

RANGER MANUAL;

OR, A

COMPENDIUM

OF

USEFUL INFORMATION,

for Individuals, both Man and Woman, wishing to
experience Life of another Time by representing

**Benjamin Whitcomb's
Independent Corps of
Rangers.**



III^d Edition.

Compiled by Michael Barbieri,
Wallingford, on Otter Creek, Republic of Vermont.

MMIX.

ERRATA.

The majority of this work is produced in modern font. However, titles and quotes from period documents are printed in an 18th-century type-face known as *Caslon Book*. While most of the font is easily recognizable and should not present any problems to a reader unfamiliar with that style, following are some differences with which you should be aware.

s = long “s” or “f” (as in “fomething ftrange”)

Do not confuse an “f” with an “f”—note the lack of a cross-bar for the “f”.

“ss” at the end of a word = often long “s” followed by a short “s” (as in “Congrefs”).

examples of *ligatures* (two or three letters together—a dozen combinations used)

ct = ct

si = fi instead of fi

st = ft instead of ft.

While reading this can be challenging at first, you soon should develop the knack and not experience any confusion. The effort is worth the time as it adds to your comprehension of the eighteenth century and that is what a large portion of this hobby is all about.

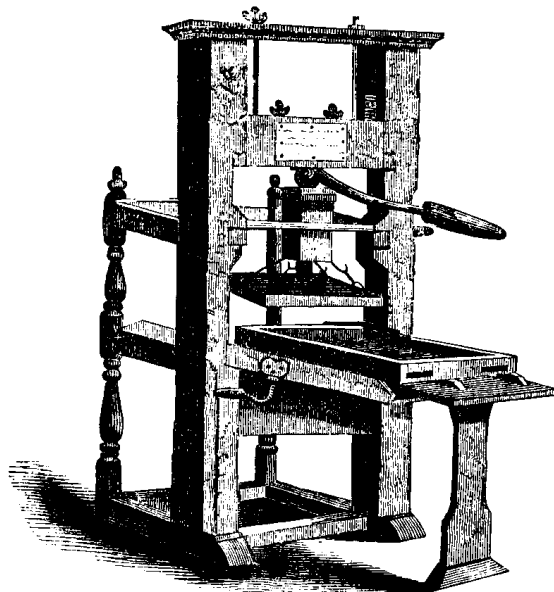


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INTRODUCTION.

Welcome to the interesting, educational, and enjoyable recreation of the re-creation of Benjamin Whitcomb's Independent Corps of Rangers and the American Revolution.

When a person enters this hobby, it is not unlike being born into a second world. People first experiencing the 18th-century lifestyle soon learn that much of it is altogether alien to us living in the 21st-century world. Consequently, his/her mind is essentially a *tabula rasa*—a blank page—and is overwhelmed with questions. Not only does a new member have to learn about the hobby and Whitcomb's Rangers, but that person also must learn about a new period of time. While he/she is attempting to re-create a person in a military unit of over two-hundred years ago, the American military during that time strongly reflected American society in general. This modern group, therefore, is the vehicle by which members learn about and re-create not just the military but also the broader spectrum of 18th-century life.

There is a considerable amount of information which everyone in Whitcomb's Rangers should possess. One of the unit's major goals is to educate the public about the American Revolution and its times but it is impossible to teach others without an understanding of the subject matter yourself. The objective of this manual is to assist you in gaining a bit of understanding by putting into print some of this necessary information. In this manner, many basic questions will be answered, the learning process will be sped up, and you will find your enjoyment of the hobby increasing exponentially.

Note that the manual is composed of several sections assembled in a loose-leaf format. Each section deals with an aspect of Whitcomb's Rangers every member should be familiar with. The loose-leaf construction will facilitate future additions and up-dates. One of your responsibilities as a member is to read and understand the contents. Another is to make suggestions for additions and alterations which you feel might improve the manual and the unit. This book is intended to be a rudimentary reference source and exists for you. It is hoped that each individual will do reading and research well beyond what is in this little tome. You will most likely find some aspect of the period that intrigues you. Do some research in that area and you will not only add enjoyment to your participation in the hobby but, will be able to share that new information with many others—a really satisfying aspect of the hobby.

Again, welcome to Whitcomb's Rangers. Read on and learn some of what this unit—and the hobby—is all about.

I. PHILOSOPHY OF THE ORGANIZATION.

When the original group of people met to form Whitcomb's Rangers, no one had any extensive experience with re-enacting. We, in our innocence, had no idea that our ignorance embodied both a curse and a blessing: A curse in that we had little information on sources of supply, events, knowledge of the period, and so on and so forth—we had to search out the info; and a blessing in that we had no idea of what we could get away with as far as authenticity and performance goes—we assumed (and you all know what assume does to “-u-” and “-me”) that the hobby demanded a high level of accuracy. The next few meetings of the re-created Whitcomb's became very important in the development of the unit. The founding members made many decisions which still govern the unit even after acquiring years of experience, new members, and folders (of both the paper and electronic type) of research information.

In spite of the lack of knowledge and the diversity of people, there existed a consensus about what needed to be done. Even though our assumption about the degree of authenticity demanded by the hobby proved inaccurate, we all felt that authenticity should play a major role in our interpretation of the original Whitcomb's Rangers. I use the word *interpretation* intentionally because that is all we can really do—we interpret what little information we can gather about the unit and the times (remember that we are re-creating another world and we know only a very small percentage of what that world was like—even less for those just beginning in the hobby). We had no pictures and virtually no description of the original Rangers. All we could (and can) do is interpret bits and pieces of information gathered from a myriad of sources. Nevertheless, we felt that certain assumptions could be made about the unit and the people of the times and that if we utilized the most accurate info available, we could put together a high-quality group. We felt that with time, we could gather sufficient information to put together a reasonably accurate depiction of the original Rangers. Whitcomb's Rangers has changed considerably since those early days but the drive for authenticity has remained. It is the responsibility of each member to make the unit appear as close as possible to what evidence indicates the original unit looked like. Remember, we represent Benjamin Whitcomb's Independent Corps of Rangers, not a generic group of soldiers.

The cost of such striving can become prohibitive to some so, to help counteract this, the unit has always encouraged members to make some of their own equipment rather than buy it all. Not only does this help keep expenses down but it also helps members to better understand and appreciate the items they produce. If a member finds something he or she wishes to make, the unit will attempt to locate a pattern and

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information on the item. A basic rule of thumb when making or buying equipment is to remember that if you can document it as being used in that period, it is eligible for your use. However, please consider whether or not a member of Whitcomb's Rangers—mostly farmers and tradesmen without large amounts of money—would have had such an item.

Another major decision involved the “distaff” side of life—the ladies and kids. Since most of us had families, we decided to make the unit a family affair. During 18th-century wars, women and children often traveled with the armies (campfollowers), some as families and part of the unit, others as hangers-on who either saw the army as a way to make some money or to be with their husbands. Although there remains no indication that any women traveled with Whitcomb's Rangers, we still encourage wives, children, girl-friends, etc. (whatever “etc.” may be—short of pets), to attend events. The hobby is very male-oriented and at times there are events where there is little for families to take part in, but, with each passing year, more women and kids are creating their own activities—such as making or repairing clothes, spinning, playing games—just as they would have during the war. All participants, men and women, are encouraged to research and demonstrate some element of 18th-century life other than just a soldier. Remember, Whitcomb's Rangers didn't exist in a vacuum but, rather, experienced the period as we experience our times. The military serves as the vehicle by which we educate the public about the American Revolution and life during that time period.

In part of the drive for authenticity, it must be noted that we decided to try to depict the unit as it appeared in the early years of the war—1776-78. Not only did the war concentrate in the Champlain valley at that time but that is also when Whitcomb's Rangers gained much of their notoriety. In addition, this decision allows the members a wide latitude in their choice of items. The Americans, in general, and Whitcomb's Rangers, in particular, utilized a wide mixture of military and civilian equipment at that time. As the war dragged on, supply (such as it was) became somewhat more uniform but we wanted to have members utilizing a wide mix of items. However, I repeat, keep in mind that the original unit does not seem to have had members with much money. Therefore, during public hours, try to avoid items which would have belonged to wealthy people. What you do after public hours is up to you but remember that you still represent Whitcomb's Rangers.

Another early decision dealt with the unit's performance on the field—we wanted to be able to perform as line troops, light infantry, and skirmishers. The members realized the unit would not be uniformly equipped and not very impressive to look at. We felt that this might be a draw-back to being invited to events. To counter the appearance, the original members thought the unit should be versatile, accurate, and impressive in its performance on the field. Taking the field as line troops necessitates the use of a manual of arms and the years chosen to be depicted ('76-'78) restricted the choice of a manual. The common American manual drawn up by Von Steuben would not be used by the American army until later and so the unit finally decided to use the British 1764 Manual of Arms. It was a common manual of the time and, in addition, can be impressive if performed well. Later, we discovered that a few of the Rangers came

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out of New Hampshire militia regiments that used the *Norfolk Militia Manual* from 1759 and we then dropped the 1764 manual in favor of the Norfolk manual. Regrettably, the unit became too adept at performing both manuals and was too often used as line troops rather than as rangers, scouts, and skirmishers as Whitcomb's Rangers originally functioned. In more recent years, the unit has come to be used almost exclusively in its proper mode in part because of the addition of practicing Lord Howe's 1774 Light Infantry drill and other maneuvers in open order.

Friday and Saturday nights provide some of the most enjoyable times at events. In the early years, most participants used modern camping gear because very few had period-correct tentage. In addition, virtually all participants arrived Saturday mornings. By the 1980s, however, events displayed much larger period camps and, now, modern camping is virtually non-existent at events. Furthermore, most participants now arrive Friday evenings. Being unfamiliar with the hobby in the early years and, like most participants, lacking any period-correct camp equipment, Whitcomb's Rangers camped in the modern areas. However, again like most participants, the members soon learned that activities in the period camps proved much more enjoyable (not to mention authentic). With the passage of time, the unit moved into the 18th-century camps and now encourages new members to acquire a wedge tent as soon as possible. The unit owns a fly and one "supply tent" of its own (where improper items—coolers, paper or plastic bags, etc.—are stored) so members can usually find some sort of tent space or shelter when they do not have their own.

An alternate form of camping began to be practiced by some members of the unit in the 1990s—that of "hard corps" (get it?—"corps" instead of "core"—you know, Whitcomb's *Corps* of Rangers). Those who wish to, do not use a tent but rather camp in the open or under a lean-to with only a blanket and, possibly, a ground-cloth in the manner that all armies on campaign often do. Be aware that nobody is required to do this but this practice gives participants a new appreciation of what the original Rangers experienced. In addition, rather than having to spend however many hours packing up your tentage and camping gear before and after an event, "hard corps" participants roll up their blankets and are ready to go within a very few minutes.

