



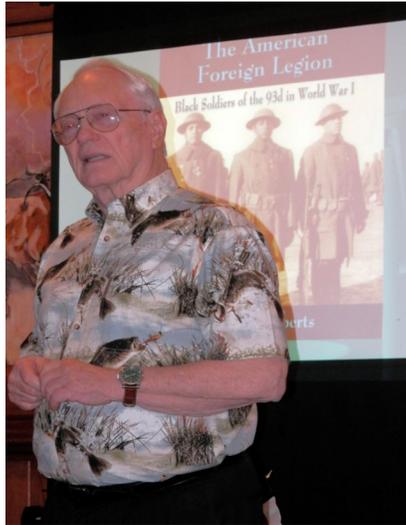
East Fork-Trinity Chapter Newsletter

Texas Society
Sons of the American Revolution



Volume ?, Issue 8 October 30 , 2012

Our speaker for the evening was Compatriot Frank Roberts, a published author who has written several articles for this newsletter.



Frank Roberts
[Photo by Tom Whitelock]

Most of you are now aware that Compatriot Frank Roberts is a published author of military history. He has published articles in the US Military Academy Alumni Association bulletin and also in the Military Officers Magazine. In addition, he has written a book, "The American Foreign Legion", published by the Naval Institute Press, which was the basis for Frank's talk. Born, 18 September 1933, New Braunfels, Texas. Attended public school in Austin, Texas. Graduated from University of Texas at Austin with a Bachelor of Business Administration and a minor in mechanical engineering. Graduated from University of North Texas at Denton with a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology and a minor in education. Did graduate work at University of North Texas and University of Virginia. In civilian career served in management and engineering positions in industry including president and chief executive officer of an electronic instruments manufacturing firm in Austin, Texas. Maintained a collateral career in United States Army on both active and reserve status serving seven years in the enlisted ranks, and twenty-five years as a commissioned officer, retiring in 1986 as Lieutenant Colonel, Corps of Engineers. Published author writing fiction and non-fiction military history articles and books. Participates in Christian outreach ministry programs including missionary work in India. Frank will have another article for us in the next Issue of the newsletter.

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In this issue, we have an article by Zack Pace;

"Rear Rank Firing Position in Von Steuben's Regulations"

Info on Zack is at the bottom of p. 8

Zack's article begins on page 9.

Our next meeting will be at 7 p.m. on November 8, 2012. Drake Peddie is scheduled to speak. See page 8 for details. Come early and join us for dinner.

Minutes from the October 11, 2012 Meeting of the East Fork-Trinity Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution

The October 11, 2012 meeting of the East Fork-Trinity Chapter of the SAR was called to order at 7:00 by President Walt Thomas, at the Texas Land and Cattle Steak House in Garland.

Ten members and ten guests were in attendance:

Members; Frank Roberts, Montie Monzingo, Gary Snowden, Walt Thomas, Tom Whitelock, Robert Vickers, Allen Christian, Paul Ridenour, Harmon Adair, and Gary Lovell; and guests Jane Christian, Jane Roberts, Vivian Dennis-Monzingo, Barbara Thomas, Della Vickers, Mindy Lovell, Joyce Adair, Edwin Cooley, Diane Cooley, and Casey Cooley (Eagle Scout Award recipient).

In the absence of Chaplain Bill Bellomy, Gary Snowden opened the meeting with a prayer.

Compatriot Gary Lovell led the pledge of allegiance to the US flag, Compatriot Bob Vickers led the pledge to the Texas flag, and Compatriot Harmon Adair led the pledge to the SAR.

President Walt Thomas acknowledged and welcomed the guests present.

Secretary Montie Monzingo presented the minutes from the September meeting, which were approved as posted.

Treasurer Harmon Adair presented the following report:

Initial balance:	\$1,321.97
Check for P. O. Box	\$109.00
Deposit:	\$95.00
Ending balance:	\$1,212.97

Compatriot Allen Christian, an Eagle Scout, introduced Eagle Scout Casey Cooley, a Senior at Garland High School, who is pursuing an International Baccalaureate Diploma.

Allen introduced Casey Cooley and his parents Diane and Edwin Cooley.

