

National Organizations Unite to Celebrate Thomas Paine's Revolutionary War Service at Annual Birthdate Event

*The Times That Tried Men's Souls:
Thomas Paine's Service During The
Revolutionary War*

MADISON, WI, UNITED STATES, January 7, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- January 29, 2026 — Online Event | 4:00 PM PST / 7:00 PM EST

Registration Required:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/ga-dvEPuR0iLzT5LA45BOw>

The Thomas Paine Memorial Association (TPMA) and a coalition of leading secular, historical, and humanist organizations invite the public to the annual celebration of the birth of one of America's most influential Founders — Thomas Paine. This year's online commemorative program, "The Times That Tried Men's Souls: Thomas Paine's Service During The Revolutionary War," will take place on Thursday, January 29, 2026.

TPMA, which educates about Paine's legacy, has been authorized by Congress to erect a memorial to Paine in Washington, D.C. The group has since received preliminary approval to pursue a memorial in Area 1 (close to the United States Capitol Building). The approval bill is awaiting congressional action.

Thomas Paine, author of Common Sense and The American Crisis, played an indispensable role in igniting the call for independence and sustaining morale through the darkest moments of the Revolution. His writing, service, and vision for a democratic society continue to inspire generations. Paine's contributions recently have been highlighted in Ken Burns' documentary



This memorial depicts Paine writing "The American Crisis" papers during the Revolutionary War. It was sculpted by Georg Lober. The memorial was dedicated on July 4, 1950 in Morristown, New Jersey.

"The American Revolution."

Event Highlights

Distinguished Opening Remarks

The program will commence with words from Members of Congress Jamie Raskin and Victoria Spartz, with a special appearance from Benjamin Franklin (portrayed by actor Brian Patrick Mulligan).

Keynote Presentation

Acclaimed historian and author Jack Kelly — whose book *Tom Paine's War* explores Paine's firsthand experiences during the Revolution — will deliver a keynote address examining Paine's military service and enduring relevance. Kelly will cover:

- Paine's background and rise to prominence
- His *Common Sense* pamphlet and his influence on the Declaration of Independence
- His service with the Pennsylvania militia and involvement with the Continental Army
- The fall of Fort Washington and Fort Lee
- The march across New Jersey
- The writing of *The American Crisis* and its impact on the battles of Trenton and Princeton
- Paine's legacy in modern times

Readings from Paine's Writings

Award-winning actor Ian Ruskin, known for his one-man show portraying Paine, will perform a dramatic reading from *The American Crisis* synchronized with a photo slide show of various images of the Paine memorial sculpted by Georg Lober, dedicated in 1950 in Morristown, New Jersey. The statue portrays Paine in the midst of writing *The American Crisis* during the Revolutionary War — capturing both his intellectual and patriotic courage.

A Veteran's Perspective

Gene Jones of Florida Veterans for Common Sense will speak about Paine's heroism, the challenges he faced after the war, and why Paine remains a powerful symbol of principled military service today.

Showcase: The Thomas Paine Cottage

A video created by Suzanne Tanswell and Gary Bush, trustees of the Huguenot New Rochelle Historical Association which owns the Thomas Paine Cottage in New Rochelle, New York, will highlight one of the most important historical sites connected to Paine's life.

Additional Program Features

- Musical selection from the celebrated play 'The Crossing'
- Live Q&A with Jack Kelly, Gary Berton, Christopher Cameron, Ian Ruskin, Margaret Downey, Gene Jones, Frances Chiu, Joy Masoff, Suzanne Tanswell, and Gary Bush

- Cosponsor messages from national organizations
- Credits slideshow
- A post-event Social Hour and Toasts, including a special opening toast by renowned sculptor Zenos Frudakis, who will show his progress in creating a statue of Thomas Paine that will be placed in a prestigious pre-approved location in Washington, D.C.

Event Hosts and Sponsors

The event will be co-hosted by TPMA President Margaret Downey and TPMA Board Member Christopher Cameron. Sponsors include:

- Thomas Paine Memorial Association
- Black Nonbelievers
- Thomas Paine Historical Association
- Freethought Society
- Freedom From Religion Foundation
- Thomas Paine Society
- Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers
- American Atheists
- Secular Coalition for America
- American Humanist Association
- Center for Inquiry/Richard Dawkins Foundation

Join Us

This event offers an extraordinary opportunity to rediscover Thomas Paine's contributions through scholarship, performance, and reflection.

Attendance is free, but pre-registration is required.

Register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/ga-dvEPuR0iLzT5LA45BOw>

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