

Spring, 2016



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BRIGADE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION NORTHWEST DEPARTMENT

B.A.R. SHOT

Commander: Bob Cairns (330) 455-9722

B.A.R. SHOT Editor: Karen Kashary (330) 523-0629

NWD Commander's Corner

HeadQuarters, Fort Laurens

5 May

At the end of last month a detachment of troops from the NW. Dept. journeyed to Mount Vernon, the home of our esteemed General Washington, to assist in protecting it from the forces of George III. Our company was made up of men from the 5th Virg., 8th Penna., 13th Virg. and Logan's Coy., and numbered 25 men-at-arms and musicians. We were accompanied by a gun crewed by men from the detached units and commanded by the Naval Landing Party. We joined a large assemblage of troops from the southern, middle and northern colonies. Our company was in the battalion of the Virginia regiments, and overall were commanded by a very able officer from New Jersey. The weather was fair and very agreeable on Friday when we arrived, and our camps were easily set. We awoke on Saturday to more weather of the same, and in the morning we were involved in a very sharp skirmish through the mansion's vegetable gardens and orchards. We successfully repelled the Crown troops' attempt on our camp. In the afternoon they returned and were able to force us back with the help of cavalry and artillery. We Congressionals did see some of our old adversaries in the form of Loyalists from the 4th N.J. Vol., the 23rd RWF, and the Jaegers.

The General and his staff were quite hospitable and arranged a jollification on the bowling green in front of the mansion. Refreshments were abundant and many of our company enjoyed the revelry late into the night. The weather turned during the night, and rain fell throughout the night and continued till nearly noon on Sunday. The Crown troops must not have protected their powder, and most were forced to withdraw. They did, however, make one last attempt to intimidate us, but many of our men held steady during the rain, and we greatly outnumbered our adversaries. The outcome of the last skirmish was never in doubt, and we were reviewed by Gen. Lafayette prior to the action, which also added steel to our resolve.

The General's home no longer being threatened, all the troops were released to their regular garrisons and posts. It is noteworthy that on Saturday, before the evening meal, the NW Dept. Continental Coy., along with men of the 23rd RWF rendered honors to General Washington and Lady Washington.

Robt. Cairns, Cmdg.



Photo by Dianne Miller

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Photos by Martin Tindell





Photo by Martin Tindell

Notes from the Inspector

This weekend saw a large contingent from the North West Department attend the event at Mount Vernon. I'll leave it for others to describe the event. There were two small items that caught my attention as Inspector that I would like to mention. The first is the way our, NWD, company was organized. We were the second company and in line to the left of our colors so that our officers were on the left side of our formation. I know that isn't a big deal and I think we did a fine job, but it was different from what most of us were accustomed to and at first it was a little strange. The other thing that we were asked to do was to form closed columns on different platoons. Again, we were able to perform the maneuvers with some coaching. My point in mentioning these two small items is that those soldiers that we seek to recreate would be able to perform these movements without hesitation. The more we get to practice those things that our predecessors did the more we get to recreate the life and times of the common soldier, (From the BAR Letterhead). I believe this makes us better Revolutionary War living historians.

Our next event is the Siege of Fort Randolph. I hope that you will attend this event and "experience" defending and attacking a stockade fortification.

Respectfully,
Joe Forte, NWD Inspector

EVENT NOTICE

Siege of Fort Randolph May 20, 21, 22, 2016 Point Pleasant, West Virginia

The NWD has been invited to participate in the reenactment of the Siege of Fort Randolph. This event is held annually and is the biggest event held at Fort Randolph. This will be the 16th year for the event. The event recreates the 1777 visit to the fort by Shawnee Chief Cornstalk and the 1778 siege of the fort. The siege is a scripted event that takes place on Saturday afternoon. The NWD Congressional forces will be joined by the local militia to defend the fort. NWD Crown and Loyalist forces will join with the Native Americans attacking the fort. All BAR members should wear their standard regimental uniform.

Weekend Schedule:

Friday: "School Day." Local elementary schools bring their students to the fort for demonstrations and programs by the reenactors. This will be open to any BAR member wishing to put on demonstrations or programs. If there is something that you want to demonstrate please let me know and we will include it. Demonstrations should be limited to about 20 minutes. On Friday evening a review of Saturday's activities will take place for all officers.

Saturday: Siege of Fort Randolph. Saturday morning will be used for drilling and formation of the combined Congressional and Militia forces. During the morning and early afternoon, before the actual siege, daily life is portrayed in the fort. During the actual siege the NWD will be directed as to their parts either defending or attacking the fort.

There will be jollification with period gaming in the tavern on Saturday evening.

Sunday: NWD Garrisoning of Fort Randolph. We will do the standard NWD demonstrations.

You can find more information on the fort's website: fortrandolph.org.

Amenities: The fort will be available for early arrivals on Thursday. One of the blockhouses has been reserved for the NWD. There will be space inside the fort for those wishing to pitch wedge tents. Also, there is ample space outside the fort for those wishing to use tents. Members of the Crown forces that want to camp will camp outside the fort adjacent to the Native American camp. There will also be sleeping space available for Crown forces inside the fort. BAR members portraying Native Americans are encouraged to attend and will be permitted to use the fort's Native American camp area.

The fort has hot and cold running water, showers, and flush toilets. There are several porta-johns available if you feel that indoor plumbing ruins the ambiance of the weekend.

The Friends of Fort Randolph will provide the following meals: light breakfasts on Saturday and Sunday, a light lunch on Saturday and dinner on Saturday evening. Point Pleasant has several restaurants downtown including McDonald's. Since the Friends of Fort Randolph will be preparing meals we need to let them know how many will be attending.

Please contact Joe Forte before May 17 to let him know how many will be attending and whether or not you need sleeping space in the fort.

Sleeping space will be filled on a first come, first served basis. If you do not register for meals you will be fed after all those registered have been fed.