The unit owns some odds and ends camp and cooking items but food is essentially the responsibility of each member. Rarely, food is provided by the event sponsors but, generally, the group purchases the ingredients for the Saturday evening meal and each individual/family contributes some money to the kitty. This way, everyone gets at least one good meal at an event. The remainder of the meals are the responsibility of each individual. Camp duties (gathering wood, water, and so on) are done in a communal manner with each individual doing their part. Cooking usually is overseen by one or two individuals. Those participants who choose to attend an event in the "hard corps" mode are often issued 18th-century-style rations—another way to understand more about what the original Rangers went through.

To some, parts of the above discussion may seem harsh or unnecessary but, Whitcomb's Rangers gained an excellent reputation by adhering to this philosophy. Proof of its value and one of the proudest moments for us came at the bicentennial of the battle of Cowpens. The six that traveled to South

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Carolina for the event received compliments from all who spoke with the members. In addition, even though none of the organizers had ever worked with us, they chose Whitcomb's Rangers to be part of the skirmish line which opened the battle. Similarly, the commanders at the 225th commemoration of the Lexington-Concord battles chose Whitcomb's Rangers to serve as a skirmish line for our battalion and, on another occasion, during a lull in the activities, to go out and drill in front of several hundred (if not thousand) spectators. On each of these occasions, the commanders had their choice of several hundred other participants. If Whitcomb's Rangers did not take pride in itself and work to achieve a high level of quality, the unit would have just been stuffed in with the scores of other units.

Whitcomb's Rangers has a reputation of being very imaginative and innovative in our approach to the hobby. For example, until the late 1990s, very few in any unit had attended events in "hard corps" mode ("minimalist" is how the Continental Line described us). We have been doing that for a number of years—just like the original Rangers did—and, now, many other participants attend events in that mode. Further, while others often keep their clothing and equipment as clean as possible and look as though they stepped out of a catalog, we allow ours to become worn as though we have been serving on the frontier in a poorly-supplied army for several campaigns—just like the original Rangers looked. In addition, we had the pleasure of being asked to help dig the first kitchens ever done at an event (you'll learn what kitchens are). Since then, we have dug them at several events where they soon become a center of attention for both spectators and participants. The bottom line of this approach?—we are always trying to think of new things to do to add to our interpretation of what the original Whitcomb's Rangers did.

In essence, as reenactors, it is our duty to re-create the period of the American Revolution to the best of our abilities. Personally, I take part in this hobby to experience in some detail what life was like for those who lived in that period. That is why I dig kitchens and do some events in a "hard-corps" mode. That is also why I let my equipment get rather ratty. By doing those things, I gain a better understanding of the time period and what the original Rangers experienced. Further, what we are doing is paying some sort of homage to those who believed in the concept of a group of disparate states uniting to form a country in which the individual played an important role. It should be constantly in our minds that we are representing a group of common folk who lived and died over two-hundred years ago. Each of us wishes to be remembered once we have left this plane of existence. The people we represent were no different and, by doing what we do, we have given them a level of immortality. In so doing, I often wonder just how close we are to doing things as they really were. I also wonder what those we represent think of what we are doing and of us. I hope they judge us well.

III. AUTHENTICITY.

Authenticity has always been a goal of Whitcomb's Rangers. We are constantly researching the unit's history and each individual is expected to read and learn about both the original unit and the time period. You will be surprised how many members of other units know little of their own unit's history or of the time period. We have always believed that the knowledge of each member not only increases the enjoyment of the hobby, but also increases the ability to understand the 18th century and to educate others. Keep in mind that we are history in three dimensions and five senses. People learn much more if they can use several of their senses to experience what they are being taught and that is what we offer them.

There are three key points to remember when considering some new item for your clothing or equipment. First, if you can document its existence and use during the period we represent, then it is probably permissible. Second, you must consider the type of unit Whitcomb's Rangers was and the stage of the war we try to represent ('76-'78). They performed extended missions on the frontier of the colonies far away from the niceties of civilized life. Furthermore, we have no indication that any of the original Rangers possessed much wealth and, therefore, it is highly unlikely that they would have had any items of much value. Finally, always seek the advice of others who are knowledgeable in the hobby and/or the time period. They will be glad to help you and might save you some embarrassment and expense.

The amount of information available has grown exponentially since the unit began. For soldiers, we suggest looking through Harold Peterson's *The Book of the Continental Soldier* and George Neumann and Frank Kravic's *The Collector's Illustrated Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* to get an idea of what types of clothing and equipment could be used. For women, look at Beth Gilgun's *Tidings from the Eighteenth Century* and the Brigade of the American Revolution's *Women's Dress During the American Revolution: an Interpretive Guide*. Be aware that what is shown there is not the be-all and end-all of what you can use—these are only a couple sources but they provide a wide spectrum of items. To help you along your kit's development, the following guidelines are applicable to Whitcomb's Rangers but these paragraphs, like the books mentioned above, should be considered as merely basic information to get you started. Hopefully, you will find your interest piqued and explore for more details to add to your own personal store of knowledge.

Fabric: Why bother with proper fabrics—primarily linen, wool, and cotton? The key reason is authenticity. The majority of units in the hobby have developed a high level of quality and Whitcomb's Rangers has always been driven to be near the top of that level. It is a matter of pride that other units look at

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Whitcomb's Rangers with respect. Another reason is education—of the members and of those to whom we talk about the unit and the 18th century. As an example, it is interesting to note that few people have felt or seen natural linen except in the fine form of a napkin or a bed sheet. We should be able to show that, in the 18th century, linen was very common and came in many forms including canvas for tents and sails. Many of those forms are now available for our use.

There are some key points to remember when making or buying clothing. First and foremost, synthetic materials did not exist in the 18th century so avoid synthetic fabrics. Synthetics, 100% or blends, often shine in sunlight, hold a good crease (which is not correct for period clothing), and will smoke and melt when a thread or small piece is burned as a test (refer to “Fabric Burn Test” table in *Supplement* section). Further, with few exceptions, avoid leather shirts, coats, or any other clothing (other than shoes, some hats, and the occasional pair of britches). Leather took considerable labor to produce and, therefore, items made out of it cost a lot. As an aside, those western-style buckskin, fringed things are not acceptable under any circumstances. Also, be aware that the people we re-create did not limit themselves to dull, muted colors. They had access to a wide spectrum of colors but they (the colors, not the people) came from natural dyes. Avoid glitzy, glow-in-the-dark colors that you get with synthetic fabrics.

Cut and fit: Clothing of the colonial period used a different cut and tailoring methods than today's garments resulting in a different fit. Coats and waistcoats fit tighter than today's coats and vests. Many of these items—in particular, breeches, overalls (a primarily military item), and trousers—are difficult for modern tailors to make properly. While they fit legs relatively tightly, they had a baggy seat to allow for bending and stretching. Shirts, on the other hand, had a much looser cut under the arms and in the body and hung much longer—long enough to use as a nightshirt.

Way of wearing: There are several ways of presenting the unit. Clothing and equipment looks much more authentic if worn, faded, patched, torn, and mended as if they had been worn day after day—especially for Whitcomb's Rangers who had a perpetual problem with supply on the frontier. The same is true for women's clothes which would also have food stains and burns from the fires. In addition, look at the details in period drawings and paintings to get a sense of how they wore their clothing and equipment. For example, equipment hanging off shoulders should be worn rather high, not down by the top of your thigh—the top of haversacks, cartridge boxes, etc. about even with your elbow (see



illustrations). Keep in mind that you have a plethora of gear hanging off you and the lower it hangs, the more apt it is to flop around and get hung up on things—including the person next to you in line.

Coats and Jackets: Whitcomb’s Rangers received at least three issues of coats but information on only one has come to light and even that is limited. It appears that the unit received some brown faced-red contract coats from France (commonly called Lottery Coats) but there is no indication of the colors or styles of the other issues except one soldier saying he had buttons with “USA” on them. Similar to a civilian coat, the military ones included facings (lapels) and cuffs of a different color than the body, something seldom seen in civilian coats. Some of these coats may have had the tails cut off or been converted to



something similar to the right-hand illustration in the previous paragraph. In addition, it is highly probable that the Rangers wore civilian style coats, casual frock coats (see right illustration below), long bulky great coats for winter, and even French style coats. It is also likely that some of the men wore jackets, made like coats but shorter and generally without collars, lapels, or cuffs. Without doubt, at no time did all of the men have the same style and color of coats.

Hunting/Rifle Shirts and Workman’s Frocks: Yet another form of outer wear is the hunting/rifle shirt/frock—it can be called any combination of those names. This sleeved, open front shirt

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(left picture below) had varying numbers of strips of fringe sewn on partially as decoration but mostly to help keep the wearer dry by providing surfaces for water to drip off and evaporate. It also often had a cape covering the shoulders. Its length varied from just covering the hips to the knees. Another piece of outer wear to consider is the workman's frock (below, right). Similar to the hunting shirt, it lacked the fringe and cape and pulled on over your head. It is intended to protect your other clothes while working.



Hats: During the 18th century, people constantly kept their heads covered and a wide variety of hats existed. Whatever pattern or type you adopt, be able to document it and use 18th-century materials. Be aware that the crown of most hats stood only three to four inches high.

Waistcoats: These common items fit similar to coats and several styles existed—sleeveless or sleeved, single- or double-breasted, etc. If you look closely at the picture of the American soldier included in the “Way of Wearing” section, you will note he is wearing a very short style with a cummerbund or belt. As a general guideline, the longer the waistcoat, the older the style. Mid-1770s waistcoats covered the waistband and top of the fall of the britches. Tailors often made the front panels of waistcoats out of more expensive materials than the back panels which generally would not be visible (jackets had all panels of the same material). Although many in the hobby may claim that men always wore waistcoats and would not be seen in just their shirts (kind of like walking around in your underwear today), this has been found not to be

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true at all times, particularly in the army. The items would wear out and could not be replaced.

Footwear: Cobblers made the common shoe out of vegetable-tanned leather, plain, straight (no left or right) with a rounded toe, a $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1" heel, black, and generally with the rough side of the leather on the outside (the roughness often would not be obvious, however, due to water-proofing the shoes with wax, oil, etc.). Latches (straps) extended over the top of the foot for buckles or, more often, ties (never use rawhide thongs) and the quarters

(sides and back) came just below the ankle bones. Recently, some use of "hi-los" or "half-boots"—similar to the shoe but reaching just above the ankle—has been documented. In either case, the addition of hobnails greatly assists in movement on slippery grass. Because of the expense of shoes, many people wore



moccasins but western Indian styles (knee-high, fringed Apache ones, for example) did not exist. Eastern woodland styles saw extensive use. As a general rule, moccasins with a hard leather sole are western. Eastern moccasins tended to be soft-soled that wrapped up around the foot.

