan to attend one or both of the dinner events. If only attending Saturday's General Membership Meeting and Annual Awards Presentation, you will be permitted to register when you arrive.

Don't miss this opportunity to bond with your George Washington Chapter compatriots while participating in an important VASSAR Annual Meeting — a once a year opportunity.

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### **Wreath Laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Revolutionary War Soldier and Alexandria's Washington Birthday Parade**

Our Chapter will again participate in a ceremonial wreath-laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Revolutionary War Soldier and march in Alexandria's Washington Birthday Parade on Monday, February 15. These are always memorable events. The wreath-laying ceremony with the Honor Guard from the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Regiment is held in the burial ground behind Alexandria's Old Presbyterian Meeting House. It is a solemn but colorful ceremony which will begin at 11:00. Compatriots who will be participants in the wreath-laying should assemble in the burial ground at 10:30 a.m.

After the wreath laying ceremony, it is an easy walk to the corner of Wilkes and St. Asaph Streets, where we will assemble for the Birthday Parade at 12:30 p.m. Thousands of citizens will line the streets and cheer as we march along the parade route. We hope that many Chapter members will participate in these two events.

Details on the parade may be found on the web at [www.washingtonbirthdayparade.net](http://www.washingtonbirthdayparade.net). Also, watch your personal e-mail for more details.

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### Registrar's Report

No new member applications have been approved since my last report. National still has two applications awaiting approval. In addition to the twelve new applications being worked, five more have been received and have been added to the queue. Nine supplemental applications have been completed with six signed and ready to be sent to State.

Mike Elston, the Chapter's new Treasurer, has volunteered to assist the Registrar in reducing the backlog. Mike has completed two supplemental applications and they look good. Thanks, Mike

We can expect a slow down in processing applications through the State Registrar in February and March. Dick Bidwell, the current VASSAR Registrar will be stepping down on February 13. His replacement, Brent D. Morgan, current Registrar for the Richmond Chapter, will be confirmed as the new Registrar at the Annual Meeting in Richmond.

Keep the applications and supplemental applications coming. If you need a new member package, please call or e-mail me and I will gladly send you one.

Bob Carr  
Registrar

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### ROTC Committee Chairman

Farewell to Butch Chaboudy our most recent chairman of the ROTC Committee. Butch is completing a new home in the mountains of Virginia and will be moving there over the next several months. He will be sorely missed as the ROTC Chairman, fellow Compatriot and a member we could always count on to show up at the meetings and our chapter's special events. Thanks, Butch, for all your hard work – we will miss you.

Welcome to Compatriot Paul D. Wagoner, who has agreed to chair our ROTC Committee. Paul was born in Rochester, Indiana, on 26 July 1934. Paul joined the Air Force in 1954 and became a fighter pilot. He retired as a Brigadier General after 30 years of service. After retirement he worked 21 years for Martin Marietta Corporation and Innovative

Solutions International, supporting the Federal Aviation Administration's Modernization Program. He joined the Chapter in October, 2008.

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### Introducing William S. Chambers

U.S. merchant seamen have served our country in every war from the Revolution to the present. During World War II, they delivered equipment and supplies in every theater of operations and across every ocean in the biggest, most difficult and dangerous conflict of its time.

Compatriot William S. "Bill" Chambers was one of those men. He may not be known to many Chapter members because health problems have prevented him from actively participating in our activities for some time. His daughter, Kathryn Chambers Torpey, recently provided information about her father's life that should be shared with other Chapter members.

Bill Chambers, a descendant of Patriot Robert Smith, was born into the "greatest generation" in 1921. A native of Philadelphia, he completed his

early education there and after high school entered the Pennsylvania State Nautical School in October, 1939. After two years training on the *Schoolship Annapolis* and US Naval vessels cruising the Atlantic coast and the West Indies, Bill obtained a Third Mate's License.



Third Mate William  
Chambers, 1943

His first voyage, serving as Junior Third Mate on the *SS Steel Maker*, was the beginning of an exciting career as an officer in the US Merchant Marine. His ship was en route from New York to Honolulu when the Captain received a radio message announcing that Japan had attacked Pearl Harbor. The voyage continued under

sealed orders received in Panama and arrived in Honolulu Harbor on December 15, 1941. The crew was not allowed to see the damage in Pearl Harbor and only heard rumors about what had happened. On December 30<sup>th</sup>, shortly before beginning the return voyage to San Francisco, the *SS Steel Maker* was shelled by a Japanese submarine in Kahului Harbor.

During the rest of WWII, Bill sailed in various convoys delivering essential supplies to our forces and our allies. He was Third Mate on the *SS Steel Worker* out-bound from New York to Murmansk on March 26, 1942, with cargo for Russia which included 250 tons of explosives. From May 25<sup>th</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup> the convoy was under continuous air attack. Eight of the ships were sunk. Three were hit but continued to port. Four enemy planes were shot down. After unloading the explosives in Murmansk and while moving to a different berth in the Kola Inlet, the *SS Steel Worker* suffered an explosion (perhaps striking a mine) and sank in 30 minutes. The crew was rescued by a British escort vessel and transferred to the *SS Alcoa Cadet* which was awaiting further orders in Murmansk. The *Alcoa Cadet* subsequently either struck a mine or was torpedoed in the Kola Inlet and sunk on June 21, 1942. Bill was rescued from a life raft by a Russian patrol craft and transferred to a Russian military barracks.