Fort Randolph is located in Krodel Park just east of Point Pleasant, WV.

If you haven't been to Fort Randolph come and check it out.

Event Coordinator: Joe Forte. E-mail: jjforte@frontier.com

Phone: (740) 474 - 6183

Adjutant's Freshest Advises

The NWD campaign season of 2016 started off with a wonderful Event at George Washington's home on the Potomac River, Mount Vernon. Next on the schedule is the Siege at Fort Randolph. See more about this Event in this BAR Shot issue. Has your Unit submitted their 2016 Brigade dues with membership updated application? It is most important that each member submit their current email and home address information promptly to their Unit Commander who needs to submit it to the BAR Membership Clerk, Dave Miller. His address is listed on the bottom of the BAR 2016 renewal form in the Brigade Courier. If you wish to participate in any of the 2016 BAR or NWD events, receive the Brigade Courier, Dispatch and NWD emails you must pay your dues promptly. Talk to your Unit members. Remind them that if they move their residence or change their email address, they need to contact me, the NWD Adjutant with their new information. Printing and mailing of our BAR publications are costly and we do not wish to waste valuable funds sitting in a dead letter file at the U.S. Post Office.

YMHS,

Bob Kashary, NWD Adjutant



Photo by Dianne Miller

THE 238TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BUILDING OF FORT LAURENS "REVOLUTION ON THE TUSCARAWAS"

32th Annual NWD BAR Encampment
Fort Laurens State Memorial
Bolivar, Ohio
July 9-10, 2016

"In December 1778, a Continental Army of 1,200+ men, commanded by General Lachlan McIntosh, built a small log fortification, designed by Louis Antoine Jean Baptiste Chevalier de Cambray-Digny, a French engineer, and named for The President of The Continental Congress, Henry Laurens. The fort was abandoned in August 1779, after several attacks by British, Loyalist, and Indian forces, and was the region's major link to The American Revolution. Both The 8th Pennsylvania and The 9th/13th Virginia Regiments served here."

In honor of the engineer work at Fort Laurens, a special presentation will be done on military engineering. To assist with the engineer demonstration, troops are asked to bring: Grapevine (the longer the length the better) and small pliable branches (1-1 1/2 inches in diameter). Also, some longer poles (about 2½ to 3 inches) are needed for the demonstration.

DIRECTIONS - From north or south, follow Interstate 77 to Bolivar Exit #93 (Bolivar, Zoar, State Route 212), exit, turn west, follow the signs to Fort Laurens State Memorial.

OFF SITE ACCOMODATIONS -

Sleep Inn
1155 St Rt. 212
Bolivar, Ohio
330-874-3435

Ramada Inn
509 S. Wooster Ave.
Strasburg, Ohio
330-878-1400

There is a large variety of motels and restaurants in the Dover-New Philadelphia area, 10-15 minutes south of Bolivar. There is also a large variety of motels and restaurants in the Canton/Belden Village area, 30 minutes north of Bolivar.

PROVIDED: Saturday lunch and supper, Sunday lunch, firewood, straw, potable water, porta-johns, (restrooms when The Museum is open), modern camping; cavalry and artillery "friendly".

18th C CAMPS: All troops and CCM are urged to bring their 18th C tentage as a large camp area will improve the public's "experience". Please include in your reservation the number and types of tents you will personally be bringing to Fort Laurens.

SATURDAY EVENING DINNER: Because of cost and prep time, the quantity of food prepared will be based upon the number of reservations received. When sending your Event Registration to Tom Pieper- by phone (330-494-6187) or by e-mail (tip@neo.rr.com) please indicate if you are not planning to eat Saturday dinner with us.

RESERVATIONS are due to Tom Pieper by July 2. When making your reservation be sure to include:

1. Your name
2. Your unit name
3. When you will be arriving and leaving
4. Number and type of tents
5. Number of soldiers and musicians
6. Number of adults and children to be fed

EVENT NOTICE: This is your event notice. There will be no event notice coming in the U.S. mail.

CCM: You are asked to bring children's games, clothing, and ideas for activities to help "engage" our younger visitors.

FORT LAURENS SCHEDULE 2016

Friday, July 8 12:00 Noon - Units may arrive and set up. * Public will be present and it is hoped that, if and when you are asked about your/our activities, you will share with the public and explain our activities.

Saturday, July 9

9:30 Sutlers open (till 5:00 PM)

9:45 Officers' Call

* Walking Tours of Fort Laurens and the camps will be held periodically, when the public number justify

10:30 Formation (Inspection, Orders, Schedule)

CCM activities begin and continue through the day

Engineering demonstration begins and continues through the day

11:00 Division drill & unit drill

11:30 Lunch *** Please bring your own mess gear

12:30 Ceremony at The Tomb of the Unknown Patriot

1:00 Music & Songs of The Revolution

1:30 Military Weapons Demonstration:

to Artillery and infantry

3:00

3:00 Uniforms & Clothing of The Revolution

3:30 Troops assemble in respective camps

4:15 Tactical Weapons Demonstration ("Mock battle")

4:45 Closing Ceremony

5:00 18th C. Flea Market

5:30 Dinner

*** Please bring your own mess gear

NWD General Membership Meeting will follow dinner

Movie in theater after Meeting

Sunday, July 10

9:30 Sutlers open (till 5:00 PM)

10:00 Officers' Call

* Walking Tours of Fort Laurens and the camps will be held periodically when the public number justify

10:30 Church Call (non-denominational)

10:45 Formation (Inspection, Orders, Schedule)

CCM activities begin and continue through the day

Engineering demonstration begins and continues through the day

11:15 Division drill / unit drill

11:30 Lunch *** Please bring your own mess gear

12:30 Ceremony at The Tomb of the Unknown Patriot

1:00 Music & Songs of The Revolution

1:30 Military Weapons Demonstration:

to Artillery and infantry /// 8th Pa. Regt.

