

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.

JUNE, 2009

The renderings of this Instant include—

CALENDAR: 20-21 Jun: Ethan Allen Days; Bennington, VT.

PERSONALS: Fire at the Chinn residence.

OILS AND FIRE: Concerning the above incident.

JIM'S JAWINGS: Ti.

DUE DUES: It's past that time again.

RANGER MANUAL: It's about time!

LEADERSHIP: A gathering to discuss such.

TWIRLING THE DISTAFF: Poet and petition writing.

RESEARCH: Get ready for a trip to Canada

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

££££££££££££££££ £

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

20-21 Jun: Ethan Allen Days; Bennington, VT.

This year features a new site—again. This time, it's at Colgate Park on VT Rt. 9, 2 miles west of the center of Bennington. As often happens at this event, the sponsors will provide a meal Sat. eve. and Continental breakfast Sun. (wonder what the Brits will have—nyuk, nyuk, nyuk).

New Date

10-11 Oct: Jerusalem Mill; Kingsville, MD. (CL/BB National event)

You may have heard that this event scheduled for mid-May had some weather problems. Indeed, the site suffered several days of rain causing the ground to become over-saturated and unsuitable for the event. Under these conditions, the organizers decided to postpone—good thing since it rained some that weekend as well. Should anyone want to go down in Oct., we still have access to a rental van at a very cheap rate.

Recent Invites

5 Jul: Evacuation of Mount Independence; Guess where.

A commemoration of the evacuation is being held at 1:00 p.m. and the site is looking for some reenactors to take part in the commemoration, music by the Seth Warner F&D, and

reenactment of the evacuation. Afternoon commitment only but any interested folks would probably be able to camp over. Contact Steve Koller at 802-758-2188 or skoller@together.net.
19-20 Sep: Gelston Castle; Warren, NY.

Of Interest

13 Jun: Seth Warner Presentation by Cliff Mullen; Hubbardton Battlefield.

££££££££££££££ £

PERSONALS

Austin and Gillian Chinn suffered a major fire at their home earlier in May. Estimates of the damage are in the hundreds-of-thousands-of-dollars range and the home is unlivable. They lost a considerable amount of irreplaceable things but, as I understand it, the library survived. To their credit, they feel their greatest loss was one of their cats, Molly.

With the exception of his musket, Austin lost all of his reenactment gear but he intends to continue in the hobby. Kris Jarrett has suggested that the unit conduct a "gear drive" to help Austin get back active. To quote Kris, *Something tells me insurance would not be great at replacing hand made reenacting gear at it's real value.* On top of the expense, I'm sure Austin is going to have other things on his mind besides this hobby. While Austin may wish to go out and get all new items, I'm sure he would appreciate our efforts. With that in mind, think about some of the duplicate items you have that you would be willing to donate to Austin's cause.

££££££££££££££ £

OILS AND FIRE

Austin's fire possibly resulted from the spontaneous combustion of a linseed-oil-coated tarp. One of our new members, Ian Tenney, is a professional fire-fighter and made some comments about such happenings which I include below. A word to the wise

There are two types of hazards that you can expect to see with 'oils' in general.

First - in the case of linseed oil: Linseed and other organic compounds naturally decompose over time. To cut through all of the technical jargon (and please forgive me ahead of time as I don't know what your background in this area is) some compounds give off more heat of decomposition (referenced as oxidization below) than others. Linseed oil, in sufficient quantities, can easily produce sufficient heat to ignite combustibles such as cloth or paper. (Saw a large building fully charged with smoke last year because a mop bucket was left full of it with the mop in the liquid during the refinishing of a floor...we found the caster wheels and metal hardware of the bucket and mop head grip, which was how the cause was determined). The purpose of sealed metal containers for 'waste rag' storage is to limit the amount of oxygen available, thus preventing combustion, and also to keep a fire that does ignite from extending. This 'spontaneous ignition' can also be found with tightly baled damp hay, among other things.

The second issue is the presence of other combustible oils - both organic and inorganic. Cloths or other materials covered in motor oil, gasoline, diesel, etc. etc. also pose a serious fire hazard and should also be stored in metal cans.

In the case of an oil cloth, the key is to make sure that the product on the cloth is fully dried prior to storage. Any items used to apply the linseed oil should be thoroughly cleaned and if you're going to keep

them, allow them to dry before returning them to storage. While the cleaning process should remove the bulk or all of the product, allowing the item(s) to dry outdoors or in an open, well-vented area should render anything remaining inert as it dries out. You should take care to keep your oil cloth (as with any other combustible material) away from camp fires, candles, etc.

£££££££££££££££ £

JIM'S JAWINGS

G'day all,

It was good to see the folks that made it to Ti for the opening weekend and to get one of our new members, Dave Johnson, on to the field with us. I think that our drill time was good, but we could have used more, and I would have liked to spend more time on Sunday discussing the rest of the season but duty called, I guess. I really appreciate the effort you folks put out, and as always, thanks very much to the ladies who make camp life so,,,,,, nice.

We've got some really interesting events on the schedule and with only eight left this year, I'm hoping to see many of you on the field. Jim

£££££££££££££££ £

DUE DUES

Don't forget, your monies for Whitcomb's (\$15) are now past due if you haven't sent them in. Get 'em to Maria Beuerlein, 30 Abercrombie St., Ticonderoga, NY 12883.

£££££££££££££££ £

RANGER MANUAL

Well, after years of revisioning, the Thud edition of the *Manual* is ready. By the time you read this, it should be printed and bound. Unless you live thousands of miles away – like England, Texas, or Hawaii--you can pick up your copy at an event (a cheap ploy to increase attendance).

