

Spring, 2020



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BRIGADE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
NORTHWEST DEPARTMENT

B.A.R. SHOT

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Commander's Corner

NW Dept. Members:

This has been a very unusual Spring, and because of health considerations we have had to cancel events and get together. I do hope that you are using your time to enjoy the people you live with, and also to get ready for what will probably be our first event, Fort Laurens, 18-19 July. You can make sure that your kit is up to the highest standards of function and repair, and that your clothes fit you in a proper 18th c. way. For the fit of clothing and kit I would refer you to the pamphlet put together a number of years ago by Roy Najecki, then the National Inspector. (If you do not have this pamphlet, email me and I will send you a copy electronically.) You can also "bone up" on your unit's documentation and history to make yourself the very best interpreter that you can be. Each of us should be ready to represent the B.A.R. and our units as the best example of what we are portraying.

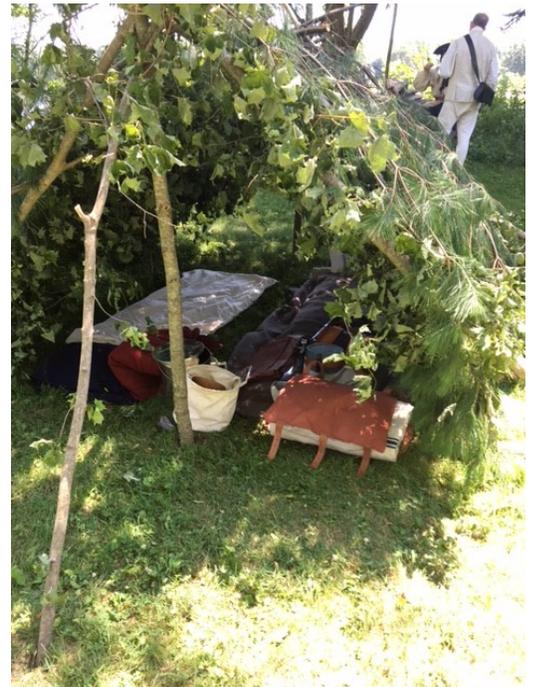
On another subject, I would challenge each of you to consider what kind of event(s) you would like to have, and what changes you would make to the way we currently present ourselves. I personally welcome any considered suggestions that we can realistically make happen. If your unit would like to create and run an event, that would be great. The ONLY parameters that exist are the B.A.R. safety and authenticity rules.

Please mark Fort Laurens, 18-19 July, and Fort Niagara, 26-27 September, on your calendars. These can be outstanding events if you want them to be.

Until I see you all at Fort Laurens, stay well and stay at home (till they tell us we don't need to), and HUZDAH the B.A.R. NW Department!!

Bob Cairns, 8th Pa., Ft. Laurens Det.

Commander, NW Dept. B.A.R.



Adjutants Freshest Advices

Spring is upon us; it is snowing, and I have 2" of snow in the grass and on the roof. Welcome to northern Ohio in mid-April!!! Hopefully, you have remained safe, healthy and kept to the isolation requirements. With the mandatory cancellation of Events, we have more time to do kit repairs, updates or even create a new persona.

Speaking of UPDATES...have you received your latest Brigade Courier? Did you notice the updated Membership Form? Did you fill it out and give it to your Unit Commander with your DUES? With all that has been going on in the USA and across the World, it is easy to overlook your 2020 Brigade Dues! Please double check that you have paid your Brigade of the American Revolution 2020 dues.

If you are tired of sewing for yourself or just plain bored... look on You-tube and make some Covid19 cloth masks to help those less fortunate than yourself. You can use up some of that material that has been just sitting in the closet or under the bed. You can donate them to neighbors or friends that do not sew or take them to a Nursing Home, Police Dept, Sheriff's Office, EMS Station or the Local Fire Dept. It will give Extra Purpose to YOUR Day!

I truly hope we can be safely together at our Fort Laurens Event July 18/19, 2020. Please watch for schedule changes and updates in your email as BLASTS will be sent when plans are confirmed.

