



*Tampa Chapter  
Sons of the American Revolution  
October 2016*

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**October Meeting Announcement**

The October meeting of the Tampa Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution will be held on **October 22**, in the Cypress Room at Grille 116 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Grille 116 is located at North Dale Mabry next to the Carrabbas Restaurant between Kennedy Blvd and I-275. The address and telephone number for Grille 116 are listed below:

Grille 116 : 612 N. Dale Mabry Hwy. Tampa, FL 33609 813-350-0216.

This is change from our usual meeting date with a move to the fourth Saturday due to a conflict at the restaurant.

Quick reminder from last month: Lunch orders will be taken as you arrive (1) to save time and (2) because we have an SAR special menu with an "all inclusive" price of \$16 per person, which includes the meal, drink, tax and gratuity. Lunch is optional, of course.

This month's program is our annual recognition of law enforcement and fire fighters in our area. We expect to present to two Law Enforcement personnel and one Fire Fighter with SAR Commendation Medals and Certificates. Please come and show your support for the Law Enforcement and Fire Fighter personnel who serve our community.

### **Revolution Note**

This month we start a two part series on one of the lesser known and misunderstood founders: John Dickinson. Hollywood made Dickinson the "villain" in two movies, *1776* and *More Perfect Union* and thus he has, among some people, gained an undeserved reputation of being a loyalist and anti-patriot. Our purpose this month and next will be to point out the flaws in this perception.



Dickinson was born in 1732 (the same year as *G. Washington*). He studied law at the Middle Temple in London and, as one of his biographers has pointed out, he did *STUDY*, not use the occasion for frivolity as did so many other colonial students. When he returned he was well educated and quickly became a success at the bar and went into politics. In the wake of the Stamp Act, Dickinson became one of the leaders of the American resistance to the British colonial policies.

In "Letters from a farmer in Pennsylvania" Dickinson put forth the American view that England was in process of taking away the traditional, historical rights of Englishmen to which the colonists were entitled. His

Farmer's letters were reprinted and widely distributed and put forth the American views in a very plain, simple manner.

This resulted in him being appointed to attend the first continental Congress where he was the main draftsman of the Olive Branch Petition (with Jefferson as a contributing co-author).

As the crisis deepened and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Congress moved toward independence, Dickinson found himself in the opposition camp. When the decision was made to form a committee to present to the Congress the reasons for independence (this committee report became the declaration of independence), Dickinson was the logical and clear choice to write it. However, since he was among those who still held out hope that the crisis could be resolved if only The King could be made to see the harm his policies were doing, it was decided that the report should be written by someone who was in favor of an immediate declaration of independence.

Thus we come to the big WHAT IF. If Dickinson had written the declaration he would have argued from the point of view of the traditional, historical rights of Englishmen as he had done in his Farmer's letters. That is, he would have traced the rights back through the Glorious Revolution, the advent of Parliament, the Magna Charta and back to the days of the Saxons. And, it might be added, had Adams written it, he would have used much the same lines of argument as Dickinson might have. When Jefferson became the primary draftsman of the declaration, he put the argument in the context of natural rights instead of historical, traditional English rights. At the time this was a bigger deal than we, today, might think. (If you are familiar with the writings of Russell Kirk or M E Bradford on the subject you will note that they both favor Dickinson's view, not the natural rights view of Jefferson.)

Since Dickinson could not bring himself to vote for Independence on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, he absented himself that day which was one of the reasons Pennsylvania vote changed from a no to a yes.

Even though he did not vote for independence or sign the Declaration, he did command a regiment (briefly) in the army early in the war and fought as a private in the militia during the battles around Philadelphia...the only member of the Congress to do so.

If you have seen either the stage play 1776 or the subsequent movie version, you know that Dickinson is made the villain. Granted, plays and movies need an antagonist, but because of how he is presented in the movie he has been maligned.