It is also possible to substitute modified modern shoes as a temporary alternative to reproductions: These should have leather uppers and be either black or dark brown, with the proper toe shape, a $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1" heel and be of smooth leather (no design). Military "low quarters" are ideal and if overalls, gaiters, etc. cover the laces, no modifications are needed. If the whole shoe shows then the shoe must be modified. *Sketchbook '76* shows how buckles or ties are positioned and shows the straps. Modify the modern shoe by cutting and stitching straps in place: This can also be done by a modern shoe repairman if he has the sketch to work from.

Supply receipts list three types of socks—stockings, hose, and socks. It appears that stockings come up over the knee, socks came to just above the ankle, and hose came above the knee but did not cover the feet—a string that passed under the arch of the foot kept them from riding up. Leather or cloth garters held the stockings or hose up (do not dare to use elastic). Whichever style you choose, white or colors would be appropriate.

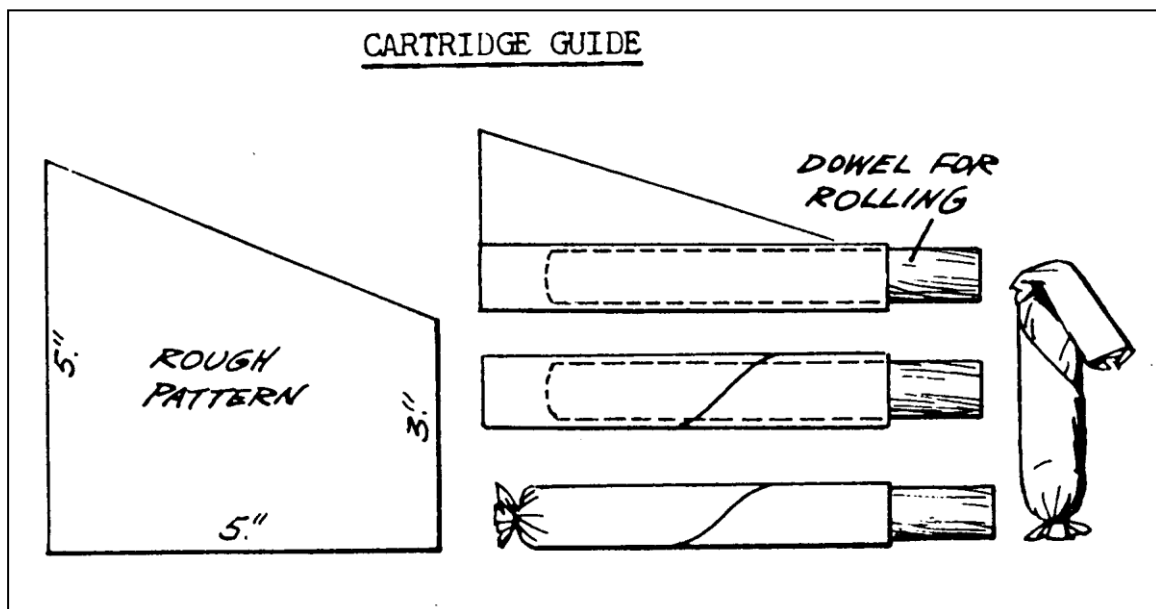
Accoutrements and Equipment: Must be of Revolutionary War or earlier pattern and period materials. Whitcomb's Rangers received cartridge boxes from Continental stores but they also received shot pouches and powder horns. If you received orders to go on a scout into Canada, you certainly would not want to be wearing something like a cartridge box—a sure sign of a soldier. Instead, you would wear a possible pouch and horn. Likewise, the unit received bayonets but, again, that is not something you would wear into Canada. However, both those items might have been quite useful on a patrol or in action and

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many of the men had them so they should be something to consider having. Several styles of canteens existed and you should make sure you have one. While they probably did not carry them that often 200-whatever years ago—water everywhere so you did not need that extra couple pounds hanging off you—some events get quite hot and you should have a water supply on the field. A backpack is something else you might want to have but, rolling your possessions up in a blanket is a very authentic practice. Everyone should also have a set of eating utensils but you don't need to worry about spoons and forks, dishes and cups. Just a bowl and a knife is highly proper. A haversack is a handy item in which to carry your utensils and food but is not necessary. Beyond that, there are scores of other items available for you to have but take the advice of someone who's been in the hobby over 30 years—you will eventually find the vast majority of those things are seldom, if ever, used and get left behind so don't waste the money.

At some point, you surely will wonder about putting some unit identification on certain items as is the practice in several other groups. Don't do it. As you will learn, the British issued a reward for the capture, dead or alive, of Whitcomb and anyone with him. They preferred alive but not for any altruistic motives. Since the reward remained in effect throughout the war, it is unlikely that any of Whitcomb's Rangers marked any of their equipment with their unit name. Being captured with such identification would surely have meant a bout of "hempen fever"—more commonly known as hanging.

Weapons: Reproduction flintlock weapons representing no later than 1781 are to be carried. As a rule of thumb, rifles must have a 39" or longer barrel to be correct for the period but Jaeger rifles had a 28" barrel. We have no indication any of the original rangers carried rifles but their use is not discouraged as they are nice to have to show spectators the differences between a musket and a rifle. Loading of all weapons is done with cartridges which should be rolled in a period manner (refer to drawing below) and made out of paper that will bite open easily but not tear as they are handled and jostled around in cartridge boxes—refer to the pattern below for one way to roll them. Whether musket or rifle, it must be equipped



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with a flashguard and a hammer-stall (also called a frizzen cover)—see patterns in the Safety section. Pistols probably did not see use by Whitcomb’s Rangers and are discouraged by both the unit and event organizers. Edged weapons must be of the proper period pattern and materials and the blade must be properly sheathed.

French Clothing: British intelligence more than once reported Whitcomb’s Rangers going into Canada dressed as Canadians. There is a noticeable difference between French-Canadian (Canadien) and American/English styles and one of the most common articles worn by Canadiens would be the capote. Sometimes inaccurately called a “blanket coat,” it is an outer garment usually with a hood and held closed by three or more ties and/or a sash rather than buttons. In a research project by Francis Back that looked at several score documentary mentions of capotes, a kind of wool called “cadis” was the chosen material for making them in over half the examples and blue, brown, grey, and white (in that order) made up over three-quarters of the same group. Styles ranged from nearly ankle length to just above the knees. It is interesting to note that people wore capotes year-round, just varying the layers of clothing underneath.



Packing for Patrol: The original Rangers performed long-distance scouting and going into Canada to spy on the Crown forces. These duties meant carrying much of your supplies on your back and, over the years, the recreated Rangers have made an effort to depict the original Rangers in just such a mode. The result has been an appreciation of just what and what not to lug. Pots and pans other than possibly a

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small tin kettle, dishes or eating utensils other than a knife and bowl, or niceties like chairs, boxes, and tents would not be something seen in the camp while on that kind of duty. Even canvas lean-tos or ground cloths would, most likely, not be carried. Remember, you'd probably be carrying it up to 100 miles on patrols and over 200 miles when going into Canada and back—not the 200 feet from your car to the camp we experience in this hobby. One small aside regarding going to events in this mode: at the end of the event, you roll up your blanket and go home. No spending hours packing for the event, setting up, knocking down and packing after the event, and unpacking the car and storing all the stuff when you get home.

There are several methods of packing for a long-distance patrol. The most obvious would be a backpack or knapsack and there are numerous versions from which to choose. These would be fine when on patrol or moving from post to post but, be aware that a pack is generally a military item and, therefore, not something anyone from Whitcomb's would want to be seen wearing in Canada. Another would be in a blanket roll slung over your shoulder—a method used for centuries (illustrated to the above right). Yet another is a tumpline—similar to a blanket roll but slung square across your back (the lower picture to the right).

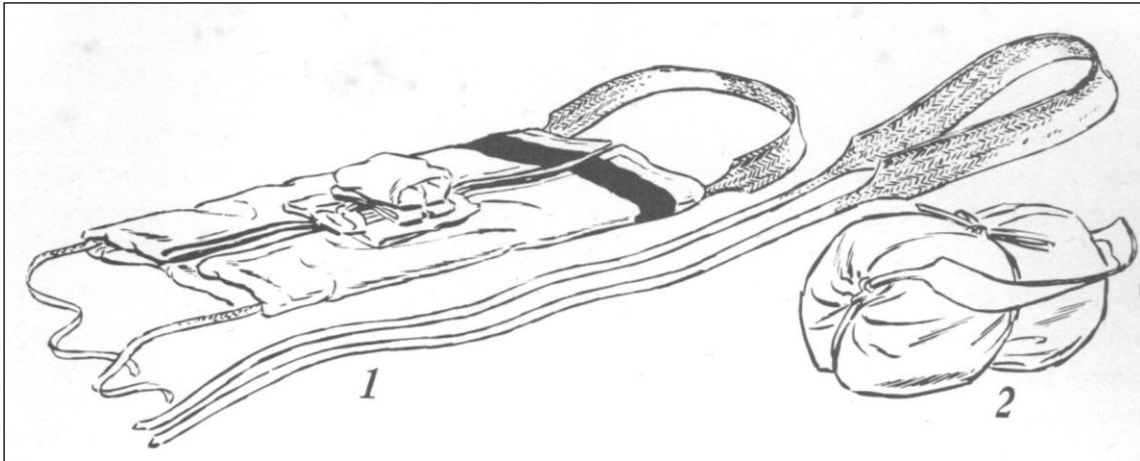
Blanket rolls and tumplines are put together in somewhat the same manner. First, your blanket is laid out on the ground. If you are making a blanket roll, arrange your items along the middle (avoid clumps and piles), then fold over the sides and ends a bit to help hold and protect your possessions and roll the blanket up side-to-side into a long tube. Fold it in half, tie the ends with some twine, sling it over your right shoulder, and, Voylah!, you're ready to walk to Canada. It may take some experimentation to find just the right length to fold and roll the blanket to get the right fit over your shoulder but once found, packing goes quite quickly.

With a blanket roll, you want it long and relatively thin but, a tumpline should be fat and narrow—no wider than your shoulders works best. Begin by folding up your blanket so that it is the width you want and about four or five feet long. In the process, fold in a strap or rope with a couple feet hanging out one end of the folded blanket (see drawing on next page). Arrange your goodies in the middle (you can be clumpy, here) and roll the whole thing up into a big braciola—or Little Debbie Swiss Roll for you non-Italians. Use the ends of the strap/rope hanging out to securely tie the roll together, pull the loop over your



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head and arrange it across your shoulders with the pack square on your back, and away you go. Make sure you have padding or a wide strap on the portion that rides on your shoulders—otherwise, it gets uncomfortable rather quickly. Like the blanket roll, it'll take some experimentation to find the size of the loop that works best for you but, you can start by putting your elbow on the roll and adjusting the strap so



that it forms a “V” with your extended fingertips at the point. Once you get the length, you will have a very authentic mode of carrying your possessions.

