



The Florida Society of the Sons of the American Revolution Fort Lauderdale Chapter Newsletter



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Minutes of Chapter Meeting November 8th by Oscar Kraehenbuehl

The meeting was conducted by Past President Joe Motes. President Mike Evans has joined a firm in North Carolina and has resigned his chapter office. For almost two years he provided leadership, support and astute commentary on current events. We send him thanks and wish him much success. He will be missed.

As discussed at previous meetings, the chapter's expenses exceed current income due primarily to fewer members and the increased cost of community activities and meeting. Earnings from the Chapter Trust Fund are being used and necessary to meet expenses. (The year-end trust fund balance is \$7660. Only accrued interest can be used.) Treasurer Rich Jones moved that chapter annual dues be increased from \$15 to \$20. Seconded by Oscar Kraehenbuehl and unanimously approved.

Highlights of the Board of Management meeting in Lakeland, Oct. 12-13, were reported by Oscar Kraehenbuehl. An item of general interest is the increase in the membership and supplemental membership application fee to \$55.00. Natl. Trustee Ed Sullivan reported on events occurring at the Louisville headquarters and at the National Congress. You have to have been there to appreciate the discussion.

Donald Mandich presented a lecture on heraldry. His years of research, knowledge and genuine interest in the subject were apparent throughout the presentation. He brought numerous old documents and books. In addition to his own publications of German and Russian heraldry, it is likely that Mr. Mandich has the largest collection of books on this topic in the world. Those fortunate enough to be present are now aware of the heraldry's origin, history, meanings, utilization and sources of further information. Too bad all members weren't present for this excellent talk. -- We are indebted to Joe Fordyce for arranging this program.

Reply to: OscarK@pobox.com

Chapter Holiday Christmas Party

Monday December 10, 2001
TOP OF THE PARK
Pompano Park Racing Track
1800 SW 3 Street Pompano Beach
Suggested Arrival Time is 6:00pm
Seat Down Time is 6:30pm

The Dining Room is located on the 6th Floor, called the "Top of the Park". Seating will be six per table and all tables are located along the windows overlooking the track.

The Cost of the dinner is \$16.95 per person, tax and tip included.

Choices of menu are 3 Entrees to select from:

Prime Rib, Chicken Breast Chasseur, or Poached Salmon, assorted dinner rolls, butter, fresh garden salad with a vinaigrette dressing, baby sweet carrots, steaming baked potato. For desert French Style Cheese cake and Coffee or Tea.

To make reservations, please call George Dennis at 954-942-3081. Should you get an answering machine, leave your name, number of people attending and if you want Beef or Chicken. You must have your order in to Mike by December 6th. This Dinner is open to all, so if you want to bring a guest or guests this will be OK as long as Mike has your reservation.

Remember, the \$16.95 price includes dinner for one, tax, gratuity and race program.

Please make you check payable to our Chapter the night of the dinner.

2002 Important Dues Inforamtion

Please check the important information on the yearly National, State and Chapter dues on Page 4.

**NEXT MEETING - JANUARY 10TH
TOWER CLUB !!!**

**\$20.00 INCL. TAX AND TIP
11:30 SOCIAL 12:00 LUNCH
28TH FLOOR BANK OF AMERICA
1 FINANCIAL TOWER
SE 3RD AVE & BROWARD BLVD
FORT LAUDERDALE**

**FOR RESERVATIONS CALL:
954-441-8735**

*Members living in North Broward need to dial the
area code plus the phone number,
or e-mail me at: joemotes@aol.com*

History: The Battle of Cowpens Part 1

By Mike Joslyn

After the disaster at Charleston and the succeeding defeats, the British spread out across South Carolina and Georgia, setting up a chain of forts to bolster 'the King's Friends'. By July, the Continental Congress had placed the ostensible victor of Saratoga, General Horatio Gates, in command of the Southern Theater, despite Washington's objections, and ordered him to regain the lost territory. The result, in the following month, was another huge disaster at Camden where only 700 out of 4,000 American troops escaped. The destruction of Ferguson's Scots at King's Mountain in October saved North Carolina, but American fortunes did not truly improve until Nathanael Greene took command from Gates on December 3d.

At dawn on January 17, 1781, Brigadier General Daniel Morgan looked south from the top of a gently sloping hill toward his pursuer, the young Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton and his British Legion. For the last three days, Tarleton had pursued Morgan and his brigade of Maryland and Delaware Continentals across the overflowing rivers of western South Carolina. Now, faced with the prospect of being attacked while trying to cross one of those swollen rivers, Morgan instead turned to fight.

