



Robert Rankin Chapter #62

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Our Constitutional Celebration

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For those of you who missed the Second Constitutional Celebration of the Robert Rankin Chapter you missed a real treat. Over forty-five Compatriots and guests gathered to hear our Bill of Rights in action, observe the honoring of Officers who patrol West Harris County, and thanks being given to those who fly the American Flag. In addition, the Rankin Chapter started a new tradition with the issuance of SAR Challenge Coins!

Our Bill of Rights

Assistant Harris Co. District Attorney Darin Darby, a Chief Prosecutor with the crimes against children unit, reminded the Rankin members and guests that the Bill of Rights is a living document and is closely followed by the D.A.'s office.



In the photo above, Darin, on the right, is emphasizing that his office gives a speedy trial to all those charged with a crime. On the left of the photo is Ida Fay Schmidt, Regent Libertad Chapter, DAR.

Prosecutor Darby, a former adjunct professor at the University of Texas School of Law, recalled, to the amusement of those assembled, his first conversation with Strawman Compatriot Jones. As I recall, it went something like this:

Jones: Mr. Darby, do you believe in the Constitution?

Darby: Yes Sir.

Jones: Mr. Darby, do you believe and uphold the Constitution and the Bill of Rights including the First Amendment regarding the freedom of speech?

Darby: Mr. Jones, I am sworn to uphold the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Jones: Great! You are our speaker for free!

Compatriot Bobby Smith presented Mr. Darby, formerly a briefing and staff attorney for Bob Gammage and James A. Baker during their tenures as Justices on the Texas Supreme Court, with the Rankin traditional coffee mug and a Speaker COA and thanked Mr. Darby for his volunteer work with the blind.



Rankin President David Jones notes that tonight the Rankin Chapter celebrates Constitution Week which begins September 17.

Protecting the Constitution

The Rankin Chapter believes that a critical element of protecting the Constitution is served by law enforcement officers. In the photo below, from left to right are Harris County District IV Deputy Sheriffs Diane Medina, Shane Shandria, Kelly Hudson and Lieutenant Sean Conrad.



Each of the Officers was recognized by the Robert Rankin Chapter with a medal and the corresponding certificate.

The SAR Medal for Heroism was presented to Deputy Sheriff Diane Medina. The Medal for Heroism may be presented by a chapter for acts of bravery. It recognizes outstanding bravery and self-sacrifice in the face of imminent danger, i.e., acts which involve great personal courage and risk to the recipient. Officer Medina, a probationary patrol deputy, was on a rookie training exercise with her supervising officer when they responded to an armed robbery. Her partner was shot multiple times by the criminal and Officer Medina reacted to protect the fallen officer while confronting the armed suspect. Her courage, under hostile fire, and her devotion to duty are inspirational and exemplary to all.

Special thanks go to Public Service Committee Chairman Gus Mistrot, member David Jones, and Lt. Parker, Harris County Sheriff Department. David Jones met with Lt. Parker to explain the public service recognition program and the standards. Lt. Conrad provided the names of the officers and the description of service. Well done!

Color Guard Commander Patrick Kerr, below left, holds the presentation pillow to which the NSSAR Medal for Heroism is affixed prior to presentation by Lt. Conrad, in the middle, to Officer Medina right.



Deputy Sheriffs Shane Shandria and Kelly Hudson were awarded the Law Enforcement Commendation Medals. Both were involved in a high-speed chase and apprehension of a suspect known to be armed and dangerous, without loss of life. In the photo below, Lt. Conrad is affixing the medal to Officer Shandria, while Officer Hudson awaits his recognition.



Harris County Sheriff's Department, District IV, located in West Harris County encompasses an area in excess of 216 square miles and a population over 220,000.

Celebrating Patriotism

J. David Sympson, past Historian General (and now Secretary General) for the NSSAR, reminds us that the “first SAR national program was the observance and general display of the Stars & Stripes, the national ensign, on Flag Day, June 14, of each year.”

In furtherance of this program, each chapter is encouraged to award at least one flag certificate each year. The Robert Rankin Chapter has led the State of Texas in the issuance of Flag Certificates for the last three years and is doing so again this year.



The Rankin Chapter awarded six certificates this evening with the first to the Drymond Family with Keith Drymond, shown on the right above while in the photo below, from left to right are Tom Strother, Mst Sgt. Bullock, Air Force JROTC Langham Creek High School, and Compatriot Jackson.



Tom Strother received a flag certificate for keeping the flag flying for 37 years in his capacity as an educator in the Cy Fair I.S.D, the last 15 as a principal.

Lieutenant Sean Conrad received a Flag Certificate on behalf of the Harris County Sheriff's Department, District IV.

A guest in attendance for our Constitutional Celebration received a certificate anonymously. The guest noted, “I fly the flag because my Dad served in World War II and because I love my country. I do not fly the flag because I wish recognition.”

The last flag certificate was awarded to Mark Jackson of Leo A. Daly, arguably the largest privately held architectural firm with over 1,100 professionals in over 20 offices worldwide. The firm entered the 23rd Annual AIA Sandcastle Competition which was held at East Beach, Galveston where they won 1st place in the Most Patriotic Theme Category.

Sculpted into the sand is the phrase, “Not every beach is for a sandcastle”, with footsteps leading up a hill to a sand triangular display box with a sculpted folded flag within. Their sign read, “Honoring the 65th anniversary of D-Day, June 6, 1944. A salute to those who serve: past and present.” Flying over head for the duration was the American Flag.

In the photo below accepting the certificate is Architect Mark Jackson (center), flanked by Rankin World War II veterans Douglas Thornton (l) and Richard Shanks (r).



Good Citizenship Lapel Pin

The Rankin Chapter awarded three Good Citizenship Lapel Pins as part of its Constitutional Celebration. The first was awarded to Lieutenant Sean Conrad of the Harris County Sheriff's Department in recognition of his service and leadership.

The second GCLP was awarded to A. Thomas Strother III in recognition of his 37 years of service to the community as an educator and administrator within the Cy Fair I.S.D. In addition, Tom permitted members of the Robert Rankin Chapter to present American History lessons on his campus through its flag shows, power point presentations of the Battle of Lexington and Concord, and the reliving of the moon shot through the eyes of a N.A.S.A. controller who retold the experience of a rocket ship leaving America, landing on the moon, and returning to America. Tom was also responsible, along with other Cy Fair I.S.D. Administrators, in bringing the Air Force JROTC program to Langham Creek High School. Principal Tom is on the left while Compatriot Tom is on the right.



The third lapel pin was presented to Mark Jackson of Leo Daly in recognition of his participation as lead design of the Sandcastle team, his monthly involvement with his firm's charitable building contributions, and in recognition of his firm's design involvement in the WWII memorial in Washington D.C.

NSSAR Challenge Coin

The origination of the Challenge Coin, shown below, is in much debate; however,



within the Rankin Chapter, the first to receive one was Color Guard Commander Patrick Kerr. Two challenges and coins were distributed Constitutional Celebration Night. The first was given to Tom Strother to prove his lineage to his Revolutionary Era Ancestors within one year and return the coin with his lineage papers. The second was given to Master Sgt. Anthony Bullock (on the left below, Compatriot Jackson is on the right).



Air Force JROTC Instructor Bullock was challenged to nominate his best junior cadet and enter him into the SAR Extended JROTC program. The coin would be returned with the paperwork and would then be given to another one of the thirteen schools with JROTC programs served by Robert Rankin under the guidance of Compatriot Kerr.