

# Tampa Chapter Sons of the American Revolution



## March 2024 Newsletter

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### Tampa SAR Officers 2024

President: Robbie Robinson  
1st Vice President: Roger Roscoe  
Secretary: Bob Yarnell  
Treasurer: Will Wagner-Hart  
Registrar: Dick Young  
Chaplain: Matt Balencie  
Sergeant-at Arms: Darren Acosta  
Historian: Bob Yarnell  
Past President: Charles Klug  
Color Guard Commander: Dick Young  
Members-at-Large: Terry Doan,  
Thomas Spangler  
Newsletter: Bob Yarnell, Dick Young,  
Robbie Robinson

## Presidents Message:

Compatriots,

I want to start by thanking everyone who supported the planning activities and / or attended the George Washington Dinner on 23 February at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club. This turned out to be an outstanding event, and I am happy to report that we brought in over \$1000 which we gave to the Fisher Houses of Tampa, located at the VA Facility on Bruce B. Downs, not far from where we hold our monthly meetings. The feedback was tremendous and we have decided to do this again next year.

As we get ready for the coming months before the summer break, we have scheduled our next three meetings to be held at our normal location at the University Mall. Please see the details in this newsletter for agendas, etc.

I am also asking for your support to help Terry Doan with the JROTC program. He is looking for volunteers to attend high school ceremonies where deserving cadets will be receiving SAR medals. We have approximately 14 high schools in our area of responsibility, so please look over the list which you can find later down in this newsletter, and let Terry know when and where you can support us.

I also want to let everyone know that we are updating our Chapter's bylaws since

they are out-of-date in several areas. We will discuss this topic at our March meeting, and you will have a month to think things over before we officially vote on the new by-laws at our April meeting. One of the items we will be including in these new by-laws a section that will change the dates for our meetings. As you all know, we currently meet on the third Saturday of the month when we hold meetings; however, due to conflicts in schedules with FLSSAR and other organizations that some of our compatriots are members of, we will plan on moving our meetings to the second Saturday of each month, starting in May- assuming the bylaws pass with your approval.

Best Wishes to All,  
Robbie



Cara and Bill Elder with Robbie Robinson at the George Washington Dinner

## February Meeting Summary:

Our February 23, 2024 meeting was held at the St Petersburg Yacht Club as an evening dinner to celebrate George Washington's birthday. This event was open to all compatriots and their family members, as well as members of the DAR chapters.



Table decorations for the George Washington Dinner at the St Petersburg Yacht Club

The dinner event started at 6pm with a Social Hour, when attendees could review the raffle items, order a drink

from the bar, look over the slide show which had photos of various SAR and DAR events, as well as have pictures taken with "George and Martha Washington."



FLSSAR President Steve Fields and Tampa Chapter VP Roger Roscoe at the dinner Social Hour



Door prizes were special bottles of Madiera wine with George Washington's portrait

The formal meeting started at 7pm when Tampa Chapter President Robbie Robinson called the meeting to order, made some opening comments, and then asked Tampa SAR Chaplain Matt Balencie to give the invocation. The Color Guard then marched forward and presented the colors, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. After posting of the colors, Clearwater SAR Chaplain Bob Cundiff led the attendees in singing God Bless America, while accompanied by Marcy Moore on the piano. President Robinson introduced the distinguished guests, which included NSSAR Vice President General-Western District Rob Moore and his wife Marcy; FLSSAR President Steve Fields; FLSSAR Regional Vice President Parks

Honeywell and his guest Mickey; St Petersburg SAR Chapter President Doug Maddox and his wife Diana; Clearwater SAR Chapter President Tim Shaner; President Robinson's wife Kathy; Daytona SAR Chapter President Bill Elder and his wife Cara, and DAR Desoto Chapter Regent Nathalie Tomczak and her husband Robert.

President Robinson then thanked the sponsors for the dinner, which included: NSSAR VPG Rob Moore, Clearwater SAR Chapter Past President Walter Arnold, the St Petersburg SAR Chapter, Tampa SAR Chapter Past President Charles Klug, Tampa SAR Chapter Chaplain Matt Balencie, and Kathy and Robbie Robinson. He then awarded a Certificate of Appreciation to the sponsors.