Between Morgan and the British lay three separate lines of American troops. Just in front of the crest of the hill on which Morgan stood was the core of his force: 290 hardened Light Infantry supported by approximately 200 Virginia State soldiers who were veterans of the Continental Army. Backing these up were 80 cavalrymen of the 3d Dragoons commanded by George Washington's cousin William, and supplemented by 40 mounted militiamen from Georgia and North Carolina. They were solid troops who could be counted on in the coming battle. The two lines ahead of the Continentals, however, were a different story.

One hundred and fifty yards down the hill was a line of about 300 Georgia, North and South Carolina militia. In front of them were 50 more militia thinly spread out to act as snipers and

skirmishers to break up the British advance. A similar militia force had thrown down their guns and run after the first British volley at Camden just six months before.

The whole array, Continentals and militia, faced their English adversaries in an open woods with flanks resting on no particular obstacle. It was perfect ground for Tarleton's 350 cavalry. Tarleton, famous for destroying Continental and partisan forces larger than his own, had artillery and two battalions of British regulars to round out his Legion of Tory cavalry and infantry. While they were approximately equal in numbers of men, Tarleton had the advantage in every other material way.

Morgan found himself in this unenviable position as a result of a brilliant strategic plan created by his immediate superior: Nathaniel Greene. While the British had lost over 5,000 men at Saratoga in 1777, the Americans lost two similarly-sized armies in 1780, first at the siege of Charleston in May and then at the battle of Camden in August. As a result, Greene replaced General Horatio Gates as commander of the southern Continental Army at Charlotte, North Carolina on December 2. He was charged with keeping the British out of North Carolina, while at the same time rebuilding an army which had only 800 out of 2,000 fit for duty.

Across the border in Winnsborough, South Carolina was a British army of over 3,000, awaiting the end of winter to resume the offensive. To prevent this, Greene decided to split his army in two and send it in opposite directions; Morgan would take 600 men into the western half of South Carolina and support militia operations there while Greene would take the majority of the army east to attack the British garrison at Cheraw. On the face of things, it was a plan which seemed to make the British superiority all the more imposing, but the British commander, Earl Charles Cornwallis, noted the hidden quandary. While Greene had all of North Carolina to protect, Cornwallis had his own vulnerabilities: his army's supply lines, and the vital pool of British sympathizers in South Carolina. To move against Morgan would allow Greene take his main supply base at Charleston.

Converging on Greene would let Morgan lunge south to pick off the British fort at Ninety-Six (so named because it was 96 miles from the start of an Indian trail) and take control of the largest concentration of loyalists in South Carolina, as well as one of its most productive farming areas. The annihilation of a Tory regiment by Morgan's cavalry some fifty miles north of his headquarters decided the issue for Cornwallis. He ordered Tarleton to swing west while he took the main army north to King's Mountain. Tarleton would either drive Morgan into a trap at King's Mountain, or engage and destroy Morgan's force, himself.

Only 27 when he rode onto the field at Cowpens, Tarleton had already gambled and drunk away a substantial fortune left to him by his father, a former Lord Mayor of Liverpool. He managed to raise enough money to buy a commission and went with 1st Dragoons to America as the equivalent of a second lieutenant. On December 13, 1776 he captured Charles Lee, a former British general who had defected to the rebel side. By the end of 1777, he was a Lieutenant Colonel in command of the British Legion. His flaming red hair and compact good looks made him instantly recognizable to all, including contemptuous fellow officers who denounced his advancement as a triumph of brash luck over ability.

The 550 men of Tarleton's British Legion had been raised in Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey specifically to hunt down American guerrillas. Half cavalry and half infantry, the Legion proved adept at surprising and destroying a wide variety of (usually fleeing) patriot opponents from militia to regulars. When faced with an enemy who refused to run, however, the Legion, and the Legion horsemen in particular, had a habit of balking. At Blackstock hill, where Tarleton attacked a fortified stockade containing a thousand partisans with only 90 infantry, 200 of the Legion dragoons refused orders to charge to their rescue. The surrounded Tarleton only managed to escape by launching a desperate bayonet charge in which he lost over half the foot soldiers with him. In a raid on Charlotte, North Carolina, the dragoons refused to advance until the infantry cleared away a mere 80 militiamen in their

path. It was lapses like these which caused the horsemen of the 17th Dragoons, a company of regular cavalry serving with the Legion, to view the loyalist cavalry with disdain.

