

Guide to the Office of Vice President General

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The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to those entering or holding the office of Vice President General (VPG) of the National Society Sons of the American Revolution. This document is based on “*Some Useful Notes for the Council of Vice Presidents General*,” written by Compatriots Ralph Nelson and Larry Guzy (2002), updated by Tom Jacks (2010), with current updates based on changes to bylaws, rulings of the President General and Executive Committee, and generally accepted customs and practices.

Nomenclature

Vice President General is abbreviated as VPG. The plural of Vice President General is Vice Presidents General and is often abbreviated as VPGs. A past Vice President General is appropriately designated as a Former Vice President General (FVPG).

Definition

The office of Vice President General (VPG) of the National Society Sons of the American Revolution is defined, along with roles and responsibilities, in the NSSAR Constitution and Bylaws (see Appendix I). Further information on the details of the duties of the Vice President General can be found in Volume II of the *NSSAR Handbook* (see Appendix I).

The most salient points of the office are:

- The Vice President General is a General Officer, just below the President General (Article IV, NSSAR Constitution)
- The Vice President General shall visit each of the State Societies in his District at least once annually. (Bylaw 5, NSSAR Bylaws)
- The Vice President General shall report on the activities of his District at the Spring and Fall meetings of the National Trustees as well as to the delegates and delegates at-large at the Annual Congress of the National Society. (Bylaw 5, NSSAR Bylaws)

Note that the Bylaws do not require a VPG to be a member of a State Society in the District which he serves.

Election and Duties

Vice Presidents General are elected like any other General Officer specified in the Article IV, Section 1 of the NSSAR Constitution. Unlike other General Officers, however, Vice Presidents General are nominated by their respective districts (except the VPG of the International District, who is appointed by the PG). Details of the nomination process of Vice President General vary from district to district and are based on local rules, customs and practices. Typically, a candidate for VPG is proposed by one state in a rotation pattern in the district and may or may not be formally nominated at the district meeting.

A district's nomination is communicated to the NSSAR Nominating Committee prior to the Annual Congress, usually by the incumbent VPG. Almost without exception, a district's nominee is elected without opposition by voice vote on the final day of the Congress, though technically additional nominations could be made from the floor.

Term of Office

Vice Presidents General are inducted and take office at the Wednesday evening banquet at the conclusion of the National Congress and serve until their successor is sworn in the following year. This means a VPG is incumbent at the Annual Congress the year *after* the one at which he is elected.

If a new VPG (not a VPG in the previous year) was not present during the installation ceremony Wednesday evening, he should contact another current General Officer and ask him to conduct the installation. If no General Officer is available, a senior State Society officer may administer the oath. The installation should take place at an SAR gathering (for example at a state or chapter meeting) and the installing officer should utilize the Oath of Office specified in NSSAR Bylaw 3:

I do solemnly swear that I will loyally support the Constitution and Bylaws of the Sons of the American Revolution; that I shall faithfully discharge my responsibilities and fiduciary duties to the best of my ability; that I will promote the principles of liberty and justice, and that I shall bear true allegiance to the Constitution and Laws of the United States, and thereby so honor the sacrifices of our patriot ancestors of the American Revolution through my fidelity to their noble cause, SO HELP ME GOD.

Each VPG should see that each and every new National Trustee or Alternate National Trustee from his district who was not installed at the National Congress be installed promptly. The Congress registration list will show who was not at the Congress.

NOTE: If the officer being sworn in is not a U.S. citizen, the installing officer should substitute for the phrase "the Constitution of the United States of America" a phrase appropriate to his nationality.

Voting

As a General Officer, the Vice President General is a voting member of the Board of Trustees and may vote as a member of that body at any meeting held during his term. There are customarily four meetings of the Board of Trustees: Fall, Spring, and two short meetings associated with the Annual Congress. Of the meetings of the Board of Trustees associated with the Annual Congress, one is held (for outgoing National Trustees) the day before the Congress opens and one is held (for incoming National Trustees) in the hour immediately after the Annual Congress is closed. The incoming National Trustees are installed at the start of the second meeting, so they can vote at that meeting. Incoming VPGs who were elected during the Congress should take the oath with the Trustees so they may vote during the second Trustees Meeting, even though they won't be sworn into the office of Vice President General until the evening Banquet.

