



THE CONTINENTAL SOLDIER

VOLUME XIX, NUMBER 2 SEPTEMBER 2006

THE SOLDIER MARCHES ON!

Welcome to the second issue of the 2006 Soldier! Once again I'd like to thank everyone who has helped make this issue a success. Anne Henninger, David Valuska and Chip Gnam continue to be invaluable and you would not be reading this without their help.

I'd like to draw your attention to the information about The Continental Line's annual meeting found on page 3. The meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2007. Please be sure to submit your registration by December 31, 2006. Also note that the deadline for booking a hotel room at The Line's discounted rate is January 4, 2007.

Through conversations with Line members at various events it's come to my attention that when The Soldier offered subscriptions in the past some of you may have paid for one and never received your issues. While we're still trying to figure out if we'll have a subscription process, I would be very interested in hearing from anyone who did pay for one and never received it. While I can't change the past I'd like to get you copies of the issues for which I've been the editor. We'll operate on the honor system, so please drop me a line at editor@continentalline.org if you paid for The Soldier in the past and never received it.

As new issues of The Soldier get published we'll continue to post them on the web page. I'd also be interested in hearing about any interest in an email distribution list to announce when the issue gets posted. Currently we're only sending hardcopies to unit COs and I'm exploring different ideas to alert other members of the Line. Please let me know what you think.

Respectfully,

Matt Schickling
Editor, The Continental Soldier

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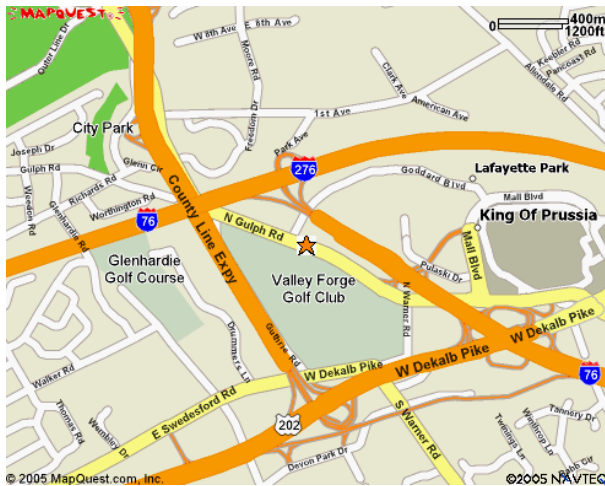
ANNUAL CONTINENTAL LINE MEETING

The annual Continental Line planning meeting is fast approaching. The meeting will be held at the Sheraton Park Ridge Hotel in King of Prussia, PA on **February 3, 2007** from 8AM – 4PM. The cost of registration is \$45.00 per attendee which will include Saturday’s continental breakfast and a hot and cold buffet lunch. Please return the attached form by December 31, 2006 to register for the meeting. A web link will be added to the Continental Line webpage so that registration may be made online (<http://www.continentalline.org>). The hotel has rooms blocked for us at a special rate for both Friday and Saturday. The cost of a traditional double room is \$103.00 plus tax per night. The deadline to make reservations at this price is **January 4, 2007**. Be sure to let the registration desk know that you are booking for the Continental Line meeting. To book a room please visit that website or contact:

Sheraton Park Ridge Hotel
480 North Gulph Road
King of Prussia, PA 19406
Phone 610-337-1800

Visit the following link for directions to the hotel and meeting location:

<http://www.starwoodhotels.com/sheraton/property/area/index.html?propertyID=97505>



Name _____ Unit Name _____

Also attending: _____

Number of people attending meeting Feb 3, 2007 _____

Amount included \$45.00 X number attending \$ _____

Mail Check (by December 31, 2006) made out to the Continental Line to:

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Questions: najanie@aol.com or 978-686-2837

Don't forget to bring a donation for our raffle. Thank you

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Greetings to all Continental Line members:

It doesn't seem possible that this reenacting season is coming to a close. Within a few weeks our final event, the 225th anniversary of the Battle of Yorktown will be upon us. As most of you know this battle forced one of the most powerful armies in the world to surrender to the American and French forces. And although Yorktown was not the last battle to be fought during the Revolution, it was certainly the turning point in our quest for independence. This battle is one of the "Big-Three" events this year, with all three reenacting groups (British Brigade, Brigade of the American Revolution and Continental Line) participating. I would like to personally thank all the units and individuals who are working so diligently to make this event happen, it takes an amazing amount of stamina and fortitude to pull this altogether. Hopefully, all CL units wanting to take part in this important anniversary have sent in all the required paperwork.

For those members and/or units new to the Continental Line, we will soon be celebrating our own anniversary – the 20th anniversary of the Line will be next year. For myself, I am grateful to our founding members; what started out as a handful of members has grown to an organization of over 70 units. Throughout the years, we have been able to put on some of the largest Revolutionary War reenactments. Being a member of the Line has been a great experience for both myself and the United Train of Artillery. To mark the occasion, tentative plans are being discussed to hold an anniversary celebration at Mount Vernon, possibly in October of 2007. More information will be provided in future newsletters, along with important information about next season's events.

Again I want to thank Matt for his dedication and perseverance (especially with me) in putting together the Continental Soldier. Any thoughts, ideas on potential articles or upcoming events, please submit them to him at mschickling@hotmail.com or editor@continentalline.org; he welcomes the help. Any other questions or concerns, please contact your Department Coordinator or myself at captuta@verizon.net.

Although we are always looking forward to the future of the Continental Line, it is important for us to remember our past. It is with great sadness that I report the loss of two Line members this year, Mark Adamo and John Villven. Both of these men were in the hobby well over twenty years and I considered them not only fellow reenactors and artillerists, but also close friends. They were both from New Jersey, Mark was with Doughty's Artillery and John was from Lamb's Artillery. Their presence at our meetings and out in the field will surely be missed.

For those of you going to Yorktown, I'll see you there, if not then at our annual meeting in February.

Yours in the hobby,

John Taber
Continental Line Chairman

NORTHERN DEPARTMENT REPORT

Greetings everyone. This communication will focus on three important pieces of information, Yorktown, your safety at events and future Continental Line events. I guess I'll start with Yorktown.