[Photo by Tom Whitelock]





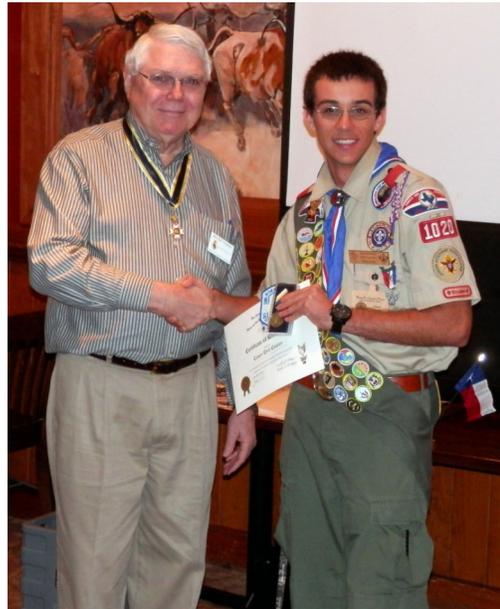
During his scouting career, Casey has amassed 36 merit badges. After Casey read his essay, “The Battle of Saratoga”, he was approved to represent our chapter for the Eagle Scout Scholarship.

Eagle Scout Casey Cooley
reading his essay.

[Photo by Tom Whitelock]

President Walt Thomas presented Casey Cooley
with a certificate, a medal, and a patch.

[Photo by Tom Whitelock]



The November meeting was discussed. It was decided that, although we plan to meet with DAR at the National Defense Luncheon on November 3rd, we will hold our scheduled meeting on November 8th.

The December 1st parade was discussed. Gary Lovell agreed to pull the boat in the parade. The boat will seat 10 people so there is adequate room for flag holders.

Compatriot Tom Whitelock informed the chapter concerning the digitalization program for TXSSAR’s collection at UNT. The program is expected to take 5 years at a cost of \$11,000. Chapters are requested to donate at least \$50 toward this project.

Allen Christian moved and Harmon Adair seconded the motion that the chapter donate \$50. The motion was carried.

Tom Whitelock complimented President Walt Thomas for handling the duties of the chaplain at the recent BOM meeting.

It was reiterated that the chapter would need volunteers to prepare the packets and man the registration desk at the TXSSAR State Convention, April 4 - 7, 2013.

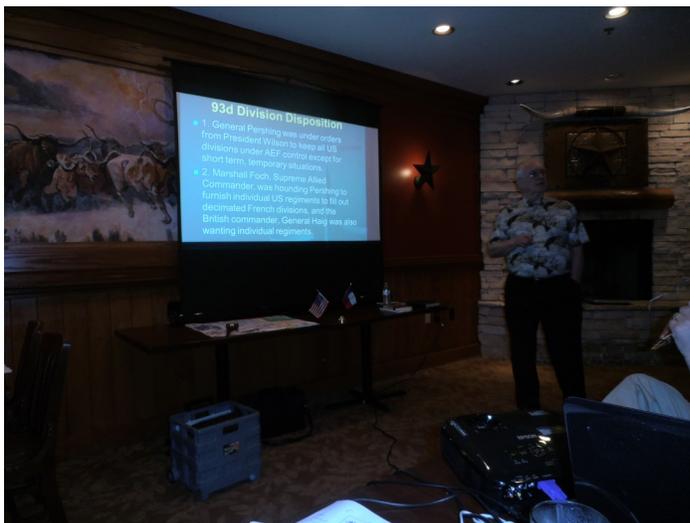
The chapter's 20th Anniversary was discussed. It was agreed to have the meeting at the Texas Land and Cattle Steak House and to ask the state president to be the guest speaker. Bill Belomy and Harmon Adair will work on preparations.

Vice President Paul Ridenour introduced our speaker, Compatriot Frank Roberts, whose talk was titled,

"The American Foreign Legion", a history of the 93d Division in WWI in France.

The 93d consisted of National Guard and draftee black enlisted personnel and black and white officers. Pershing and his army and corps commanders did not want the 93d as combat troops, so Pershing gave the division away by individual regiments to the French army. The 93d earned two Congressional Medals of Honor, over 75 Distinguished Service Crosses, and over 600 French decorations including four unit citations under French command, a feat not likely to have occurred under US Army command.

Interestingly, the French call the men of the 93d "Partridges", and the Germans called them "Black Devils".



Frank Roberts giving his PowerPoint presentation.

