



THE CONTINENTAL SOLDIER

The newsletter of the Continental Line, Inc.

FROM THE ORDERLY ROOM — FROM THE CHAIRMAN

While I know it seems early, this is a reminder of our Annual Meeting coming up in January. We have moved the date a week further away from the holidays, to January 21. The location is the same. You'll find the registration form and more information on our website.

I mention the meeting because it is not too early to begin thinking about events and event presentations for the next several years. If you know of, or are interested in presenting, an event I urge you to let me know in advance so I can make sure we include your presentation on the schedule. You'll find some guidelines for making these presentations on the CL Yahoo "Officer's Mess." (Please see "CL Event Proposal Presentation Guide," and "CL Event Sanctioning Guide" documents.)

NATIONAL EVENTS 2012

I believe everyone is aware of Mitch Lee's National Event at Gelston Castle, New York, scheduled for August 4 – 5, 2012. This will commemorate the 235th Anniversary of the Battle of Oriskany and Mitch has already begun disseminating information on the Officer's Mess. Mitch has been involved in organizing a number of events, including one of the largest for the 225th of Saratoga.

I posted information on the Spring National Event on the Officer's Mess recently. I presented a 2012 spring event at our meeting last year with the tentative location to be at Mount Vernon. Unfortunately, Mount Vernon was unable to accommodate us this time, but hopes to be able to host a national battle in the future.

Happily, we have secured another location in the Northern Virginia area at Morven Park in Leesburg, VA (www.morven-park.org). Some of you will remember the two National Events in Leesburg in 1992 and '94, hosted by the First Virginia. This site is literally next door to the previous location and is much larger, and much nicer.

I have visited the site with BB Commander Michael Grenier and we agree this will be a great location for our event. This private site has hosted a number of large public events and will be the site of the Civil War 150th reenactment of Ball's Bluff this October. While we will need to vote on this event in January I hope all of you will place this one on your calendar for next year.

NATIONAL EVENT 2013

I am also expecting Warner Hall in Gloucester, VA, the site of our "Battle of the Hook" event in 2008, to invite us back in October 2013. I am waiting for additional details but believe we will see a presentation for this event at this year's Annual Meeting. If, indeed, this is selected as a National Event you can be assured that we will work hard to make the event as much fun as we can, changing up the battles and activities. Either way, I will keep you posted on the status of this event in the coming months.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our National Event at Mount Harmon next month. I was there last year and can say that the site is fantastic and expect this year's event to be a great one. I hope your unit is planning to attend!

Chip Gnam, Chairman

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Any feedback from the Spring news letter or if you have anything you would like to have added to the newsletter, please e-mail them to me (erick.nason.ctr@jpra.jfcom.mil) and I will make sure it's added. AARs, up-coming events, or points of interests, send them to me and I'll get them into the newsletter.

Erick Nason, 2nd South Carolina, Editor

UP COMING BIG EVENTS

MOUNT HARMON PLANTATION

EARLEVILLE, MD » SEPTEMBER 23-25 2011

Mark your calendars for September 24 & 25 - Mount Harmon is hosting a full-scale Revolutionary War Re-enactment & Colonial Festival featuring nearly 1,000 re-enactors and an array of colonial craft vendors and activities for the whole family to enjoy. Each day will feature military skirmishes, tactical demonstrations and drills, colonial crafts, food vendors, and of course a full fledged Revolutionary War Encampment of both British and "Rebels" (Continental and militia groups) will be at hand. The public will be able to: tour the encampments, shop at the colonial faire, enjoy children's activities, hearth cooking demonstrations, manor house tours, nature walks, and more.

Reenactment to Celebrate the 1777 Campaign of the Revolutionary War:

Background to Campaign of 1777: The Campaign of 1777 began when the British fleet anchored at the mouth of the Sassafra River and landed at Oldfield Point, as part of the largest amphibious landing of the Revolutionary War. General Howe marched



his British troops onto Head of Elk, and continued north toward the then American Capital of Philadelphia. General Howe's goal was to bring George Washington and his army to battle by forcing him to defend the rebel capital and the Congress then meeting there. Howe hoped to destroy the main army under Washington, capture or disperse the Congress, and bring an end the rebellion in the colonies once and for all.