By the time you read this, you should have submitted your unit roster and musket list for the Yorktown event. I hope everyone realizes that the commanding officer of each unit must sign the individual member registration form for each member of your unit going to Yorktown. You are verifying that these folks are members of your unit. When they get to Yorktown, their registration will be matched with your master list, and everyone will be accounted for. While an elaborate way of not accepting "walk-ons" to the event, it should work and discourage uninvited individuals and units.

Speaking of Yorktown, I have to say that my contact with the uninvited units and individuals has been incredible, and I also have to say that for those of you who have been contacted by these folks, your response has been consistently the same: You can join us as individuals, purchase or make and wear our uniform, learn our safety procedures and do our drill, attend our meetings and events and etc., and that's the way it has to be. While these uninvited folks continue to fish around for a unit to join, it appears that they are receiving the same message from everyone. Ever since our annual meeting, I've been contacted by various minutemen companies (which I can understand) who appear to have stepped out of 1975-1976. I've been contacted by mountain men groups who feel they are in the same time period and want to go just because Yorktown is there. Probably the oddest request came from a Confederate group who wanted to go to Yorktown because the Brits would be holding the Confederate line. Let me just say handling these requests has been an adventure.

Now a few words about your personal safety at any event. With summer upon us, we've had both rain and hot, humid weather this year. We can't do much about the rain, but I find it interesting that there is little hesitation by organizers to cancel a drill or an engagement when it's raining. After all, we can't shoot in the rain. But, what can we do about the very hot and humid weather? We can encourage participants to go onto the field dressed lightly. There are original references to soldiers stripping themselves of their coats and heavy gear before Monmouth and other battles. We can make sure we hydrate ourselves, not only at the event, but for several days prior to the event as well. That way, we will have ample fluids in our body when the event begins. The other thing is that event organizers should be willing to shorten or cancel a drill or even a battle in the sun for the safety of the participants. While medical personnel may be around, isn't it better to avoid the need to put them to work? The heat took me down at Rockford Plantation a few years back, and I would not wish that experience on anyone. As for myself, and I hope others, don't be afraid to protect your health and say NO to falling in for a drill and/or battle when you feel the weather conditions are too severe. I hope that event organizers will understand this and be supportive versus trying to pressure people into doing something that could be dangerous to their health. While we can't shoot in the rain, we also can't shoot when we're passed out or dead!

Now for future events. 2007 is rapidly approaching, and the Continental Line needs quality events for our member units. While Bordentown is on the calendar, and I hope everyone will support this event, please be thinking of what your unit can do to sponsor an event in your area. We all know the toll that high gas prices are taking on the number of participants at events this year, but if events are well thought out and prepared for the 2007 annual meeting, then your enthusiasm can be what it takes to draw people to the event no matter what gas prices are. For everyone, when it comes to pumping up your event, please feel free to involve your regional coordinators and Chairman. We can assist you in a variety of ways. As an organization, we need to support our regional shows and our full Line shows. Without them, we would all be sitting at home.

Well, thanks for letting me have my say.

See you at Yorktown,

Mark Richardson
Northern Dept. Coordinator

SOUTHERN DEPARTMENT REPORT

Greetings and Salutations!

The second quarter of 2006 has kept the Southern Department busy. An informal (and totally unscientific) poll disclosed that the Guilford Courthouse event in March was one of the best 225th events yet held. The daily battles and Sunday morning tactical were as close to their historic counterparts as Patrick O'Kelley (Otho Holland Williams... tall, good looking, easy to get along with), who wrote the script, could make them. The City of Greensboro moved the event to Price Park, which approximated the terrain of the battlefield on a 1:3 scale. As the action approached the Third Line, the advancing British were obscured by smoke from the artillery. It was eerie to see shapes moving in the haze, but not to see them clearly until they were close at hand. We also had the advantage of an adjacent wooded area for a Sunday morning tactical involving infantry, cavalry, and Boots. I believe that the 2NC with 103 attendees, of whom 57 were men under arms, was the largest unit in attendance.

April took several units from the Southern Department to Gunston Hall, VA - a great tie-in to Mike Cecere's *Potomac Raids: April 1781* article in the *Soldier*. Later in April the IISC, 2NC, 1VA, and 7VA participated in the 225th of Petersburg. On 20-21 May, Bryant White and Pam Patrick White organized the Field Music of the American Revolution for the annual Drummers Call weekend at Colonial Williamsburg. Musicians from the First Maryland, IISC, 6th NC, 7th VA, Clarks Illinois Regiment, 10th Connecticut Regiment, Royal Deux Ponts, and the MCV 4H participated and did the hobby proud! In late May the 7th VA attended an event at Gloucester Court House.

Upcoming Southern Department events include:

26-27 August, Head of Elk 225th, MD (6th MD, POC: Fred Allen)
2-3 September, Eutaw Springs 225th, SC (IISC, POC: Herb Puckett)
21-22 October, Yorktown 225th, VA
4-5 November, Camden, SC

One administrative note: As you renew your unit's insurance policy, please be sure to provide me with a copy of the new binder.

The new *Soldier* is out and has been well received. Please take some time to peruse it, if you have not already done so. I'd also encourage any of our articulate Southern Department members who feel touched by the Muse to consider submitting an article for publication. We need **your** help to continue publishing.

Lastly, a warm welcome to the IISC's newest member, Chloe Virginia Armstrong!

Your Most Humble and Obstreperous Servant,

Anne Henninger
Southern Department Coordinator
Continental Line

HUCK'S DEFEAT AND UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

ERICK NASON, IIND SC REGIMENT

This month I want to take a look at the events surrounding Huck's Defeat, and how unconventional warfare played into it. By 1780, numerous partisan bands were being formed in both North and South Carolina. There was no conventional or "regular army" force since the destruction at Camden. An insurgency was being waged against the British occupiers. Along with conducting guerilla warfare against the British, the insurgents also collected intelligence against the British and kept the different partisan bands informed on movements and locations of camps. There was also limited subversion, showing the Loyalists how the British government couldn't protect them, as well as conduct sabotage against the British Forces.

The British had to do something about this and waged a counter-insurgency operation to pacify the back country. When Cornwallis assumed command of the Southern Campaign once Clinton departed, he relied upon two men to wage this counter-insurgency. Patrick Ferguson was the Inspector-General for the Loyalist Militia who really believed the Loyalist militias would perform well, and free up the regular British forces to continue the campaign. Of course, he stirred up the hornet's nest by demanding the back country folk to stop waging a guerrilla war against the British "or he would lay their homes waste with fire and sword." He would regret this when he was surrounded on King's Mountain and killed.