At the Annual Congress, all General Officers (including Vice Presidents General) are automatically voting delegates and receive their credentials directly from National Headquarters. General Officers do not count against their home society's delegate allotment. Therefore, at the Congress *following* one's installation, the VPG will serve as a delegate credentialed through NSSAR.

Appropriate Decorations

Per Volume IV of the *NSSAR Handbook*, an incumbent or former VPG is entitled to wear the VPG pin on his neck ribbon or lapel. Additionally, incumbent or former General Officers are entitled to wear the General Officer's sash with formal attire (see Appendix I).

A member nominated to the office of VPG should obtain the sash and pin prior to the Congress at which he expects to be elected. (NSSAR Merchandise typically sells these items at the Congress as well.) However, the pin and sash should not be worn until the Wednesday evening banquet, unless a nominee has previously earned the right to wear them.

Unless one is a former President General, the VPG pin will be the highest-ranking pin on the neck ribbon and should be worn at the "V" as described in the *NSSAR Handbook*.

The sash is to be worn only with formal attire (tuxedo, dinner jacket, or tails). As purchased from NSSAR Merchandise, the sash will be a very long piece of wide ribbon which might be trimmed to fit, depending on the stature of the person. The sash should be worn from the right shoulder to the left hip, over the vest or cummerbund, but under the jacket. Safety pins should be used to hold the sash in place, taking care that the end does not show under the coat, particularly with tails, which have a short jacket. Many men cut the ribbon from merchandise in half and only wear the ribbon on the front.

Formal Attire, Processions, Seating

The *NSSAR Handbook* should be consulted for the proper dress codes for various functions. Of particular interest to incoming VPGs (who are typically first-time General Officers) is the attire for the installation which occurs on the Wednesday Banquet at the Annual Congress. This banquet starts with a procession of the General Officers-elect, and they are installed (sworn in) near the end of the event. The General Officers-elect are asked to wear white tie and (black) tails with white gloves (black tuxedo is acceptable, but strongly discouraged). Again, the incoming VPGs should wear their VPG pins and General Officer's sashes.

At this banquet there are several tiers of head tables, and the new VPGs are seated in the lowest tier. As the name of each new General Officer is called, he will process down the aisle, by himself or with his lady, turn to face the audience (turn inward past each other) and bow to the audience, then walk to his reserved seat(s).

For other National Society banquets (i.e. at Trustees meetings and Tuesday night Congress banquet), the General Officers will be assigned a seat.

Protocol

As always, the *NSSAR Handbook* should be consulted for all issues of Society protocol. The Vice President General is the highest ranking General Officer (except the President General) within his District.

Council of Vice Presidents General

The Council of Vice Presidents General is composed of all incumbent Vice Presidents General. It is led by a Chairman and Vice Chairman appointed by the President General. The function of the Council is:

- To provide a platform from which to advise the President General and Executive Committee
- To provide a structured means of transmitting information, data and concerns between the National Society and the leadership of the State Societies
- To provide a forum from which practices, programs and issues can be shared between leadership from different Districts
- To provide orientation, including review of responsibilities, duties, and protocol to incoming Vice Presidents General prior to their installation

History of the Council

The Council of Vice Presidents General was formed in 1999 by PG Howard Horne as an advisory and coordination committee. It is currently defined in **Bylaw No. 21 – Special Advisory and Program Committees** (see Appendix I).

District Awards

The Vice Presidents General are authorized to present several medals (see Appendix I). The Meritorious Service Medal may be awarded at the District Level to SAR members who have rendered long, faithful, and meritorious service to their district. The Silver Roger Sherman Medal may be awarded to a compatriot in recognition of, and in appreciation of, outstanding services rendered to a District. The medal is presented to a compatriot for significant service which lacks the requirements for the Meritorious Service Medal.