Modern Items: Any modern item must be hidden from view during the time the public is present. Some overlooked items are modern glasses (have an old prescription fitted to period frames), sunglasses, and wristwatches. Women should not wear nail polish or makeup and be cautious of jewelry—think about the type of women you are depicting. Cigarette smoking is to be hidden from the public.

Facial Hair: We do not require members (man or woman) to be clean shaven as did most armies of the period. However, British spies reported some of Whitcomb’s men going into Canada “dressed as Indians”—they, therefore, must not have had facial hair. A few days’ growth looks good—as if just returned from an extended scout.

Improving: For those of us who already have a kit put together, just remember that there is always something we can do to improve it. With that in mind, peruse the following suggestions. While directed towards a civilian impression, they are still applicable to our portrayal. (*The Hive Online*, <http://www.thehiveonline.org/index.htm>)

1. Use a neck cloth
2. Forget about those horizontally striped stockings - there’s no documentation for them
3. Remove any medals or unit pins from your hat or coat
4. Cover your buttons with fabric
5. Save the haversack for military interpretations & use a market wallet or snap sack to carry your things. You can also put things in your coat pockets - that’s what they’re there for! - Another reason to wear a coat or jacket!!

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6. Lose the accessories in the hat - one or two folks might have stuck a pipe in their hat, but there are far too many out there
7. Remove the ostrich feathers from your hat unless you are doing an upper class interpretation
8. Overcast your machine made button holes with hand stitches
9. Use farmer's Half Boots made from black wool to hide inaccurate shoes.
10. Use a razor! Beards were not fashionable in the 18th century. If you can't part with that beard that you've had since high school, consider trimming it to the stubble stage—it will grow back!
11. While you have the razor out, consider trimming your sideburns.
12. Consider making a checked linen shirt, or unbleached linen shirt instead of a plain white one when interpreting the lower sort – and save the ruffles for an upper class impression
13. Feeling prosperous? Have your waistcoats fitted to the point of being snug all around. This garment should serve to provide shape & support for men of middling & upper classes. If you are concerned about too tight a waistcoat, consider opening the back seam and installing linen tape ties or eyelets with stay lacing cord (they are laced up like a pair of stays, and are eyeleted accordingly)
14. Tailor your breeches they should fit well thru the leg and not be too long
15. Consider a queue (\$25-\$30)
16. Try contacts or period frames (for those who wear glasses)
17. Use period documentation for developing and honing your impression

Women's Clothing: Campfollowers may have come from any class of society but, as mentioned above, none of Whitcomb's Rangers seem to have been from well-to-do families. Therefore, it is highly recommended the women portray common folk in their dress and attitudes. Like the men, women must wear only 18th-century items—no zippers, sneakers, improper jewelry, purses, etc. A long skirt is not a pass to authenticity.

All women wore some sort of sleeved outer garment—gown, jacket, caraco, shortgown, bed jacket, riding habit, etc. Since period printed material cost such exorbitant rates and have not been very well authenticated, avoid them. Please note that the infamous “bodice” is not correct under any circumstances. At least two petticoats—made of two to three yards of material and reaching between the lower calf and upper ankle (left picture on next page)—should be worn under the outer garment if it is not full length. One petticoat will suffice if the outer garment is full length. These cover up the shift—low-necked, sleeves below the elbow, and of white or natural fabric (center picture on next page). Stays and jumps (left and right pictures), providing a conical shape to the upper body, are recommended but are not seen. Cover your neck with a handkerchief. An apron is optional but very handy around the camp. Guidelines for women's shoes and stockings are the same as for men except that women sometimes wore cloth shoes. Hair (including bangs) should be pulled back and put up or hidden with a cap. Unless you are a fine lady with an expensive, convoluted, hairstyle (which, with all due respect to those we represent, probably did not associate with Whitcomb's Rangers) or a woman of pleasure (providing man's pleasure, that is), top yourself off with one of the myriad styles of caps or hats but be aware that the “mobcap” (single circle of cloth gathered to form a



ruffle) is not acceptable. Carry your personal items in a “pocket”—a smallish cloth bag tied around your waist and hidden from view. One other general note, no make-up, please, unless you are one of those aforementioned fine ladies in which case, what are you doing associating with such slugs as Whitcomb’s?

Women sometimes wore men’s shoes they might have “liberated” but take into consideration that soldiers who did not have shoes probably would have re-patriated any a woman had. There are companies reproducing acceptable women’s shoes and clogs (wooden sole with full leather uppers—not the ones with the heel cut out) can sometimes be had more cheaply.

Lastly, one of the best resources for women’s clothing is *Women’s Dress During the American Revolution: An Interpretive Guide* published by the Brigade of the American Revolution. Loaded with illustrations, it also includes patterns, measuring, and sewing instructions, descriptions of the fabrics and construction of many items, how to develop your persona, and references for further reading.

Improving: Like the men, there is always something women can do to improve their appearance. Consider the following suggestions from *The Hive Online*:

1. Change out of the square silk & hand hem a triangle handkerchief
2. Use real silk ribbon in your cap & around your neck
3. Switch drawstring waistbands to tape waistbands on your petticoats

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4. Leave the haversack to the soldiers – consider making a workbag to carry sewing projects and/or snacks for the event
5. Choose lightweight wools instead of linen for clothing – wool was much more common and can be worn year round if it's light enough
6. Take the flowers and feathers off your straw hat and decorate it with a simple ribbon
7. Wear two petticoats rather than one
8. Avoid matching and color coordinating, in a modern way, ALL your outer garments to each other.
9. Style/dress hair under cap to avoid Q-tip head (head swallowed by cap) or bang hanging down look to the cap.
10. Cut and resew shift neckline to eliminate throat swallowing
11. If you don't have stays or jumps, wear a masher kind of sports bra under your short gown or bed gown
12. Get rid of the printed petticoat (or wear it as your inner petticoat rather than your top one). Use a solid or balanced stripe if you want a pattern
13. Shorten your shift sleeves to just past the elbow and finish with cuff or, if sleeves are narrow enough, optionally plain hem. Preferably omit ruffle entirely, or at least make it no deeper than 1" and only one layer rather than doubled; ditto ruffle around neck (preferably remove/omit, or at least make narrow and single layer
14. Make a bonnet
15. Make a pair of mitts
16. Replace 17c style cap or 19c style cap or early 18c style cap or post-RevWar 18c style cap with F&I to RevWar style cap. Made of white linen, no heavier than 3.5 oz
17. Lose the modern jewelry and nail polish
18. Use a runaway ad for inspiration on honing your impression

Children's clothing: Infants can be clothed in a shirt or shift and a cap of white or natural material. Frocks, shoes, or stockings are optional. Keep modern diapers covered with a cloth. Young children dressed similar to infants but, obviously, with larger versions of the shifts and frocks. Girls should wear a cap or hat but boys can get by without. Shoes and stockings are optional but recommended. Black modern lace-up shoes or moccasins are acceptable. Older boys and girls dressed generally the same as adults.

Camp: Like clothing and equipment, keeping the camp as period-correct as possible is everyone's goal and responsibility. Whether you sleep in a tent, the Hovel, or in the open, do your best to keep modern items out of sight. Keep in mind that people will open tents just to look inside even if they are tied—the tents, not the people—so keep things covered even if in a tent. In most cases, there are 18th-century equivalents of modern items and it is satisfying to make use of the proper items.

However, there are some instances where period-correct poses problems and refrigeration is probably the most common example. While it is a great experience and a good show to use period food, many just can't stomach it and coolers abound at events. Whitcomb's, like many units, usually sets up a storage tent for hiding improper items but, if you choose not to use the supply tent, a blanket can hide a

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myriad of anachronisms.

Modern bedding conveniences also need to be hidden. While some participants don't have a problem sleeping on hay or the ground, sore backs, allergies, fear of bugs and worms, etc. can detract from the hobby's experiences and enjoyments. To alleviate those conditions, you will see modern items such as plastic ground covers, cots, air mattresses, sleeping bags, etc. in tents. Should you choose/need to use such things, be sure to cover them with something more period correct. And, be particularly careful about them sticking out from under the sides of the tent. Nothing spoils the period atmosphere quite like an orange sleeping bag with zippers hanging out of a tent.

Seating is a constant problem in camp. In the 18th century, a soldier carried everything that belonged to him as well as some of the items for his mess (the three to six men who lived and ate together). The supply wagons would be loaded with those things necessary to the operation of the army. With the possible rare exception in a garrison camp, chairs and benches for the soldiers would not have been seen—no soldier would have carried it very far and no quartermaster would have allowed it to take up precious space on a wagon. While concessions to comfort are made in our hobby, the British Brigade has gone so far as to ban “rendezvous” type seating from their camp including the two types illustrated below. Boxes, too,



would not appear around the camp—again, no soldier would have carried it very far and no quarter-master would have allowed government property boxes out of his control for very long. Look at paintings of period camps and you will see the soldiers sitting on the ground or, at best, on stumps or logs. In spite of the hobby's concessions, we should strive to minimize such intrusions.

The easiest way to maintain a proper camp is simply not to use any modern items but such is often very inconvenient or simply not possible. Mornings are the time when you will see the greatest number of intrusions—pillows, mattresses, modern clothes, egg cartons, bacon packages, juice containers, milk bottles, coffee jars, toothbrushes, hair brushes, &c., &c., &c.—and the remnants of the previous nights partying—bottles, cans, food wrappings, aspirin/Tylenol bottles, Alka-Seltzer packages, etc. It would be

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ideal not to need these items but, since we do use them, under no circumstances should they still be visible when the site opens to the public. It is everyone's responsibility to take care of any such intrusions which belong to them. If you happen to see something improper that nobody seems to be taking care of, either ask who it belongs to or take care of it yourself.