The other person Cornwallis relied upon for counter-insurgency was Banastre Tarleton. He was very direct in his approach to quelling the insurgency, using intimidation and fear to squash any local support for the partisans. As Tarleton and the British moved into the interior of South Carolina, they encouraged the Loyalists to harass their Whig neighbors. Instead of causing intimidation, it actually caused them to support the partisans more and sparked a fierce resistance. The British Legion was just as callous and vindictive as the Loyal South Carolina militias.

One of the areas that were considered "most adverse to the British government" was along the Catawba River Valley, settled by mostly Scots-Irish. Colonel George Turnbull, commander of the Rocky Mount garrison, learned that Bratton and "some of the violent rebels" had returned to their plantations and were actively recruiting. He ordered Captain Christian Huck of the British Legion to return to this region and track down these rebels and to "persuade" the residents to be loyal to the King. Not the best choice Turnbull could have made. Captain Huck had already led an expedition into this region back in June and was the primary reason for the increase in Whig support and activity. Turnbull ordered Huck to gather as many Loyalists with him and with said force, push the rebels as far as you deem convenient. Huck was determined to push the rebels as far and as hard as he could!

Word was soon out that Huck and his men were on their way with about a hundred men. He had his men gather all of the men from the region and made his claims how he would root out the rebels. He had missed the opportunity to capture Reverend Simpson in June, he told his audience "if the Rebels were as thick as trees, and Jesus Christ himself were to command them, he would defeat them!" Then he confiscated all of their horses and forced the men to walk home. As angry as the men were for losing their horses, the fact that Huck took the Lord's name in vain infuriated these devote Presbyterians. Not only are we now looking at an insurgency per say, now we also have secular fighting between the Presbyterians who believe the English are Protestant are blasphemers. (Gee, where have I seen this before?).

The word was out and it set the tone for the upcoming engagement between Huck and the local partisans. Many fence sitters made up their minds and joined the partisans due to Huck's comments. Additionally, Huck's progress through the Catawba River Valley would give rise of stories concerning British atrocities and brutality. At William Adair's home, Huck's men stripped the family of everything except their clothes. He threatened to hand Mrs. Adair's husband if she didn't send word for her two sons to abandon the Whig cause and join the King. Huck's men departed and Mr. Adair spoke to a patriot patrol that stopped in later, and told them of Huck and how he took everything. The roughing-up of back country women was standard practice intended to intimidate the populace. Whether or not this was substantiated, the use of propaganda to get the support for the partisans worked effectively, another means of unconventional warfare.

Captain John McClure of Sumter's command was one of the handfuls of partisans on Huck's most wanted list. On July 11th, Huck approached McClure's homestead hoping to catch him. While he wasn't there, two other men belonging to Sumter's band who were making bullets for the partisans were captured and taken away, to be hanged in the morning. When Mrs. McClure protested, she was struck with the flat of a sword. In the confusion of the confrontation with Mrs. McClure, the British overlooked her daughter, Mary McClure who was able to evade them and run to Sumter's camp.

HUCK'S DEFEAT, *CONTINUED*

Along with the McClure, Captain Huck was hunting for William Hill and William Bratton. In June, Huck had reduced the Hill's home and forced the family into the woods, the Bratton's place was untouched. This would be Huck's next target.

Warned by her neighbors, Martha Bratton and her six-year old son waited for the enemy to arrive. When a detachment arrived and demanded to know where her husband was, she replied she didn't know. This infuriated one of the detachment's Tory members who grasped a reaping hook, and threatened to cut off her head unless she talked. She held firm and did not waver, even under that threat. This was a hard thing for the Tories to face; to them the only good rebel was a dead one. Yet, here was a woman facing them down and would not tell them what they wanted. Before the Tory could do anything, the reaping hook was struck down by Captain Adamson, a Tory from Camden who continued to beat the offending Tory with the flat of his sword. The captain apologized to Mrs. Bratton for the rude behavior of his man.

Later, Captain Huck arrived and demanded dinner from Mrs. Bratton. Three elderly neighbors who had been visiting were also taken prisoner, to be hung in the morning. Huck's men did not fire the house, and moved on down the road about a half-mile to James Williamson's plantation. The house was abandoned, seeing all five sons were partisans under Bratton. Captain Huck occupied the house with his 35 dragoons from the British Legion, 20 New York Loyalist Volunteers and 60 local Tories. The prisoners were locked into a corn crib to await their morning fate. Mrs. Bratton dispatched her slave Watt to find her husband once the British departed. Watt found Bratton at Fishing Creek and told him where Huck had encamped.

Joseph Kerr, who had been crippled from birth, was allowed to move freely through Huck's camp, they believing a cripple could do them no harm. Though Captain Huck had him retained until night fall, Joseph Kerr was able to escape and bring valuable intelligence to the partisans. The British camp had lacked security, only one man posted on the road, while the Tories had three men positioned around their camp. Unfortunately for Huck, he did not realize how many partisans were closing in on his position. After hearing of Huck's movement, Captain John McClure and Colonel William Bratton with about 150 men departed from Sumter's camp and rode home. Captain Edward Lacy and Colonels Andrew Neal and William Hill were also tracking Huck with their men. The partisans were informed at the Adair's house they were facing a combined Tory-British force of "a thousand men." (The one time the partisans received bad intelligence.) Undeterred, the partisans pressed on after Huck.

The partisans had roughly 500 men from four bands closing in on Huck. One detachment of 150 men was sent down the wrong road. Some of the men were not on horse back and another hundred fell behind. By the time the South Carolina partisans arrived at Bratton's place, they had 250 men with all of the leading patriots from the area in attendance: Bratton, Hill, McClure, Neal and Lacey. This gave them an excellent advantage over Huck; they knew the area and the terrain. Lacey also knew his father was a hard-core Loyalist as well as his brother Reuben who served under Huck. Seeing his farm was only a couple miles from Huck's camp, and his father determination to warn them, Lacey had his father tied to the bed in order to prevent him from warning Huck. Reuben, on the other hand, was a slacker and suffered from poor eye sight.