The VPGs may also present medals to ladies, including Daughters of Liberty, Martha Washington, Lydia Darragh, and Molly Pitcher medals (see Appendix I). The Molly Pitcher medal requires approval by state and national Color Guard Commanders. The SAR Handbook should be consulted to follow all requirements for medals.

APPENDIX I: SAR Documents Governing the Office of Vice President General

CONSTITUTION OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Article IV - Officers and Trustees

Section 1. The General Officers of this Society shall be a President General, a Vice-President General for each of the regularly established districts within the United States as specified in the Bylaws and one or more Vice-Presidents General for outside areas - provided that the Board of Trustees shall so provide, Secretary General, Treasurer General, Chancellor General, Genealogist General, Registrar General, Historian General, Librarian General, Surgeon General, and Chaplain General, who shall be elected by ballot by a majority vote of the delegates present and voting at the Annual Congress of the Society and shall hold office for one year or until their successors are elected and qualified. Such General Officers shall serve without compensation in such capacities.

All nominations of General Officers, including those made by the Nominating Committee, shall be made from the floor, at a regular meeting of the Annual Congress.

BYLAWS OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Bylaw No. 5 – Vice-Presidents General

Section 1. There shall be one (1) Vice-President General elected from each of the following Districts of the National Society:

- (a) New England District composed of the Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont State Societies;
- (b) North Atlantic District composed of the New York (Empire State) Society and New Jersey State Societies;
- (c) Mid-Atlantic District composed of the Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia State Societies;
- (d) South Atlantic District composed of the Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina State Societies;
- (e) Southern District composed of the Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee State Societies;
- (f) Central District composed of the Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio and West Virginia State Societies;
- (g) Great Lakes District composed of the Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin State Societies;
- (h) North Central District composed of the Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska State Societies;
- (i) South Central District composed of the Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and

- Texas State Societies;
- (j) Rocky Mountain District composed of the Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico State Societies;
 - (k) Inter-Mountain District composed of the Idaho, Montana, Utah and Wyoming State Societies;
 - (l) Western District composed of the California, Hawaii and Nevada State Societies;
 - (m) Pacific District composed of the Alaska, Oregon and Washington State Societies;
 - (n) European District composed of the Germany, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the remainder of the continent of Europe Societies except France.

Section 2. The President General shall appoint a Vice- President General for an International District composed of all of the remaining territory outside of the above-named Societies.

Section 3. It shall be the responsibility of each Vice-President General to promote the interest and activities that further the objectives of the National Society among the State Societies in his District.

In addition, the Vice-President General shall visit each of the State Societies in his District at least once annually. He shall also endeavor to visit the various Chapters in his District during his term of office. He shall encourage the formation of new chapters and encourage the enrollment of new members as well as perform such additional duties within his District as may be assigned to him by the President General, the Executive Committee or the Board of Trustees.

The Vice-President General shall report on the activities of his District at the Spring and Fall meetings of the National Trustees as well as to the delegates and delegates at-large at the Annual Congress of the National Society. A copy of this report shall be available to any member of the Society upon written request to the Executive Director. A copy of the report shall also be placed in the archives of the National Society for future reference.

Bylaw No. 21 – Special Advisory and Program Committees

Section 1. The following Special Advisory Committees are authorized to provide advice to the President General and General Officers: Council of Presidents General, Council of Vice Presidents General, Council of State Presidents, Facilities and Legal Advisory...

- (b) Council of Vice Presidents General. The Council of Vice Presidents General provides
 - (i) a platform from which to advise the President General and Executive Committee,
 - (ii) a structured means of transmitting information, data and concerns between the National Society and the leadership of the State Societies, (iii) a forum from which practices, programs and issues can be shared between leadership from different Districts, and (iv) orientation, including review of responsibilities, duties and protocol, to incoming Vice Presidents General prior to their installation.

- (1) *Membership.* The Council shall consist of all incumbent Vice Presidents General.

(2) *Chairman.* The President General shall appoint a chairman from the members of the council, who shall serve for one (1) year. The President General may appoint one or more members of the committee to serve as a vice-chairman.