Those were indeed exciting times for a 21 year old sailor, and that was just the beginning! His next big voyage, again as Third Mate, was aboard the *SS Robin Sherwood*. On December 30, 1942, the ship sailed from New York bound for Iran with cargo that would then be transferred overland to Russia. Sailing without a convoy escort, the ship traveled a very circuitous route in order to avoid contact with the Japanese. After discharging cargo at three different ports in the Persian Gulf, the *SS Robin Sherwood* returned via the east coast of Africa, then across the South Atlantic to Rio de Janeiro and ultimately to New York arriving on July 23, 1943 — a voyage of 36,000 miles.

Many other hazardous voyages were successfully completed. These delivered equipment and supplies to England to support the D-Day invasion and later to Naples to support our forces in Italy. By the time the war was over in Europe, Bill had climbed through the ranks and was Master of the *SS Thomas J. Walsh*. His ship delivered cargo to various ports in

Italy and France and then loaded military vehicles for delivery to the Far East. While en route from Marseilles to the Philippines, the atomic bomb was dropped on Japan, effectively ending WWII. His ship reached Japan in October 1945. As its cargo was no longer needed there, the ship was ultimately directed to Norfolk where all the military supplies were unloaded.

It was 1946. The war was over. In the last five years Bill had been shot at more than once and missed, survived the sinking of two ships, circum-navigated the globe and risen to the command of a United States merchant vessel where he was responsible for the safety of the ship, her crew and cargo. He had successfully delivered essential war equipment and supplies to US forces engaged in a great battle all over the world – and he wasn't even considered a war veteran! Bill was then only 25 years old. What to do now?

Well, Bill resumed his education at MIT where he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Marine Transportation in 1950. [Note that Merchant Marine veterans did not receive GI Bill benefits.]

His continuing career in naval shipping included a series of increasing responsibilities beginning with the Cuba Mail Steamship Company and ending after completing 22 years in the US Maritime Administration. His last assignment was in Norfolk as Director of the South Atlantic Region of the US Maritime Administration. In that position, he worked to improve and enlarge the Ready Reserve Fleet where many ships were activated and manned by the merchant marine to transport equipment and supplies in support of our forces during Operation Desert Storm.

In recognition of his war-time service, Chambers was awarded the Merchant Marine Emblem, the Atlantic War Zone Bar, the Pacific War Zone Bar, the Mediterranean Middle East War Zone Bar, the Victory Medal, the Combat Bar with two stars, the Honorable Service Button, and a Presidential Testimonial Letter signed by President Truman. Fifty years after the war, Bill was awarded a commemorative medal by the Russian government in recognition of courage and personal contribution to the Allied support in the North of Russia. That medal is called *The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War*.



After many years of service to our nation, Bill Chambers retired at the end of 1992. He became a



Bill Chambers now enjoys a well deserved retirement in Florida.

member of the George Washington Chapter with certificate dated December 14, 2005. Bill now resides in a retirement home in Florida.

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In a recent communication to your newsletter editor, Mrs. Kathryn Chambers Torpey observed that the Library of Congress Veterans History Project might be of interest to Chapter members. She cited the two web sites that are listed below. Those sites contain the information on her father's WWII service which was used to prepare the above article. You will find there all the details of Compatriot Chambers' experiences during and after WWII.

It is worth noting that Mrs. Torpey is a Board Certified Genealogist.

From the decorations displayed by many Chapter members, I am confident that there are other interesting experiences that should be preserved in the Library of Congress. Wouldn't this make an interesting project for our Chapter?

Please take a moment to visit the following web sites:

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp-stories/loc.natlib.afc2001001.18182/>

<http://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/cgmm-merchantmarine.html>

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## Calendar of Coming Events

### February

- 13-15 2010 VASSAR Annual Meeting, Holiday Inn Select Hotel, Koger South Conference Center, 1021 Koger Center Boulevard, Richmond. Reservation date cut off is Thursday, January 28. **This takes the place of our regular February luncheon meeting.**
- 15 Chapter wreath-laying ceremony at Tomb of the Unknown Revolutionary Soldier and participation in Alexandria's Washington's Birthday Parade.
- 20 Crossing of the Dan, *The Pizery*, South Boston, VA 10 a.m. POC is Dan Shaw 434-575-7253

### March

- 5-7 National Spring Trustees/Leadership Meetings, Louisville, KY.
- 14 St. John's Episcopal Church in Hampton, VA. Plaque presentation and wreath-laying ceremony. Lunch - 1:00 p.m. Program begins at 2:30 p.m. For details contact melyman@-va.metrocast.net.
- 16 President James Madison's Birthday - Montpelier, VA.

The George Washington Chapter was chartered in its present form on April 2, 1954. With over 200 members, it is Virginia's largest SAR chapter. Meetings are held at 11:30 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month (June, July & August excepted) at the Belle Haven Country Club, 6023 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria, Virginia.

