

MORNING REPORT

of Benjamin Whitcomb's Independent Corps of Rangers.

Being the ramblings of a Serjeant who has smelled too much of Congress's
gunpowder and King George's lackeys.

JANUARY, 2008

The renderings of this Instant include—

CALENDAR: Lots of choices.

JIM'S JAWINGS: To quote Gov. LePetomane, "Work, work, work."

CL HAPPENINGS: Just what the title says.

SOURCES OF SUPPLY: Firelocks & more.

GAMES: Something to while away the hours.

TWIRLING THE DISTAFF: A hairy topic.

RESEARCH: Websites with lots o' material.

RANGERS: A couple of short-term Rangers.

And MUCH, MUCH more! Well, at least much more.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Next Season

16 Feb: CL Annual Meeting; King of Prussia, PA.

Jim and I will be going down. Lemme know if you are interested.

29 Mar: Black Powder Reenactors' Tag Sale/Swap Meet; Lebanon, CT.

Contact me for details if interested in going down.

29-30 Mar: 2^d Annual Command School; Ft. Ti.

Seminars Sat. and putting topic into practice on Sun. a.m. Registration = \$40 for first unit member, \$30 for each additional. Cost includes coffee in a.m., bag lunch Sat., & copies of handouts. Dunno topic yet.

19 Apr: Battle Road; Hartwell Tavern.

3-4 May: School of the Militia; Luzern Ctc., PA.

17-18 May: Daniel Boone Homestead; Birdsboro, PA. (BB/CL)

BB folks are saying this will be the largest turnout of Crown forces in several years.

24-25 May: Military Timeline; Plattsburgh, NY.

Being organized, at least in part, by our own Josh Wingler.

31 May-1 Jun: War in Schohary: Lansing Manor; Blenheim, NY. (CL Nor. Dept.)

Host is 2^d Regiment, Albany County Militia, and accepted as a CL Northern Dept. event. The site belongs to the NY Power Authority and includes about 400 acres of fields and woods. Site

details can be found at <http://www.nypa.gov/vc/blengil.htm>.

6-8 Jun: Camp Woodhaven; W. Boyleston, MA.

14-15 Jun: Ethan Allen Days; Manchester, VT. (LHA)

21-22 Jun: Monmouth Battle; Freehold, NJ. (BB/CL)

5-6 Jul: Hubbardton. (LHA)

12-13 Jul: Battle of Wyoming; Moon Lake County Park, Hunlock Creek, PA.

19-20 Jul: Mt. I.

“ “ “ : Loyalist Landing 225th; Shelburne, Nova Scotia.

“ “ “ : Ft. Ontario, Oswego, NY.

2-3 Aug: Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, MA.

23-24 Aug: Newtown Battle; Elmira, NY.

5-7 Sep: Ti.

6-7 Sep: Brandywine Battle; Chadds Ford, PA.

14-16 Sep: Army Heritage Education Center; Carlisle, PA.

20-21 Sep: Jerusalem Mills; Kingsville, MD.

1 Oct: Germantown.

18-19 Oct: Battles of the Hook & Greensprings; Gloucester, VA. (BB/CL)

The other big event of the year.

25-26 Oct: American Revolution Seminar; Ti.

Of Interest—maybe

Workshops Presented by the Ladies of Refined Taste and Friends; Minuteman NHP, Concord, MA.

Details can be found at <http://www.thehiveonline.org/2008workshops.htm>.

10 Feb: Create an 18th-Century Swatch Book—Hallie Larkin.

15 Mar: Making a Short Cloak—Sue Felshin.

16 Mar: 18th-Century Crewel Embroidery—Hallie Larkin.

***The Hive*, Presented by the same band as above; same place, different house.**

Feature a lecture from 1:00 – 2:00 followed by clinics from 2:00 – 4:00. Details at

<http://www.thehiveonline.org/2008schedule.htm>.

10 Feb: 18th-century hair styles; Making a workman's cap; Applying period construction techniques to a commercial pattern.