SAR HANDBOOK, Volume II (March 5, 2017 Edition): VICE PRESIDENT GENERAL

Vice Presidents General are established as General Officers of this Society. They are nominated by the state societies within a district and elected by a majority vote of delegates at the Annual Congress of the National Society, where they are installed into office.

State Society Presidents should recognize Vice Presidents General (VPG) within his district and provide every courtesy as a national officer. Protocol establishes the VPG as second in rank to the President General of the National Society in his respective district. The principal duties and responsibilities of the VPG are presented here as a guide to assist them in their performance.

No compatriot should accept the office unless he is willing to assume all the inherent responsibilities and duties. The office requires considerable time, effort, traveling and expense. The interest of the Society must take precedent over the personal aspirations of any member. The prime factor in selection of a nominee should be his SAR experience, knowledge, ability and previous performance. There is no budgeted expense allowance for the VPG.

Vice Presidents General should confine their duties to their district, except when requested by the President General, and concentrate on state and district concerns. Exceptions are:

- The VPG is concurrently a National Society chairman of a committee and required to coordinate a national program with all of the states.
- The VPG is under special instructions from the President General or Executive Committee.

A Vice President General:

1. Assists the President General in the affairs of the Society, performing any assigned or delegated task the President General may request.
2. Escorts the President General on official visits within the district of the Vice President General, except when the President General and VPG may make other arrangements.
3. Is knowledgeable of the Constitution and Bylaws of the National Society, the official handbook, national programs, administrative requirements and inner workings of the National Society and his District.
4. Attends all scheduled meetings of the National Society to include Fall and Spring Leadership Meetings and the National Congress.
5. Serves as an ex-officio member of the NSSAR Membership Committee.
6. Prepares and submits timely written reports as required by the Executive Director, normally two to three weeks prior to a Leadership Meeting and one month prior to a

National Congress, or whenever requested by National staff. This facilitates publication and binding in time for distribution to members in attendance to Leadership Meetings and National Congresses. Copies of reports by the state society presidents to the Vice President General should be included in the report to the National Society.

7. Schedules and conducts a meeting of all state societies within the district at least once annually.
8. Visits each of the state societies within the district at least once annually during the term of office and attends the annual meeting of each state society except in the case of scheduling conflicts.
9. Assists the state societies in any areas of weakness or in response to any request for assistance, including disputes within the District, but always functioning within the knowledge and approval of any pertinent state society president.
10. Organizes and conducts district or state workshops. Indoctrinates newly elected state officers to ensure that they fully understand National Society procedures and programs. Suggested topics for discussion may include, but are not limited to, promotion of attendance at the NSSAR Congress and Leadership Meetings, protocol and parliamentary procedures, purposes and functions of national committees and programs, establishing speaker bureaus for schools, public functions and holidays, and reporting requirements of the state societies to the Vice President General and the National Society.
11. When informed of any visit by the President General within his district, assists the state society president with hosting and other arrangements for said visit and insures that protocol procedures and preparations are in place, but always in coordination with the state society.
12. Upon election to office, coordinates calendars of events with each state society president within the district, arranging an information stream through e-mail, web sites, or other means of correspondence including telephone, USPS, or facsimile.
13. Obtains copies of constitutions and bylaws plus rosters of officers for each state society in the district.
14. Is prepared to promote the programs and activities of the National Society. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - American History Teacher Award
 - Elementary Poster Contest
 - Sergeant Moses Adams Middle School Brochure Contest
 - Joseph S. Rumbaugh Historical Patriotic Oration Contest
 - George and Stella Knight Essay Contest
 - Eagle Scout Contest
 - JROTC Recognition Program
 - C.A.R. Recognition Program
 - Current Membership Activities Program
 - Changes to the Constitution and Bylaws
 - Information from Leadership Meetings and National Congresses

- Committee programs that affect state societies and chapters
 - Instructions to state societies and chapters on any SAR matter that are not fully understood.
15. Each VPG should inform state societies of a planned visit and coordinate with the state president.
16. Is prepared to participate in certain SAR activities and ceremonies to include, but not limited to:
- Marking graves of Revolutionary War Patriots and deceased SAR members
 - Submitting articles and photos for publication in *THE SAR MAGAZINE*
 - Speaking at meetings of the state societies and chapters, the C.A.R., DAR, and other functions that promote the SAR.