NORTHERN DEPARTMENT

SEPTEMBER 10-11, STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY

Fort Ticonderoga, NY

www.fort-ticonderoga.org/reenactors/index/index.html

The Struggle for Liberty event recreates the anxious fall of 1776 when General Carleton's advance was finally stopped by the impending winter season. Elsewhere this was the first year of campaign, for the Lake Champlain corridor this was the second campaign season. So far north that the words of the Declaration of Independence reached here July 28th, the garrison of Ticonderoga named the new fortification across the lake Mount Independence. 1776 saw a shattered Continental Northern Army retreat back from Montreal, rebuilt again at Ticonderoga. This year saw a new American navy built at Skenesborough and destroyed at Valcour Island. Ticonderoga stood both as a defensive work, but



also headquarters and the public storehouse for the whole Northern theater. This year we present that final push, after Valcour Island when General Carleton scouted out the redoubts, batteries, emplacements built to stall an advance on Ticonderoga.

Registration Process

This is a juried event. Participants/units/merchants must be pre-approved by Fort Ticonderoga, pre-registered, and each unit/merchant must submit proof of insurance to Fort Ticonderoga prior to attending the event. Each person attending this event must be affiliated with a pre-registered unit. Units not approved and registered in advance will not be permitted to participate in these events.

Unit Applications

Units wishing to participate in Fort Ticonderoga events must submit an application, along with color photographs that accurately

illustrate overall unit clothing, shelter, and camp appearance. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the jury process approximately ten business days after receipt. The Event Guidelines posted at the bottom of this page are the standards by which units will be judged for acceptance into Fort Ticonderoga's living history events.

Specific instructions concerning uniform/clothing guides, camp layout and other instructions can be found at: <http://www.fort-ticonderoga.org/learn/re-enactors/struggle-for-liberty/registration>.



OCTOBER 1-2: FORT #4

Charlestown, NH, Warner's Regiment
www.fortat4.com

This reconstructed fortified village (1744-1760) represents rich encounters with the past through "experiential" education where trained, costumed guides invite you to touch and use authentically reproduced objects and settings. The Fort is a "hands on" museum offering total access to its staff and facilities and the stories they convey. The fort is located on the shore of the Connecticut River, one mile from Interstate 91, and near Charlestown, New Hampshire.



OCTOBER 14-16: BURNING OF KINGSTON

Kingston, NY
1st Ulster County Militia
www.firstulster.org/Pages/6_0_bok.html

On October 16, 1777, during the British campaign to control the North (Hudson) River & effectively split the New England Colonies/States from the South, a fleet of 23 ships & 2000 troops were sent North to rendezvous & support General Burgoyne's push South from the Champlain Valley to Albany. After Gentleman Johnny's defeat at Saratoga, the support fleet under General Vaughn stopped at Kingston, then capitol of New York, to punish this "nest of villains" & the badly outnumbered Militia had no choice but to flee as the British troops burned every building but one in the time allowed them.

MID-ATLANTIC DEPARTMENT



OCTOBER 1, 2011: BATTLE OF GERMANTOWN.

On October 4th 1777, the British fought George Washington and the Continental Army at Cliveden. This fight came to be known as the Battle of Germantown. Join us on October 1st, 2011 as we reenact this historic battle on Cliveden's 6-acre property. Cliveden is located at 6401 Germantown Avenue in Philadelphia.

NOVEMBER 11TH & 12TH - FT. MIFFLIN, PHILADELPHIA, PA

Only a few minutes from historic downtown Philadelphia lays the only Revolutionary War battlefield completely intact. Originally built in 1771 and continuously used by the U.S. Army until 1952, Fort Mifflin is one of the most unique tourism destinations in existence. During the Revolutionary War the garrison at Fort Mifflin was ordered by General George Washington to hold off the British Navy so the Continental Army could make its way to their winter encampment at Valley Forge. Washington wrote that the defense of the Delaware River was "of the utmost importance to America."