16 Mar: Earbobs, Witches Hearts, Sleeve Links, Wig Loops—What's what in 18th-century jewelry and which is right for you; Lining a man's hat; Hemming a petticoat.

2009 Things To Do

16-17 May: Jerusalem Mills; Kingsville, MD.

Probably the big event of the year if the CL approves support—the BB already has.

11-12 Jul: Basel Tattoo; Basel, Switzerland.

Yup, across the pond. Very early efforts in the works to get some of us over to this gathering.

?????: Ft. Ontario; Oswego, NY.

Possible CL/BB event.

?????: Cooperstown Farmer's Museum; Cooperstown, NY.

Another probable CL/BB event—already BB-approved.

2010 Events

Columbus Day Weekend (likely): Philadelphia 1777 Campaign; Wilmington, DE.

Being organized by 6th VA. BB already working on supporting this one.

2011 Events (Yup—2011)

?????: 230th Anniversary Commemoration, Battle of the Isle of Jersey; Europe.

Proposed but not yet firm.

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JIM'S JAWINGS

G'day all,

I hope you all had a great Christmas and have been faring well into the new year. Although I have had to spend much time lately with 21st century concerns, I have been thinking about the upcoming campaign season. Even though we've been doing well at the events that we've attended during the past couple of years, I think that there is still room for improvement. One way to work on this is with a few pre-season drills/meetings. We used to get together more often in the winter and I think we've gotten a little lazy and complacent. There are lots of things we can work on, along with the field manual, that can improve our collective and individual impression and make the events more interesting and fun. So, let me know what you have for ideas as to activities and schedule.

Thanks a lot for your commitment in the past and I hope to see many of you on the field this year.
Jim

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PERSONALS

A couple notes regarding Caleb. For one, he now is apparently working for the Shelburne police along with Bruce. What impression of a police dept. does that give you? For another, he has a new e-mail address: ccasco@earthlink.net.

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IDENTIFY YOURSELF

As it stands as of this writing in mid-Jan., by the end of this month, you will need either a passport or a photo ID and proof of US citizenship to get back into the States. Lots of folks are fighting this regulation so it may change but, should you plan on going out of the country for whatever reason, get identification. Passports are, by far, the best but, they currently take several months to process.

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CL HAPPENINGS

Jim and I had occasion to attend the Northern Dept meeting in early Nov. and Whitcomb's had the opportunity to be involved in a number of items on the agenda. For one, we announced that one of the two units we are sponsoring for membership—Warner's Regt. in this case—would have a rep at the national meeting and we would move for their acceptance as full members. We also announced that the other unit—Herrick's—has not been, and will not be, able to send a rep to said meeting and, since attendance is a requirement, we would be pulling their name from the list of applicant units.

In other business, Jim offered up the following amendment to the by-laws for consideration at the national meeting—the underlined segments are to be added to the existing article:

The sponsoring unit(s) will then invite the “applicant” unit to the Line field events for that year as its quest. At these events, the applicant unit will field with or under the direction of the sponsoring unit and be observed as to their safety, authenticity and cooperation.

A bit more regarding events where the sponsor is not attending may be added but, that’s up to Jim. The reason for Jim’s proposal involves units being put up for membership and then not having any connection with the sponsoring unit at events. There has already been some discussion concerning the situation but nobody has taken any action until now. Jim’s proposal formalizes the discussion and forces a decision by the organization.

At last year’s meeting, someone broached the idea of asking the British Brigade to have their annual meeting in conjunction with the CL. Doncha know that at the recent BB meeting, they approved just such an idea. The thought is to hold calendar discussions—and those relating to any other common themes—together in order to move things along more quickly. In another move to make given elements alike in both organizations, committee(s) will be formed to develop common safety regs. It is hoped the BAR will also become involved in the discussion.

Lastly, in the first such election that I can remember involving more than one candidate, yours truly has been elected Coordinator for the Northern Dept. That means I answer questions, sometimes play the bad guy when non-CL units want to attend a CL event, arrange and run the dept. meeting, and attend the meeting of the national board in Feb.