His Farmer's letters were just as influential, if not more so, than Patrick Henry's speeches or Sam Adams' antics in putting forth the views of the colonists. But since he thought the decision on independence was premature and disagreed with Jefferson basing the argument on natural rights, not the historical traditional rights of Englishmen he has been unfairly vilified.

(Next month—John Dickinson at the Constitutional convention)

### September Meeting



In September, Donald Miller gave us a presentation on the life of Marquis de Lafayette and his contribution to the American Revolution. Mr. Miller based his presentation on his book, *Lafayette, His Extraordinary Life and Legacy* and his own travels to France. Though longer than usual, Mr. Miller's presentation was well received and he sold several copies of his book. The Chapter bought one copy for presentation to the Hillsborough County Library System.

### PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Below is the tentative program schedule for the remainder of 2016.

Nov.— First Thanksgiving controversy revisited—Compatriot Bob Yarnell  
(date TBD)

Dec 17 - Meeting will be held in conjunction with Wreaths Across America at the American Legion Hall on Kennedy Blvd in Tampa (time TBD)  
Jan 21 - Officer Installation (time and place TBD)

### **Wreaths Across America**



The Tampa Chapter is once again a sponsor of Wreaths Across America and again supporting the American Legion Post #5 (Tampa) Veterans Cemetery on Kennedy Blvd. The ceremony and wreath laying is on Saturday December 17. The ceremony usually starts at Noon. That will be confirmed before December 17. For \$15 you can sponsor a wreath to be placed on a headstone at this or any other Veterans Cemetery. The Tampa Chapter sponsorship form will be attached to the email that sent this Newsletter. You can mail the form or give your check to Dick Young. To learn more about Wreaths Across America or to make a credit card sponsorship, you can visit their website at [www.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org). The 2016 deadline for submitting wreath sponsorships is November 28.

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### **Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War**

The Winding Waters Chapter of DAR has asked to recognize Vietnam Era veterans at our November meeting, in conjunction with Veteran's Day. They will recognize all Vietnam Era Veterans present whether a member or not.

We have the name of all known Tampa Chapter members that served during that time. If you are a prospective member or even a guest, we want to recognize you too, regardless of where you served, as long as you were on active duty during the Vietnam War Era, which is defined as November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975. Please send your full name and branch of service at that time to Dick Young at [dyoung22@aol.com](mailto:dyoung22@aol.com). It is not necessary to provide proof of service.

## Honor Flight

The Tampa Chapter Hillsborough Camp Color Guard met the return home of the September 20 Honor Flight at the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Airport. Some 75 veterans of WWII, Korea and Vietnam were welcomed home for their day trip to Washington DC. Your Color Guard joined members of the Clearwater Chapter DAR and the Clearwater Harbor Society of C.A.R. All are shown below. SAR members in uniform are Dick Young, Commander Alan Bell, David Chestnut (St. Petersburg) and David Bryant.



## Misc. Reminders and notes:

**Dues are Due** - Please see the form attached to the email that sent you this newsletter. Unless you are a Junior Member (18 or less on Jan 1, 2017) or a Life Member, your dues are \$80 for 2017. This includes Chapter, State and National Dues. There are no Dues for Junior Members of the Tampa Chapter.

**Chapter Website**— Remember you can find information about the chapter and programs on the chapter website. [www.tampasar.org](http://www.tampasar.org)

The chapter web page update is finished. If you haven't looked it over, please do so. Our many thanks to Kevin Yarnell for the upgrade.

**Chapter Chaplain** - One of the duties of the Chapter Chaplain is to send cards to our members that are sick and sympathy notes to the family of a member who has passed away. If you know of anyone for whom a card should be sent, please mention it to Chaplain Sessums or President Klug at our next meeting.

Chapter officers and committee chairman are encouraged to send to the editor any pertinent information they wish included in the newsletter.

Florida Society website - [www.flssar.org](http://www.flssar.org)

National Society website - [www.sar.org](http://www.sar.org)