

Primary Sources Battle of the Hook

Unit: Royal Deux-Ponts Regiment of Infantry (?)

Sous-Lieutenant Friedrich Franck von/de la Roche (1757-1805)

Den 7. Attack. Tarlet. den fr. Mons. de Choisy welcher mit der Legion des H. v. Laizen 100 Am. und 800 fr. Truppen auf der anderen Seitten von Jork River, 4 E Meilen von Gloucester Posten gefaßt hatte, wurde aber mit beträchtlichen Verluste zurück getrieben, und selbstn tödlichen verwundet.

On the 7th Tarleton attacked the French Monsieur de Choisy who had taken up a post together with 100 American and 800 French troops on the other side of the York River, four English miles from Gloucester, but was pushed back with considerable loss and himself mortally wounded.

De la Roche Papers, 1778-1954. MS 1210, Special Collections, H. Furlong Baldwin Library, Maryland Center for History and Culture, Baltimore, MD.

De la Roche was commissioned as a sous-lieutenant in the Royal Deux-Ponts on 4 March 1780, and resigned his commission in 1784. He then married and moved to Offenbach in Germany in 1787 where his father lived but immigrated to Philadelphia around 1790 and became active in the shipping business. Following a series of losses in 1795 in the run-up to the Quasi War with France he returned to France with his family. When his claims for compensation were denied, he joined the Russian service and drowned on 5 December 1805 in the aftermath of the Battle of Austerlitz in the Satschan ponds south of Austerlitz.

The account of the Yorktown Campaign in his papers begins 19 August 1781 and ends in the middle of a sentence on 14 October 1781 but de la Roche is most likely not the author. According to his personnel file in the Service historique de la Défense in Vincennes (Yb 346; 1Ye 14571; Yd 4 mars 1780), de la Roche remained behind in France in March 1780 and asked only on 27 September 1782 for permission to join his unit in the United States. He never left France. I am grateful to Lt. Col. Gilbert Bodinier (ret.) for the information from the personnel file.

For more information on la Roche see Robert A. Selig, "Friedrich Franck von la Roche (1757-1805). A German-American Life from Warthausen to Yorktown, Philadelphia and Austerlitz?" *German Life* vol. 29 No. 1 (June/July 2022).