SOUTHERN DEPARTMENT

MOUNT VERNON WASHINGTON & ROCHAMBEAU COMMEMORATION WEEKEND

10-11 September 2011

In celebration of the 230th anniversary of the American victory at Yorktown, George Washington's Mount Vernon and the 1st Virginia Regiment invite you to participate in a weekend-long reenactment on the estate.

All Congressional and French forces that wish to participate please contact Marshall Smith at Smithmdlt@aol.com or 703.978.5687 We will have a busy weekend of military demonstrations, drill, interpretation for the public and celebratory activity at the Mt. Vernon Estate and Gardens.

FESTIFALL AT WALNUT GROVE PLANTATION

Saturday, October 1 - Sunday, October 2, 2011

10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday & 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday

See the American Revolution come to life during FestiFall at Walnut Grove Plantation! Each day features a re-enactment of a skirmish at the plantation between Loyalist and Patriot militia. This reenactment occurs at Noon on Saturday and at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday. Throughout the two-day living history festival, over 100 reenactors will camp at Walnut Grove and demonstrate 18th century battle tactics, weapons firing, cavalry tactics and military drills as well as dozens of colonial era crafts and trades.

The battle reenactment will be "Bloody Bill" Cunningham's raid on Walnut Grove. Blood Bill is leading his Loyalists on a large raid throughout South Carolina when they pay a visit to Walnut Grove. Bloody Bill, forcing his way into the house, stabs Mrs. Barry whose screams alert nearby Patriots who rush to her aid.

The Patriots and Loyalists skirmish, with the Loyalists beating the patriots back. While they are looting the bodies, a new force of militia arrive and drive Bloody Bill and his men away from the house before they could burn it.



8-9 OCT — WILLIAMSBURG, VA

The Continental Army encamps within the City of Williamsburg to prepare for the siege of Yorktown. Colonial Williamsburg celebrates the anniversary of the Battle of Yorktown with three days of special programs that recall September 26, 27, and 28, 1781, the last three days of the period when General Washington and Le Compte de Rochambeau, commander of French forces, were headquartered in Williamsburg, prior to the siege at Yorktown. The Continental forces will set up encampments within the City of Williamsburg, conduct drill and prepare for the up-coming siege. His Excellency General Washington will review the troops performing their drill to ensure all is in order prior to marching on to Yorktown.



5-6 NOV — BATTLE OF CAMDEN, CAMDEN, SC

The final major event for the southern department, the Battle of Camden will pit the pride of the southern contingent of His Majesty's forces against the determined Continental and militia forces.

Instead of following a set script, the battle scenarios are planned with just enough information to get the battle started, but with enough free play to allow both commanders flexibility to react to the differing circumstances during the battle. Saturday night is full of mirth and merriment, in both the Tavern as well as within the Royal camp.



THE BRITISH NIGHT WATCH

Friday December 2nd to Sunday, December 4th 2011

St. Augustine, Florida

Vol. XXXVII, Issue 1 — July, 2011

Are you hot wearing wool? December (and a cooler event) is only 5 months away! The website is nearly finished, with just a few items left to be filled in. The schedule is well under way, and the first newsletter of the year is now in your hands. So far so good, we're slightly ahead in event preparations, which is a good thing because this is the year Everything Changes.

<http://events.rncr.org> <<http://events.rncr.org/>>

Ok, well not everything will change, but we have moved our camp! We've grown, and the old site has shrunk. The City & the NPS made a land deal- towards better visitor movement across the street, and eventually a new NPS visitor's center, and some of the land involved was the part of the De Mesa yard. Our relationship with the Museum has never been better, but they simply do not have the room for an encampment of our size- and don't even mention how full last year's camp was of visitors! (No- we cannot camp at the Fort- the local NPS will not authorize it.)

As of this year, the British Night Watch will move a few blocks to Francis Field, the 4+ acre site behind the Historic Downtown Parking Facility (HPDF). This will mean much more room for

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us, but it also means much more room to fill- so this year's message is the opposite of the past few.... Bring Tents! Lots of them. Bring Colors! The new venue allows us to program the schedule so that we are no longer walking all over town during the day, and we can create focal points for our visitors. Visibility- much more visible than in the past, we may draw even more than the 5000+ visitors we had come through our camps last year. More Sutlers, more entertainment, easier access- what more can we ask?