3:00 Uniforms & Clothing of The Revolution

4:00 Troops assemble in respective camps

4:15 Tactical Weapons Demonstration ("Mock battle")

4:45 Closing Ceremony

Coordinators

CCM - Julie Watkins: 740-448-3157 or julie.watkins@fbports.com

Event - Tom Pieper: 2810 River Run Circle N.W., North Canton, Ohio 44720

[\(330\)494-6187](tel:3304946187) tip@neo.rr.com

Emergency Phone - Fort Laurens State Memorial - 800-283-8914 & 330-874-2059
Tuscarawas County Sheriff & Bolivar Police - 330-874-2113

NWD Spring Firelock Match

25-26 June 2016

Tom Hornbrook's Farm

4665 Carmont Ave. SW

Navarre, Ohio 44662

This match will focus on 18th c. style targets, shot at random distances. You should have 70 live rounds rolled in aluminum foil for this match. We will open the range at 9:30 AM both days for sighting shooting, and matches will begin at 10:00 AM each day. Remember, shooting glasses may be worn, but should be clear, not tinted. Ear protection is also recommended. We will shoot smooth bore and rifled shoulder arms matches and pistol if there is interest. You must load using the rod in the gun and shooting boxes are not to be on the range. We are trying to duplicate the conditions of an 18th c. shoot, with the obvious nod to safety. A port-a-john will be provided. There is space for camping. Firewood will be provided and potable water is available. NO FOOD is provided, so bring your own. Please bring a haversack lunch so you can eat at the range. We will not stop for lunch on Saturday. 18th c. attire is required to participate.

Please look at the accompanying pages that describe how to roll live rounds in foil and some recommendations for live shooting. We ENCOURAGE first time shooters to attend and instruction will be in ample supply. This is to be a learning experience, NOT a competition. We want you to experience live shooting to make you a better interpreter. If you have ANY questions, contact:

Tom Hornbrook- tphornbrook@yahoo.com (330) 879-2617 or
robtcairns@cs.com (330) 455-9722

Bob Cairns-

When you arrive, park at the pond on the east side of the street, and we'll see you there. **Please** let Bob know you plan to attend, using his email.

Remaining 2016 NWD Schedule

21-22 May	Siege of Fort Randolph, Point Pleasant, WV
25-26 June	NWD Firelock, Hornbrook Farm, Navarre, OH
9-10 July	Fort Laurens, Bolivar, OH
6-7 Aug.	Fort Meigs, Perrysburg, OH
3-4 Sept.	Fort Henry Siege, Wheeling, WV
25 Sept.	Brecksville Fall Fest, Brecksville, OH
5-6 Nov.	NWD Firelock Match, Log Cabin Gun Shop, Lodi, OH



Live Fire

At our Authentic Weekend I talked with a number of shooters that had never fired in B.A.R. live-fire matches, and would like to share with you what I talked about. First, I believe that if you are going to interpret a musketeer of the Revolution, you should have practical, first hand knowledge of loading and firing your musket live at a target. So, I believe you all should live-fire your musket once and a while so you can accurately relate this to the public.

The B.A.R. requires that muskets be loaded from foil (aluminum or tin) cartridges. There are several reasons for this. First, it is nearly impossible to mistake a foil cartridge for a blank paper round, which means our tacticals are safe from this error. Secondly, when you ram the foil, it actually acts as a scraper, cleaning some of the fouling from the barrel, making your musket a little easier to load a number of rounds in succession. And thirdly, we do it because it is a B.A.R. regulation, and keeps us within our insurance requirements.

I'm going to share how I roll cartridges and get ready to shoot. These aren't the only ways to do it, but they have worked for me for 30 years. What you need to roll live rounds is;

- aluminum foil** (buy good foil, if you get cheap stuff it tears too easily)
- copper tube**, 6"-7" in length, and slightly smaller diameter than the ball you use
If you use a wooden dowel, the foil tends to collapse when you remove it.
- powder measure**, if your measure has a funnel, it makes pouring easier

- powder can spout**, optional, but makes pouring from the can easier, usually made from a spent brass rifle shell
- wooden cartridge block**, from your cartridge box
- lead balls**, make sure these are pure lead. Balls cast from tire weights or other Alloy metals are hard, and difficult to pull if need be.
- BLACK POWDER** the unit uses GOEX or SCHUETZEN brands. DO NOT use black powder substitutes such as Pyrodex. You will be creating a very dangerous situation. The two brands used by the unit are readily available. Use ONLY FFg or FFFg granulations for cartridges.

- 1st cut your foil cartridges out using the pattern diagram included. You can cut squares, but then the seam of the cartridge runs straight down the side instead of spiraling around the cartridge, which I believe is a little stronger
- 2nd lay your former (copper tube) with a ball at one end, on the cartridge. (see the diagram). Make sure to leave enough foil beyond the ball so you can twist it closed.
- 3rd roll the former and ball up in the foil, making sure you keep the ball tight against the former, and roll it tightly in the foil. Twist the ball end shut.
- 4th remove the cartridge w/ ball from the former, and put it in your cartridge block. When you have a block full, the measure your powder charges and load each round. Fold down the tops, and you're ready to go.

I don't use any lubricant on the cartridges, although so folks do. I've found it just made a mess for me, and if you have the right sized ball, lubricant isn't necessary. (Bore Butter is the brand named used by some shooters, if you're inclined to try a lube). Now you're ready to shoot.

Live Firing Tips

- Never step off the line to load your musket or with a loaded musket. If you have a problem, notify the range officer.
- Although at B.A.R. matches it is permissible to prime before you load, if you prefer not to (as I do) it is also permissible to prime from a horn with less than 2 oz. of powder. Make sure you return the horn to a safe place on your person before you fire.
- If you have a "hang fire", or if only your prime goes off, continue to Hold your musket on the target for several seconds before lowering it.