[Photo by Tom Whitelock]

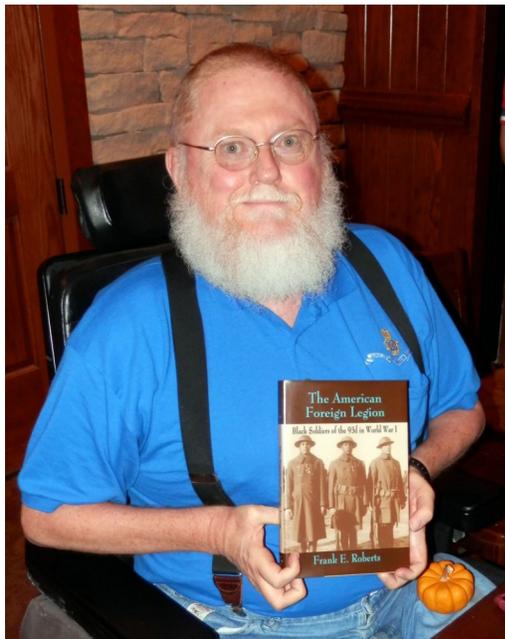
Compatriot Tom Whitelock, outdid himself this time, having his door prizes attached to a pumpkin forming turkey tail feathers.

Tom's unusual prizes took on an unusual form.

[Photo by Tom Whitelock]



The door prize winners, in order, were: Gary Snowden, Jane Christian, Casey Cooley, Montie Monzingo, Barbara Thomas, Gary Lovell, Mindy Lovell, Paul Ridenour, Allen Christian, Harmon Adair, and Walt Thomas.



Gary Snowden won the first door prize, an autographed copy of Frank Roberts' book:

The American Foreign Legion, a History of the 93d Division in WWI in France

[Photo by Tom Whitelock]

In the absence of Chaplain Bill Bellomy, Gary Snowden closed the meeting with a prayer; President Walt Thomas led the closing.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54.

Respectfully submitted,

Montie Monzingo, Secretary
East Fork-Trinity Chapter
Sons of the American Revolution

PHOTOS FROM RECENT EVENTS



Barbara and Vivian react to Frank Roberts' chilling narration.

[Photo by Tom Whitelock]



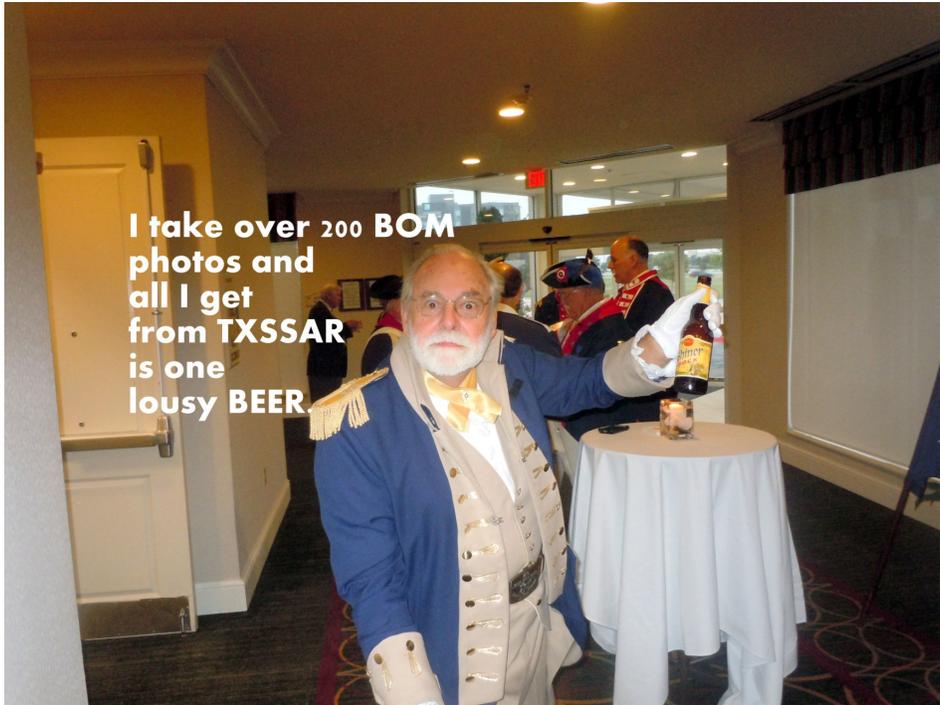
District 6 VP Harmon Adair and President Walt Thomas at the recent BOM meeting.

[Photo by Tom Whitelock]



President Walt Thomas served as the chaplain at the recent BOM meeting.

[Photo by Tom Whitelock]



Yes, but at least it's a Great Texas Beer.