Be careful, Be Safe, and Be Kind,

Bob Kashary, 5th Va. Reg't

NWD Adjutant

Mock Battles and Tactical Weapons Demonstrations

Several weeks ago, Don Newton, long-time member of the 8th Pa., Ft. Laurens Det., sent me the following in an email:

"10) John Goddard: Autograph letter, signed, from Goddard to Dr. Clement Storer, requesting a surgeon for a voyage, outlining current American naval forces off the Newport coast, mentioning the "treachery of the infamous [Benedict] Arnold, "and providing a detailed account of a training exercise undertaken by the Allied forces of the Americans under Christopher Greene and the French forces of Rochambeau. Camp Butts Hill {near Portsmouth}, R.I. October 16, 1780. [3]pp. Goddard was a member of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress before the Revolution and served as a commissary general in the Continental Army, allowing the use of his farm in Brookline for the storage of American military supplies. Dated just three months after Rochambeau and his troops arrived in Newport, Goddard enumerates the force strength on and around Newport:

". . . there are about 7500 Men on the Island at the Several ports, 5000 of which are French, at Newport, 2000 Three Months Men, at this place & 500 continentals under Col. Greene of this State, stationed at Stoddard's Farm 3 miles from Newport Northwest. Notwithstanding the Superiority of the English Fleet the French appear to feel very secure their Fleet consisting of seven sail of the Line & three Frigates are drawn up in Line of Battle from Tomany Hill across the Channel to Conanicut. The Town of Newport is surrounded with Forts which are well filled with Cannon, on the whole I believe there is no Reason to fear an Attack from the Enemy this season."

Goddard then details a training battle organized between the Continental forces and the newly-arrived French Army:

"I had like to have forgot to mention a famous Sham Battle on the 2d Inst. Between a party of French Troops on one part representing the English, & the Continental Regt' reinforced by a party of French & the German Line representing the allied Armies, the particulars I have not time to give you in full shall only mention a few of the principals, Maj. Gen'l Viamino [sic][Charles Joseph Hyacinthe du Houx de Viomenil] second in Command of the French Army [under Rochambeau] commanded by the English who landed at Stoddard's Farm & marched up & attained Col. Greene's Reg't. The Line began with skirmishing between the Flank Guards light horse &c. soon after a heavy cannonade on the part of the British obliged Col. Greene to retreat & form his Reg. behind a Wall where the resistance was obstinate & a constant fire kept uphill. Col. Greene was reinforced with about 2000 French and Germans commanded by his Excellency Count de Rochambeau with 12 pieces of Cannon, a severe conflict ensued in which the British gave way were finally surrounded & all made prisoners, the Action lasted two hours during which a constant heavy fire was kept up-if I have any just Idea of a real Action this very nearly resembles it."

Accounts of Revolutionary War battles are rare in letters; rarer still are training exercises described in detail. Of further interest here is the notion that this "Sham Battle" likely involved African-American troops, as Col. Christopher Greene was known to enlist freedmen and slaves in his regiments.

This piece from Don got me thinking, and I remembered several other occasions of documented mock battles for the time period. Before going on I would like to note that if the idea of German troops confused you, the French regiments Royal Deux Ponts and the Legion de Lauzun, both present, were primarily made up of German-speaking troops.

Another well-documented mock battle is best known because it was represented in a painting titled "The Mock Attack". I copied and pasted the following description from an internet site:

George III's visit to the military camp at Warley near Brentwood in Essex took place on 20 October 1778; the King and Queen stayed for the nights of 19 and 20 October at Thorndon Hall, the seat of the Catholic peer Lord Petre. The day began with a review of the troops, the subject of de Louthembourg's pendant painting. The Light Infantry and Grenadiers then 'marched with the artillery through the woods towards Little Warley (followed by the whole line in two columns), where, as well as in the adjacent woods, several batteries were placed, and many manoeuvres of attack and defence were performed, with the continued firing of musquetry and cannon, to which the situation and variety of the ground were very favourable and afforded much pleasure to the numerous spectators'. The manoeuvres are shown on Daniel Paterson's plan of Warley Camp (Royal Collection).