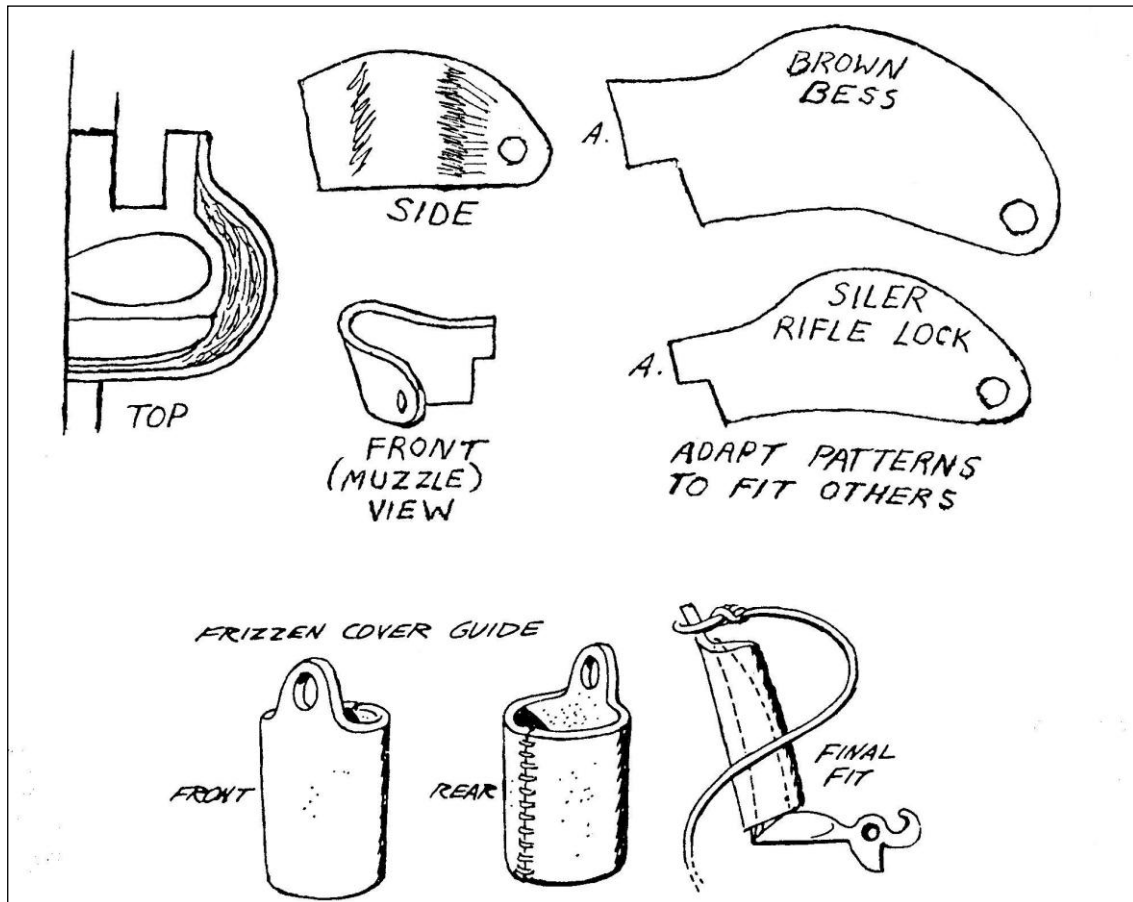
There are also a number of items you will often see around a camp that appear to be proper but, in reality, should not be used. Lantern stands (tall iron rods with a hook on the top to hang a lantern) have not been documented. In fact, lanterns probably did not appear that often in camp but, for convenience, they are used in our hobby. Another item is sets of iron rods in all sorts of combinations from which are hung pots, kettles, grills, and various other improper things for cooking. The quartermaster would not have let such things be put on the wagons when the men could have fashioned such stands, cross-pieces, hooks, etc. out of trees and, for the same reason, the men would not have carried them for very long. For the same reasons, the plethora of kettles, pans, jugs, buckets, and so on, would not, for the most part, have been around. The armies generally cooked and ate out of tin kettles—much lighter to carry (generally not allowed on the wagons). All those tables, chairs, benches, and even the ubiquitous dining flies seen at every event are also things that really should not be there but, for the sake of comfort—and due to ignorance—these items will continue to appear in most camps. We should try to minimize them in ours. The more authentic your clothing, equipment, and camp, the better you will feel about yourself and the better others in the hobby and the public will look upon you and Whitcomb's Rangers. Take pride in yourself and our unit.



IV. SAFETY.

Most of these rules are common sense. The hobby has an excellent safety record because of the attention paid to them. Most events will have similar rules and any violation may result in the expulsion from the event of the offending individual or even the entire unit. Make the following second-nature to you and don't be afraid to point out violations should you see one.

- 1) All firearms must have frizzen covers and flash guards (refer to drawing below).



- 2) Treat every firearm as if it is loaded. Test by pinging the ramrod on the bottom of the barrel.
- 3) Handle firearms in a safe manner when loaded.
- 4) All loading must be done from prepared paper cartridges. Aluminum foil, coin wrappers, staples, etc. are NOT to be used. Store cartridges and extra flints in separate pouches.

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- 5) Number of grains in cartridges should not exceed 1.5 (one-and-one-half) times the diameter of the bore. For example, cartridges for a .75-caliber firelock should not exceed $.75 \times 1.5 = 112.5$ grains.
- 6) Unload firearm when not in use. Ask permission of your officer to clear.
- 7) Always be sure where you are shooting and do not aim directly at a person.
- 8) Never climb or jump fences or other obstructions with a loaded or cocked weapon.
- 9) Use only black powder. Under no circumstances should any other powder be used (especially smokeless).
- 10) When loading, always keep the muzzle pointing away from your or any other person's face.
- 11) Ramrods and wadding will only be used when commanded to do so. Never use a ramrod on the field of battle.
- 12) No smoking when black powder is exposed.
- 13) All edged weapons must be sheathed so the blade is covered and secured so that they cannot be accidentally drawn by anyone other than the user.
- 14) No bayonets to be fixed unless ordered by your commander. No running with fixed bayonets.
- 15) When charging an enemy who does not give way, stop. Do not press him. Also, when charged by an enemy, give way.
- 16) Do not strike or fire at an enemy who is too close—fall dead or retreat.
- 17) When killed or wounded during a battle, lie still or crawl away from the action. Do not rise, fire, or strike out at anyone once you have fallen. Wait for the command to reassemble.
- 18) Never attempt to charge an artillery piece.
- 19) No hand-to-hand combat unless planned in advance with your opponent and your officers. If you are not a planned participant, do not join in.
- 20) Do not consume alcoholic beverages during the day. Keep them for evening festivities.
- 21) Listen to your officers and the more experienced members—do as they tell you.
- 22) At NO time will any member of the public be allowed to fire a weapon and at no time will live ammunition to be carried.

Following is the firelock inspection checklist used by the Continental Line. It includes checks that you can expect to encounter at every event you attend whether sponsored by the Line or not and it is the responsibility of each participant to make sure that their weapon meets these standards before going out on the field. To preclude any problems during the main inspection when formed with the other units, Whitcomb's will conduct an inspection in camp and any firelock found not to meet these standards—either during the unit or main formation inspections—will not be allowed to participate. So, save yourself and the unit some embarrassment and make sure you meet these standards. Before the inspection, the weapon is to be confirmed to be unloaded by springing the rammer.

The Stock:

1. No cracks or splits.
2. Butt plate, trigger guard, etc., fit tightly with no burrs that would snag clothing or hands.
3. If pin-fastened barrel, no missing pins, & tight.

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4. If band-fastened barrel, springs work smoothly & not bound by wood.
5. Two-piece stocks must have sections securely joined.
6. No splinters or rough edges.

The Lock:

1. The lock works smoothly.
2. All hammer positions are firm and solid.
3. The half-cock (safety) position works properly.
4. The trigger pull is proper, not a hair trigger nor too heavy.
5. Rifles with set triggers must be adjusted properly.
6. Locks must fit properly into the stock and snugly against the barrel.
7. Insure the leather or lead holds the flint securely in the lock jaws.
8. The pan is clean and in proper relation to the touch hole of the barrel.
9. All muskets must have a well fitting and tight metal flashguard.
10. The frizzen must not be deeply gouged. The frizzen must move properly against the frizzen spring and fits tightly against the pan.
11. Leather frizzen covers (hammer stalls) are highly recommended

The Barrel:

1. The flint is not striking the barrel.
2. The touchhole is clear with no signs of corrosion.
3. The ramrod is straight and fits properly.
4. The muzzle is not dented or worn.
5. Sights on rifles are not loose and are fitted as not to catch on clothing or hands.
6. Musket bayonet lug is securely welded and the bayonet fits easily and latches with a positive twist lock.

In an effort to minimize dangerous situations with cannons, the following signals are commonly used at most events.

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. 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.

Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke: Many events take place on hot and humid days. In camp, there is shade and participants generally do not need to be wearing all their clothing and equipment but. in

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formations or in the battles, all that extra gear adds to the chances of experiencing heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Because of that, everyone in this hobby should become familiar with the causes, symptoms, and methods for prevention.

Heat exhaustion occurs when fluids and salts in the body are lost through sweating and the body overheats. This is not life-threatening but, heat stroke definitely can be fatal. In this situation, the body's cooling system shuts down and the internal temperature rises high enough to cause damage to the brain and internal organs.

Symptoms of heat exhaustion include: pale and cool, moist skin; lots of sweating; complaining of cramps or pain; feeling faint or dizzy; maybe having a headache, feeling weak, or nauseous; high pulse rate; and thirsty (duh). Heat stroke exhibits markedly different symptoms which include: red, hot, and dry skin (don't be confused by previous sweating or water poured on earlier); possibly hyperventilating or dizzy; and possibly a dramatically abnormal mental state including confusion, hallucinations, or even coma. Should you see anyone exhibiting these symptoms or you, yourself, start to experience them, immediately let those around you and your officers know about it so that appropriate actions—including stopping any battle and calling for the ambulance—can be taken. At many events, there will be medical crews and an ambulance on hand. Beyond that, someone on the field at virtually every event will have some level of medical training ranging from basic first aid through emergency medical personnel to doctors. Be sure to call out for anyone with such skills.

There are a number of things everyone can do to help someone suffering from either condition until medical people arrive. For heat exhaustion, get the person to rest in a shaded area (cool, if possible); give them water or sports drinks (nothing with caffeine or alcohol in it) to begin to replace the lost fluids (many sports drinks will replace the salts that have been lost); remove their equipment and loosen the clothing; and apply water to their skin (don't use alcohol rubs). Immediate treatment for heat stroke is much the same but give the sufferer drinks only if they are in a normal mental state (that's often a challenge under normal conditions in this hobby) and can tolerate it—some sufferers will not be able to keep the fluids down vomiting them up almost immediately. In addition, should someone have ice packs or even a cold canteen, they can be put in the armpits or groin. At some events, campfollowers will be on or near the field with buckets of water with ice in them or spectators may have ice packs.