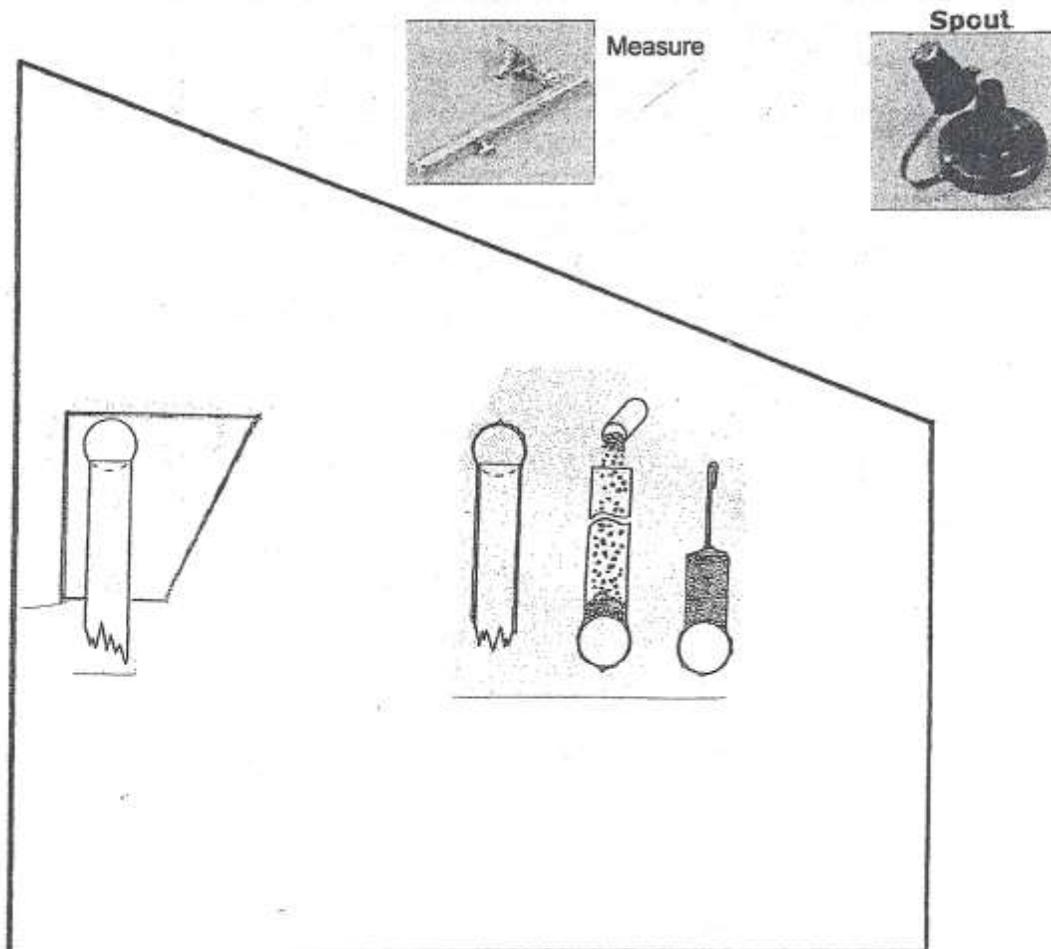
- If the foil bothers your dental work, tear the top of the cartridge off with your fingers.
- Always start your shooting day with a CLEAN musket. It makes things work better.
- Ball Size. Trying to shoot a ball too large is a common problem that can take a great deal of fun out of your shooting, so I recommend that you start with the following ;

.75 cal. Musket – No larger than .735, but many very experienced shooters use .730 or .715. (I shoot a .730 in my .775 musket, with good results).

.69 cal. Musket – No larger than .662, but I recommend .648, .620, or even .600. (many of the Navy Arms French muskets seem to have a choke several inches from the muzzle, and a smaller ball works better. *Never* use .678. I guarantee you'll get one stuck, and your shooting day will be over.

Precast round ball are available from many sources, including Dixie Gun Works, Track of the Wolf, and The Log Cabin Shop. If you can't find the ball size you want from these folks, it might not be made. If you want to cast your own, make sure that you use pure lead. Tire weights, or other such metals may, and probably do, have tin and other things alloyed with them that will make it very difficult to get a ball puller in if need be. Save this harder metal for casting buttons.

Powder Charge Your charge will vary with your musket, but I recommend you start with about 65 grains of Ffg. Shot this charge till you get all the rounds going in about the same place at about 35 yds. If you're consistently low, add 5 grains and keep experimenting until you get a charge that puts the ball where you want it. If you are priming from the cartridge, take this into account and add 5 grains.



A final note on live-firing. Don't be embarrassed if you don't know something. There is no problem in not knowing. The problem is not knowing and ***NOT ASKING*** for help. We have many experienced shooters at our shoots, and they are glad to help by sharing what they know.



Photo by Dianne Miller

Regarding "Buff Leather"

A person cannot very long be involved in recreating a Revolutionary War military impression without running in to the term "buff leather". Over my years of living history involvement, I have heard numerous explanations and definitions of "buff leather", with a wide range of opinions and contradictory information. In the most recent journal of the Company of Military Historians, Mr. David Jarnagin and Mr. K. Knopp presented an article that helps my understanding of "buff leather". Mr. Jarnagin has been gracious enough to allow that article to be reprinted in our B.A.R. SHOT. I would like to thank both authors as well as the Company of Military Historians for their permission and their work on the following piece.

The Strange History of Buff Leather: Its Origins and Military Applications

David Jarnagin and Ken R. Knopp

"Buff" leather? While most military historians believe they know what the term means, the reality is this leather is one of the most misunderstood leather types from the nineteenth century, particularly here in the United States. The name itself conjures up all kinds of thoughts and questions about what "buff" is and where it comes from. The confusion about buff actually goes back centuries. It begins with its name but is further complicated by its unique surface textures, often referred to as "rough out" or "fuzzy." Much of the confusion stems from eighteenth century writings which erroneously surmised from the name it was tanned from shaggy buffalo. (1) Neither option is true. So. Where did the name come from and what was the original animal hide the leather was tanned from? How was this leather made? More importantly, what are its military applications and why it there white, black and brown buff?