The King and Queen 'beheld the whole from a stand erected by Lord Petre in the centre of the scene', seen here (amidst smoke) in the centre middle distance. After the mock attack, which took place on the slopes of Childerditch and Little Warley Commons, the King was introduced to several officers who had taken part. He expressed his 'great satisfaction at the appearance, discipline, and good order of the several regiments, and the royal artillery; and likewise his approbation of the manoeuvres which were performed'.

The attack was led by Lieutenant-General Pierson, who commissioned this painting and its pendant from de Louthembourg and presented them - presumably in their magnificent frames - to the King. Both pictures were exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1779. De Louthembourg's obvious care in recording the scene is very much in contrast with the broad treatment of the landscape in the large canvas of Banditti in a Landscape (Royal Collection) which he painted for the Prince of Wales in 1804. The artist's career was both illustrious and prolific, ranging from stage design for the theatrical impresario David Garrick to landscapes and history paintings, and achieving the title of 'Historical Painter to HRH the Duke of Gloucester' in 1807. By that date the Warley Camp paintings were hanging in the Music Room in the Dutch House at Kew.

Signed and dated P.J. De Louthembourg 1779

It is probable that many of you veteran reenactors have a copy of this painting, as it was central on a NPS poster of the British Army that was available in the 1960s and 70s. There are some pretty good discussions about the uniforms and tactics displayed in the painting, on several websites. You might also remember the fine line drawings of British troops done by the author as studies for these paintings. I would encourage you to visit the discussion sites and look up this painting.

A third incident, best described as a Tactical Demonstration, as it was one-sided, took place at Valley Forge to celebrate the French Alliance, 6 May 1778. The exercise was to celebrate France's formal entry into the War, but was also an opportunity for General Washington and Baron V. Steuben to demonstrate how well the army could maneuver and fire at the brigade level. Instructions for this can be found in General Washington's orders for the day:

After Orders May 5th 1778.

It having pleased the Almighty ruler of the Universe propitiously to defend the Cause of the United American-States and finally by raising us up a powerful Friend among the Princes of the Earth to establish our liberty and Independence upon lasting foundations, it becomes us to set apart a day for gratefully acknowledging the divine Goodness & celebrating the important Event which we owe to his benign Interposition.

The several Brigades are to be assembled for this Purpose at nine o'clock tomorrow morning when their Chaplains will communicate the Intelligence contain'd in the Post-script to the Pennsylvania Gazette of the 2nd instant⁴ and offer up a thanksgiving and deliver a discourse suitable to the Occasion—At half after ten o'clock a Cannon will be fired, which is to be a signal for the men to be under Arms—The Brigade Inspectors will then inspect their Dress and Arms, form the Battalions according to instructions given them and announce to the Commanding Officers of Brigades that the Battalions are formed: The Brigadiers or Commandants will then appoint the Field Officers to command the Battalions, after which each Battalion will be ordered to load & ground their Arms.

At half after eleven a second Cannon be fired as a signal for the march upon which the several Brigades will begin their march by wheeling to the right by Platoons & proceed by the nearest way to the left of their ground in the new Position; this will be pointed out by the Brigade Inspectors—A third signal will be given upon which there will be discharge of thirteen Cannon; When the thirteen has fired a running fire of the Infantry will begin on the right of Woodford's and continue throughout the whole front line, it will then be taken on the left of the second line and continue to the right—Upon a signal given, the whole Army will Huzza! "Long Live the King of France"—The Artillery then begins again and fires thirteen rounds, this will be succeeded by a second general discharge of the Musquetry in a running fire—Huzza!—"And long live the friendly European Powers"—Then the last discharge of thirteen Pieces of Artillery will be given, followed by a General running fire and Huzza! [""]To the American States."

There will be no Exercise in the morning and the guards of the day will not parade 'till after the feu de joie is finished, when the Brigade Major will march them out to the Grand Parade: The Adjutants then will tell off their Battalions into eight Platoons and the commanding officer will reconduct them to their Camps marching by the Left.