Some of the scouts spotted an approaching rider, who turned out to be Reuben. As he approached, the scouts called out to him as "friends of the King" and needed directions. Reuben told them everything, including where the sentries were due to his poor eye sight and being in the dark. After gleaning as much intelligence from him, they let him pass and continued on. The partisans split their force between Bratton and Lacey, while a new commander, Captain John Moffett arrived so the attack would come from three directions. Bratton and Lacey would attack from the different ends of the road which ran through the middle of the camp. Moffett, using the orchard for concealment, would approach the camp from the rear.

A sentry did see Moffett's men approach and fired a shot at them. The sentry ran back into the camp and some of the Legionnaires were able to mount their horses. Lacey's men were slowed by a swamp, while Bratton's men closed to within 75-yards before opening fire. Using the split-rail fence to rest their muskets and rifles, Bratton's men fired murderously into the confused camp as the British stumbled out of their tents. The battle was well under way before Huck emerged from the house. Mounting his horse, he began to rally his men before a sharpshooter; Thomas Carroll put a bullet in his head and dropped him from his horse. Once Huck fell, the Tories and Legionnaires panicked and finally collapsed as the partisans pressed the attack through the camp. Within the hour, the battle was over. Only approximately 24 of the British-Tory force were able to escape, the rest killed, captured or wounded. The partisans recovered as much of the weapons, equipment and horses from the fallen. This battle was a great example how guerrilla fighters were able to stop and destroy a professional British force through unconventional warfare.

WHAT EVERY SOLDIER NEEDS

RON VIDEAU, IIND SC REGIMENT

We who have been involved in the hobby for many years seem to take so many things for granted and forget that once we knew next to nothing. We tend to ignore the new soldier in the ranks and the ton of questions that he throws at us. At times this can be a pain, but then I remember how I was when I started out and how I wished I had an experienced person to turn to for answers. I also remember that 26 years ago when I started out there were few sutlers out there selling the items you needed. Now the choices for gear are plenty and a new person to the hobby can easily make the wrong choice in equipment and clothing when he goes shopping at an event or on line. I know that he needs a helping hand in his first and very critical months within the hobby so I try and make the time for him. If he is allowed to go off to sutler row by himself, he will always return to camp proudly showing off his new-found treasures, many of which can be totally incorrect for the period and his unit. It is only then that we wish we had gone off with the well-meaning newbie. We then will be forced over the next few events to try to find ways to let him know without hurting his feelings that he has thrown away a great deal of his hard-earned money on a pack full of farb.

Now I am not pointing a finger at anyone person nor unit when I say these things. I'm just stating the facts. I know that some of us try our best to look out for the new soldier but we cannot always be with him. In an effort to try and head the farb off at the pass, I have come up with this simple-to-remember list. Just about every unit has its own special items in the way of buttons and clothing that are particular to the unit. However, when it comes to a soldier's personal kit, most items are the same no matter which side of the line he belongs to. Think about it, just what are the basic (practical) items that a soldier from the period needs to be correct? Easy answer - he'll need something to drink out of, to eat out of, and to eat with.

Let's look at these one at a time, my friend, and save you a few bucks while we're at it. Your cup can be your best friend and an all-purpose friend while at an event if you just let it. Yes, a mug made of pewter or crockery may look good at first, but a simple tin cup is really the way to go. Why? The pewter mug tends to be heavy. Carrying a crockery or pewter mug with you onto the field along with all the other accoutrements will help you understand this. Also if you want to do it right, you'll find out after doing a little research that most soldiers never were issued pewter. Therefore you'll end up leaving your heavy lead-colored friend at home. Crockery mugs, like pewter, look cool, but they too are heavy and tend to break easily. The simple tin mug is the way to go. Why? First of all they are cheaper than the other two types. Secondly, unlike the other two types, you can also cook a meal or your coffee/tea in your tin cup. Tin cups come in many sizes and styles. The photo below shows the most popular and period correct sizes.

Now when it comes to what to put your food into, don't bother with a plate of any kind unless you're an officer wanting to show off. If you're a simple everyday soldier the best thing you can do is pick up a simple wooden bowl ranging in size from six to eight inches in diameter. Why? Well, a plate is good but some of the meals you may get will be soup, and soup and plates don't mix well. A wooden bowl on the other hand will serve you whether you're eating grits, potato soup, and stew or freshly slaughtered and fried up chicken. A wooden bowl will also be much lighter and less likely to break than a pewter or crockery plate. And the all-purpose bowl will also leave more green-backs in your pocket.

WHAT EVERY SOLDIER NEEDS, *CONTINUED*

When it comes to what eating utensil to pick up for your mess kit all you will need is the vestal spoon made of wood or even better horn. I hear you! What will I cut my meat with? How can I stab a large piece of meat with a spoon? Well, after you have been in the hobby for a while you'll find out that you will rarely if ever run into a large piece of meat in your mess, and if you do, you have fingers to deal with it. With that said, I don't even need to tell you that you'll never need a knife to cut up your food. From time to time you will find that you will have need of a knife to cut a piece of leather or some other item and in that case just pick up a period pocket knife. Your pocket knife need only be a couple of inches long and you'll find that a large belt knife will be rarely needed. However, if you want to get a belt knife for your militia impression, for God's sake, don't pick up a Bowie knife. And remember, before you pick up a belt knife, ask someone in the unit which knife is correct for the period. Don't forget, there are people out there who will sell you anything to make a buck. Your best bet is to not fail to ask someone in your unit to take a walk with you down Sutler Row or send them an image of what you're thinking about purchasing to make sure that it is right for the time period, as well as your unit.

I'll see you on the battlefield, mess kit at the ready!



THREADS THAT BIND: LINEN

ANNE HENNINGER, 1ST MARYLAND REGIMENT

The origins of the cultivation of flax and the waving of linen are lost in pre-history, but evidence places these fibers among the oldest textiles known to man. The production of linen reached a high stage of perfection 6,000 years ago.

Archeological evidence, based on wall paintings illustrating spinning and weaving, suggests linen was woven in Egypt as early as 4,000 BCE. Mummies of pharaohs and nobles of the Egyptian court were wrapped in linen much finer than any woven today, with thread counts as high as 540 threads to the inch. Some of the linen cloth found in Egyptian tombs is sixty inches wide and over six feet long.