Buff leather acquired its original name from a very obscure source. The very first buff leather came from the hide of the ancient Urus (or Aurochs), an early type of wild cattle that centuries ago roamed Europe, Asia, and North Africa. Commonly known as the "Buffe," this now extinct bovine was a large, stout animal that stood up to 6.5 feet tall at the shoulder and weighed 2,200 pounds. The very first recorded military use of buff leather was in the early 1500s when English King Henry VIII imported a number of "bufe-hides," which were tanned and manufactured into leather for military clothing. This "buff-leather" was very thick, durable, yet supple and known to be so strong it would turn the edge of a sword and was impervious to the pistol ball of the period. However, its use was short lived. The last of the Urus/Aurochs breed died in the early 1600s. It was only then domestic cattle began to be routinely used for making military leather. However, according to period writings they were found to be inferior in quality to the Urus. (2) The innate confusion of buff leather was further perpetuated by the common practice of referring to any breed of wild oxen as a "buffalo," which of course may explain why our American bison was mislabeled a "buffalo."

To really understand the nature of buff leather, one must first understand leather tanning-the process by which raw animal hides are finished into usable leather. Good quality bridle and harness leather requires tanners to start with hides of only the best, smooth, unblemished surfaces then apply a process that strengthens and preserves yet leaves the grain surface even in texture and color. For thousands of years tanning has employed an intricate, laborious, multi-step, natural chemical process to make differing hides in various weights, thicknesses, colors, and grade4s of leather for a myriad of human uses and applications. For most of that time, the more well known "vegetable" or bark tanning method was commonly achieved by repeat soakings of the raw hide first in lime, then in solutions made from the bark of trees, which generates an acidic chemical reaction that slowly turns the hides into leather. The "tannin" (tanning agents) found in the bark is the central ingredient that preserves the hide-first by stopping natural decay then leaving the leather both flexible yet durable enough for extended use. Most leathers were hand finished with various stains, tallows, and other compounds to give them durability and a smooth, even texture and color. Another popular tanning method in the period was "mineral tanning," which encompassed all other nonvegetable methods for preserving hides into leather. (3)

Tanning buff leather was unique. Since a smooth surface is not the object with buff leather, tanners started with only the poorest quality or damaged hides for finishing into buff's rough facing. Tanners heavily limed or sanded the hide4 which stripped the smooth grain surface to a fine suede. They then employed alternating combinations of alum and salt tanning (a form of mineral tanning called Tawing). For white buff the tanning process ended there and whiteners were added to finish the leather. Buff that was to be ultimately dyed black was oak stained and then sealed with a protective cod oil surface tan which left the leather a yellowish-brown chamois color. Unfortunately, the oil tanning process requires a specific range of temperatures that must be performed in direct sunlight thus limiting its tanning to short periods in the spring and fall. Regardless of the final color buff tanning was tedious, labor intensive, and expensive. Perhaps more importantly, it had a very limited market outside of military contracts. As a result, few tanners were willing to devote the necessary resources to its production and the few that did so, of course, charged high prices. Nevertheless, it was a unique process that produced buff's distinctive fuzzy, rough out surface and also gives the durability, look, and feel that differentiates it from all other leathers. (4)

Over the next three centuries, tanners refined their abilities to produce a buff leather that nearly replicated the strength and durability of the Urus hides, but made from domestic cowhided. Throughout this period, European and later American military applications for buff leather were primarily in making accoutrement belts and clothing. Period writing describes the original buff leather as generally a light yellow color. (5) This yellow-crème color would remain synonymous with buff leather until the late 1700s

when the European and American armies began to add whiteners to give a distinctively uniform white color. The source of these whiteners was, "Paris Whitening," which is simply powdered chalk worked in at the finishing end of the tanning process. Unfortunately, white buff gets soiled quite quickly which necessitated soldiers being issued pipe clay and whiteners to keep up the appearance of the buff leather. (6)

By the early 1800s enough time had passed that both the Europeans and Americans referred to buff leather simply as "buff," meaning it white (or sometimes white-yellow) color of the leather and no longer the ancient animal or even the tanning process. (7) In the U.S. Army, white buff was used for infantry and cavalry accouterments, including waist belts, cartridge box slings, and carbine slings. This leather color remained the dominant choice for the U.S. Army until the early 1850s. By then, the plentiful supplies remaining from the recent Mexican War were running low due to the complexity of the buff tanning processes tanneries charged high prices for new buff leather. Moreover, the high maintenance of white buff and its restoration remedies) soiled the appearance of the dark blue military uniforms. Because of these factors, the Army began changing its leather orders over to blackened buff and increasingly, "waxed" black leather belts. (8)

However, when the Army switched to the other black leathers it was not without some controversy. First, field troops were resistant to change preferring white buff as cleaner, more durable, and more "dashing." Apparently, the oil in the new black buff also came off when wet soiling the clothing but, more appalling, in the summer it drew flies. According to one officer, attracting "such a swarm of them, as to become disgusting to the sight, nauseating to the stomach, and in fact absolutely tormenting to the soldier." (9)

Another problem for the Ordnance Department was the changeover itself. As they quickly discovered, white buff cannot be re-dyed. As a result, all the leather in arsenal inventories and in the field had to be sent back to the tanneries to have the whiteners removed and then oak stained to allow the leather to be dyed black. By the Civil War, white buff accouterments had been entirely replaced by black buff or more common "waxed" leather in the Regular Army; however, the U.S. Marine Corps retained its white buff leather belts and some could be found among militia units. (10) The war revived buff leather tanning to the extent great quantities were again being made and issued until mid-war when more easily and less expensive bridle and waxed leathers significantly dominated manufacture.