[Photo by Tom Whitelock]

Americanism, Main Program Presentations

Meeting	Month	Speaker
1	January	Paul Ridenour
2	February	Montie Monzingo
3	March	Gary Lovell
4	April	Tom Crowe
5	May	Michael Radcliff
6	June	Drake Peddie
7	July	no meeting
8	August	no meeting
9	September	Drake Peddie
10	October	Frank Roberts
11	November	Drake Peddie
12	December	Christmas Party

Our guest speaker, Drake Peddie, is currently the President of the Denton Chapter of the SAR, past president of the Plano Chapter of the SAR, and is the Chairman of the Council of Chapter Presidents for the Texas Society. In addition, he is a member of the Dutch Colonial Society, the Order of Descendants of Pirates and Privateers, and is the current Senior Vice-Commander for the E.E. Ellsworth Chapter of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. The topic of his talk will be:

"Revolutionary Rewind", a collection of short stories from the Revolutionary War Period.

Our guest writer, Zack Pace, is more than just a member of the reenactment group 2nd SC Regiment (formed in 1975). In his words, he has served as the current President, Serjeant (Revolutionary War spelling), researcher, clothier, and general pain-in-the-neck. As such, Zack is an expert on the revolutionary war, in particular the 2nd SC Regiment clothing, equipment, and history. Zack has also been a high school music/history teacher for 17 years, and is working on his Masters in military history. My patriot ancestor, Peter Bozeman, served in the 2nd SC Regiment, and Zack made my cap.

Rear Rank Firing Position in Von Steuben's Regulations - Zacchary Pace, 2d SC Regt

In Steuben drill as practiced by most reenacting units, the rear rank firing position involves: a) the left foot remaining in place, and b) the right foot stepping diagonally, forward and right. This places the musket in-between and a safe distance ahead of soldiers in the front rank. This position, however, puts the rear rank in an awkward stance, stretching forward and off-balance. A review of Steuben's Regulations, along with commentaries by Col. John F. Grimke, 4th SC Regiment, from December 1778, shows the current rear rank firing position practiced by reenactors is incorrect.

Section III of the Manual Exercise is usually cited for the firing positions in both front and rear ranks:

Take – Aim! One motion.

Step back about six inches with the right foot, bringing the left toe to the front...

This places the muzzles of the second rank directly over the right shoulder of the front rank, and perilously close to their faces, even by 18th century standards. So, to make this safer, reenactors have adjusted the position so that the rear rank steps *forward* with the right foot. However, the front rank is simultaneously stepping *backward* with their right feet, so the rear rank must take a large diagonal step forward with the right foot while keeping their left foot fast. This creates a very awkward and off-balance position.

Reenactors attempt to have the rear rank carry out the rear rank foot position under "Take Aim" in the Manual Exercise, yet the presence of a rear rank isn't mentioned under that command. It never tells them to do anything; it never even says BOTH ranks will do this. In fact, the presence of a rear rank is NEVER mentioned in the whole Manual Exercise section, save in the command "Charge Bayonets."

What if there is a fundamental misinterpretation of this section? In the section before this one, Steuben orders that soldiers be instructed individually and in a single rank. Then comes the Manual Exercise, after which men are to be exercised in their companies. I believe that Steuben wrote the Manual Exercise section to be done in only one rank. The exercise simply cannot be done in two ranks. The obvious problem of the rear rank muzzles at "Take Aim" has been noted; further, the commands of "Ground/Take Up Firelocks" are *impossible* to carry out. But doesn't Steuben mention the rear rank under the command "Charge Bayonet"? Yes, but I suggest that this is simply a poor editorial decision. There is no bayonet drill, nor anywhere else that would be convenient to place the specifications on the rear rank body position at the Charge (though perhaps a more appropriate place would be under Chapter XI, Article 2, "Of the Charge with Bayonets").

This confusion in the printed regulations has left reenactors trying to fit a square peg in a round hole. We have based our firing positions on the wrong section of the drill. Steuben fully addressed the position of each rank's firing position in the section entitled (oddly enough):

Position of each Rank in the Firings...

Many reenactors have dismissed this section because it treats each rank as firing independently from the other. I suggest that Steuben wrote it this way to show clarity between each rank's firing position, NOT to suggest that firing by ranks has an inherently different position than when firing by company. Why would the rear rank only step over when the front rank isn't firing?

Here are the commands as written:

Rear rank! Make Ready! One motion.

Recover and cock as before directed, at the same time stepping about six inches to the right, so as to place yourself opposite the interval of the front rank [underlined by author].

Take Aim! Fire!

As before explained. [i.e., step back about six inches with the right foot...]