Standard event features, such as the Parade, Jollification, and an Opening Scenario on Friday have remained unchanged. I believe you, our participants, will be happy with the move.

Registration is now open, so visit the website, <http://events.rncr.org> <<http://events.rncr.org>>

If you know of interested participants, send them this message please. While representing the British Period of Florida, 1763 to 1783, we welcome Continentals & other Unsavory Fellows representing that time period, if they have given Parole- Dress as a Continental Prisoner, or throw on Civilian gear and play Loyal for a time!

I Remain,
John Thornton
Committee for the Night Watch

COMING IN 2012

NORTHERN REGIONAL EVENT:

PRESCOTT ONTARIO JULY 21-22 2012.

The last time the Continental Line and the British Brigade conducted an event at this site was in 1988. Jointly sponsored by the Town of Prescott, parks Canada, the Kings Royal Regiment of New York, and the 64th Regiment of Foot.

Prescott Ontario is located right across the St. Lawrence River from Ogdensburg, NY. It is 7 hours from Boston, 6 hours and 35 minutes from New York, and 8 hours 45 minutes from Washington DC.



THE 13TH CONTINENTAL REGIMENT'S THE BATTLE AT SEGREGANSETT, DIGHTON, MA, AUGUST 17 - 19, 2012

The Town of Dighton, and the 13th Continental Regiment, presents the Battle at Segregansett at Sweets Knoll State Park in Dighton, Massachusetts. Situated on the Taunton River, this new park comprises nearly 40 acres of land consisting of open fields, a wooded upland area and some lowland swamp area, all overlooking the river running along the eastern side of the park. The entire combination makes it an excellent choice for an encampment.

Dighton is located on Route 138 between Taunton and Somerset, Massachusetts, about 10 minutes north of Interstate 195, and 10 minutes south of Taunton center.

This encampment is the premier activity surrounding the 300th Anniversary of the Town of Dighton, and the selectmen of the Town of Dighton, the Dighton Historical Commission and the 13th Continental Regiment look forward to welcoming you to the Battle at Segregansett. Planning is well underway for this event. Activities and attractions will include battles on Saturday and Sunday, Sutlers Row, evening activities on Saturday, etc. Details to follow!

Contact: Al Soucy of the 13th Continental

THE BATTLE OF ORISKANY, 235TH ANNIVERSARY AT GELSTON CASTLE, AUGUST 4-5, 2012

Oriskany 235th Anniversary event for next year, 2012 (Chip, Mitch, Al--please see to CL distribution). Note the change in dates to August 4-5. This change has been made to bring the event in line with the anniversary date of the battle, August 6, 1777, and also at the request of the Continental Line Northern department to eliminate a conflict with a major department-sanctioned event planned the weekend of August 18-19 at Dighton, Massachusetts.

Units Commanders and members of the Continental Line I would like to take a few moments out of your busy preparations for the end of the 2011 season to first say thank you for your support of Gelston Castle/ The Battle of Oriskany 235th set for August 4th & 5th of 2012 as a National Event.

As many may know preparations for such a show takes time and care. In so doing I am building the army in four distinct Battalions and have been in contact with many seasoned individuals to make up my staff.

My Friends from the British Brigade inform me that they will provide a huge force of troops as we saw at the 225th of Saratoga / Men to "Play upon the ground". It would be great if we could match that effort.

"Do you remember the 225th of Saratoga just 10 years ago?"

The same two units who provided you that show are now planning the 235th of Oriskany. The 1st NY McCracken's Co. & the 24th Regt. Of Foot. We have a larger camping ground than we had a Saratoga, with water already in place in regular spigots along

the entire company streets for both the British and American Army. We have found a ravine that we can fight the battle in that is reminiscent in every way of the Oriskany Battle Field. Just a short 10 Minute March from camp. We will have a Sutler park within a two min walk of both armies. Parking for you cars on site & out of site just an 8 Minute walk from canvas.

We are planning a full on Battle of Oriskany on Saturday morning without the public at all, just for you in the life style. "NO PUBLIC"

The rest of the weekend will be filled with scenarios on Open Fields and Woods that cover the site all within short marches from camp. Public will be invited to view these scenarios and our camps during both days after our Oriskany Battle is complete.

