



*Tampa Chapter  
Sons of the American Revolution  
November 2022*

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## November Meeting

The next meeting of the Tampa Chapter Sons of the American Revolution will be held on November 19th at the Innovation Partnership space at University Mall. It is located on the Second Floor of the University Mall. Drive to the backside of the mall. You will see a parking garage. Go to the 2nd floor and park. Enter through the door, walk straight until you reach a big hallway, turn right. Walk 30 or so feet and the room will be on your left.

We will continue with our Law Enforcement Recognition by recognizing a seven man unit of the Florida Highway Patrol. This unit was deployed to the Hurricane Ian devastated area to assist in recovery at the time of our October meeting.

**Program** - Compatriot Terry Doan has reached out to a friend and colleague, David Maxwell, to make a presentation to our chapter. We confirmed that he will make a national security oriented presentation on Korea at our November 19th meeting via Zoom. His presentation will begin at 12:30 and should last about 30 minutes followed by Q&A. **David Maxwell** is a Senior Fellow at the Foundation

for Defense of Democracies. The FDD is a Washington-based nonpartisan research institute focusing on national security and foreign policy.

### **Nominating Committee Report**

At the November meeting we will be electing officers for the 2023 calendar year. Below is the slate being presented by the Nominating Committee.

President	Robbie Robinson
Vice-President	Roger Roscoe
Secretary	Bob Yarnell
Treasurer	Will Wagner-Hart
Registrar	Dick Young
Chaplain	<b>Matthew Balencie</b>
Sgt at Arms	Darren Acosta
Member-at-large	Terry Doan
Member-at-large	TBD

**Procedure.** When we get the election of officers, the President will ask if there are any nominations from the floor for any of the offices on the slate (excluding the 2<sup>nd</sup> member at large). If there are none, the secretary will make a motion that the slate of the Nominating Committee be accepted. The motion will need to be seconded. The President will then ask for a vote by the membership on the motion.

We will then proceed to the election of a 2<sup>nd</sup> member-at-large. The Board of Governors of the Chapter consists of the elected officers, two members-at-large who are not officers and the Immediate Past President. The requirements for the job are that you be available to attend a Board of Governors meeting in mid-August where plans are made for the year and perhaps another meeting called by the new President in December or January. Occasionally, matters needing a vote by the Board of Governors are handled via e-mail. Please feel free to self-nominate. The current Board would like to see one of our more recently inducted members step up to this position. If there are no nominations, the position will remain vacant. If more than one person is nominated, the secretary will make ballots for a secret vote. The ballots will be counted by the secretary and the treasurer.

## American Revolution Note

General Sir William Howe and the first years of the American War for Independence.

During 1776 and into 1777 the American Army escaped a British trap on Long Island and then managed to stay just a step ahead of the British as they retreated through New Jersey and into Pennsylvania. Over the ensuing two and half centuries many Americans came to accept the view that the American Army had been blessed by good fortune and/or were aided by divine intervention.

However, perhaps there is a more realistic and less mystical reason for the American Army's run of "luck". That reason being Sir William Howe, commander of His Majesty's forces in North America from the summer of 1776 until the fall of 1777.

As I mentioned at the meeting last month, one of the controversies about the war revolves around British Gen. Howe. During this crucial initial phase of the war the British had several chances to destroy the American Army and end the war. Beginning in the mid-1900's historians began exploring the question of why Howe did not finish off the Americans when he had the chance.

Two schools of thought emerged which we will explore separately. The first is that Howe pulled his punches because he hoped a reconciliation between the colonies and the mother country could still be achieved. The second is that large British casualties at the Battle of Breed's Hill scared him and thus, when opportunities arose that he might have taken advantage of, he hesitated for fear of the casualties.

He had been elected to Parliament in 1774 as a peace candidate assuring his constituents he would never fight in a war against the North American colonists. When the war started, he told his superiors he would fight against the colonists. Was this just another example of a politician saying what the people wanted to hear to get elected, or was there a reason for this change? Those who agree with the argument that he pulled his punches in the hopes of reconciliation believe his decision had purpose. Only by going to the colonies and taking command could he guarantee that military force was applied with a delicate hand and that diplomacy would be given a chance. He thought that a few minor setbacks would convince the colonists they could not win and open them to negotiations.

The Battle on Long Island is a good example. The British outflanked the Americans, had them beat and instead of one last charge to finish them off, Howe, convinced he had already won, order his men back to camp with the thought of, well, we'll finish them in them morning. Some of his subordinate officers remonstrated against his decision but to no avail. Later in life Howe claimed he did not launch a final attack because of the fatigue of his men.