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SOURCES OF SUPPLY

Loyalist Arms out of Canada has added several items to their catalog. Take a look at their website, <http://www.gosea.com/loyalistarms/>, for to see ‘em. They are also offering some deals on some items until 25 Feb. If interested, lemme know.

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BAR

I have received the dues notice for the coming year from the BAR. Should you wish to belong, I need a check for \$25 made out to “Whitcomb’s Rangers”—not the BAR—and your membership form that your will receive from the BAR. Get those two things to me by 15 March. Keep in mind that our own dues will be coming up end of March.

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GAMES

The following comes from *A Brief Discourse on 18th-Century Games* by Mark Tully.

During the 18th-century, Whist was one of the most popular of all card games. It is a trick-taking game (similar to Bridge and Euchre) and is very simple to learn, but takes time and concentration to master, so it never gets dull.

You will need a deck of 52 cards (no jokers) and four willing players. Card ranking is as follows: Ace (high), King, Queen, Jack, Ten Nine, Eight, Seven Six, Five, Four, Three, Deuce (low). The suits are all equal in rank—except the trump suit, which always ranks higher than

any of its non-trump counterparts viz: the deuce of trumps outranks the ace of any non-trump suit.

The players cut the deck to determine the pairs of partners—the two high cuts play against the two low cuts. The lowest card assumes the role of the dealer and deals out hands of 13 cards in clockwise rotation, one card at a time, to each of the four players. The last suit dealt, which would fall to the dealer's hand, is instead dealt to the table and turned face-up for all to see. This card's suit becomes trump and it stays on the table until the dealer's turn (see below).

Partners sit opposite one another at the table and the player to the dealer's left leads the first trick by laying down any card he chooses. Each player then plays out a card from their own hand. Players must follow the lead suit (clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades) if they have it in their hand, otherwise they may play a trump card or "throw off" a card from another suit. The dealer may either play the trump card on the table, or pick it up and play a different card (note that the dealer must follow suit and pick up the trump card if he has a card matching the lead suit in his hand).

The highest card of the lead suit wins the trick—unless a trump card is played, in which case the highest trump card wins (see card rankings above). A non-trump, non-lead-suit card ranks as the lowest card played and can never take a trick.

The winner of the trick sets it aside and leads the next trick (only one of each pair of partners should keep his team's trick pile). The first six tricks are called the "book" and do not count toward final score (sorry, that's the rules). Each trick taken after a team makes book counts as one point.

At the end of a deal (once all of the cards are played), the tricks taken by each team are added up, and the team holding the most tricks above book is the winner of that hand. The losing team's tricks are then subtracted from the winning team's tricks—and the total is awarded to the winning team as their final score for that deal. In "English Whist" (known in America as "Short Whist"), the number of points need to win the game is five, but the deal in which the fifth point is gained is still played out to completion and losing team's total tricks are subtracted as usual.

"Scotch Whist," also called "Catch-Honours" or "Catch-the-Ten," is identical to the above except that (as in American Whist) game point is seven. Also, when a trick is won with the ten of trumps, it counts for ten points instead of the usual one point. Note that the trick must be WON with the ten of trump—a trick where the ten of trumps is played and then out-trumped by and Ace, King, Queen, or Jack of trumps is scored as a normal trick at just one point. At the end of the deal points are added up as above, and the losing team's score subtracted from the total at the end of the hand. So, even though game point is only seven, taking a trick with the ten of trumps does not automatically win the game!

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TWIRLING THE DISTAFF

At many events, we see womenfolk wandering around dressed to the nines. One element of these occurrences that is not quite right is their hair. To be fashionable, they should have it done up in some sort of huge towering construction of wire, animal and human hair (other than their own), pomade, and powder—talk about unsanitary and uncomfortable. Even children had their hair done in such manner. The following comes from the diary of Anna Green Winslow, a 12-year-old from Nova Scotia visiting family in Boston:

[Y]esterday towards evening, I took a walk with cousin Sally to see the good folks in Sudbury Street, & found them all well. I had my HEDDUS roll on, aunt Storer said it ought to be made less, Aunt Deming said it ought not to be made at all. It makes my head itch, &

ach, & burn like anything Mamma. This famous roll is not made wholly of a red Cow Tail, but is a mixture of that, & horsehair (very course) & a little human hair of yellow hue, that I suppose was taken out of the back part of an old. But D----- made it (our head) all carded together and twisted up. When it first came home aunt put it on & my new cap on it, she then took up her apron & mesure'd me, & from the roots of my hair on my forehead to the top of my notions, I mesur'd above an inch longer than I did downwards from the roots of my hair to the end of my chin. Nothing renders a young person more amiable than virtue & modesty without the help of fals hair, red Cow tail, or D----- (the barber).

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RESEARCH

A couple interesting websites have come to my attention recently. One is that of the Godfrey Memorial Library, <http://www.godfrey.org/>, through which you can get at a slew of 18th-century newspapers. The other is <http://www.footnote.com/> which includes access to, among lots of other things, Rev War rolls and pension files and the Papers of the Continental Congress.

Cliff Mullen of Warner's has posted the diary of a lieut. in the original Warner's who writes about the fighting that went on around St. Johns and Montreal in the fall of 1775. You can access it at http://www.warnersregiment.com/75_09_01_John_Fassetts_Journal.doc.

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RANGERS

As you should know, Whitcomb's Rangers never reached the full allowance of 50 men in each company. To augment their limited strength, the unit often had other companies attached to them. Thomas Lee's company of continental rangers served with them for much of '77 and '78 and other companies of NH militia helped them once the Rangers moved up to the Co's region. In general, these additional companies garrisoned posts and went on shorter range patrols and scouts while the men of Whitcomb's and Aldrich's companies did the long-distance scouting and spying. In addition to additional companies, individuals also served in the Rangers for short terms. I have known for some time that a number of men served for a campaign season—usually four months—but I have also found some who served for a couple months up to a year. Odd thing about these guys is that none appear on any of the rolls. I doubt I'll ever find an answer but I'm wondering why not include them on the rolls? Anyways, I have begun to do some research on these men and here's some info on a couple of them.

Alexander McKean—at the age of 71, applied in Bath, NH, for a pension in 1832 (born 1761 for the math challenged). He lived in Landaff, NH, at the time but hailed from Amherst, NH, when he enlisted as a volunteer (went for New Boston, NH) in Feb., 1780 (19 years old), for a 6 week stint in co. commanded by one Capt. Nicols' (from Antrim, NH) in support of Whitcomb's. He served one month, 15 days in said role and then enlisted in Whitcomb's Co. for a year. The info I have gives Haverhill, NH, as headquarters for the Rangers at the time but he reported for duty in Stratford, NH. Interesting that he comments about arriving there in March on snowshoes. When the corps received orders to move south in Feb., 1781, McKean found a replacement for himself—his enlistment being nearly out—and went home rather than go with the unit. One of the long-term Rangers, Edward Mardin, supported

McKean's pension application. His pension file, by the way, includes his discharge written and signed by Whitcomb.

John Moore is another teen-ager who saw service with the Rangers but, unlike McKean, Moore served in one of three companies attached to Whitcomb in the summer of 1780. Moore came from Bow, NH, where he had been born in June, 1763. His first service—in Bedel's regt.—came in April, 1778, just short of his 15th birthday. Here's his account of his service with Whitcomb's as written down by a pension clerk:

About the 1st day of February 1780 an order came to Bow for a draft or volunteer of one from each company of the militia to march to Upper Coos to relieve the regular Troops under Major Whitcomb stationed at Brown's Fort. The applicant volunteered to go for his company and joined a party of sixteen under Lieutenant Heath. They marched immediately in the depth of winter two hundred miles through the woods principally on snow shoes to the Canada frontier where Colonel Bayley of Newbury on the Vermont side of the Connecticut (as he believes his name to be) took the command of the militia who relieved Major Whitcomb. He was engaged in this service two months and was discharged at Brown's fort about the 1st of April 1780, and returned home to Bow. In the month of June (he cannot state the day) he was again inlisted by Captain McConnel in the state troops or militia for six months to march for the defence of the Northern frontier, and joined his company at Haverill Coos. His Captain was Ephraim Stone of Westmoreland—Lieutenant Liford. The whole troops were he thinks under the Command of Col. Timothy Bedell. His company was stationed as a guard during this time of six months at different places in the upper settlements—at Haverill; at Peachem; at Newbury; and at Piermont.