£££££££££££££££ £

LEADERSHIP

Jim attended a weekend gathering of the officers and non-commissioned officers of Warner's (Cliff Mullen, host), Herrick's, Lee's, and Whitcomb's (neither of our nco's went). Topics of discussion covered a wide range of inter- and intra-unit governance and event activities. Attendees want to do it again with the possibility of holding short gatherings at event or two.

One of the meeting's ideas involved the American units in Vermont forming something of a "Grants brigade" wherein the units would work together at some events. Since all said units are ranger-types, one of the advantages would be a much larger force to deal with the droves of Brit irregulars that Whitcomb's has had to put up with for years.

££££££££££££££££ £

TWIRLING THE DISTAFF

I came across the following in the "Poet's Corner" of *The New London Gazette* for 31 March 1775, vol. XII, issue 594, p. 4. It took me a bit to realize that this poem needs to be formatted in the following manner. See why?

To a LADY.

Your face, So fair, First bent, Mine eye,	your tongue, so sweet, then drew, mine ear,	your wit, so sharp, then hit, my heart,
Mine eye, To like, Your face, Doth lead,	mine ear, to learn, your tongue, doth teach,	mine heart, to love, your wit, doth move.
Your face, With beams, Doth blind, Mine eye,	your tongue, with sound, doth charm, mine ear,	your wit, with art, doth rule, mine heart.
Mine eye, With life, Your face, Doth feed,	mine ear, with hope, your tongue, doth feast,	mine heart, with skill, your wit, doth fill.
O face! With frowns, Wrong not, Mine eye,	O tongue! with check, vex not, mine ear,	O wit! with smart, wound not, mine heart,
This eye, Shall joy, Your face, To serve,	this ear, shall bend, your tongue, to trust,	this heart, shall swear, your wit, to fear.

The following comes from *The New Hampshire Gazette*, 22 August 1775, p.2:

The FEMALE SUPPORTERS of LIBERTY.

Whereas our Country has long groaned under the Oppressions of a tyrannical Ministry; and has lately been invaded by our Enemies, who stained the Land with the Blood of our dear Brethren: – THEREFORE we, the Subscribers, are determined to defend our Liberties, both civil and religious, do the utmost that lies in our Power. We do not mean to take up Arms, for that does not become our Sex: But we will put our Hands to the Plough, hoe and rake, and till the Ground, For our Men to go to the Assistance of our distressed Brethren, there

to conquer our Enemies, or die in the Attempt. And we further determine to undergo all the Hardships which Human Lives can be exposed to: We will forsake the Gaities of this World, content ourselves to live in solitary Caves on Bread and Water, before we will give up our Country's Liberties and Religion. We are to stand by each other, and all Sons and Daughters of Liberty throughout America; determining to hear no evil spoken of them without vindicating them. Our Company is to consist of as many true Daughters of Liberty as will undertake the noble Cause—No one to be admitted who retains any of the Tory Principles.

GOD SAVE AMERICA.

Upwards of 70 Daughters of Liberty have signed the above Articles, within a small Circle.

£££££££££££££££ £

RESEARCH

Continuing the topic begun last issue—essentially, skulking—I offer some comments concerning disguises.

In May of 1779, British intelligence reported to Governor-General Haldimand in Canada that Whitcomb and six men had set out for Canada *dressed like Indians*. The spy did not include in his report exactly what this description meant in terms of clothing nor did he indicate which Indian community the Rangers dressed like and the British employed several different tribes from as far away as the Great Plains, each with their own style of dress. To add to the myriad options, many Indians had become Europeanized by the 1770s and wore a mix of European and Indian clothing. We can only guess at what the Rangers looked like but the information does indicate that the Rangers must have shaved regularly as Indians seldom have facial hair.

The Rangers utilized other non-American clothing as well. A little over a month after Haldimand received the note about the Rangers dressed like Indians, a British deserter, who had been recaptured and questioned, reported that he went to a home in La Ricause, Quebec, where he saw two men *dressed in the Canadian manner*. When he asked their names, one answered, "Whitcomb." Years earlier, Whitcomb had been asked by Ensign Saunders when he first accosted the British officer on the road near St. Johns if he (Whitcomb) was not a Canadien, thereby hinting that Whitcomb had on Canadien clothing. By the way, the term "Canadien," as opposed to "Canadian," refers to a male of French heritage. "Canadienne" is the term for a female.

What defined Canadien dress? During his service in Canada, British Captain Peachey made several drawings of the local indigenous population and a couple of the drawings are included in the *Ranger Manual*. There are also a couple drawings by a German soldier that include one of a Canadien and another of a British soldier wearing Canadien-style winter clothing. One written example of "the Canadian manner" of dress can be found in Ethan Allen's narrative: "viz. a short fawn skin jacket, double-breasted, an under vest and breeches of sagathy, worsted stockings, a decent pair of shoes, two plain shirts, and a red worsted cap." Canadians also commonly wore a capote described in a letter to yours truly from André Gousse of Parcs Canada as a knee-length, woolen, hooded coat with full skirts and fitted relatively tightly above the waist where it tied closed with three or four ribbons and a sash around the waist. Mr. Gousse also included a number of period drawings of capotes. These descriptions and contemporary pictures of Canadians show a style of dress quite distinctive from that worn by the Americans.

Michael Barbieri
662 Creek Rd.
Wallingford, Republic



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.