My intention is that this will be the "Biggie" Just as it was 10 years ago The site will be available for early arrivals and late departures for those who may rent a bus or use this as a vacation to see many Mohawk Valley historic sites as most did at the 225th of Saratoga.

This site is great for horse and will have its own Horse Park, and great for artillery for the scenarios after the Battle of Oriskany which had no guns. We are planning jollifications & An Evening Artillery barrage over the Valley. "This is the one not to miss" a web site will go up soon. and Registration to begin by November.

315-357-4602 | ltmitch3rdny@aol.com

Mitch Lee, 1st NY McCracken's Co. 1777

THE STORY

Herkimer's counsels were divided whether they should await further accessions, or hasten to Fort Stanwix Prudence prompted delay. St. Leger's force was more than double that of Herkimer; it might be divided, and while one-half occupied the patriot column, the Indians under Tory lead might hurry down the valley, gathering reinforcements while they ravaged the homes of the patriots. The blow might come from Unadilla, where Brant had been as late as the early part of that very July. Herkimer, at Fort Dayton, was in position to turn in either direction. But the way of the Mohawk was the natural and traditional warpath. The patriots

looked to Fort Stanwix as their defense. They started on the fourth of August, crossed the Mohawk where is now Utica, and reached Whitestown, The Oneida village of Orisko on the fifth. Here it was probably that a band of Oneida Indians joined the column. From this point or before Herkimer sent an express to Colonel Gansevoort arranging cooperation. He was to move forward when three cannon signaled that aid was ready. The signal was not heard; the messenger had been delayed. His chief advisors, including Colonel Cox and Paris, the latter a member of the Committee of Safety, urged quicker movement. Fort Stanwix might fall while

they were delaying, and the foe could then turn upon them. Herkimer was taunted as a coward and a Tory. His German phlegm was stirred. He warned his impatient advisers that they would be the first in the face of the enemy to flee. He gave the order "march on!" Apprised of the ambush, his courage which had been assailed prevented the necessary precautions.

He led his little band on. If he had before been cautious, now he was audacious. His course lay on the south side of the river, avoiding its bends, where the country loses the general level which the rude road sought to follow, when it could be found. For three or four miles hills rose upon valleys, with occasional gullies. The trickling springs and the spring freshets had cut more than one ravine where even in the summer, the water still moistened the earth. These run toward the river, from southerly toward the north. Corduroy roads had been constructed over the marches. For this was the line of such travel as sought Fore Stanwix and the river otherwise than by boat. Herkimer had come to one of the deepest of these ravines, ten or twelve rods wide, running narrower up to the hills at the south, and broadening toward the Mohawk into the flat bottom land. Where the forests were thick, where the rude roadway ran down into the march, and the ravine closed like a pocket, he pressed his way. Not in soldierly order, not watching against the enemy, but in rough haste, the eight hundred marched. They reached the ravine at ten in the morning. The advance had gained the higher ground. Then as so often, the woods became alive. Black eyes flashed from behind every tree. Rifles blazed from a thousand unexpected coverts. The Indians rushed out hatchet in hand, decked in paint and feather.

The brave band was checked. It was cut in two. The assailants aimed first of all to seize the supply train. Colonel Visscher, who commanded its rear guard, showed his courage before and after and doubtless fought well here, as the best informed descendants of other heroes of the battle believe. But his regiment, driven



Herkimer at the Battle of Oriskany, Painting by F.C. Yohn, c. 1901,

northward toward the river, was cut up or in great part captured with the supplies and ammunition. In the ravine and just west of it, Herkimer rallied those who stood with him. Back to back, shoulder to shoulder, they faced the foe. Where shelter could be had two stood tighter, so that one might fire while the other loaded. Often the fight grew closer, and the knife ended the personal contest. Eye to eye, hand to hand, this was a fight of men. Nerve and brawn and muscle were the price of life. Rifle and knife, spear and tomahawk, were the only weapons, or the clubbed butt of the rifle. It was not a test of science, not a weighing of machinery, not a measure of caliber not an exhibition of choices mechanism. Men stood against death, and death struck at them with the simplest implements. Homer sings of chariots and shields. Here were not such helps, no such defenses. Fort or earthworks, barricades or abattis, there were none. The British force had chosen its ground. Two to one it must have been against the band which stood and fought in that pass, forever glorious. Herkimer, early wounded and his horse shot under him, sat on his saddle beneath a beech tree, just where the hill rises at the west a little north of the center of the ravine, calmly smoking a pipe while ordering the battle. He was urged to retire from so much danger; his reply is the eloquence of a hero: "I will face the enemy."