Where does brown buff leather come in? Today's brown buff leather military artifacts are simply black buff accouterments that have faded back to their original brown stain. This fading occurs because the logwood in the black stain cannot hold the iron mordents over extended periods of time which causes the eventual reversion back to the brown stain color.

Today, original, pre-Civil War "white buff" American military leather accouterments are rare. Other than the obvious scarcity afforded all old military artifacts, another reason they are so rare is the fact that many military belts were used in the nineteenth century for other purposes. Some were employed as knife or razor sharpening straps, but many more were cut up as tools for polishing brass. (11) The common name for these polishing tools was "buff sticks." These were wooden sticks with pieces of buff leather wrapped, then glued or nailed to the end of the stick. Grit made of Crocus and rotten-stone was used as a polishing agent with the buff sticks since the porous nature of the buff leather allowed the grit to be held in place. Buff sticks were routinely issued to the troops in the nineteenth century British and American Armies to polish their brass, but they were also commonly used by jewelers and other trades for polishing. (12)

The myths and mysteries of buff leather originated centuries ago and have ever since remained stubbornly persistent across many continents and cultures. Perhaps now the facts can help historians understand the true nature and contributions of this long misunderstood but important part of our military culture.

Notes

Buff: (Webster's 1828 dictionary) [contracted from buffalo, or buffskin.] Buffskin; a sort of leather, prepared from the skin of the buffalo, dressed with oil, like shammy. It is used for making bandoliers, belts, pouches, gloves and other articles. The skins of oxen, elks, and other animals, dressed in the manner, are also called buffs.

Buffalo: (Webster's 1828 dictionary) [L. bubalas.] The Bubalas, a species of the bovine Genus, originally from India, but now found in most of the warmer countries of the Eastern Continent. It is larger and less docile than the common ox, and is fond of marshy places and rivers. The name is applied to wild oxen in general, and particularly to the Bison of North America.

Transactions of the Society Instituted at London for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce: with Premiums Offered for the Years 1833-34 and 1834-35 (London: 1836). L: 194

David Jarnagin and Ken R. Knopp, "Military Leather in the Nineteenth Century: Its Methods and Secrets," *MC&H*, 61, no.1 (Spring 2009): 56-61.

Encyclopedia Britannica: or, a Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, Compiled Upon a New Plan, Vol. III, by A Society of Gentlemen in Scotland (Edinburgh, Scotland: A. Bell and C. Macfarquhar, 1771) 889 (This is really an alum and sea salt tannage. This is the oldest form of tanning known to man. This tannage gives the leather the body needed to work in military applications. The oil tannage on its own would give you chamois leather, which does not have the body or strength for military applications.) The American Leather Chemist Association defines tawing as, "The old English term applied to the process of making leather with alum as distinguished from tanning, which was originally confined to vegetable tanning." (<http://www.leatherchemists.org/dictionary.asp>).

The color of buff; a light yellow. *Transactions of the Society instituted at London for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce*, 194

Henry Trenchard, Serjeant Major, *Private Soldier's and Militia Man's Friend* (London: G.Kearsley, 1786); 27: John Adolphus, *The Political State of the British Empire ...* (London, T. Cadell and W. Davies in the Strand, 1818), 313.

DAVID JARNAGIN is co-owner of C&D Jarnagin, the nation's largest manufacturers of eighteenth and nineteenth century military reenactment clothing and equipment. For over twenty years David's domain has been the company leather shop where authentic cartridge boxes, cap boxes, belts, bayonet scabbards, knapsacks, shoes, boots, and more are made. A passion for the study and experimentation with period leather tanning, dyeing, preservatives, equipment manufacture, and, of course, the handling of thousands of artifacts have made David uniquely qualified in the subject of nineteenth century leather processes, footwear, and leather equipment.

KEN R. KNOPP is a financial adviser with Edward Jones Investments and the author of two books; *Confederate Saddles & Horse Equipment and Made in the CSA, Saddle Makers of the Confederacy, as well as numerous articles about nineteenth century saddlery, leather, and Confederate accouterments*. See www.confederatesaddles.com.



FIG 1. Despite being "posed," this studio photo clearly shows how dirty whitened buff accoutrements can become from field use. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

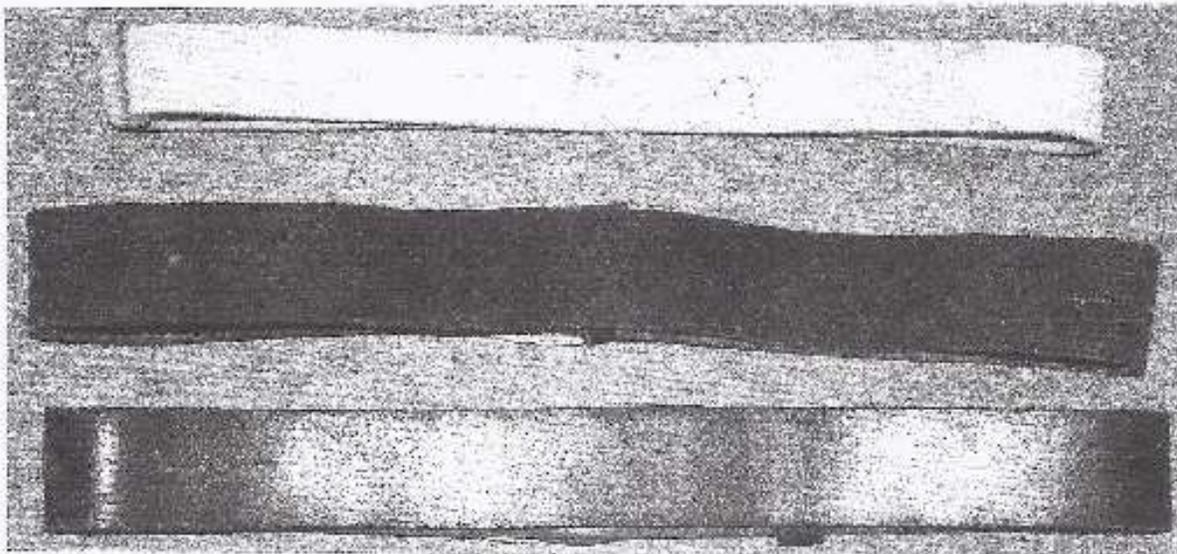


FIG 2. Pictured are three types of leather used in U.S. military waist belts. The top is white buff; middle is bleckened buff; and the bottom is waxed leather. Courtesy of the authors.