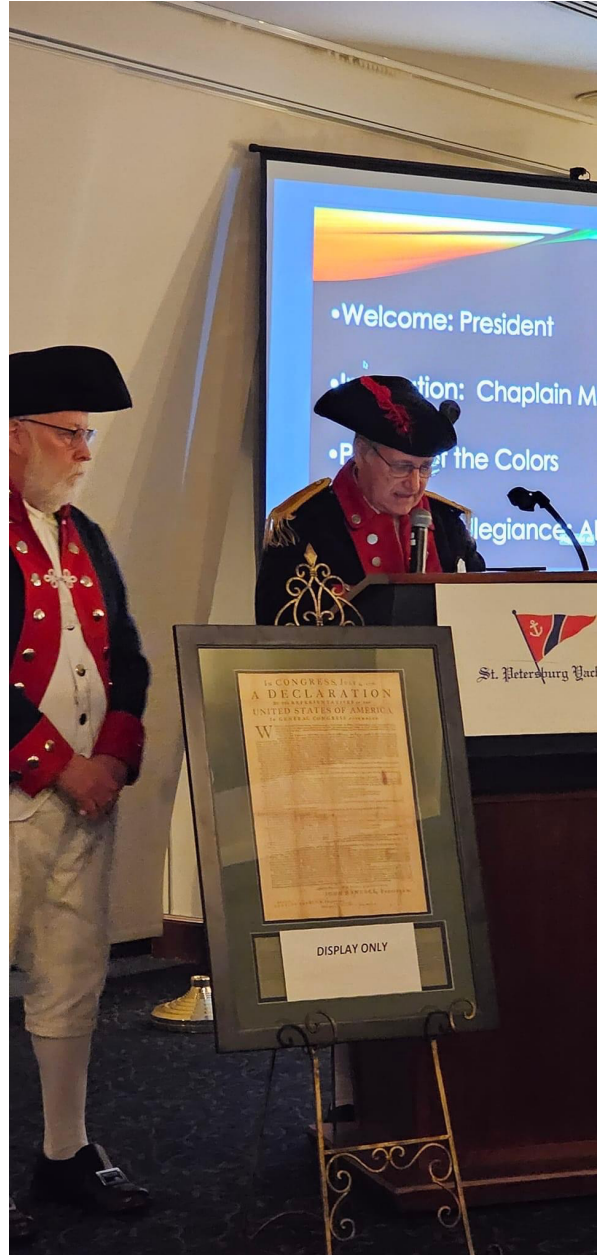
Dinner Sponsors Kathy Robinson, Doug Maddox, Matt Balencie, Charles Klug, Rob Moore, and Walter Arnold

President Robinson also thanked those who supported the dinner event by providing items for the raffle, which included Jim Grayshaw and Margaret Harris from the Clearwater SAR Chapter; Roger and May Roscoe, and

Kathy Robinson from the Tampa SAR Chapter.

Robbie told everyone that the event was set up to do three things: 1) celebrate the 292nd birthday of our first US President, George Washington, 2) use the dinner as an opportunity for all of the Tampa Bay Area SAR and DAR chapters to come together for a joint event, and 3) generate funds for a worthwhile charity in the Tampa area. The chosen charity this year was the Fisher Houses of Tampa, located at the VA facility on Bruce B. Downs. The Fisher Houses operate the same way as Ronald McDonald houses to provide a location where families can stay while their loved ones are being treated at the VA facility for long term health issues.

Robbie then discussed the SAR 250 Anniversary program and introduced Matt Balencie, who discussed a special copy of the Constitution of the United States that had a limited number printed.



Matt Balencie and Robbie Robinson with the special copy of the US Constitution



After the presentation, DeSoto DAR Regent Nathalie Tomczak and Past Regent Laura Glass came forward and awarded the DAR America 250! Commendation certificate and medal for leading the efforts to set up the dinner.



Laura Glass, Robbie Robinson, and DeSoto DAR Regent Nathalie Tomczak

After the dinner, Daytona SAR Chapter President Bill Elder, who came to the dinner as George Washington, came forward as a surrogate for our first US President and Clearwater Chaplain Bob Cundiff led the attendees in singing Happy Birthday to our first US President.



Robbie Robinson with "George Washington"

Afterwards, "George" gave a few remarks and then led the activities to announce the winners of the raffle items. Door prizes were also given out, as well as the table decorations at each of the tables. Overall, 33 items were given to dinner attendees.

Tampa SAR Chaplain Matt Balencie gave the benediction and the meeting was adjourned.

## March Meeting:

Our March meeting will be held at the University Mall--our normal meeting location. We will start at 11:30am, as usual. We will be presenting awards to EMT and Firefighters, and will hear from our chapter's winner of the SAR Knight Essay Contest.