Prevention of both conditions is quite simple. In the days prior to the event, drink plenty of water—something most people, in or out of the hobby, do not do. Continue to drink water at the event especially if you drink much alcohol in the evenings (the booze takes water out of your system—that's one reason why you have to go pee a lot). On the field, have plenty of full canteens available and make use of them during the battle. In the case of Whitcomb's, we are often separated from one another by some distance so it's a good idea to have your own. Before you go out on the field, during lulls in the action, and at the end, be sure to drink even if you don't feel thirsty. As I mentioned earlier, you will often see campfollowers with buckets of water around the field. Don't be afraid to ask them if you could have a drink

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even if you don't know them. They are out there for the good of everyone, not just their unit. By the way, one way to judge if you have enough water in your system is to drink until you have to go to the bathroom a lot and your urine is clear or nearly so.

Lastly, get plenty of rest in the days before the event. Not only will this help minimize health problems but it also will allow you to have a more enjoyable time. Nighttime sleep is often rather limited at events for a number of reasons—not accustomed to sleeping on the ground or in the cold, snoring neighbors, and lots of partying to name a few—and being rested when you get there helps deal with it. After all, you probably didn't spend hours packing and driving to nap through much of the event.



"Hey! C'mon! Hold it! Hold it! ... Or someone's gonna get hurt!"

V. HISTORY.

Benjamin Whitcomb entered his world the second of sixteen children of Benjamin and Dorothy Whitcomb on July 2, 1737, in Lancaster (now Leominster), Massachusetts. The younger Benjamin's great-great-grandfather had come to America in 1629 and moved to Lancaster in 1654.

Whitcomb's introduction to war came during the Seven Years' War (a.k.a. French and Indian War) when he enlisted in a Massachusetts regiment. He went on General Johnson's expedition against Fort St. Frederick (later built as Crown Point by the English) and fought in the battle of Lake George in September, 1755. Whitcomb served in each of the years of the war culminating in the expedition against Montreal. Ultimately, he reached the rank of captain and had his own company.

After the Montreal expedition, some men returned home over the Crown Point Road to Fort Number 4 at Charlestown, New Hampshire, and then on to Massachusetts. Vermont must have impressed Whitcomb for in 1761 he became one of the original grantees of Cavendish, Vermont, a town located along the route of the Crown Point Road. He apparently never lived in Cavendish but by 1764, he had moved to Westmoreland, New Hampshire, where he met and married Lydia Howe in 1769. By 1771 they had sold several acres and a mill in Westmoreland and moved to Putney, Vermont. The next year, Guildhall, Vermont, along the upper reaches of the Connecticut River, offered a bounty of 100 acres to anyone settling and improving it. Whitcomb and his family took advantage of the offer and moved there. Soon after, the residents of Gloucester County elected Benjamin Whitcomb as a Justice of the Peace.

Because of the character of frontier life and the distances between northern Vermont and the more settled areas, the effects of the growing disagreements with England took considerable time to reach the upper Connecticut River valley. Even with the outbreak of armed conflict in the spring of 1775, Guildhall felt little impact. Then, in the winter of 1775, Generals Montgomery and Arnold took the war to Canada and, on January 20, 1776, the New Hampshire House of Representatives voted "to raise one regiment of foldiers forthwith" in addition to the three regiments already in service. Timothy Bedel commanded the regiment which became known as Bedel's Rangers and Orford, New Hampshire, about fifty miles south of Guildhall, served as its headquarters.

Benjamin Whitcomb enlisted as a 2^d Lieutenant in Captain Samuel Young's company of Bedel's Rangers on January 22, 1776. The duties of enlisting new men fell to Whitcomb and in March, when the regiment left to join the Continental Army in Canada, he remained in Orford. Two months later, the 38-year-old lieutenant left Orford with his recruits to join the company. By then, the campaign had

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collapsed and Whitcomb and his recruits met up with Young's company on the retreat. Bedel's Regiment reported in at Crown Point on July 18, with Whitcomb as a 1st lieutenant.

Because of Whitcomb's knowledge of the Champlain Valley gained during the French and Indian War, the American commanders employed him as a ranger and scout between Fort Ti and the enemy positions around St. John's and Montreal, one hundred miles away. On one of his missions, Whitcomb became involved in one of the most notorious events of the war and one that served to make his name famous. He had set out with two other men but one became ill and returned to Fort Ti and the other deserted. In spite of being alone, Whitcomb stationed himself alongside the road between Saint John's and La Prairie in order to observe the traffic. On July 24, a British field officer came riding down the road. The lieutenant took aim and fired. Because of the smoke and leaves he could not tell how severely he had wounded the officer, only that he had hit him. The officer rode the short distance to St. John's and a party immediately set out in pursuit of Whitcomb. Knowing the sound of the shot would attract attention, the scout remained in the hollow of a blown over tree until the pursuit party had rushed past. He then slipped down the bank to a stream and disappeared into the woods. Not until he returned to Fort Ti in early August did the lieutenant learn the full story of his shooting.

Whitcomb had fired upon the commander of the British First Brigade, Brigadier General Patrick Gordon. Two days after the shooting, General Phillips issued the following general orders:

The Rebel Runaways not having dared shew their Faces as Soldiers, have now taken the part of the vilest Affairins, and are lurking in small parties to Murder, if possible, any single or unarmed officer, or foldier, who may be passing the Roads near a Wood 'de.

B.G. Gordon was dangerously wounded yesterday by one of these infamous Skulkers. Precautions are taken to get Intelligence of other parties. In order to be expeditious in the pursuit, a Serjeant's Guard, which is quite sufficient to quell such an Enemy, is to be ready, distinct from the Picquet, in every Contonment. This Guard is not to take off its Accoutrements or Shoes in the Night, but is at all times to be prepared to turn out upon the Infant.

The Person who commands the Party which attack'd B.G. Gordon is Witcomb of Connecticut Colony, calling himself Lieutenant. He is between 30 & 40 years of Age, to appearance near 6 feet High, rather thin than otherwise, Light Brown Hair tied behind, rough faced, not sure whether owing to the small Pox or not. He wears a kind of under Jacket, without Sleeves, flash Pockets, leather Breeches, grey woolen or yarn Stockings, and shews, Hat flopped, with a Gold Cord round it. He had a firelock, Blanket, Pouch, and Powder Horn.

Should he, or any of his party, or any other party of the same Nature come within reach of our Men, it is hoped they will not honor them with a Soldier's Death, if they can possibly avoid it, but reserve them for a due punishment, which can only be inflicted by the Hangman.

Apparently, the man with Whitcomb who deserted gave the British a description of the lieutenant. It is also interesting to note that the orders applied not just to Whitcomb but to "any of his party." These orders

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would remain in effect throughout the war.

General Gordon died on the 1st of August. Subsequently, General Carleton issued a reward of 50 guineas (£52/10s) for Benjamin Whitcomb, alive or dead (a private in both the American and British armies earned about £45/7s a year). The British said shooting officers as Whitcomb had done violated the rules of war and they demanded that he be turned over. Although some American officers tended to agree with the British, the Americans said that as long as the British used Indians to terrorize the countryside, they had to expect retaliation.

The threat of British vengeance had little or no effect on Whitcomb. On August 19th, he received orders from General Gates for another scouting mission and Whitcomb with his small party set out on the 20th. In spite of bad weather, two men turning back, and being stricken with the ague (malaria), Whitcomb and another man, Jonathan Wright, continued with the mission. On September 13, Whitcomb positioned himself in the same area where he had shot General Gordon. Shortly, two British soldiers came along and Whitcomb captured them. One of the men was a corporal and the other was Alexander Saunders, the quartermaster of the 29th Regiment, the same regiment that Gordon belonged to. On the return to Ti, the two men did not dare make any attempt to escape for fear of getting lost in the wilderness. The party arrived at Fort Ti on the 22nd.

There is some evidence that anyone capturing a British officer would receive a major's commission. However, the original document does not seem to be an official order and may have been written as a joke or by an historian attempting to build up the story. True or not, as a result of Whitcomb's prowess as a ranger and scout, General Gates recommended to Congress on September 30 that he be given command of a corps of rangers. On October 15, 1776, Congress, adopted the following resolution:

That two independent Companies conf'ing of fifty Men each, be immediately raised to be commanded by Lieutenant Whitcomb, who should be appointed Captain Commandant—that he nominate the Officers of the said two Companies who are to be appointed, when approved of by the Commanding Officer in the Northern Department.

Captain Whitcomb chose Captain George Aldrich to command the other company and they set about recruiting the men. Although the two companies never reached full strength, they were officially designated for service at Fort Ti on November 27, 1776.

The two officers spent much of the winter of 1776-1777 enlisting their men. Aldrich went to recruit in the Connecticut River valley in January while Whitcomb remained at Mount Independence. With the coming of spring and the melting of the snow and ice, Benjamin Whitcomb's Independent Corps of Rangers began doing their job in earnest. Several times, Whitcomb and his Rangers, with other companies attached to them, went out in pursuit of Indian and Loyalist scouting and raiding parties. The Rangers built a reputation for their skill at scouting and raiding as shown in a letter to General Gates on May 16, 1777: "Whitcomb was detached on the 14th Inst. with a party of 150 Men in quest of McCalpins and will I Fancy spare no pains to Fall in with them." In an earlier letter, General Gates had said that if the

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Tory inhabitants of Tryon County give any trouble he would send Whitcomb with 100 men to “whip them into obedience.”

Although Whitcomb’s Rangers did operate in large groups, their primary function required going out in small groups of from two to twenty. Many times, only two or three men would go on a mission. Even the British in Canada knew the scouting parties tended to be small as evidenced by a report from Christopher Carleton to Governor-General Haldimand telling him “that Whitcomb had 44 fingle men on different parts of the Lake as scouts.” The reason for such small parties stemmed from their maneuverability and secrecy. Furthermore, considering that the scouts often traveled an extensive portion of the distance on open water, a single canoe could easily slip by enemy scouts and positions.

Having to travel so far prohibited the Rangers from carrying all the necessary supplies with them on each mission. They addressed this problem in a couple of ways. For one, they would send a small party with pack horses into Canada to store supplies in a secret place, often Chambly Mountain. Another major source of assistance for the Rangers came from the Captain of the St. Charles, Quebec, militia—troops supposedly loyal to the British Crown. On several occasions, this officer or some of his men aided the Rangers even though the town served as the base for some of the German troops stationed in Canada.

In July of 1777, the British forced the Americans to abandon the Fort Ti/Mount Independence complex. Whitcomb’s Rangers retreated with the army—with the exception of Sergeant Abel Rice who returned from a scout to find the British flag flying over Fort Ti—and at least some of them took part in the battles at Hubbardton and Bennington. Once the army established positions north of Albany, the Rangers—with Abel Rice who had found his way back to his company—began their work again. In spite of having thousands of men to choose from, Gates chose Whitcomb’s Rangers to do much of the scouting. There is a report that Whitcomb, himself, first saw the British army as it approached the positions along Bemis Heights. When Burgoyne came up against the American positions at Freeman’s Farm on September 19, some of Whitcomb’s Rangers served with Dearborne’s Light Infantry Battalion and fought in the first battle of Saratoga. Other Rangers accompanied Colonel Brown on his raid on the British and German positions around the Ti/Mount Independence complex.

