

National Capital Commandery

Three Naval Order Members Participate in Bermuda Commemoration

On Saturday, 22 February, Captain John Rodgaard, Commander Nathan Bein, and Dr. Judy Pearson of the National Capital Commandery, participated in the annual Midshipman Richard Sutherland Dale, USN, Commemoration ceremony in St. George, Bermuda. The event was hosted by the Friends of St. Peter's Church. Other attending dignitaries were His Excellency Andrew Murdoch, Governor of Bermuda, Her Worship the Mayor of St George Quinell Francis, and Acting US Consul Vanya Vukota.

Background

Midshipman Dale was 20 years-old and serving on the US Frigate *President* during the War of 1812 when she encountered a squadron of British ships on January 15, 1815. During the 15-hour engagement the young sailor was severely wounded, and his right leg was amputated; HMS *Endymion* captured and brought *President* to St. George's Harbor.

On arrival in St. George, Midshipman Dale was housed and cared for in Stennett's Hotel, today known as Stiles House and owned by Butterfield Bank. It was here he died. His father, Commadore Richard Dale, USN, and family, were grateful for the care Midshipman Dale received in St. George and erected a large marble stone over his grave in St. Peter's Church graveyard. Part of the inscription reads "This stone Records the tribute Of his Parents gratitude To those inhabitants of *St George's* Whose generous and tender sympathy Prompted the kindest attentions To their son while living, And honoured him, While dead." In 2015, under the leadership of Captain Rodgaard, the Naval Order, The 1805 Club, and the Friends of St. Peter's Church conducted a successful fund-raising project to replace the aging marble headstone with a replica.

Tragically, the naval battle which ended Midshipman Dale's life took place after the Treaty of Ghent was signed, which ended the War of 1812, and Midshipman Dale died one week after the treaty was ratified and signed by the U.S. Senate and President James Madison.

Service

The annual memorialization of Midshipman Dale was initiated in 1932 by Captain Scarritt Adams USN, whose family moved to Bermuda when he was 10 years old. Captain Scarritt requested and funded the placing of a wreath on Dale's gravestone every year on Memorial Day. After WWII members of the U.S. armed forces took part in the commemorative ceremony until the departure of the U.S. Navy from Bermuda in 1995. The event resumed in 2006 thanks to the efforts of Captain Adam's daughter Louise Hall Reider and the Friends of St. Peter's Church charity.

This year's ceremony began on King's Square with the inspection of TS Admiral Somers Sea Cadet Corps by His Excellency Andrew Murdoch, Governor of Bermuda, followed by a welcome from Friends of St. Peter's Church Chairman Gillian Outerbridge. Acting US Consul Vanya Vukota laid a wreath on behalf of The Daughters of 1812 at a plaque erected by the organization in 2018 to mark the 15 black and white U.S. prisoners of war, including Midshipman Dale, who died and were buried in Bermuda during the War of 1812. Only Dale's grave is identifiable today.

Pipe Major Emeritus David Frith and Drummer Peter Profit of the Bermuda Islands Pipe Band, and the Sea Cadet Corps, led a procession from King's Square to St. Peter's Church graveyard. The officiants at the graveside service were St. Peter's Church Priest in Charge Rev'd Marie Loewen and Rev'd Canon John Stow. Governor Andrew Murdoch laid a wreath on Midshipman Dale's grave by on behalf of Louise Hall Reider, whose father, Captain Scarritt Adams USN, first commemorated Midshipman Dale in 1932; Captain John Rodgaard, USN (Rtd) laid a wreath on behalf of the 1805 Club, as he also the current chairman of that organization. Dr. Judy Pearson laid a wreath on behalf of the Naval Order of the United States. A minute's silence was observed, and the service concluded with the British national anthem followed by the U.S. national anthem.

Photos and Captions

- Photo 1 His Excellency Andrew Murdoch Governor of Bermuda inspects the *TS Admiral Somers* Sea Cadet Corps.
- Photo 2 The procession from King's Square to St. Peter's Church led by Pipe Major Emeritus David Frith and drummer Peter Profit
- Photo 3 Captain John Rodgaard USN lays a wreath on behalf of the 1805 Club.
- Photo 4 Dr. Judy Pearson lays a wreath on behalf of the Naval Order of the U.S.
- Photo 5 Naval Order members Captain John Rodgaard, Dr. Judy Pearson, and Commander Nathan Bein, graveside.
- Photo 6 Dignitaries, officiants and Sea Cadet Corps gather on the steps of St. Peter's Church following the ceremony.