**SAR HANDBOOK, Volume IV (March 5, 2017 Edition):
INSIGNIA AND AWARDS PERTAINING TO VICE PRESIDENTS GENERAL**

BROAD SASH

The Broad Sash is a wide silk ribbon of the society's colors worn with full dress or formal attire (including the tuxedo or dinner jacket), extending from the right shoulder to the left hip. If wearing a vest, the sash is worn *over* the vest. The sash should not extend below the wearer's waist. The broad sash is not worn with business suits. The following individuals are authorized to wear the indicated sashes: 1) *The President General and former Presidents General*: three and one-half inches wide. 2) *Current and former General Officers and Vice Presidents General*: two and one-half inches wide.

VICE PRESIDENT GENERAL PIN

The Vice President General pin, authorized in 1990, consists of a profiled silhouette of John Adams, the first Vice President of the United States, surrounded by a gold wreath over a scroll containing the words, "Vice President General" in gold on a black background. An incumbent Vice President General or a former Vice President General is authorized to wear this pin. A newly elected Vice President General may wear this pin beginning with the Wednesday night Installation Banquet at the Annual Congress.

SAR HANDBOOK, Volume V (March 5, 2017 Edition): MEDALS AWARDED BY A DISTRICT TO COMPATRIOTS FOR SERVICE TO THE SAR

DISTRICT MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

The District Meritorious Service Medal may be awarded to SAR members who have rendered long, faithful and meritorious service to their district. The meritorious service rendered should be stated in the citation.

SILVER ROGER SHERMAN MEDAL

The Silver Roger Sherman Medal may be awarded to a compatriot in recognition of, and in appreciation of, outstanding services rendered to a District. The medal is presented to a compatriot for significant service which lacks the requirements for the Meritorious Service Medal. The recipient must have served as an active officer for a minimum of two years, as an active committee chairman for three years, or as an active member of a committee for four years.

SAR HANDBOOK, Volume V (March 5, 2017 Edition): MEDALS AWARDED BY A DISTRICT TO A LADY FOR SERVICE TO THE SAR

DAUGHTERS OF LIBERTY MEDAL

The Daughters of Liberty Medal may be presented to a lady recommended by any officer of a chapter, state or National Society, SAR in appreciation for her unselfish devotion, tireless efforts and assistance to the SAR, and who has dedicated her time, energy, ability and/or finances to the organization in support and furtherance of the stated objectives of the SAR. This is the highest lady's medal and consideration in awarding this medal should be given only after the SAR Medal of Appreciation or the Martha Washington Medal has been presented. District Vice President General has approval and presenting authority.

MARTHA WASHINGTON MEDAL

The Martha Washington Medal may be presented to a woman over 18 years of age in recognition of outstanding service to SAR. A DAR may receive the Martha Washington Medal and the SAR Medal of Appreciation (on separate occasions) if her service warrants it. District Vice President General has approval and presenting authority.

LYDIA DARRAGH MEDAL

The Lydia Darragh Medal may be awarded by the Vice President General to the lady who has provided significant service to him during his term. The medal will recognize the assistance of the ladies who work behind the scenes supporting SAR programs, but whose service does not meet the requirements for the Martha Washington Medal. It may only be presented once per year at the discretion of the Vice President General.

MOLLY PITCHER MEDAL

The Molly Pitcher Medal may be awarded to women who have supported the SAR Color Guard at the State, District and National Levels. Before a woman may be awarded the Molly Pitcher Medal, her husband or male companion must have been awarded the SAR Silver Color Guard Medal. To earn the Molly Pitcher Medal, a woman must accrue at least 300 points in qualifying Color Guard events, or must participate in at least three (3) State, District, or National events in each of three (3) years. Must be approved by both the District Color Guard Commander and the National Color Guard Commander.