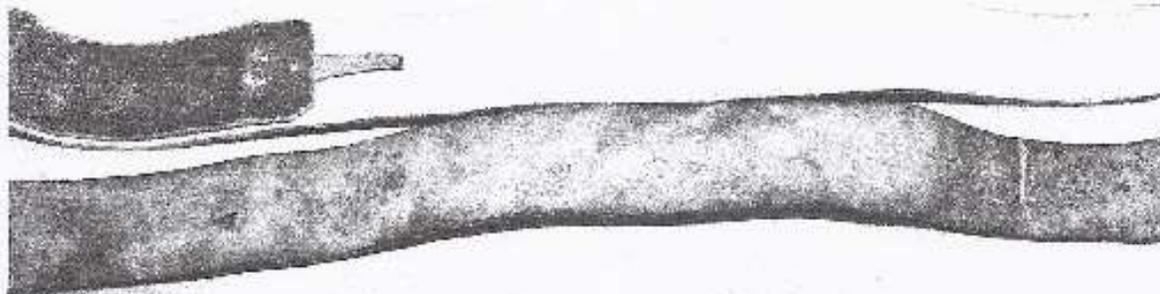


FIG 3. This photo shows the underside of two different blackened buff belts. The lower belt is not well tanned whereas the top one shows what the inside of a blackened buff belt should look like when tanned properly. Note the area behind the hook on the top belt where its original black color is still present. The edges were always dyed on buff leather belts. Courtesy of the authors.

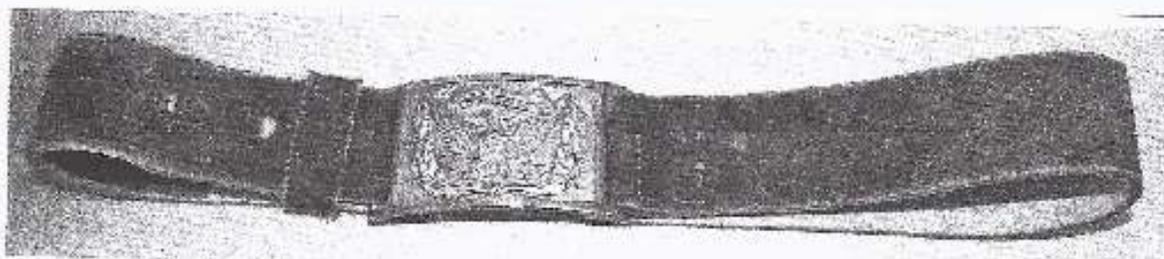


FIG 4. All buff leather required constant upkeep. This faded blackened buff NCO belt shows the necessity of constant maintenance which motivated the Army's move to unred leather accoutrements. Courtesy of the authors.

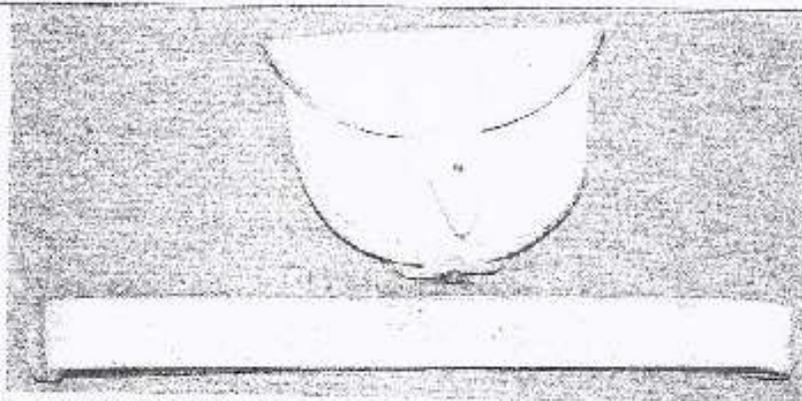


FIG 5. Top: English pattern 21 October 1859 Bull Rog made from whitened buff. Bottom: U.S. Army pattern 1844 (whitened) buff waist belt. As can be seen there is very little difference between the buff leather made in England and that made in the United States. Constant work was needed by the soldiers to keep the buff from looking dingy. Courtesy of the authors.

I hope you found this piece informative, and helpful in your interpretation. I want to add that in corresponding with Mr. Jarnagin I asked his opinion on the use of buff leather by the Continental army during the Revolution. He replied:

"If buff leather was used much by the colonists is doubtful. The tanning process is a hard one and finding tanners that knew how to tan the leather. Vegetable tanned leather was an easier process and was well known and used in the colonies for most of the leather uses of the time. It was hard to get the tanning process of vegetable tanned leather from England since the guilds held their secrets very dearly.

Careful [sic] using the term harness leather since it was used in its namesake harnesses. Harness has more oils and waxes to protect the leather from sweat of horses and mules. The type most likely used was bridle (leather).

I have moved on from leather about three years ago and have been studying shoes and flax thread. . . . In reading information on shoes it seems that shoes used by the Continental army were tall shoes by the end of the war."