In December 1778, Lt. Col. John Ternant, newly appointed Inspector General for the Southern Department, arrived in Charleston, S.C. He began instructing the southern officers on the new Steuben drill. He did not have printed copies as of yet, so the officers were obliged to take notes. The notes of Lt. Col. John F. Grimke, 4th SC

Regiment, have survived in the manuscript archives of the South Carolina Historical Society. He specifically addresses the rear rank firing position, not in a Manual Exercise context, but in the context of being in action:

The Custom for the Soldiers of the Second Rank to carry their Right foot opposite to the interval of the next file (being occasioned by the necessity of stepping over the Leggs [sic] of the men in the front Rank when kneeled down as in the order of three deep) is become in our present order not only useless by but even Pernicious. It throws the Body into a vacillating & unsettled Position which renders the leveling of the musquet very uncertain. The Soldiers of the rear Rank therefore instead of that movement will make a short side step with both Feet to the Right at the word of Command "Make Ready" & at the word "Take Sight" , They are to carry the Right Foot behind the Left in the same manner as the Soldiers of the Front Rank, firing in the same Position as This & Stepping again to the Left afterwards to Cover their File Leader.*

*Note: "Take Sight" is Steuben's original wording of "Take Aim", prior to publication of his Regulations in 1779

In other words, the S.C. Continentals had been using a modified version of the British 1764 drill, in which the men deployed in three ranks (see illustration). The men of the 2nd rank stepped out with just the right foot, due to having THREE ranks, the first of which kneeled. The 2nd rank couldn't shuffle over because of the legs of the front rank being in the way; they had to step over the front ranks' legs with just the right foot. This was necessary but was awkward. Eventually, the southern troops began deploying in two lines, but never modified the drill position of the second rank. Now that the men are in TWO ranks, with the first on NOT kneeling, there is no need for the clumsy off-balance method of leaning out with the right foot. Steuben corrected this oversight. Now the men will step over and be able to stand upright and take better AIM ("leveling the musquet"), which Steuben makes clear is now more of a priority than just "Presenting".



This observation was written by a trained lawyer/officer, based on instructions from the mouth of the Southern Department Inspector General, himself a Steuben protégé. Steuben's Regulations have several contradictions, but here we have clarification of what Steuben intended from a man who was there.

So, at the "Make Ready", the rear rank side-steps to the right, placing themselves in-between the front rank men (I suggest to perform this in two counts). At "Take Aim", both ranks step back six inches with the right foot. Immediately after firing, both ranks assume the Priming Position (feet in an "L", facing 45 degrees to the right); the rear rank side-steps to the left (again in two counts), again covering behind their file leader.

Since this "Take Aim" position puts the muzzles of the rear rank closer to the faces of the front rank than our does current reenactor practice, inevitably some reenactors will view this as a being "unsafe." This is not the case. The distance between the two ranks is specified at two feet; this places the muzzles of the rear rank approximately 32"-36" in front of the front rank, depending on musket type. This is a perfectly safe distance, IF the men in the rear rank maintain proper distance from the front rank, and both ranks take the correct size step back when firing. Even given slight discrepancies in execution, the muzzle clearance should never fall below 24", still a quite safe distance. As with all of our activities regarding weapons on the field, proper training is the key to safety, NOT a dependence on redesigned drill to make up for poor execution by reenactors. Proper drilling and deployment of the men (recruits on the front rank, more experienced men in the rear) is essential. If we train our men adequately, there is no safety issue.

This new rear rank footwork will require a bit more practice than what we are used to doing, but in the end it will result in less cluttered ranks and better execution. And, of course, it also is more historically accurate.

By the way, Grimke also states in no uncertain terms that the men advanced into action at the POISE, but that is another story...

Typical Reenactor Firing Practice

First Position



Make Ready! (both ranks stand fast)



Take Aim! (right foot: FR back, RR fwd)



Fire! (assume priming position in 1 count)



Steuben Regulations

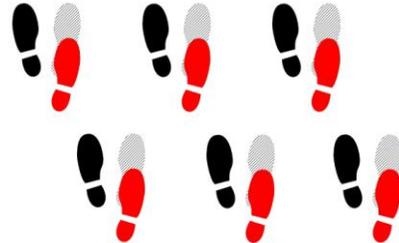
First Position



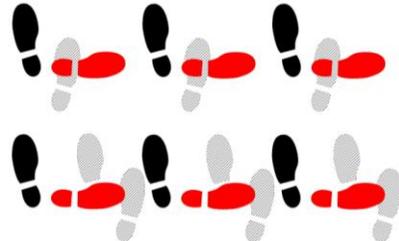
Make Ready! (RR shifts right in 2 counts)



Take Aim! (both ranks: right foot back)



Fire! (RR in 2 counts: left then right)



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