

MORNING REPORT

of Benjamin Whitcomb's Independent Corps of Rangers.

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

FEBRUARY, MARCH, **APRIL, 2008**

The renderings of this Instant include—

CALENDAR: Lots of choices.

DUE DUES: It's that time again.

BAR: Are we dropping out?

ELECTIONS: It's that time again, again.

WEBSITE: Are you dropping in?

FREE PUBLICITY: We're on cable TV.

CL HAPPENINGS: Just what the title says.

TWIRLING THE DISTAFF: Wet nurses with an accent.

RANGERS: Ben in Canada, early.

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

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Younit Meeting

Not: Nowhere.

For a number of reasons—not the least of which is the lateness of the season—it has been decided by your elected officials to forego a meeting this year. Instead, we will have an extended meeting at our usual spring gathering at Ti. Since we won't be together to go over the potential events in a timely manner, review the list below and let me know which events you would like to attend. I will then send in the appropriate returns. I need to know your wishes by mid-April. If you have any questions, contact me and I'll try to answer 'em.

10-11 May: RustOff Weekend; Ti.

Our annual campaign-opening gathering to attempt to get things in order for the season (you will notice I said "attempt").

Coming Up

NOTE WELL: Anyone planning to attend any of the events in May or June, let me know right now—not in a week or two or at the Ti meeting ...RIGHT NOW!!! I need to send returns.

12 Apr: Liberty Pole Capping & Parade; Bedford, MA.

19 Apr: Battle Road; Hartwell Tavern.

Austin often goes down to this event to serve as an interpreter.

26-27 Apr: Tricentennial of Ridgefield, CT.

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

“ “ : **Encampment; Ridley Creek State Park, Media, PA.**

3 May: 225th of Meeting between Guy Carleton & Washington; Tappan, NY. (5th NY)
Beverages & stipend provided.

3 May: Spring Muster; Rebecca Nurse Homestead, Danvers, MA.

Because we would be coming some distance, we will be able to camp over.

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. Details at www.battlesatboone.com.

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

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

31 May-1 Jun: War in Schoharie: 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>. Wargame and tactical each day. Period dance and tavern Sat. eve.

6-8 Jun: Town Bicentennial; Camp Woodhaven, W. Boylston, MA.

Sat. eve. meal & tavern.

7-8 Jun: Market Fair; Johnson Hall, Johnstown, NY.

A gathering of sutlers. Fun event with several activities we usually don't see at events.

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

“ “ “ : **Mabee Farm, Rotterdam Jct., NY. (BVMA)**

21-22 Jun: Vermont History Expo; Tunbridge Fairgrounds, Tunbridge, VT.

“ “ “ : **230th Monmouth Battle; Freehold, NJ. (BB/CL)**

Year's second biggie. Details at <http://monmouthbattlefield.com/Monmouth-Battlefield-Reenactor-Information.htm>.

5-6 Jul: Hubbardton. (LHA)

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

19-20 Jul: Mt. I. (LHA)

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

Nice area but 12-14 hour drive.

“ “ “ : **Ft. Ontario, Oswego, NY.**

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

9-10 Aug: Battle of Prescott; Prescott, Ont.

16-17 Aug: Rabble in Arms; Lake Champlain Maritime Museum.

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

“ “ “ : **225th Anniversary of Mustering Out of Washington's Life Guard; Constitution Isl., NY. (5th NY)**

Dinner, beverages, & stipend provided.

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.

Warm-up for next year's biggie. Details at <http://www.jerusalemill.org/redcoats.htm>.

1 Oct: Germantown.

4-5 Oct: Stark's Muster; Fort at #4, Charlestown, NH.

No, there is no Rev War event other than this at #4 this year

4 Oct: Twin Forts Day; Ft. Montgomery, NY. (5th NY)

Artillery demos including a 32-pounder. Dinner & beverages provided. Possible stipend.

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

The other big event of the year. Three battles. 225th anniversary of mustering out of Continental Army. Sat. eve. jollification. Info at www.battleofthehook.com.

Individual Activities Maybe of Interest

Crown Point Road Assoc.