Also attached to the Legion in its hunt for Morgan were two battalions of British regulars and three companies of loyalist light infantry. The 1st battalion of the 71st (Fraser's) Highlander regiment, 200 men in all, was an excellent unit with a fine commander: Major Archibald MacArthur. The 1st battalion of the 7th Royal Fusiliers, however, was a different story. Recently reconstituted from Irish recruits, the 7th had only been in America since the beginning of December. The British commander at Charleston declared them "so bad, not above a third can possibly move with a regiment". Of the three light companies, the best that can be said is that they ranged from good to wretched, with the range heavily weighted toward the wretched.

With the exception of the Highlanders, the best troops in Tarleton's command were the eighteen blue-coated artillerymen who served his two '3 pounder' guns. They had a level of discipline unmatched in Tarleton's force and a reputation for never leaving their guns under fire.

The 45 year old Morgan had an important psychological advantage, however. He had a solid understanding of both his militia's temperament and Tarleton, the former because he was from the same background, and the latter because of Tarleton's well-known preference for, as Morgan put it, "downright fighting". Born in Pennsylvania, the Brigadier General was one of Daniel Boone's first cousins. Like Boone, he had served in the French & Indian War, and was once severely flogged for striking a British officer. After Lexington and Concord, Morgan organized and led several regiments of West Virginia riflemen, but resigned in 1778 when it was obvious he was not going to be promoted to general rank. He remained apart from the war effort until 1780, when the American defeat at Camden prompted him to rejoin the army. In gratitude, Congress promoted him to Brigadier General so that he could take command of Greene's light troops (then the elite forces in the Continental Army).

As far as Tarleton was concerned, Morgan could count on his not maneuvering for position on the army's exposed flanks. Tarleton preferred the headlong charge which usually scattered rebel troops like scythed corn. It was with the militia, however, that the genius of his battlefield arrangement was most apparent. The rifle-armed militia could technically hold their own in a fire fight, but because the rifles had no bayonets, the British could usually scatter them with a charge. At Camden, where the militia had been placed in the line alongside the Continentals, their rapid disappearance left huge holes in the line which resulted in the destruction of the army. At Cowpens, Morgan put his militia in front to wear down the British before they got to the main line. He urged them in campfire speeches before the battle to give the British two volleys and then retire behind the Continentals' wall of bayonets, where they could be reformed and brought back into battle. The skirmishers who were to be posted farthest forward, the best shots among the militiamen, were urged to concentrate on British officers before retreating to the main line of resistance.

With the enemy only eight miles away, Tarleton could barely restrain himself. He roused his men at 2 AM and sent them on a rough and muddy march through the hills to the Cowpens. At 6:45 AM, Tarleton's lead cavalry moved out of the surrounding woods and into the sights of the skirmishers, drawing their fire. The Legion commander rode forward to observe his enemy, but the skirmish line prevented him from getting close enough for a good look, so he ordered a company of Legion Dragoons to clear away this annoyance. The dragoons confidently thundered out only to come

streaming back a moment later with a third of their saddles empty. Denied a better vantage point, Tarleton over-estimated the size of Morgan's army at almost 2,000 men.

With contemptuous regard for both his own assessment of the odds and any counsel his subordinates might have offered, Tarleton immediately ordered the army formed into line about 400 yards from the skirmishers. The light infantry companies filed to the right, followed by the Legion infantry and the Royal Fusiliers. Between the 7th and the Legion stood the two 3-pounder guns. A company of dragoons was posted at both ends to fend off any American cavalry that might appear. Two hundred yards behind the line, Fraser's Highlanders and the remaining Legion cavalry were held in reserve.

2002 Annual Dues

Your Year 2002 dues notice are enclosed with this newsletter. Payment is due by Dec 10th. A return envelope is enclosed for your convenience. The chapter's annual report and dues payment will be forwarded to the state Secretary on December 31th., so I must receive all dues no later than December 10th. If there are extenuating circumstances that will delay your payment beyond this deadline, please call or write me. If unanticipated payment is made later, it will be necessary for you to prepare reinstatement papers in order to reestablish active status. Your cooperation in completing this necessary obligation will be appreciated.

Please remember, National dues are \$20, State dues are \$20 and Chapter dues are \$20. Also, please try to add a little extra for the Chapter's Endowment Trust Fund, we can only use the interest from this fund and lately, interest rates have been very low. Please make checks payable to the Fort Lauderdale Chapter S.A.R.

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Guest speaker Mr Donald Mandich receives a Certificate of Appreciation from Compatriot Joe Motes at our November meeting.