## Tampa Chapter Schedule for 2024:

-March 16th - EMT/Fire Fighter recognition at our normal meeting location; Knight Essay winner

-April 20th - ROTC recognition at our normal meeting location

-May 17th - Speaker from Pioneer Museum in Dade City

## Color Guard Events:

The Tampa SAR Color Guard was requested to support the Genesis Preparatory School in New Port Richey on 23 February. The school was celebrating George Washington's birthday and held a full morning of activities where students gave presentations on colonial life and events that led up to the Revolutionary War.



Robbie Robinson, Dick Young, Bill Swain, Will Wagner-Hart, Walter Arnold, Tim Shaner, and Matt Balencie at the Genesis Preparatory School

On the evening of 23 February, the Color Guard presented the colors to start the formal activities of the George Washington Birthday dinner celebration.

## Upcoming Dates:

**9 Mar: DAR Spring Conference, Orlando**

**16 Mar: Last Naval Battle, Brevard**

**23 Mar: Battle of Thomas Creek, Jacksonville**

**16 Apr: Honor Flight at St Pete Airport**



Dave Bryant, Will Wagner-Hart, Dwight Hamborsky, Joe Dato, Terry Doan, Bill Swain, and Dick Young at the George Washington dinner

## Revolutionary History Notes (by Bob Yarnell)

### Saratoga Part 3

The impact of the American victory at Saratoga did not resonate on the military chessboard as much as people now think, but it did affect the key players. I'll look at the effect it had on Gen Gates, the American commander, how it effected the life of Benedict Arnold, the hero of the battle, and whether Saratoga should be seen as the "turning point" in the war.

Following the British surrender, Gates sent his report directly to Congress, bypassing Washington, his superior in the military. Gates' friends and supporters in Congress used his success to try to get Congress to replace Washington with Gates. This resulted in Congress dividing into a pro-Washington camp and

a pro-Gates camp. The animosity simmered for the next few years, sometimes below the surface and sometimes in open debate on the floor.

After Gen. Benjamin Lincoln surrendered Charleston to the British in May 1779, Congress sent Gates south to command the American southern army and stop Cornwallis from advancing further north. The two armies met at Camden in August 1780. The British routed Gates' army and for all intents and purposes, Gates' military career ended.

In the intervening 200+ years, Gates' reputation has tumbled. His subordinates at Saratoga, Gen. Benedict Arnold, Col. Daniel Morgan and Gen Benjamin Lincoln are now, correctly, viewed as being responsible for the American victory at Saratoga, not Gates.

Which brings us to two questions concerning Benedict Arnold. First, what led to his argument with Gates that resulted in Gates placing him under "house" arrest. Second, did Arnold receive a leg wound or did he hurt his leg when his horse fell on top of him after the horse was shot?

Gates planned on fighting a defensive battle at Saratoga. Arnold argued that the American army's lack of discipline and training precluded that from being an option and argued for a more aggressive stance. Gates agreed to allow Arnold to go forward, but after the first day's inconclusive results, decided to fall back.

This led to another argument that resulted in Gates relieving Arnold of his command and ordering him out of camp. While in his tent packing up, Arnold heard the fighting break out on the second day of the battle. Unable to contain himself, he jumped on his horse and rode to the front. There he rallied the American troops and following several unsuccessful charges, finally, as evening approached, Arnold led one last charge that broke the British lines.

It was at this time Arnold was injured. I phrase it that way because you will find some sources saying his horse was shot, and in the fall, Arnold broke his leg. Other sources claim he received a leg wound with a ball through his thigh. Gen. David Palmer, former superintendent of West Point and a noted military historian wrote a book about the history of West Point. I trust his research. He is one of those who go with shot in the leg theory. While having a horse fall on your leg could very easily break your leg, the "wounded in the thigh" seems to make more sense.

In an interview Gen. Palmer gave concerning Arnold, he said "I wish he had been shot through the heart, not the thigh. If Arnold had died at Saratoga, he would today be Washington's equal in our pantheon of Revolutionary War heroes."

A monument on the battlefield commemorates Arnold's wounding. It is known as the "Boot" monument because



it is just a boot. The inscription on the monument reads:

***In memory of the most brilliant soldier of the Continental Army who was desperately wounded on this spot, the sally port of Burgoyne's great [western] redoubt 7th October 1777 winning for his countrymen the decisive battle of the American Revolution and for himself the rank of Major General.***

The important thing to note is Arnold is not mentioned by name. This was done on purpose due to his later treason.