10 May: Tour Fort Ti ...oh, wait ...we'll be there anyways.

7 Jun: Plymouth encampment site.

Jul: Bus tour of eastern portion of Crown Point Road.

17 Aug: Cavendish Hike. Whitcomb is listed as one of the original grantees of Cavendish.

20 Sep: Orwell Hike.

19 Oct: Annual Meeting. Speaker is U.S. Forest Service archaeologist Dave Lacy.

Other

19 Apr: French Lines Work Day; Ti.

25-26 Oct: American Revolution Seminar; Ti.

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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DUE DUES

Yup, it's that time again. Send your \$15.00 made out to Whitcomb's Rangers to Maria Beuerlein, 15 Abercrombie St., Ticonderoga, NY 12801.

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BAR

Phil Keyes and Austin are the only ones I heard from regarding BAR dues. Guidelines require a unit to have a minimum of four men at arms so, I guess, we no longer belong.

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ELECTIONS

We will hold our annual elections at Ti this year. A bit of a sidebar here: In the past, we have elected the clerk/adjutant and treasurer but, in the process of revising the *Ranger Manual*, I noticed that the bye-by-laws say those are appointed positions. With that in mind,

nominations are needed for lieut., sergt., corp., and three board members-at-large. In the past, the field officers, treasurer, and clerk have served as board and we can continue that practice if you want by simply nominating the two ncos and clerk for the board (lieut. and treas. already serve on the board according to the bye-by-laws). Here's the plan: send me your *written* nominations by 19 April (why's that date sound familiar?); I'll send out ballots; and we'll vote at Ti. If you won't be at Ti, you can return your ballots to me or anybody else planning to be at the gathering.

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WEBSITE

Jeff has added a list with some details on the original Whitcomb's Rangers so take a peek and maybe learn something about those people. I'm going to try to send him some other material and, of course, the schedule will soon be added. Also, it would be nice to begin adding more visual aids so, if anyone has some pictures of the unit, Jeff can put those up as well. I've forwarded a couple from last fall's Saratoga.

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FREE PUBLICITY

New Amsterdam is a new show on Fox network. The hero is a guy named John Amsterdam (get the title connection?) who, in 1640-something, takes a sword thrust intended for an Indian girl who, in turn, saves his life and makes him immortal until he finds his one true love. Now, nearly 400 years later, he serves as a detective in New York City (get the title connection?) and the show centers on cases he is working on and includes flashbacks into other time periods that he has lived through. Last Monday, a nasty guy had a knife at John's female partner's neck and John starts talking with the guy about the style of knife—a ranger knife ...wait for it ...don't get ahead of the story. He says he used to be in the rangers a long time ago ...Whitcomb's Rangers. He actually says he belonged to Whitcomb's!!! I'm wondering how the writer(s)/producer(s) chose that name so I sent Fox a note asking 'em. Haven't heard anything back yet, though. Don't know as I really expect to for that matter.

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CL HAPPENINGS

Back in Feb., Jim and I went down to the CL annual meeting so's I could do my thing as coordinator, present Warner's for full membership, pull Herrick's application, Jim could present his ammendment to the CL constitution, and ...what else? ...something more ...oh, yeah—socializing. Here's a synopsis of what transpired.

A committee formed last year to deal with issues specific to those on horse reported that they have been working on safety and operational guidelines as well as insurance for mounted troops. They will have a more formal presentation at the '09 meeting.

Dean Barnes and Kevin Richard-Morrow talked about the new maritime umbrella, the Age of Sail Maritime Alliance ("ASMA"—not the best acronym). The organization will be open to all maritime types from all sides representing the French wars through the War of 1812. The goal is to represent boat folks in the hobby and promote their interests. Since that

organization will be developing safety regulations and guidelines for operating boats, those of us on the CL maritime committee put our work on hold to see what ASMA comes up with.

The discussion of last season's events proved very brief as the chairman wanted to address only safety issues and nobody could come up with any of any significance.