“Linen fish nets and the earliest surviving linen textiles in Europe were used by the neolithic Swiss Lake Dwellers of the Stone Age at sites dated about 2940 BCE. Among the artifacts found at these sites have been bundles of flax, spun linen yarn, and fragments of linen fabric.”¹

Numerous references to linen are found in the Bible and surviving “Greek and Roman records also show that linen was of profound economic importance.”² Phoenician traders were responsible for carrying linen to other parts of the world. By the 14th century the process of making linen, which was eventually carried to the American colonies, was already in place.

Flax, from which linen is made, is considered a bast or stem fiber. The fiber is inside the length of the stem (this is also true of hemp, the processing of which is not addressed here). Flax seed was planted in the early spring; about two acres of flax per year was needed to produce cloth and clothing for each household. The seed was sowed thickly so that the plant grew tall and thin. In mid-May it produced flowers and, later, seed bolls. If the plant was destined to be used for fiber it was pulled, root and all, before it was mature, normally in July. The flax was bundled and allowed to wilt and dry. The dry flax was pulled through a ripple to remove seeds and leaves. At this point the process to remove the fiber from the bark - retting - began. This was accomplished in one of several ways:

- The bundles of flax could be left on the ground. The dew moistened the stems which, over four to six weeks, would rot. This method of retting was common in Russia and produced a coarse, dark flax.³
- The bundles could be placed in flowing water. “Stream retting produced the best quality linen and took from five to fifteen days of immersion in slow flowing water.”⁴
- Pool retting was the quickest and most commonly used in America, as the fermentation was speeded up by the more numerous bacteria in the stagnant water.⁵

After retting, the flax was dried and raked to remove the bark. It was then scutched (or swiggled) to remove the remaining bark and shortened fibers. These short, broken fibers were known as tow; tow was used to manufacture cordage or coarse textiles and also for tinder and to clean rifles. At this point the flax was hackled to comb out the tangled fibers. Again, the shorter, broken fibers, of an off-white to gray color, were designated as tow. The longer flax fibers, a pale yellow or ecru, were called “line.” The line was twisted into pear-shaped forms called “sticks.” The sticks, in turn, were tied together in groups of twelve. Each stick was then draped on the distaff for spinning and was spun wet.

THREADS THAT BIND: LINEN, *CONTINUED*

The processed flax was “dressed onto a distaff in a fine web, allowing the spinner to draw strands of the fibers into a uniform, continuous yarn.”⁶ The thread was spun on a Saxony or Low Irish Wheel. The spinner used a niddy noddy or clock wheel to remove the thread from the bobbin and wind into skeins.

After the thread was prepared, it was woven into cloth. Coons and Koob described the process:

WARPING

Weaving involves interlacing lengthwise yarns called the warp with the weft, or crosswise yarns. Warping, or setting up the stationary warp threads on the warp beams of the loom, was complicated because of the danger of tangling or breaking the threads. In order to keep the threads in order and the tension even, a weaver transferred the yarn between a series of tools and finally to the warp beam. First, a skein of was placed on a swift, from which it was wound onto spools using a spool winder. The spools were then arranged on a rack called a creel. Gathering a few threads together at a time, and carefully unwinding them from the spools, the weaver wound the threads onto a warping reel or bards to a predetermined length. The yarns were then transferred under tension to the loom’s warp beam. In this process, the weaver achieved the correct width and density for the desired fabric.

Compared to warping, preparing the weft was a simple process. The spool winder doubled as a quill winder. Quills wound with yarn were placed onto the shuttles which would carry the weft back and forth as the weaver created the cloth.

WEAVING

Handlooms used in early New England differed little from those which had become common in Europe during the middle ages. Each loom had at least two harnesses, through which the warp threads were passed. By stepping upon the treadles connected to the harnesses, the weaver lifted them up and down, creating a passage in the warp for the shuttle. The shuttle was thrown from side to side by hand. After each passage of the shuttle, the weft was driven into the cloth by means of a beater..

To create a length of striped ticking, a plaid kerchief, or a colorful patterned coverlet, a weaver wove together dyed and natural or bleached linen yarns. To weave plain weaves and stripes, a weaver needed a simple, two-harness loom, while four to sixteen harnesses were required for more elaborate patterns. ⁷

Within the household, plain weave on a two-harness loom produced cloth suitable for shifts and shirts as well as stripes, checks, and plaids. More decorative weaves, such as M’s and O’s, overshot, and huck-a-buck, were woven on a four-harness loom and used for towels and tablecloths.

The linen thread or the woven cloth was either bleached or dyed. Linen did not take dye well and was more often bleached. If it was to be dyed, strong dyes such as indigo, madder, walnut hulls or tree bark were used.

THREADS THAT BIND: LINEN, *CONTINUED*

Unless the linen was destined to be dyed or used brown, it had to be bleached. This process took about a month. In 1765 John Wily wrote *A Treatise on the Propagation of Sheep, the Manufacture of Wool, and the Cultivation and Manufacture of Flax* in which he described the bleaching process:

1. Soak linen 36 to 40 hours in warm water, rinse and dry.
2. Soak in lye and cow dung 48 hours.
3. Stretch cloth over the grass in a bleach-yard.
4. Wash off the cow dung.
5. Beat cloth with “bat staffs” 2 to 3 hours.
6. Place cloth into boiling lye; soak 24 hours.
7. Wash cloth; stretch it over the bleach-green 24 hours.
8. Beat with bat staffs.
9. Repeat the last three steps for 8 to 10 days.
10. Place cloth in buttermilk for 1 or 2 nights.
11. Wash and beat the cloth again, then stretch it over the bleach-green.
12. Sour it again in buttermilk.
13. Repeat the process for another week, until the cloth is white enough.⁸

During the latter part of the 1760s the Irish invented a bleach of chlorine in lime, which shorted and simplified the above process a great deal!