The Americans escaped to Manhattan under cover of night and a fortuitous morning fog. Once on Manhattan, Howe forced the Americans from their positions on Harlem Heights, but he did not vigorously pursue. Once off the island into New Jersey, his pursuit of the now shrunken American force was desultory at best. He missed an opportunity to cut off the Americans by crossing the Hudson at a point downstream from where the Americans crossed and did not attempt to force a battle during the march across New Jersey.

During the summer of 1777, Howe launched his own campaign against Philadelphia instead of assisting, as anticipated in London and Canada, with Burgoyne's campaign to control the Hudson River Valley and cut off New England.

Throughout his tenure in command, he disobeyed orders from London to pursue a more vigorous military strategy and he let opportunities slip away. Also, it must be noted, he never fully understood that once they had declared Independence, the colonists were in it to the end. Howe always thought there was a chance for reconciliation if the colonists weren't humiliated, or their army not thoroughly destroyed.

What is the evidence that the casualties on Breed's Hill affected his decision making? Long Island presents one key piece. The Americans had pulled back during the day to previously prepared fortifications. When Howe looked at what his men would have to do, it is thought, he recoiled at sending his men across an open field to seize well manned fortifications knowing what the casualties would be.

Similarly, after an original setback at Harlem Heights, he settled for maneuvering the Americans out of their position instead of another frontal assault.

And, in the late summer of 1777 at Brandywine, he again used a flank attack to dislodge the Americans rather than order a frontal assault on the center of the American lines.

You can argue that his flanking maneuvers on Long Island, at Harlem Heights and at Brandywine are simply proof of good generalship. But then you have to

explain his desultory pursuit in New Jersey and slowness in Manhattan, which are not examples of good generalship.

Without a doubt the best class I took at Penn State while doing graduate work there was a class on the background to the war. During that class Dr. Ira Gruber, who taught at Rice University, presented a lecture on this topic. He had just authored a book *The Howe Brothers and the American Revolution*. Both his lecture and the book, which I later bought and read, were persuasive. In the book he provides considerable background on the political leanings of the Howes prior to the war and their interaction with the British ministry at Whitehall. All of which provides evidence for the "he pulled his punches in hopes of reconciliation" theory.

There are three ways a teacher can present/explain the story of the survival of the Continental Army from Aug of 1776 to Sept 1777.

1. The Americans were lucky and occasionally better than the British gave them credit for
2. Howe pulled his punches in hopes of reconciliation
3. Howe pulled his punches out of fear of sustaining high casualties.

In my classes over the years, I have always presented all three. And while I give credit to the Americans where it is proper to do so, I emphasize Howe's hope for reconciliation being the main motivating factor for his decision making.

Now, to be clear, even assuming (as I do) that Howe pulled his punches in '76 and '77 that does not detract from the extraordinary effort of the Gloucester regiment in rowing Washington's army to safety after the disaster on Long Island nor does it detract from the bravery and skill of the Continental Line at Brandywine. What it does do is to help us realize that what Howe did while trying to bring the war to a negotiated conclusion, was to inadvertently help set the table for the successes at Trenton, Princeton, and Saratoga. So, did Howe's decisions based on his view of how the war should be conducted in disobedience to his orders help the American cause—absolutely. But it was still necessary for Washington and his army to take advantage of the openings Howe gave them in the winter of '76 and the fall of '77.

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PS. Dr. Eric Wolters teaches history on the West Campus of Pasco-Hernando State College. One day several years ago in one of his classes we briefly debated this for his students. I favor the "he pulled his punches in hopes of reconciliation" thesis while Dr Wolters favors "the huge British casualties at Breed's Hill impacted his decision making and explains his slowness and missing opportunities".

## Program Schedule

Dates and tentative programs for the meeting year are below. As always, feel free to pass along any program/speaker suggestions to President Charles Klug, VPs Robbie Robinson, Roger Roscoe or Sec. Bob Yarnell

Dec. 17 <u>2023</u>	Wreaths Across America (American Legion Post #5, Tampa)
Jan. 21	Officer Installation (place TBD)
Feb. 18	TBD
Mar. 18	EMT/Fire Fighter recognition + speaker (TBD)
April 15	JROTC recognition
May 20	tentative: program/speaker from a local history museum.

## Other Important Dates

December 9	DeSoto DAR Chapter Christmas Luncheon
December 14	Death of George Washington (1799)
December 17	Wreaths Across America
February 22	Birth of George Washington (1732)
May 19-20	Florida Society Board of Management & Annual Meetings
July 13-20	133 <sup>rd</sup> National Congress, Orlando

## 2023 Congress Volunteers

Some of you have volunteered to work at Congress and have asked what is expected. There will be several possibilities each day ranging from a few hours to all day, with some days going 10-12 hours.