At every meeting, applicant units are voted on for full membership. Each such unit is supposed to have a representative at the meeting but Herrick's has not sent anyone so I recommended their application be dropped. The same happened with the application of the 4th Mass. Crane's Artillery (the guys we watched stuck in the low ground at Saratoga), Auxonne Artillery, Tryon Cty. Militia, and Warner's received approval for full membership. Some discussion about Eames' Rangers and their "not playing well with others" resulted in their application being put on hold for another season. If they do well, they will be advanced next meeting.

George Radecky of the 6th PA became the new chairman of the CL.

Coming events resulted in three events being chosen for CL support: Boone Homestead, Monmouth, and Gloucester, VA (see Calendar). The above calendar also notes those events discussed for the future. The 2009 CL meeting will be held in King of Prussia on 10 January which will coincide with the British Brigade annual meeting. Both organizations will meet together to discuss common issues such as calendar and safety.

Changes to the by-laws and safety regs won approval by the herd. Our own Jim brought up the by-law change which adds the underlined sections to Article III of Section 1:

The sponsoring unit(s) will invite the "applicant" unit to the Line field events for that year as its guest. At these events, the applicant unit will field with, or under the direction of the sponsoring unit, or another full member unit designated by the sponsor, and be observed as to safety, authenticity, and cooperation.

The portion dealing with applicant member units attending the annual meeting changes to:

This representative however, shall not be present in the meeting room when the vote is taken. In the event that no member of the applicant unit is in attendance at this meeting, the unit may maintain its applicant status for one more year. If no member of the applicant unit attends the next annual meeting, the unit will lose its applicant status and not be considered for full membership at this meeting.

This change came about as a result of units not having reps at the annual meeting year after year—i.e., Herrick's and Eames'.

A couple of safety issues received some attention, as well. For years, riflemen have fought against having to use flashguards saying they couldn't be easily fitted and that they didn't need them 'cause they never fought in line. Well, it seems our riflemen's research has found that the original riflemen functioned a bit more militarily than originally thought and have been in close formation at times. The result is that a few have been splattered with powder from their neighbor's flashpan so they proposed the following change be tried for one year and addressed again at the next meeting:

All muskets and rifles must have a well fitting and tight metal flash guard.

The second safety issue involved artillery but is something we all need to be aware of, particularly those in command at any level. The following practice will be tried for a year and acted on next meeting:

Loaded Gun – Artillery, both in battery and battalion, upon completion of loading to have the #3 (Rammer) and #4 (Worm) gunners stand outside of the cannon wheels in a present arms position [tools held straight up and down in front of them]. The #1 (Firing) gunner will raise the linstock above their head, which will be the signal for a loaded gun ready to fire.

Cannon Misfire – When a cannon has misfired or its safety zone is violated, both #3 (Rammer) and #4 (Worm) gunners will cross both the rammer and the worm over the cannon barrel and the linstock will be lowered to the ground position. This is the signal to take just care to stay clear of the artillery piece.

The meeting ended with the usual raffle and Jim and I both won prizes!

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TWIRLING THE DISTAFF

The following comes from Patricia Ivinski’s “Maternal versus Mercenary Nursing: Popular Debate and Artistic Representation” which is a chapter in *Farewell to the Wet Nurse: Etienne Aubry and Images of Breast-Feeding in Eighteenth-Century France*, a catalog published by the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, MA, to accompany an exhibit by the same name. By the way, for those of you even moderately interested in art, the Clark is a great place to visit. They have some very special pieces on display and often have special exhibits that deal with the 18th century.

At the Paris Salon of 1777 Aubry exhibited his *Farewell to the Wet Nurse* under the narrative title *The Goodbyes of a Villager and His Wife to the Nursling for Whom the Parents Have Come*. It was accompanied by his ... *A Couple, Visiting One of Their Children Who Is with a Wet Nurse, Have the Older Brother Kiss the Nursling*. The subject matter of the pair was familiar to the original audience. In the first, the aristocratic couple has hired a wet nurse to breast-feed their infant, whom they visit on occasion, and whom they eventually retrieve. The second shows an episode earlier in the story, when the couple and their other child visit the infant. The subjects of child rearing and wet-nursing were widely discussed in eighteenth-century France. Enlightenment physicians and philosophers began to encourage upper-class women to nurse their own children. ...