After the first battle at Saratoga, the Rangers moved to the east side of the Hudson with the assignment to keep watch on Burgoyne’s left flank until General Stark could move into position to cut off the British retreat route to the north. After the surrender of Burgoyne, the Rangers took up positions in and around Saratoga.

On November 15, General Gates in Albany gave Whitcomb a message to deliver to Colonel Bedel in Haverhill, New Hampshire. It said, in part:

I am defirous you should without delay engage a Regiment of Volunteers, confisting of 500 men Officers included to be commanded yourself as Colonel Mr. John Wheelock as Lieut. Colo. & the Bearor Capt. Whitcomb as Major.

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This force was to be part of an expedition against Canada with La Fayette as commander. However, because of political squabbling between Congress and the army, the plan fell apart by spring of 1778.

No longer needed for the Canadian incursion, the Rangers moved to Rutland, Vermont, along the frontier between the United States and Canada. Once warmer weather arrived, the Rangers commandeered a sawmill and set about building barracks and a stockade fort. This came to be called Fort Ranger and served as the headquarters for Vermont troops during the time of the Republic of Vermont. Being the senior Continental Army officer in the area, Whitcomb functioned as the overall commander. In addition to his own men, he had several companies of militia, another company of Continental rangers under Thomas Lee, and a portion of Seth Warner's Regiment—the only other Continental troops in Vermont—a total of around 500 men and a formidable enough force for British intelligence to keep a regular watch on the post.

The duty of the Rangers did not change while at Rutland—they continued to scout and spy on the British in Canada. In a letter to General Washington on September 15, General Stark wrote: “The enemy at the Northward have given us no trouble as yet. Major Whitcomb is daily watching their Motions, and often bringing in their Sailors—Four came in the other day”

The British knew that Whitcomb had been involved with the planned invasion of Canada the previous winter and still had concerns of just such an action. In an attempt to discourage, or at least forestall, an invasion, Major Christopher Carleton, the nephew of the former Governor-General of Canada, Guy Carleton, received orders for a secret expedition up Lake Champlain to burn sources of supplies and mills on both sides of the Lake. In late October, 1778, a force of around 400 specially-trained regulars, Loyalists, Indians, and a few Germans set out. Carleton soon reported canoes going back and forth across the Lake in front of him. Some of these canoes probably had Whitcomb's men paddling them. Shortly after setting out, Carleton received a report that the expedition “. . . had been expected for weeks before at Rutland, that Whitcomb's post was augmented to five hundred men.” It is likely that Whitcomb and his men had discovered the plan during their missions behind British lines.

On a report of a large supply of grain being stored at Moore's Mill in Bridport, Major Carleton sent 60 men to burn it. The party never reached the mill for they encountered a force within a house and a sharp skirmish ensued. Precisely who barricaded themselves in the house is not known but surely some of the men came from Whitcomb's Rangers. The raiding party reported only one wounded and that they heard several cries from the house and assumed that they had wounded many of the defenders. However, the raiders withdrew and the question arises as to why they would retreat after defeating the enemy and being within a few hundred yards of their objective. Muster rolls for the Rangers report no casualties on that date, November 6, but subsequent deaths may have been as a result of wounds suffered in the action.

Whitcomb and his Rangers remained in Rutland through the fall of 1778 and into the following winter. Early in 1779, he received orders to collect his scattered corps and report to Bedel in Haverhill,

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New Hampshire—an area known as Co'os and considered the frontier because of its proximity to Canada. In April, Moses Hazen's regiment relieved Bedel who, with the help of Whitcomb and his men, continued the construction of a road to Canada which had been begun in 1776 by General Jacob Bayley. This became known as the Bayley-Hazen Military Road and featured prominently in the post-war history of the region.

Along with working on the road, Whitcomb's Rangers continued their scouting missions into Canada. On many occasions, the men would be "dressed like Indians" or "in the Canadian manner." With continued work on the road and the scouting of Whitcomb's Rangers, the British still thought an invasion of Canada would be attempted and they kept a close watch on Whitcomb's movements. On one occasion, Governor-General Haldimand received a report that Whitcomb was leading 600 men into Canada by way of Mississquoi Bay. In fact, the Americans continued to consider an invasion but took no action.

In September, 1779, Hazen's regiment joined the main body of the army and the Co-os region came under the protection of Whitcomb's Rangers, accompanied by some New Hampshire troops. By the end of October, Whitcomb and the 200 men under his command had occupied the blockhouses which had been built every ten miles along the still unfinished military road. Along with guarding the area, they continued their scouts into Canada.

Although a small unit, many people knew of Benjamin Whitcomb and his Rangers. The list of those familiar with the unit included George Washington. In late November, Whitcomb went to Morristown, New Jersey and met with General Washington. He returned on December 11, carrying with him orders for Bedel to appear before a court of inquiry concerning charges of mal-conduct in the handling of the quartermaster's and commissary departments while at Haverhill. Whether or not Whitcomb had been a factor in bringing those charges is not known.

Through casualties, desertions, and enlistments running out, Whitcomb's already understrength companies found themselves well depleted by 1780. On January 18, he sent a formal memorial to Washington asking him to ask New Hampshire to fill his companies. Soon after, the New Hampshire General Assembly resolved:

That those foldiers that will enlist into Major Whitcomb's Corps of Rangers during the war, shall be entitled to and receive the same pay, cloathing depreciation and other emoluments as other foldiers in the Continental Army.

In addition, New Hampshire voted on June 22 to raise 120 men to be sent to the Western frontier under Whitcomb's command. These men enlisted for six months and came from the various militia regiments around the state. One company reinforced Haverhill and the other went to garrison the fort at Northumberland, also called Upper Co-os. These additional troops freed the Rangers for more scouting into Canada and across Vermont to the Onion River and Lake Champlain. Their presence also worsened the supply situation and on August 28 Whitcomb wrote another of his many requests for supplies which received some response but, like every response, did not include everything he wanted.

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Throughout the war, the reward offered by Carleton in 1776 for the capture of Whitcomb remained on his head. During September and October of 1780, the British conducted a series of raids out of Canada into the Hudson and Mohawk River valleys and along Lake George and the Champlain valley with the objective of destroying sources of supply. Claiming the reward may have been a partial motivation for one of these raids into Vermont. A Tory named Hamilton had told the British he knew the location of Whitcomb and offered to guide a party to the Connecticut River. The British accepted the offer and a party of 2-300 men, mostly Indians, set out under the command of a Canadian officer named Joseph Marie LaMotte and a British lieutenant of the Indian Department named Richard Houghton. When they reached the Montpelier area, captives told them that Whitcomb had 500 men at Co-os and Newbury, Vermont. The raiders decided that they had insufficient numbers to succeed in their original plan and they turned south to raid the White River valleys inflicting considerable damage on Chelsea, Tunbridge, and Royalton. They burned much of the region, killed a number of inhabitants, and took others prisoner (including a member of the Rangers) before turning back to Canada. While Whitcomb probably did not have 500 men with him, New Hampshire had reinforced the troops in Co-os that summer and they had been busy building defensive positions. The raiders' choice to avoid the region probably proved to be the best one for them but certainly not for the inhabitants of the White River valleys.

In January, 1781, as part of an army-wide reorganization, Congress sent orders for Whitcomb to send his non-commissioned officers and privates to join the Continental Army at Peekskill, New York and for the officers to retire. Not wanting to disband—or to become part of the regular army—thirty of Whitcomb's Rangers sent a memorial to Washington asking that he "direct that they are still to be continued an Independent Corps of Rangers for the defense of the Frontier aforesaid." The answer came on March 12. Washington rejected the request and repeated the original orders. This time the Rangers complied and most became part of the light infantry companies of the New Hampshire Line.

Now a civilian, Whitcomb had more freedom to do as he wished. The war in North America had all but ended by 1781 and, although some small raids out of Canada still would come, the British threat to New England had become almost non-existent. At the outbreak of the war, Whitcomb had taken his family back to Westmoreland knowing that northern New Hampshire could turn into a trouble spot. He now brought them back to Co-os to settle down.

Even though officially out of the war, the price on Whitcomb's head remained in effect. In early May an Abenaki chief named Joseph Louis Gill left St. Francis with ten Indians with the goal of capturing Whitcomb and claiming the reward. On May 15 they surprised Whitcomb and Abel Learned near Peacham and captured them. In order to prevent their escape when night came, the Indians tied Whitcomb and Learned to one of the party. The last night before they were to reach St. Francis, Whitcomb found himself tied to Gill. During the night, he managed to free himself, take a canoe that had a gun in it, and destroy the others to prevent pursuit.

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When morning came and the Indian's discovered Whitcomb's escape, Gill forbade the others from going after him and said that God meant Whitcomb to live. When the party reached St. Francis the Indians with Gill charged him with becoming frightened of Whitcomb's threats to burn his house and village and let him escape. Although the British never pursued the matter, they no longer used Gill as a scout. There is evidence that Gill and Whitcomb had known each other before the war and even a story that Whitcomb had saved Gill from dying of exposure one winter. There is also evidence that Gill actually worked for the Americans. Whatever truly happened, Whitcomb had survived another nearly fatal incident.

British intelligence sources constantly maintained a watch on Whitcomb. Soon after his capture and escape, a spy reported that he knew of:

... no intentions in that quarter against this Province [Quebec] except a motion made by Mr. W. to the People of New Hampshire recommending a party to be detached against St. Francis.

Whitcomb had no such plans and spent the rest of the year getting settled and hunting.

Whether for revenge, thirst for action, or support for Gill's story that Whitcomb had threatened to burn his village, Whitcomb did reportedly plan another attack on St. Francis in May of 1782. This information came from a prisoner who told the British that Whitcomb planned to capture Gill and burn at least his house if not the whole village. The raid, like so many others reported by the intelligence network, never materialized. The reports, whether based on fact or not, did serve to keep Whitcomb's whereabouts a priority on British spy reports. Even Riedesel himself, the commander of the German forces, wrote to Governor-General Haldimand in September of 1782 requesting information on Whitcomb's movements.

Whitcomb had gained some political experience as a grantee of a town before the war when he had been involved with the formation of Cavendish, Vermont. He continued that practice of petitioning for the formation of towns in various areas of Vermont. In all, Whitcomb's name appears on over a dozen such petitions. One of these areas was along a section of the Bayley-Hazen road and was signed by the men in the Rangers and Hazen's regiment. No action was taken on any of the petitions.

