

National Capital Commandery

A Commemorative Wreath-laying in Bermuda

On 25 February 2023, Naval Order companions Dr. Judy Pearson and Captain John Rodgaard (USN Ret) represented the Naval Order of the US at the annual Midshipman Dale Commemoration in St. George's Parish, Bermuda. The commemoration was an occasion to honor Richard Sutherland Dale, who died in Bermuda, on 22 February 1815 at the age of 21, as a US prisoner of war, following the sea battle between the USS *President* and HMS *Endymion*, at the end of the War of 1812. Dale was the last US Navy commissioned officer to die in that war. Like so many brave men in uniform, he perished on a foreign shore, far from home.

John Rodgaard and Judy Pearson were in the official party, as they have been for over eight years. For more information about the history of this event, and the participation of the US Navy and the Naval Order, see the article on the Naval Order website:

<http://www.navalorder.org/articles/2019/1/28/preserving-the-memory-of-midshipman-richard-sutherland-dale>

This year's ceremony began at 5:00 pm, on King's Square, in the center of this seaside village, where officials, citizens, and tourists gathered. Mr. David Frith, the master of ceremonies, called everyone to order and announced the sequence of the day's activities. Training Ship Admiral Somers Sea Cadets assembled for inspection, carrying the colors – a Bermuda flag and a US Flag with 15 stars. The island's Deputy Governor of Bermuda, Mr. Tom Oppenheim inspected the young men and women who stood at attention.

Also in the official party were the Worshipful Mr. George Dowling, Mayor of St. George's; US Consul General, Karen Grissette; the Venerable Marie Loewen and the Reverend Canon John Mark Stow of St. Peter's Church. Representing the US Daughters of the War of 1812, Ms Grissette, laid a wreath under a plaque on the square honoring 15 US Navy prisoners of war who died on Bermuda in the War of 1812.

Following announcements, the Sea Cadets, onlookers, and the official party, led by a piper and drummer, formed a procession to walk to up the hill to the nearby graveyard behind St. Peter's Church, founded in the early 17th century. There, everyone gathered in front of Dale's grave, which is covered by a white marble gravestone. Dale's original marble gravestone was placed by his father, Commodore Richard Dale, a naval hero of the American War for Independence. The Naval Order replaced the aging gravestone in 2016.

The graveside ceremony consisted of Bible readings, prayers, and the singing of the National Anthems of the UK and the US. Deputy Governor Oppenheim laid a wreath on the gravestone, representing Mrs. Louise Hall Reider for the Dale family and the US Navy, in honor of her deceased father, Captain Scarritt Adams, USN. Consul General Grissett laid a wreath on the behalf of the American People. Captain John Rodgaard laid a wreath for The 1805 Club. Dr. Judy Pearson laid a wreath for the Naval Order of the US. Then everyone met in the fellowship hall for conversation and refreshments. The

lovely ceremony symbolizes the friendship and shared history of the US, Great Britain, and Bermuda.

Submitted by Dr. Judy Pearson

Photos and Captions

Photo 1: T.S. Admiral Somers Sea Cadets ready for inspection.

Photo 2: Deputy Governor Tom Oppenheim inspects the Sea Cadets

Photo 3: US Consular General Grissette receives the wreath for the US Daughters of the War of 1812

Photo 4: Judy Pearson and John Rodgaard, graveside, with wreaths

Photo 5: John Rodgaard with Deputy Governor Oppenheim and Mayor Dowling

Photo 6: Official Party and Sea Cadets on the steps of St. Peter's Church