...[T]he dearth of wet-nursing subjects in works of art may have been a result of the new focus on the family and on the maternal role within the home in eighteenth-century France. Creating a happy, stable home was deemed paramount to a healthy society; therefore it was viewed as immoral and unnatural to relinquish one’s child to a wet nurse rather than to nurse it oneself. The most noble role a woman could fulfill was that of mother The Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one of the most outspoken and esteemed proponents of maternal nursing, went so far as to claim that this motherly duty was the absolute foundation of solid familial relations. Failing to nurse one’s children would result in domestic chaos: “Every evil follows in the train of this first sin; the whole moral order is disturbed, nature is quenched in every breast, the home becomes gloomy, the spectacle of a young family no longer stirs the husband’s love and the stranger’s reverence.” A print after Jean-Baptiste Greuze’s 1769 Salon painting *The Beloved Mother*, which depicts a mother being smothered with attention by six children, one of whom has recently finished

nursing, epitomizes the rewards of a happy home life, including loving children and an adoring husband, all gained through the virtuous tasks of motherhood.

This new view countered the advisability of wet-nursing, which had long been debated ..., but it was attacked with a new furor beginning in the 1760s. In the first half of the eighteenth century, however, wet nurses were employed, particularly by royalty and the aristocratic class, for a number of reasons. Mercenary nurses were clear symbols of status, and less elevated members of society used them whenever possible. Wet nurses were also seen as a means of freeing aristocratic women from their maternal duties. Women of this station were advised to remain available for social obligations and to leave the mundane physical feeding of their children to servants. The survival of aristocratic and royal infants prior to the second half of the eighteenth century depended completely on wet nurses, who were accordingly treated with high regard. ...

Medical misconceptions held until the first half of the eighteenth century also affected the decision to employ a wet nurse. Since breast milk was believed to be converted menstrual blood, it was thought that nursing drained the mother of her lifeblood. Nursing delays the return of the menstrual cycle, and it was therefore believed that women could not get pregnant while nursing—a serious problem for women who were expected to produce family heirs. Semen was thought to spoil breast milk, and nursing women were encouraged to abstain from sexual intercourse. Although this rule was often strictly enforced with wet nurses and their husbands, an aristocratic or royal husband was not expected to forego intercourse during the nursing period. Yet another consideration, which reflects concern for the child rather than the parents, was that colostrum, the milk produced by the mother immediately following birth, was believed to endanger the child's health. Until the mid-eighteenth century, when medical science debunked this notion, a nurse was seen as necessary just after birth, even if the mother planned to breast-feed later on.

Wet-nursing did have its drawbacks. Babies who made the difficult journey from the city successfully—delivered by wagon-loads to wet nurses in the country—were then exposed to all kinds of potential dangers. Having received temporary immunities from the mother while in the womb, babies were not protected against the germs of an entirely different environment. Many babies were killed by nurses who fed them in bed and then rolled over, accidentally smothering the child. Nurses were also accused of swaddling infants to restrict their movement, making it easier for them to neglect the infant for long periods. Parents also had to consider the then current notion that the wet nurse transferred her mercenary nature and other negative qualities to the nursling through her breast milk. Wet nurses were seen as interested purely in the financial gains of the trade and not in the well-being of the child.



RANGERS

This entry is a bit off on a tangent—Surprise!—to the details on the original Rangers that I have been including lately. In fact, it deals with Whitcomb before he had formed the unit.

While rummaging through some pensions, I came across one for Obed Sanders, one of the men recruited in Orford and Haverhill, NH, by Whitcomb for Samuel Young's Co., Colo. Timothy Bedel's Regt., in early 1776. No evidence has been found indicating when Whitcomb took his new men to rejoin Bedel's—until now, that is. In his documentation, Sanders states that they *arrived at the Plains of Abraham before the City of Quebec with the said Whitcomb ... on the ninth day of April 1776*. That means Ben did participate in the retreat.

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.

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