The ground tells the story of the fight. General Herkimer was with the advance, which had crossed the ravine. His column stretched out for nearly half a mile. Its head was a hundred rods

or more west of the ravine, his rear guard reached as far east of it. The firing began from the hills into the gulf. Herkimer closed his line on its center, and in reaching that point his white horse was shot under him. The flag staff today on the hill marks his position. Then, as today, the hills curved like a cimeter, from the west to the east on the north side of the river. Fort Stanwix could not be seen, but it lay in the plain just beyond the gap in the hills, six miles distant. The Mohawk, from the mouth of the Oriskany, curves northward, so that here it is as far away in a right line, perhaps a mile in each case. The bottoms were marshy, as they yet are where the trees exclude the sun. Now the New York Central Railroad and the Erie Canal mark the general direction of the march of the patriots from their starting place hither. Then forests of beech and birch and maple and hemlock covered the land where now orchards and rich meadows extend, and grain fields are ripening for the harvest. Even the forests are gone, and the Mohawk and the hills and the ravine and "Battle Brook," are the sole witnesses to confirm the traditions which have come down to us. The elms which fling their plumes to the sky are young successors to the knightly warriors who were once masters here.

Through the forests Herkimer, from his elevation, could catch the general outlines of the battle. Some of his advance had fallen at the farthest point to which they had marched. Upon their left the enemy had appeared in force, and had closed up from the southward, and on the east side of the ravine. The patriots had been pushed to the north side of the road, away from the line which the corduroy still marks in the ravine, and those who fled sought the river. Skeletons have been found in the smaller ravine about two hundred rods west, and at the mouth of the Oriskany, an extent of a mile and a half; and gun barrels and other relics along the line of the Erie Canal, and down toward the river. These are witnesses of the battle. They mark the center here. Here gathered the brave militia without uniforms, in the garb of farmers, for their firesides and their homes, and the republic just born which was to be. Against them here, in the ravine, pursuing and capturing the rear guard on the east of the ravine or down in it, and thence toward the river, rushed from the forests, uniformed and well equipped, Johnson's Greens, in their gay color, the German Chasseurs, Europe's best soldiers, with picked men of British and Canadian regiments, and the Indian warriors decked in the equipments with which they made war brilliant. Some of this scene Herkimer saw; some of it extent of space and thickness of forest hid from his eye. But here he faced the enemy, and here he ordered the battle.

During the carnage a storm of wind and rain and lightning brought a respite. Old men preserve the tradition that in the path by which the enemy came a broad windfall was cut, and was seen for long years afterward. The elements caused only a short lull. In came at the thick of the strife a detachment of Johnson's Greens; and they sought to appear reinforcements for the patriots. They paid dearly for the fraud, for thirty were quickly killed. Captain Gardenier slew three with his spear, one after the other. Captain Dillenback, assailed by three, brained one, shot the second and bayoneted the third. Henry Thompson grew faint with hunger, sat down on the body of a dead soldier, ate his lunch, and refreshed, resumed the fight. William Merckley, mortally wounded, to a friend offering to assist him, said: "Take care of yourself, leave me to my fate." Such men could not be whipped. The Indians, finding they were losing many, became suspicious that their allies wished to destroy them, and fired on them, giving unexpected aid to the patriot band. Tradition relates that an Oneida maid, only fifteen years old, daughter of a chief, fought on the side of the patriots, firing her rifle, and shouting her battle cry. The Indians raised the cry of retreat, "Oonah! Oonah!" Johnson heard the firing of a sortie from the fort. The British fell back, after five hours of desperate fight. Herkimer and his gallant men held the ground.