Initially the linen industry in Colonial America, centered in New England and the mid-Atlantic colonies, was a cottage industry; families made linen for their own use. Over time, the process became more specialized with different individuals or units responsible for the different phases of production. As early as 1640, the Massachusetts General Court directed each town to identify individuals knowledgeable in the production of linen. Sixteen years later the colony required spinning be taught to boys and girls; each was required to produce “three pounds of linen, cotton or woolen yarn each week for thirty weeks of the year.”⁹ Despite their productivity, large quantities of linen was imported, via England, from Holland, France, Silesia, and Saxony. Montgomery lists some of these imports, among which were:

- Linen Cloth;
- Canvas;
- Damask;
- Diaper;
- Lawns;
- Flanders Holland Cloth;
- Brown Holland;
- Irish Cloth;
- Drilling;
- Kinsters;
- Twill, and
- Oznaburgs.¹⁰

THREADS THAT BIND: LINEN, *CONTINUED*

In examining probate records from Cumberland County, PA, for the period 1750-1800, Tandy and Charles Hersh determined flax production grew rapidly during the last half of the eighteenth century, although they estimated “only one of every three households produced flax or wool.”¹¹ The majority of the inventories they examined listed tow flax and about 1/3 reported “spun flax,” or yard.¹² Linen accounted for 58% of the unused fabric found in households. Locally produced linen included various grades of linen as well as tow, shirting, checked, stamped, and striped cloth. Linen imported from other areas included cambric, Holland, Irish, Russia Sheeting, and Oznaburg.

Other linen fabrics were not always available but were sometimes offered in the stores: birdseye, canvas, crocus, diaper...and toweling. Most of these were likely to have been imported and brought from Philadelphia or Baltimore to local stores.¹³

In Cumberland County, more linen was found in household textile inventories than any other fiber. Traditionally, it was used for men’s and women’s clothing as well as for bedding and bed furniture, tablecloths, and towels. Tow and coarsely spun linen was used for wagon covers and bags.

In many instances a linen warp was combined with a cotton weft, producing the fabric known today as fustian. (Jean cloth in the 18th century was a twilled fustian.) The extent to which this was done depended on the availability and cost of cotton. Fustian was first imported to Massachusetts in 1629 and continued in use throughout the Colonial period.

The physical characteristics of the flax plant determined the usefulness of linen. Linen is smooth and does not attract lint; this is a result of the length of the flax fibers, which range from six to forty inches in length. It is a strong textile. Again, this is a result of the length of the fibers but also because they are “cylindrical, straight, and solid.”¹⁴ This shape also tends to make linen somewhat inelastic in nature. Because the flax fiber is hollow, it absorbs moisture easily. It is soft, and becomes softer the more it is laundered. All of these factors combined to make linen a necessary and popular textile during the 18th century. The production of linen peaked in the first decade of the 19th century after which time it was overtaken by cotton in popularity and use.

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THOMPSON'S RIFLE BATTALION

DAVID L. VALUSKA, PH.D., VON HEERS PROVOST CORPS, "MARECHAUSSE"

This is the second article in a series dealing with the Pennsylvania Germans and the American War for Independence.

In that critical period of 1774-1775 Pennsylvania found itself in a predicament unlike her sister colonies, she did not have an active militia system. As a result of the Quaker legacy the colony, and later commonwealth, did not have legislation to provide for troops to serve in the approaching resistance to their perceived British tyranny. There was no method available to impose mandatory service on the eligible male inhabitants. To answer the immediate needs Pennsylvania called upon the tried and tested method of calling for companies of Associators.

These voluntary associations were a banding of citizens, for the common defense, acknowledged by the government, but in no way subsidized by the government. Benjamin Franklin drafted the first Articles of Association and it called for a company of 50 to 100 men each company electing their own officers consisting of: a captain, lieutenant and an ensign. The companies from each county were to form a regiment which was to elect their own colonel, lieutenant colonel and major. Each soldier was to supply himself with a firelock (flintlock), cartouche box (cartridge box) and a minimum of 12 rounds of powder and ball, and if you could afford it, a good sword or cutlass. If you were going to join a rifle company the cost was even higher as every officer and every private in a rifle company was required to have a good long rifle, powder horn, charger, bullet screw, twelve flints, pouch to hold four pounds of ball or a "possibles" bag, knife and other accoutrements needed by the rifleman. A cost of about 20 to 30 English pounds, and one that kept many from joining the musket companies of the Associators and even more so the rifle companies.

The Associator companies were community based, and as a result the companies reflected the ethnic make-up of that locality. From 1770 to 1775 there were nearly 85,000 German immigrants settling primarily in the colonies of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, with the greatest population density in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. German immigrants tended to settle in ethnic communities centering around the church. It is not surprising that many of the Pennsylvania Associator companies had a high percentage of Pennsylvania Germans in their ranks.

Throughout the Colony of Pennsylvania there was a reaction to Parliamentary and Crown policies, and as a result many communities began organizing volunteer military units. On June 14, 1775 (two days before the battle at Bunker/Breed's Hill and a day before the appointment of George Washington as Commander-in-Chief, Continental Congress passed a resolution authorizing the raising of six companies of riflemen in Pennsylvania, two in Maryland and two in Virginia. By a resolution dated June 22, 1775, the Colony of Pennsylvania was authorized to raise two more companies and with the original six form a rifle battalion. On July 11, 1775 Congress was informed that Lancaster County had exceeded their allotment and had raised two companies instead of one, and accordingly Congress resolved that all nine companies form a battalion and be taken into Continental service. The men enlisting had to sign the following oath "I have this day voluntarily enlisted myself as a soldier in the American Continental Army for one year, unless sooner discharged, and do bind myself to conform in all instances to such rules and regulations as are or shall be established for the government of said army."

THOMPSON'S RIFLE BATTALION, *CONTINUED*

Each company was to consist of one captain, three lieutenants, four sergeants, four corporals, a drummer, or trumpeter, and sixty eight privates. Over one third of the company commanders were Pennsylvania German and Pennsylvania German soldiers could be found in all the companies. The companies of Captain George Nagle of Berks County, Captain James Ross of Lancaster County, and Captain Abraham Miller of Northampton County had nearly 100% Pennsylvania Dutch., while the companies of Captain John Lowdon of Northumberland County and Captain Michael Doudel of York (Adams) County had a high percentage of Pennsylvania Germans.

The remaining companies commanded by Captain James Chambers of Cumberland County (now Franklin), Captain William Hendricks of Cumberland County, Captain Matthew Smith of Lancaster (now Dauphin) County and Captain Robert Cluggage of Bedford County all had some Pennsylvania Dutch in their ranks. The two Maryland companies were commanded by Thomas Price and Thomas Cresap and they contained a high percentage of Germans.. The Virginia companies were commanded by Captain Ericson and Captain Daniel Morgan., and they too were composed of a high percentage of Germans. The rifle companies were formed into a battalion commanded by Colonel William Thompson.