Major General Lord Stirling will command on the right, the Marquis de Lafayette on the left and Baron De Kalb the second line—Each Major General will conduct the first Brigade of his Command to its ground, the other Brigades will be conducted by their commanding Officers in separate Columns—The Posts of each Brigade will be pointed out by Baron De Steuben's Aids—Majr Walker will attend Lord Stirling—Major De Eponsieu, the Marquis de Lafayette and Captain Lanfant⁵ the Baron De Kalb—The line is to be formed with the Interval of a foot between the files.

Each man is to have a Gill of rum—The Quarter-Masters of the several Brigades are to apply to the Adjutant General for an order on the Commissary of Military stores for the number of blank Cartridges that may be wanted.⁶

Finally, there is one more example, this time taking place after the British surrender at Yorktown. In 1782 the army was on the Hudson River, involved in training as part of General Washington's efforts to keep the army together. "On 31 August (1782) when Washington moved the main army down the Hudson river from Newburgh to Verplank's Point to simplify subsistence. In the process he tested the feasibility of an amphibious attack on New York City. Five infantry brigades made the move by water, with baggage following in other boats. The individual units were assigned to boats in a manner which kept elements intact, and the flotilla maintained strict parade-ground alignment. These factors enabled the regiments to deploy promptly into line of battle as soon as the boats beached at Verplank's Point. The experiment was a striking success. Indeed, if de Grasse's warships had been available for a real assault, Washington's veterans, with the aid of French troops, probably would have been able to seize Manhattan." (from *The Continental Army*, Robert K. Wright, Jr., pub. 1989)

Further, Paul Ackermann informed me that a drawing by Pierre L'Enfant of the encampment shows Washington's marquee (the one in the Smithsonian). The L'Enfant drawing is on display in the Museum of the American Revolution. In a hurry to get this to the editor, I did not find an original source, but was told by both Bill Troppman, Ranger, NPS, Valley Forge, and Paul Ackermann that French officers observed this mock amphibious assault and were very complimentary of the professionalism and elan of the Continental troops.

I would like to thank Don Newton, 8th Pa., Ft. Laurens Det. for getting started, and Bill Troppman, NPS Ranger, Valley Forge, and Paul Ackermann, B.A.R. past National Commander for helping me with dates and other information on the Valley Forge and Hudson River events. I hope you will find these mock actions interesting, and perhaps a different perspective on the Tactical Weapons Demonstrations we perform at events.

Bob Cairns

8th Pa., Ft. Laurens Det.

Commonality

Commonality, according to the Miriam Webster dictionary is defined as “the possession of common features or attributes.” I might add experiences.

In these “uncertain times” (oh, how tired I am of that phrase, but it is so apt!) I think we share a great commonality with those people of the Revolutionary period. Think about it. We live in fear. So did they. Our economy is in shambles. So was theirs. Small businesses are ruined. They had that too. Our news is bad. Their news was bad. We are attacked by an invisible, viral army that is deadly. 250 years ago, the visible army came in with fifes and drums, tents and cannon, marching men, but it was just as deadly. Confusion and fear are abundant, just as they were then. How do we recover? What plan is best? Will the enemy return?

I’ve been looking at “Weathering the Storm” by Elizabeth Evans, and “The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker”. These women lived lives that are suddenly more in step with our lives than ever before. I find that I can relate to their anxieties and admire the courage so many women and men had to summon to live in those perilous times.

When we come together again, hopefully at Fort Laurens in July, I think that these are talking points of commonality that we can share with the public we want to educate. We can all relate. The upheaval we have all faced in 2020 has not been as violent as it was in the late 1770s, but it’s close enough to make a point. We educate our audiences on dress and weaponry, tactics and politics, but now we can share the commonality of facing an enemy and hopefully, coming out safe and sound on the other side.

Be safe, friends. Be well. And if we need to wear masks at events, be sure they’re 100% cotton or linen.

Dianne Miller, 5th Va. Reg’t.

Immersion Weekend Eastfield Village, 30-31 May

The Immersion Weekend, scheduled for 30-31 May at Eastfield Village, East Nassau, NY has been cancelled by the sponsor for health considerations. Please take this event off of your calendar. Please continue to watch your email for BLASTS regarding upcoming events.

The NWD B.A.R. SHOT

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