- Go to the FLSSAR.org website
- Click on the Congress button
- Click on the Volunteer button
  - You will see a matrix of all positions needed and number of volunteers needed day-by-day. If you need more information about a position, contact Dick Young at [dyoung22@aol.com](mailto:dyoung22@aol.com) or Tom Thompson at



[tjthompsonsar@gmail.com](mailto:tjthompsonsar@gmail.com). Feel free to volunteer for more than one day, but be cautious not to overload yourself.

You can skip the first step and go directly to [SAR2023FloridaCongress.org](http://SAR2023FloridaCongress.org). Don't forget to check out the raffles and especially the "Donation" button.

**Also**, please understand this is a **volunteer** activity; you will not be reimbursed for any travel, meal or lodging expenses.

## Color Guard Events and Opportunities



Since our last meeting, your Color Guard attended the Welcome Home Ceremony for the 71 veterans on Mission #44 of the Honor Flight of West Central Florida. This was the last of four flights in 2022 and there are four planned for 2023. Your Color Guard also participated in the Veterans Day and WWII Veterans Recognition Ceremony (see pictures above) at the Mission BBQ on Waters Avenue in Tampa (where we used to meet). The Ceremony was brief but impressive. We joined the Honor Guards from McDill Air Force Base and American Legion Post # 5 (Tampa) and representatives of the Air National Guard, also from McDill AFB. The National Anthem was sung by an active duty Navy Seaman. Representing the Tampa Chapter in uniform in the picture above are Terry Doan, Matthew Balance, Bill Swain, Robbie Robinson and Dick Young. Also attending, but not in uniform, were Darren Acosta, with his family, and Dan Lubinsky.

## Color Guard Opportunities

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|-------------|--|
| December 4  | Safety Harbor Christmas Parade                         |
| December 9  | Desoto DAR Chapter (Palma Ceia County Club)            |
| December 17 | Wreaths Across America (American Legion Post #5 Tampa) |

We can never have enough Color Guardsmen. If you have any interest in joining the Color Guard, please contact Dick Young, Chapter Commander or any of the members of the Tampa Chapter Color Guard. If you do not want to start with the full Continental Line uniform, we can show you how to get started with a militia "uniform" for much less cost.

### **Minutes for October 15, 2022**

President Charles Klug called the meeting to order at 11:45.

President Klug reminded the membership of the Chapter's Skillman lending library of books on or relating to the Revolutionary period.

The Pledge of Allegiance and the Sar Pledge were followed by officer and committee reports. The secretary had no report. Treasurer Will Wagner-Hart reported a balance of \$12071.94 on hand. Do not be misled by that number. Most of it is dues that will be sent to State and National in December. A motion was made to send \$100 to Hurricane Ian relief. It passed. Dick Young gave the color guard report, highlighting welcoming an honor flight. The ongoing need for volunteers at the 2023 National Congress in Orlando was also mentioned.

The next order of business was the presenting of the SAR law-enforcement medal to Treasurer Will Wagner-Hart. His immediate superior gave a glowing report of Will's work on the force and the contributions he has made over the course of his career.

The meeting adjourned for lunch just after 12 noon.

The meeting reconvened at 12:40. 1<sup>st</sup> VP Robbie Robinson gave a talk on the Battle of Breed's Hill. After some background material he proceeded to the X's and O's of the battle. He made special mention of the high casualties the British sustained and finished with some remarks about some of the people involved and the effect of the battle on both sides.

His discussion of the high casualties prompted newspaper co-editor Bob Yarnell to announce that he would revisit the controversy about British Gen Howe in the Revolutionary Notes section of the November newsletter.

The meeting adjourned after the benediction and recessional at 1:20.

*Submitted by Robert Yarnell, Secretary*

### **Miscellaneous Reminders**

The face book page for the Tampa Sons of the American Revolution is Tampa Sar. The password to add anything is American1776.



Please feel free to upload pictures or comments. Invite all your friends to look.

Chapter Website—remember you can find information about the chapter and programs on the chapter website. <http://www.tampasar.org/>

One of the duties of the Chapter Chaplain Balencie is to send cards to our members that are sick. Another is to send a sympathy card to the family of a member who has passed away. If you know of anyone that should be the recipient of these cards, please mention it to the Chaplain or one of the other officers at our next meeting.

If you are aware of any Tampa Chapter compatriot who suffered damage or injury as a result of the recent hurricane, please let one of the chapter officers know as soon as possible.