By June/July of 1775, the companies of Colonel Thompson's battalion began marching towards Massachusetts to assist their fellow compatriots. The companies did not march as a battalion, but each company marched independent of the others as they hurried to Cambridge. Most Pennsylvania companies passed through Bethlehem, PA where they were hosted by the German religious community of Moravians. The various accounts of the routes taken by the rifle companies are sketchy, but enough exists to give some idea of their route of march, and it is important to note that only thirty-four days after Congress had authorized the battalion they had formed and were in camp around Cambridge, MA.

The following is a brief description of the rifle battalion as recorded by Dr. James Thatcher in his *MILITARY JOURNAL OF THE REVOLUTION*:

“They are remarkably stout and hardy men; many of them exceeding six feet in height. They are dressed in white frocks or rifle shirts and round hats. These men are remarkable for the accuracy of their aim; striking a mark with great certainty at two hundred yards distance.”

The battalion carried a deep green flag with a crimson square in the center, containing the image of a tiger ensnared in a net engaged in battle against a hunter clad in white and holding a spear striking at the tiger. The motto on the flag was “DOMARI NOLO” (I refuse to be subjugated).

The service of Thompson's Rifle Battalion was a mixed record of duty and misconduct. They were camped on Prospect Hill and saw limited action against the English. One company from York County was engaged in a mutinous action rebelling against punishment being meted out to their comrades, the mutiny was suppressed and the mutineers were fined for their actions. Two of the companies (Hendricks and Smith) marched north to Canada with Benedict Arnold, and the remainder stayed in and around Cambridge.

On March 11, 1776 the battalion received orders to march to New York and here many re-enlisted into Continental service. On July 1, 1776 the unit was officially designated The First Pennsylvania Regiment of the Continental Line. The newly designated regiment was to be heavily tested at the Battle of Long Island which we will discuss in a later episode.

Battle of Eutaw Springs Conference & Tour**Saturday, September 9th, 2006**

THE EUTAWS CAMPAIGN OF MAJ. GEN. NATHANAEL GREENE

“Giving the enemy a deadly blow.
I have a good mind to put all to the hazard...”

Southern Campaigns of the Revolutionary War and the Church of the Epiphany in historic Eutawville, South Carolina proudly presents a conference on the Eutaw Springs military campaigns of “The Fighting Quaker” - Major General Nathanael Greene and Eutaw Springs battlefield tour.

The conference will be held at the Church of the Epiphany in historic Eutawville, South Carolina and on the Eutaw Springs battlefield from 9:00 am - 7:30 pm on **Saturday, September 9th, 2006**. Keynote presenter, **Dr. Dennis M. Conrad**, historian for the United States Navy and editor of the final volumes of the encyclopedic *Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, will discuss Lt. Col. “Light Horse Harry” Lee’s role and reactions to Gen. Greene concerning the fight at Eutaw Springs. **Dr. Lee F. McGee** will discuss Lt. Col. William Washington and this Continental Dragoons at Eutaw Springs. All aspects of the battle, the troops engaged, strategy, and aftermath of the battle will be covered by Eutaw Springs scholars: author **Dr. Christine Swager**; historical novelist **Charles F. Price**; author **Robert M. Dunkerly**; author **Dr. Jim Picuch**; and military historian **Steven J. Rauch**. **Gen. George Fields** and Eutaw Springs battlefield project archaeologist **Scott Butler** will be on hand to discuss the modern battlefield research and preservation planning.

Saturday afternoon tour of the Eutaw Springs battlefield on the shores of Lake Marion will put you on the ground where Gen. Nathanael Greene pushed the British from the midlands of South Carolina to their tidewater enclave around Charleston. Guides will be **David P. Reuwer** and **Charles B. Baxley**, both renowned battle sites tour guides of the Tarleton, Camden Campaign, Thomas Sumter and Nathanael Greene symposia. Assisted by military historians **Dr. Lee F. McGee**, **Steven J. Rauch** and **Dr. Jim Picuch**, and geologist **Dr. Irene Boland** and archaeologist **Scott Butler**, this on-the-ground tour of the huge Eutaws battlefield will point out the battle chronology, tactical deployments and topography. Wrongly thought by many to be submerged under Lake Marion, the major battle fought on this preservation challenge was undoubtedly General Greene’s greatest victory.

Afternoon program includes a commemorative ceremony to honor those who fought at Eutaw Springs at the memorial park conducted by the SAR and DAR at 5:25 pm. Attendees are also invited to a closing reception at Numertia Plantation Saturday afternoon complete with a “groaning board” of h’ors oredeves.

To insure your seat and catering, please take advantage of the early registration. Registration fees include the morning scholarly presentations, snacks, included Saturday luncheon, Eutaw Springs battlefield guided tour, and closing reception. Early Registration deadline: August 5, 2006. Early Registration fees: \$60.00 person or \$100.00 couple. Final Registration deadline: September 6, 2006. Final Registration fees: \$75.00 person or \$130.00 couple. Payment may be made by cash, MasterCard/Visa (phone or mail), or by check made payable to the Church of the Epiphany and mailed to P.O. Box 9, Eutawville, S.C. 29048. All registrations are non-refundable after September 6, 2006.