The sortie from Fort Stanwix, which Herkimer expected, was made as soon as his messengers arrived. They were delayed, and yet got through at a critical moment. Colonel Willett made a sally at the head of two hundred and fifty men, totally routed two of the enemy's encampments, and captured their contents, including five British flags. The exploit did not cost a single patriot life, while at least six of the enemy were killed and four made prisoners. It aided to force the British retreat from Oriskany. The captured flags were floated beneath the stars and stripes, fashioned in the fort from cloaks and shirts; and here for the first time the flag of the republic was raised in victory over British colors.

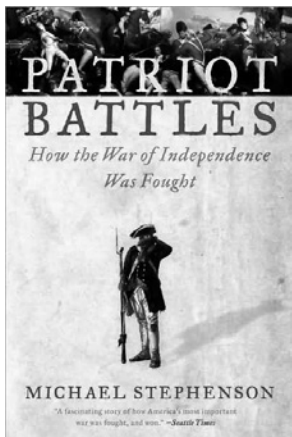
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The slaughter at Oriskany was terrible. St. Leger claims that four hundred of Herkimer's men were killed and two hundred captures, leaving only two hundred to escape. No such number of prisoners was ever accounted for. The Americans admitted two hundred killed, one fourth of the whole army. St. Leger places the number of Indians killed, at thirty, and the like number wounded, including favorite chiefs and confidential warriors. It was doubtless greater, for the Senecas alone lost thirty-six killed, and in all the tribes twice as many must have been killed. St. Leger makes no account of any of his whites killed or wounded. Butler, however, mentions of New Yorkers (Johnson's Greens) killed, Captain McDonald; Captain Watts dangerously wounded and one sabalter. Of the Tory Rangers Captains Wilson and Hare (their chiefs after Butler) were killed. With such loss of officers, the death list of privates must have been considerable. The Greens alone lost thirty. In Britain it was believed as many of the British were killed by the Indians as by the militia. The loss of British and Indians

must have approached a hundred and fifty killed. Eyewitnesses were found who estimated it as great as that of the Americans. The patriot dead included Colonel Cox, and his Lieutenant-Colonel Hunt, Majors Eisenlord, Van Slyck, Klapsattle and Belvin; and Captains Diefendorf, Crouse, Bowman, Dillenback, Davis, Pettingill, Helmer, Graves and Fox; with no less than four member of the Tryon county Committee of Safety, who were present as volunteers. They were Isaac Paris, Samuel Billington, John Dygert and Jacob Snell. Spencer, the Oneida, who gave the warning to the patriots, was also among the killed. The heads of the patriot organization in the valley were swept off. Herkimer's glory is that out of such slaughter he snatched the substance of victory. In no other battle of the revolution did the ration of deaths rise so high. At Waterloo, the French loss was not in so large a ration to the number engaged, as was Herkimer's at Oriskany; no did the allies suffer as much on that bloody field.

THE THREE WAY WAR BY JOE WAGNER

Excerpts from "*Patriot Battles – How the War of Independence was Fought*" By Michael Stephenson



The musket was the linchpin in defining the effectiveness and functionality of the 18th century army. We are all aware how the inaccurate and short ranged musket determined the tactics of the time. Volley fire, linear alignments, constant repetition of a rigid drill, the en masse movement of formations, all reflect the nature of the musket as the infantry weapon of choice. Its performance was key in dealing with the other two members of this triad.

The musket, as we have heard, and often repeated, was a poor instrument for battle, using 600-800 FPS of muzzle velocity (a fifth that of a modern rifle) in sending off a round ball that could drop 5 feet in elevation over the first 150 yards of flight, and diverge by as much in any direction from the point of aim.