#### Present officers are:

President: Bob Carr 703-780-3066  
Vice President: Paul Briggs 703-768-6910  
Secretary: Don Kellerman 703-768-2442  
Treasurer: Mike Elston 703-680-0866  
Registrar: Bob Carr 703-780-3066

This monthly newsletter is edited by Don Kraft, who depends heavily on inputs from chapter officers and committee chairmen. Inputs from others are always welcome. Please send your inputs and comments to [kraftdon@att.net](mailto:kraftdon@att.net) or call 703-451-6132.

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**VIRGINIA SOCIETY**  
SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

***120<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA***

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12**

1:00 PM	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING	SUITE 802
3:00 PM	REGISTRATION	SHENANDOAH CORRIDOR
6:00 PM	DINNER BUFFET (Theme: <i>Happy Birthday Mr. President!</i> )	SHENANDOAH A & B
8:00 PM	BOARD OF MANAGERS MEETING	SHENANDOAH C
8:00 PM	LADIES PROGRAM	SHENANDOAH A
10:00 PM	PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION	SUITE 802

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13**

7:30 AM	REGISTRATION	SHENANDOAH CORRIDOR
8:30 AM	GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING	SHENANDOAH C
9:00 AM	LADIES PROGRAM	SHENANDOAH A
10:30 AM	RUMBAUGH ORATIONS CONTEST	SHENANDOAH C
11:30 AM	LUNCH (DELI BUFFET AVAILABLE IN COURT CAFÉ)	INDIVIDUAL ARRANGEMENTS
12:15 PM	BUSES ARRIVE AT HOTEL	FRONT OF HOTEL
12:30 PM	BUSES DEPART FOR CAPITOL	FRONT OF HOTEL
1:45 PM	ANNUAL AWARDS PRESENTATION (ENTERTAINMENT BY NEW DOMINION CHORALERS)	VIRGINIA STATE CAPITOL
6:00 PM	SOCIAL GATHERING/CASH BAR	SHENANDOAH A & B
7:00 PM	BANQUET	SHENANDOAH A & B
10:00 PM	NEW PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION	SUITE 802

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14**

8:30 AM	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING	BOARD ROOM
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## Sons of the American Revolution

## 2010 Annual Meeting Registration Form

February 12-13, 2010

**Holiday Inn Select Hotel**

## Koger South Conference Center

1021 Koger Center Boulevard

Richmond, Virginia 23235-4756

Phone: 1-804-379-3800      Web: [www.hiselectrva.com](http://www.hiselectrva.com)

<b>Name:</b>	_____	<b>Wife/Guest:</b>	_____
<b>Street:</b>	_____	<b>Phone Number:</b>	_____
<b>City/State/Zip:</b>	_____	<b>E-Mail Address:</b>	_____
<b>Chapter:</b>	_____		

	<u>Number</u>		<u>Total</u>
Registration (SAR Compatriots Only):	<u>0</u>	@ \$35 each	\$ <u>0.00</u>
Friday Night Buffet:	<u>0</u>	@ \$30 each	\$ <u>0.00</u>
Saturday Night Banquet:	<u>0</u>	@ \$35 each	\$ <u>0.00</u>
Total Amount Remitted:			\$ <u>0.00</u>

		<u>Compatriot</u>	<u>Guest</u>
<b>Do you or your guest need a name tag? (Yes/No):</b>		_____	_____
	} <b>New York Strip</b>	_____	_____
<b>Saturday Night Meal Choice (choose one)</b>	}		
	} <b>Salmon</b>	_____	_____

Please make your check payable to "VASSAR"

Mail this form and your check to:

*Assistant Treasurer, VASSAR*

*71 Hope Springs Lane*

*Stafford, Virginia 22554-5238*

**Hotel arrangements must be made directly with the Holiday Inn Select Hotel**

***Cutoff Date for Registrations and Hotel Reservations is Thursday, January 28, 2010***

For questions please contact:

Taylor Cowardin, President, Richmond Chapter (dowl7000@aol.com or 804-305-8007)

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Wayne Rouse, Asst. Treasurer, VASSAR (wrouse4sar@aol.com or 540-659-5258)

**The Holiday Inn Select Hotel  
Koger South Conference Center**

1021 Koger Center Boulevard  
Richmond, Virginia 23235-4756  
804-379-3800  
www.hiselectrva.com

**Site of the Virginia Society SAR 2010 Annual Meeting**

*Please make your hotel reservations by calling  
the Holiday Inn Select Hotel – Koger Center  
directly at*

1-804-379-3800 or [resv@holidayinnkoger.com](mailto:resv@holidayinnkoger.com)

Tell the reservation desk that a block of rooms is being held under  
“Sons of the American Revolution”  
or “Virginia Society Sons of the American Revolution”

The rate for SAR compatriots is \$95 per night, plus local room tax of 13%. A \$2.00 per day charge for telecommunication is charged for all guest accounts.

*Reservations must be received by the Holiday Inn Select Hotel – Koger South  
Conference Center*

*Reservation Date Cut Off --- **THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2010.***