For more information call Rev. John Scott at **The Church of the Epiphany** Post Office Box 9 Eutawville, SC 29048 (803) 492-7644 or see the symposium postings on www.southerncampaign.org/eutaw or <http://www.pietty.com/epiphany/index.htm>.

www.southerncampaign.org/eutaw

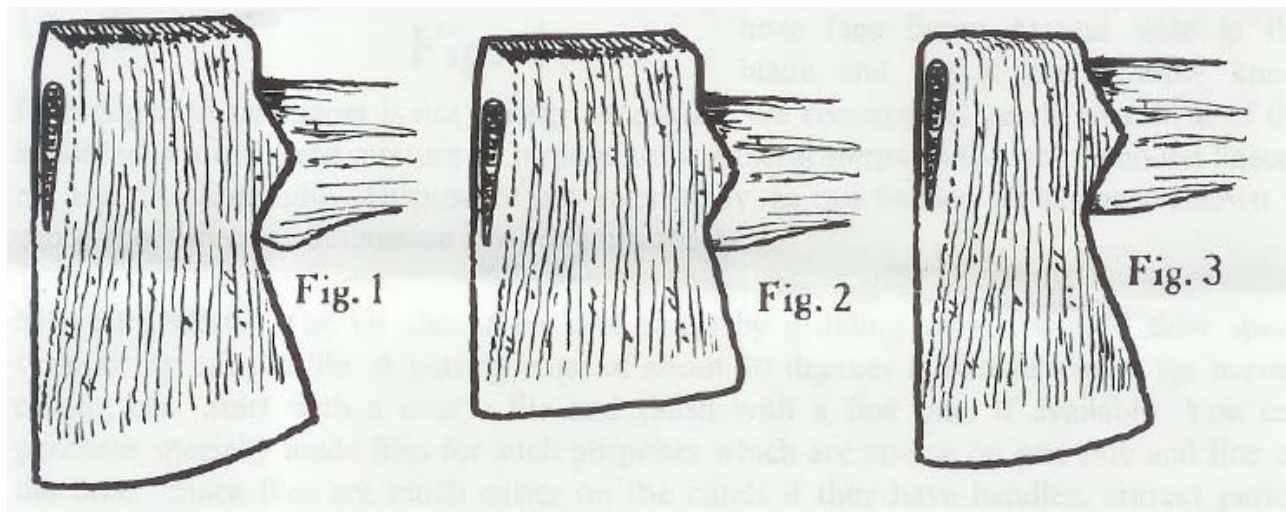
SOME NOTES ON AXES

JOHN WHITE, 1ST MARYLAND REGIMENT

HISTORY:

In 18th century British North America, axes were in common use throughout the area settled by Europeans. Early axes were brought from the mother country and subsequent production tended at first to follow familiar patterns. Each region tended to cling to established patterns. Indeed, late 19th century American ax manufacturers had to offer dozens of varying patterns in order to satisfy regional tastes. Today few patterns survive in production, mainly due to the decline of logging by manual methods.

The one pattern still made in this country which would be most easily recognizable to an 18th century axman is the so-called Jersey pattern (figure 1). This unique American pattern (often called a Yankee ax in Europe) was fully developed by the mid 18th century. Earlier versions of this ax, developed from so called trade axes, had a much longer bit and no poll (figure 3). Later developments often had a very short bit, looking very squarish compared to today's pattern (figure 2). For illustrations of many correct 18th century ax styles, I recommend reading the "Collector's Illustrated Encyclopedia of the American Revolution". Please see the bibliography at the end of this article for more information.



HANDLE STYLES:

As to handle styles, almost all evidence indicates that the preference was for straight handles, probably because they were rather easy to fashion by hand from a piece of straight grained wood. Sometime a knob at the end helped keep the handle from slipping from one's grasp. The currently common curved handle with the "deer's foot" knob apparently gained popularity after the availability of machine carved handles about 1850. When examining old hand made handles, one is surprised by how much slimmer they were than modern handles. The best modern handles are made from hickory, but they are made heavier to minimize breakage, as mass production doesn't allow selecting exact wood grain patterns to match the particular style of handle being made.

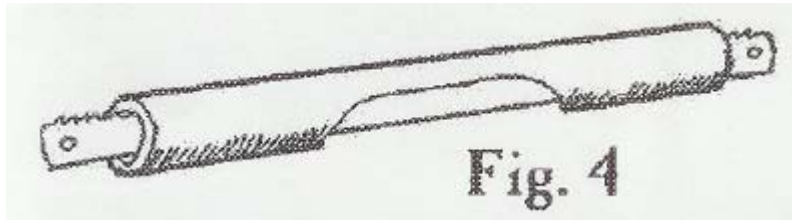
A NOTE ON AXES, *CONTINUED*

HANDLE REPLACEMENT:

First drill out the old handle remains. Often the replacement handle will have to be shaved or filed with a wood rasp to make it fit through the eye which is tapered from both top and bottom to the smallest dimension about in the center. Don't make it too loose or you will never get a solid fit. The replacement handle can be driven in without fear of breaking if you hold the ax head in the air (with inserted handle) toward the ground and hit the handle end smartly until it is firmly seated. The physics involved is, since the handle has less mass than the head, it accelerates faster, thus moving more quickly than the head. The handle should normally protrude a little above the toP. of the ax. If more than a quarter inch, cut it off. Then drive in the wood wedge (a spot of glue will help insure it won't loosen). Although we don't think the added steel wedge was used in the 18th century, it further protects against loosening. If necessary, cut the handle more or less flush with the ax top for a finished look.

HANDLE FINISH:

If the handle has a glossy modern finish, you may want to remove it for more authenticity. Old timers often would use broken glass as an efficient (and cheap) method of scraping wood. However, most of us would not want the hazard of using this approach. We have found that the back edge of an old hacksaw blade works great. And when it gets dull, it can be re-sharpened many times. To make it easy to work with, cut an appropriate length of old hose (see figure 4) and slide in the blade and use it like a draw knife. Finishing with sandpaper is not usually necessary. We recommend yearly treatment of the handle with a one third mixture of turpentine or mineral spirits to two thirds boiled linseed oil. Let dry thoroughly. Dispose of oily rags safely, as raw linseed oil has been known to cause spontaneous combustion if stored improperly.



SHARPENING:

The bit should be kept sharp by grinding with a wetted slow speed stone or by using a file. A cutting edge of about 30 degrees is recommended for normal cutting use. Start with a coarse file and finish with a fine one, if available. You can purchase specially made files for such purposes which are coarse on one side and fine on the other. Since files are much easier on the hands if they have handles, correct period handles can be made from wood, horn, antler, corn cobs or other items limited only by your imagination.

A NOTE ON AXES, *CONTINUED*

USAGE:

Several books in the bibliography (see asterisks) have lengthy instructions on proper ax use. We do, however, want to stress the fact that ax polls were designed to give good balance to the ax, not as a striking tool. The eye is normally not thick enough to withstand heavy battering. We have seen many axes seriously deformed, or broken because they were used as a sledge hammer. If you must hammer, use a mallet or a maul. An ax properly used and maintained can last several lifetimes.

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