A third teenager, Thaddeus Nichols, engaged as a volunteer in August, 1778, for four months at the age of 16. At that time, he lived in Guilford, VT, and Whitcomb's operated out of Rutland. In his pension, he writes,

We were employed principally in scouting parties, detailed for the purpose of watching the enemy on the Northern Lines. In one of our enterprizes, the party of which I was one, had a skirmish with and defeated a party of British and Indians, between Ticonderoga and Crown Point. This was in the month of November 1778. (For those who haven't done their homework, that fight's a part of Carleton's Raid.)

For the foreseeable future, I'll continue to look into the records of these guys to try to find out more info on the unit as a whole. I'll keep you posted.

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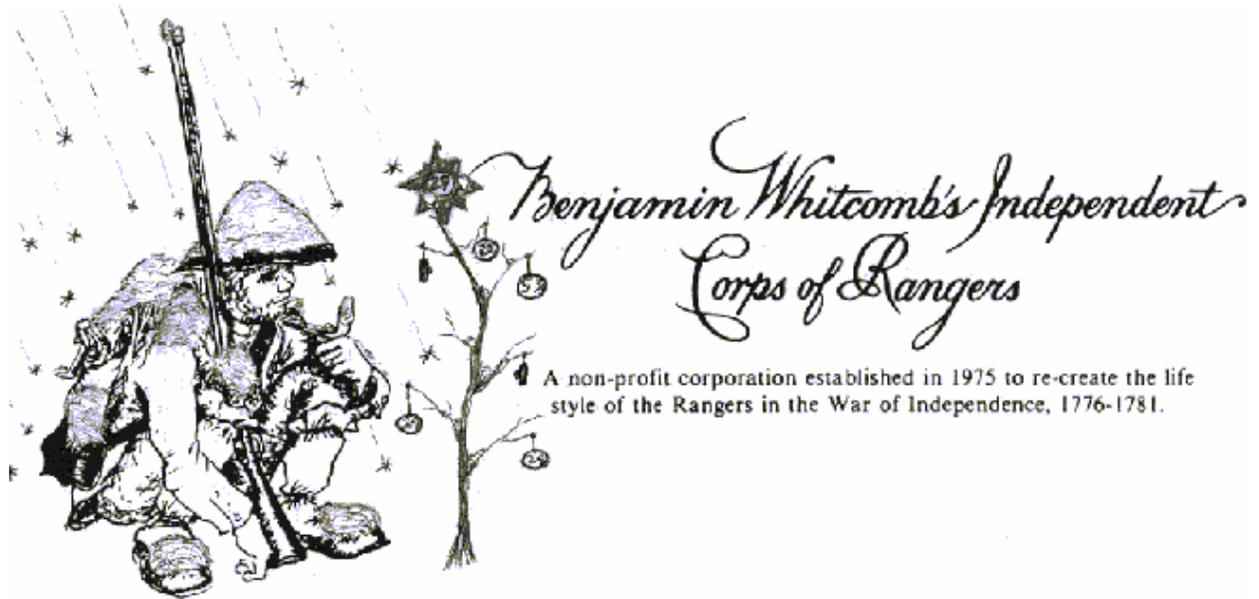
LATE, AS USUAL

I realize this is a bit late but, I hope you all survived the seasonal celebrations and received some nifty presents. Don't forget your New Year's resolutions (I usually give 'em up for Lent).

Happy Holidayze!

**Quando Omni Flunkus Moritati
Carpe Potus**

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Benjamin Whitcomb's Independent Corps of Rangers

A non-profit corporation established in 1975 to re-create the life style of the Rangers in the War of Independence, 1776-1781.