David Jarnagin

So, those of us Continentals that are using buff leather for our cartridge pouch and/or bayonet carriages should consider swapping them for bridle leather examples, unless, of course, your particular unit can document buff leather. The reprinted article appeared in *Military Collector and Historian*, Vol. 68, No. 1, Spring 2016. As a closing thought, the publication is put out quarterly by the Company of Military Historians, and is chocked full of terrific, documented information. You can see more by visiting the Company's website, <http://www.military-historians.org>. Also, please note the advertisement for C & D Jarnagin in this issue of the B.A.R. SHOT. I can personally vouch for the quality and accuracy of their offerings.

Bob Cairns, 8th Pa Reg't, Ft. Laurens Det.



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An Invitation

"Historic Locust Grove and Capt'n Kellar's Comp'y of the Illinois Regim't wish to extend this invitation to all BAR members to participate at their 18th Century Market Fair on Oct. 29-30, 2016.

To be held on the grounds of Major William Croghan's estate, Locust Grove, last home of General George Rogers Clark, which will be brought to life with the world of the American Revolutionary War, in which both of these men served. The camps and market are all in the shadow of the historic home, which was begun ca. 1792, and retaining many Georgian characteristics despite the dawning of the Federal Period. The 55 acre site is also equipped with multiple correctly reconstructed and fully functional out buildings. A large valley with a reconstructed double pen barn and bordered by woods on the far side provides a perfect setting for period military engagements of any sort we can muster; the ridge on the side closer to the rest of the action of the event is ideal place for the public to take the whole thing in. Other features of the event include around thirty quality period artisans and purveyors of period goods, His Lordship's Beef and Crown Point Bread Company for period food and drink for purchase, a la carte breakfast for sale for reenactors 7am-10am both days by Locust Grove volunteers. Registration link will be available through the event listing on locustgrove.org."

Brian Cushing

Program Coordinator

Historic Locust Grove

(502) 897-9845

This is NOT a B.A.R. event, but some of you may be interested in attending. Please visit their website for further information/registration. (Ed.)



The Sew & So...

THOUGHTS FROM THE KNITTERS CIRCLE AT MT VERNON.....

The Ladies of the Northwest Department were sitting under the dining fly, with cloudy skies above threatening rain. We have studied 18th century clothing for years, even decades. And, we've come a long way baby! (Remember the early Brigade clothing instructions in the 70's and 80's? A circle of fabric for a cap, and a petticoat with a casing for the waist?) But what about knitted, rather than woven garments? Not as much info on this....

I mentioned that I had read "somewhere", that in the 18th century, they only used double-pointed knitting needles in sets of 4 or 5, and that there were none of the pairs of needles with points on one end with some kind of finial at the other end. This would mean that garments were only knitted in the round, rather than the currently familiar "back and forth" style. After some discussion, it became apparent that this style of knitting would limit what garments would have been possible. In other words, knitted garments would be knitted in a tube shape. This would eliminate scarves and shawls, which are flat.

Well, consensus was quickly reached. I was "elected" to check this out and publish the findings in this publication. By the way, the deadline is one week... (And subtract a day for travel home, and another day for unpacking and laundry.) SO... this is NOT a paper of thorough, intense research. But I did find interesting, well documented information online which I am happy to share. I am almost certain that there could be a few rare extant examples that are exceptions to my findings. I am also suspicious that a few of the examples I found may have been given an inaccurate date. Nevertheless, prudent women would be wise to portray the most commonly knitted garments and techniques. My hope is for discussion and further research on this topic. I'm looking forward to hearing what you find! A summary of what I learned:

1. Items were knitted IN THE ROUND on double pointed needles. NO FLAT, BACK-AND-FORTH knitting on pairs of needles with finials on one end! Most common: smooth, stockinet stitch. "In-the-round" knitting eliminates items such as scarves and shawls.
2. Knitting needles (called knitting "pins") were made of steel wire, had double points to knit in the round, and were in a very small size. The gage for stockings was 7 to 30 stitches per inch, most commonly 9 to 15 stitches per inch!
3. For Knitted caps, gloves, fingerless mitts and mittens, the gage could be larger, up to 5-6 stitches per inch. Some needles in larger sizes were made of wood.
4. Rare items: fine gage silk "waistcoat" (really an undershirt), infant and ladies jacket...and a knit petticoat that had 2,000 stitches cast on at the hem!
5. Garments were made in silk, linen, cotton, and wool. Wool was sometimes felted and blocked into shape.
6. There were knitted pin balls and knitted purses ...a good project for someone who wants to make something different! (I wonder if purses were at the very end of century...too late for us!)
7. No fancy cables or knitted lace in "our time".
8. Ribbing (K1, P1) was rare! To keep the edge of item from rolling, edges were done in variations of garter stitch (K 1 row, P 1row, and variations of multiple K & P rows).
9. Portraits of the period show only knitting "in-the-round", not back & forth.

Most of the above information (and more!) can be found by googling: 18th century knitting, especially thanks to:

marariley.com, colleenstitchesintime.blogspot.com, 18th century knitting Bing Images

Anticipating further discussion, I am your humble servant,

Barb Eakin

The NWD B.A.R. SHOT

Editor: Karen Kashary

9390 Brecksville Road

Brecksville, OH 44141

The NWD B.A.R. SHOT is the newsletter of the North West Department, Brigade of the American Revolution (NWD-BAR) and has been in publication since 1977. It is sent to subscribers and member families throughout the U.S. Subscription rates are \$6 per year for non-members of the NWD-BAR. Cutoff dates for submissions:

Winter Issue—Jan. 15 Spring Issue—April 15 Summer Issue—July 15 Fall Issue—Oct. 15

Contact the editor for advertising rates (\$7-\$40, depending on size and placement). The Brigade of the American Revolution was established in 1962 as a not-for-profit association dedicated to recreating the life and times of the common soldier of the War for Independence, 1775-83. The NWD was established in 1973. Extracted passages are scholarly comment only.