Poor as they were, some were better than others, at least in the eyes of the users. The American militia establishment for decades had been exposed to the British King's Arm. As English-

men, they had accepted it as much as any other part of their heritage. Once war began, the first sizable shipment of 23,000 French Charleville muskets reached the American forces in 1777. One early reaction appears in an American soldier's diary:

"The enemy then retreated precipitately, throwing away many of their guns. I was foremost in following (being mounted), and got as many of their guns as I could conveniently manage on my horse. I gave them to the American soldiers as they stood in rank. They threw away their French pieces, preferring the British." – Wm. Lloyd, NJ Militia

Whatever the feeling about muskets, there is no doubt they were much preferred (along with the accompanying bayonet) to the rifle by the commanders and tacticians of the day. The rifle was an individually handmade outsider, an unknown and unpracticed quantity in 18th

century combat, which combat was founded upon the bedrock capabilities of the musket with its bayonet. Herewith is a military leader's opinion that captures the essence of all three corners in this weapons triangle –

“I don't like rifles – I would almost as soon face an enemy with a good musket and bayonet without ammunition – as with a rifle and ammunition without bayonet; for although there are not many instances of bloody bayonets, yet I am confident that one bayonet keeps off another . . . the enemy knowing the defenseless state of a rifleman, rush on – they fly – and mix with or pass through our troops and communicate their fears. It would be better if good muskets and bayonets were put in the hands of good marksmen and rifles laid entirely aside.” – Genl. Anthony Wayne, 1778

Use of the bayonet on musket was viewed, perhaps subconsciously, by military officers as the logical follow-on to the application of force against the enemy using the pike and other hand arms of earlier wars. The poor performance of the musket alone encouraged this thinking - that in the end they were still dealing with a hand to hand struggle. This led to the commonly expressed belief that the bayonet was the ultimate “decider” for infantry. Of course, the preference for bayonet, vice a musket or rifle, was most prevalent with the generals and senior tacticians of the day. For the common soldier, it must have seemed a better day when he could fire at an officer or artillery crewman with a rifle, or volley with the musket, rather than advance in ranks with the bayonet, ala Bunker Hill.

“The impetuosity and uncertain aim of the troops in giving their fire and the mistake they are still under in preferring it to the bayonet is much to be lamented.” – General Burgoyne 19 Sep 1777

Whatever the common soldier preferred, the bayonet and its tactics, in the minds of the generals, represented the brave and aggressive behavior they desired to see in their troops.

“General Howe recommends to the troops an entire dependence upon their bayonets, with which they will ever command the success which their bravery so well deserves.”

General Orders, Kips Bay, NY 15 Sep 1776

“Tell General Sullivan to use the bayonet as I am resolved to take Trenton.” – General G, Washington 25 Sep 1776

As General Wayne pointed out in the quote above, there are “not many instances of bloody bayonets.” Despite enthusiastic support of bayonet usage by the leadership, a survey of battles fought in the period offers little evidence of bayonet on bayonet combat on any large scale. There were actions planned that relied on the bayonet, such as Paoli or Bunker Hill. There were also isolated occurrences due to circumstance, such as the death by bayonet of General Mercer leading the Virginia troops at Trenton. But in most cases the answer to such attack was fire and/or retreat.

While rifles seem a somewhat safer alternative for the user - if he took care in how he fought, they also stood apart in terms of the military organization that used them. General Wayne's opinion of riflemen is clear – they seem to be right up there with militia in their ability to ruin formations and instill panic in the solid, much-to-be-preferred musket men. It is not hard to look back at the descriptions of rifle units, and perceive that they thought they were something special – maybe with the thought that they were avoiding the rigid discipline and rote behavior required of the musket and bayonet line.

“A rifle corps came into camp from Virginia, made up of recruits from the backwoods and mountains of that state, in a uniform dress totally different from that of the regiments raised o the seaboard and interior of NE. Their white linen frocks, ruffled and fringed, excited the curiosity of the whole army, particularly the Marblehead regiment.

Their first manifestations, ridicule and derision, which the riflemen bore with more patience than was their wont. Resort being made to the snow which then covered the ground, these soft missives were interchanged but a few minutes when both parties closed, and a fierce struggle commenced with biting, gouging, and knockdown with as much deadly fury as the most deadly enmity could create. Reinforced by their friends, in five minutes more than a thousand combatants filled the field.”

– Israil Trask, Private, Mass. Militia, December 1775

As a descendent of a Revolutionary War rifleman (Maryland & Virginia Rifle Corps), and 25 year member of the infantry, I can understand both sides of the argument.



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