A combination of the leg wound, Arnold's anger at not being given any credit for his part in the battle and his marriage a year later to Margaret "Peggy" Shippen, a loyalist, all combined to create the witches brew that resulted in his betrayal of the American cause.

The last controversy about Saratoga is whether it was, indeed, the "turning point of the war. What follows is an excerpt from my column for February 2022.

(Saratoga) is usually singled out as the turning point since it resulted in the French alliance. That presupposes that after Saratoga the British never had a chance to win and the Americans were not going to lose. While I taught that Saratoga is important because it did result in the French alliance, for the last 10-15 years of my career I no longer used the phrase turning point. No one in London or the American Congress or at

Washington's Headquarters at the time thought the war was now a foregone conclusion.

The French alliance kept Washington's army supplied, but since there was no major fighting in the north after Monmouth, those supplies did not lead to victories. It is also true that the alliance forced England to divert resources to protect other parts of its empire and it did bring a French fleet into American waters in October of 1781. But that circumstance could not have been predicted after Saratoga.

While Saratoga thwarted the British campaign of 1777, Britain did not give up on suppressing the American rebellion. They launched their southern campaign in 1780 with the full intention of it succeeding and bringing the Americans to heel. The French were a non-factor in the American south so there is no connection between an American victory at Saratoga and American successes in the south in 1780 and 1781.

Today we piece together a sequence of events that runs from Kings Mountain to Cowpens to Guilford Courthouse and then to Yorktown. At the time, while each represented a setback, the British did not view them as a string of events inevitability leading to the loss of the colonies. Indeed, had Cornwallis, chosen to fall back to his base at Charleston or even to spend the winter re-supplying and refitting at Wilmington, there would have been no Yorktown and

there would have been a new campaign in 1782.

As Dutch historian Johan Huizinga wrote, we must put ourselves “at a point in the past at which the human factors still seem to permit different outcomes.” If you want to pick that point at which the human factor could still permit different outcomes, it would be Cornwallis’ decision to head to Virginia after Guilford Courthouse, instead of spending the winter in Wilmington or Charleston preparing for a spring campaign in 1782.

Reading history backward, especially through the prism of pre-determined conclusion, as we are wont to do, allows us to make history neat and tidy with simple explanations for how things turned out. Making Saratoga the turning point allows people to do that. Reading history forward is usually not as tidy, but much more interesting.

## Miscellaneous Reminders:

JROTC Awards Schedule:

Please see the list of schools where the Tampa Chapter will be providing awards to deserving JROTC cadets in the next few months. Please let Terry Doan which of these schools you can support. There is very little you have to do other than attend the program and make the presentation when your turn comes up.

More information will be provided at the March meeting to provide the times for each school.

<u>School:</u>	<u>Location:</u>
Hillsborough	Tampa
Blake	Tampa
Jefferson	Tampa
King	Temple Terrace
Middleton	Tampa
Tampa Bay Tech	Tampa
Chamberlain	Tampa
Leto	Tampa
Robinson	Tampa
Gaither	Tampa
Sickles	Tampa
HB Plant	Tampa
Alonso	Tampa
Wharton	New Tampa
Zephyrhills	Zephyrhills
Steinbrenner	Lutz
USF (AF)	Tampa
USP (AR)	Tampa
USF (Navy)	Tampa
Sea Cadets	Tampa

## Member News:

On 21 December, compatriot Dick Young, FLSAR Treasurer and Tampa Chapter Registrar was invited to the monthly meeting of the Winding Waters Chapter of the DAR. The Florida DAR Regent Cindy Addison presented him with the DAR Silver Hannah White Arnette Medal for assistance and efforts for the DAR at the state level.



Dick Young and Florida State DAR Regent  
Cindy Addison

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.

Websites—remember you can find information about the chapter and programs on the chapter website: <http://www.tampasar.org>, and that you can find information related to Florida SAR at [FLSSAR.org](http://FLSSAR.org).

### Secretary Request:

Any officer or committee chairman giving a report that includes numbers or names, I would appreciate it if you could give me that information either via email prior to or after the meeting or hard copy at the meeting. During the meeting I may easily miss those details and that information will enable us to have more accurate and complete minutes.

### Chaplain Comments:

One of the duties of the Chapter Chaplain 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.