Although ultimately unsuccessful in his attempts at acquiring land grants in Vermont, by the fall of 1782 Whitcomb had bought land in Lisbon, New Hampshire where he built the first frame house in 1785. He became one of the town's most prominent figures and at one time or another held most public offices. He continued his quest for land but on a smaller scale and dealt in real estate in the Lisbon area.

According to a contemporary officer, Whitcomb was:

a presumptuous fellow, entirely devoid of fear, of more than common strength, equal to an Indian for enduring hardship or privation, drank to excess even when in the greatest peril, balls whistling around his head.

A story of the Lisbon area tells of how an Indian appeared in town one day asking questions about Whitcomb. Some neighbors told Whitcomb of this but he did not seem worried. Shortly after hearing the news, Whitcomb took his gun and went hunting. Townspeople reported hearing a single shot later that day.

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Soon, Whitcomb returned empty-handed—a rare sight as he excelled at hunting. Time passed and the people of Lisbon forgot the Indian and the hunting incident until one day some boys made a terrifying discovery while playing in a cave. On the floor of the cave they found the skeleton of a man. The bones still had the remnants of clothing on it—that of an Indian.

Benjamin Whitcomb applied for a pension in 1818 and received \$240 a year. At the time of his application, he had property valued at only \$49.74. In order to get a higher pension, he may have given most of his possessions to his six children. Eventually, all the Whitcomb children except Ruth moved away. She remained in Lisbon to care for her parents.

Major Benjamin Whitcomb died on July 22, 1828, at the age of 91. He was buried in the Salmon Hole Cemetery in Lisbon next to his wife, who had died in 1823, and with some of his war-time comrades.

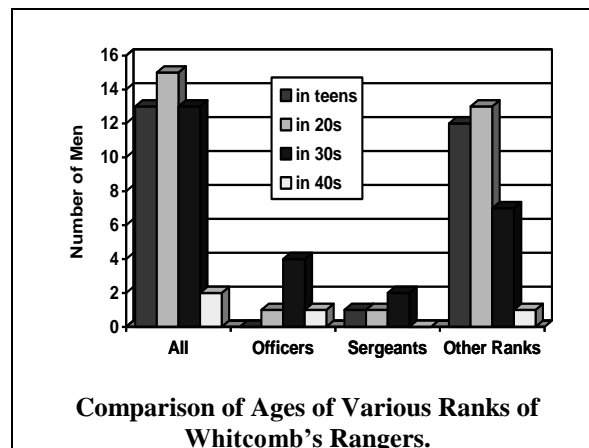
OF WHAT AGE

Traveling long distances with minimal provisions to scout behind enemy lines required considerable stamina—a characteristic present in the young. The table below presents a summary of the ages at the time of enlistment of the men of Whitcomb’s Rangers for whom that information is known—a total of forty-three men.

Table 1.—Age of Whitcomb’s Rangers at the Time of Enlistment
[Number of men in that age range (% of column)]

	All	Officers	Sergeants	Other Ranks
in 40s	2 (4.7)	1 (16.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.0)
in 30s	13 (30.2)	4 (66.7)	2 (50.0)	7 (21.2)
in 20s	15 (34.9)	1 (16.7)	1 (25.0)	13 (39.4)
in teens	13 (30.2)	0 (0.0)	1 (25.0)	12 (36.4)
average age	26.2	35.7	27.5	24.3

Arranging the information in the above table in a chart (presented on the bottom of the page) clearly shows that the officers and sergeants came from the older members of the unit, particularly those in their 30s. If Nathan Taylor, the youngest officer at 22, had not been an officer, the average age of that group would have been 38.4 making the age difference between officers and men even more distinctive. The great majority of the men in the lower ranks were in their teens and 20s. Look through the list of the men in the list at the end of this section and you might be surprised at the number of Rangers in their mid-teens (How many



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of today's 15- or 16-year-olds would you expect to volunteer for the army based on their belief in the idea of independence?).

As with the officers, the sergeants' average age (27.5) proved to have been higher than that of the lower ranks. Sergeants tended to be younger than the officers, however. Four of the men whose ages are known enlisted as sergeants but three others received promotions to that rank during their service—John Hodgdon when he was 36, Urijah Temple at 22, and Manassah Sawyer when he was only 18. Even with the younger sergeants included, the average age of that rank remained considerably higher than that of the other enlisted men.

The vast majority of the enlisted men fell into the teens and 20s. With an average age of 24.3, the bulk of the unit was much younger than the officers and sergeants. The youth of that group becomes even more apparent by removing the eldest private, Samuel Fifield (45), from the calculations. His removal alone results in a drop in the average age to 23.6. Removal from the mix of the next two eldest men, Samuel Stevens at 39 and John Martin at 38, dramatically lowered the average age another year to 22.6. The removal of only these three men from the mix lowered the average age by nearly two years. With the exception of the officers and a few enlisted men, Whitcomb had a youthful group of Rangers under his command—a condition which the re-created Rangers has never equaled and probably never will.

TOWNS BELONGED TO

Where were the families and farms of Whitcomb's Rangers? Only three of Whitcomb's men enlisted for towns outside of either New Hampshire or the Grants. The other three came from Massachusetts and even they had family or property connections with Vermont or New Hampshire. Many of the Rangers must have known each other before the war as a plotting of home towns on a map shows distinct groupings. For example, in southeastern New Hampshire, two men came from Durham and three others came from less than ten miles away. Similarly, five men came from Boscawen and Canterbury, towns just across the Merrimack River from each other. Three more of the Rangers came from Sanbornton and Northfield less than ten miles north of Canterbury. Four more came from towns on the north end of Lake Winnepesaukee—Meredith, Sandwich, and Moultonborough—just a few miles above Sanbornton.

Several Rangers came from the string of villages along the frontier of the upper Connecticut River. Three men lived in Stratford, four had residences in Northumberland about five miles to the south, and one lived in Lancaster just a mile or two further south making for a total of eight from that area. Just a short trip further down the river, six men had homes in Haverhill and one lived in Piermont, the next town below. This small, compact string of frontier villages provided nearly as many men as did the larger, more developed region of southeastern New Hampshire.

Two other concentrations of homes of members of Whitcomb's Rangers strongly indicated familiarity with one another. Guilford, in southeastern Vermont, provided eight men, many of whom enlisted on 17 February 1777. Just a few miles east of Guilford, the greatest concentration of Rangers centered on Westmoreland, in southwestern New Hampshire—fifteen Rangers claimed that town as their

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home. Whitcomb had lived there for some years and Captain Aldrich came from Westmoreland, a fact that may explain why nearly all the men in his company claimed that town as home.

Men came from other towns, as well, including two from Swanzey, some miles south of Westmoreland. Other towns within a few miles of Westmoreland and represented in the unit included Charlestown, Cheshire, and Gilsum. In Vermont, Cavendish and Moretown stood as the only towns for several miles around that had men in the Rangers. Three Rangers came from Massachusetts—two from Shutesbury in the central part of the state and the third came from Westford, northwest of Boston. It is ironic—for lack of a better term—that the members of the re-created Whitcomb’s Rangers come from a very similar geographical spread except for the addition of members from New York, a state from which none of the original Rangers came from.

TOWNS WENT FOR

Each soldier had to declare which town he was signing on for when he enlisted and soldiers often lived in one town but enlisted for another. Each had his own reason but it is likely that considerable incentive for many soldiers to enlist for another town originated in the possibility that the town they went for offered a greater bounty than did their home town. This may have been the incentive for all except two of the Vermonters in Whitcomb’s Rangers to enlist for New Hampshire towns. Comparison of home towns with towns went for shows how the numbers of men who claimed Vermont towns as their homes decreased while the numbers of men who enlisted for New Hampshire towns increased. Vermont towns simply could not afford the bounties that other towns paid. Only two men signed on for Vermont towns and two enlisted for Massachusetts—Samuel Clark enlisted for Walpole, New Hampshire. The rest enlisted for New Hampshire towns and the concentration of men for Westmoreland changed from fifteen to eighteen—nearly a third of those for whom “town went for” is known!

The concentration of Rangers living in proximity to each other reinforces the supposition that many Rangers knew each other before the war. Because Whitcomb’s Rangers often operated in small groups far behind enemy lines, trust in their partners held a great deal of value. Early in the war, Whitcomb had been betrayed when one of his companions deserted him within a few miles of Montreal. He did not want to see the same happen to the men under his command. Taking only men known to a member of the unit provided a quick way to gather a trustworthy group of men and that appears to be what Benjamin Whitcomb did. Not only had he lived in Westmoreland (the source for a third of his men) before the war, he had also lived in the Co-os region where several other Rangers came from. It would seem familiarity may have been a strong consideration in recruiting Whitcomb’s Rangers.

OF SOME HAPPENINGS

Our hobby attempts to re-create daily life of the Revolutionary War period. However, more than two centuries separate us from the times and most readily accessible history concentrates on notable events and known people with the result that we tend to lose contact with the common person who lived

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through those times. It is when we read diaries, journals, letters, etc. written by these people that we begin to see that they were not very different from us. They experienced the same emotions as we do; the only difference being the technology around them. The following few paragraphs tell of some incidents in the lives of some of the original Whitcomb's Rangers. Most were found in the individual's pension application files. Hopefully, these true stories will help bring more of a sense of identification with these people.

Manasseh Sawyer and his wife lived with the family of one of their daughters in the later years of life. Luckily for us, one of Manasseh's granddaughters took the time to write down her reminiscences of the stories told by her grandfather and his friends—unidentified former Rangers. She remembered Manasseh and his friends talking about being so tired that they would sleep on the ground during a storm covered in only a blanket, if they had one. Her grandfather had told her about once waking up with water running over his legs.

Manasseh also talked about being on a particular scout near a British camp. Developing a thirst, he went to drink at a spring near the edge of the woods. While drinking, he heard the report of a firelock and a ball hit the bank near him. Spotting the British assailant behind the fork of a tree at some distance, Manasseh calmly finished his drink and started to walk back to the cover of the woods. By this time, the sharpshooter had reloaded and he fired again, the ball hitting the grass near Manasseh's feet. Unperturbed, Manasseh "spanked my back -fides at him."

The Rangers often took volunteers or four-month men with them on their patrols. Many of these men did not know the ways of war but certainly knew how to take the warmest places by the fire. One night on a patrol during the winter, after the men had set camp, they heard slight sounds of breaking twigs and the pickets reported hearing quiet foot steps. The veterans told the new men that the sounds might be made by Indians prowling about to get a shot at those they could see best—those by the firelight. The seats by the fire soon became vacant. After a period of watchfulness, the veterans, with apparent recklessness, took the seats by the fire. No one heard any more sounds. In truth, the sounds had been made by some old soldiers sneaking out of camp and making the noise. The pickets, of course, had full knowledge of the trick and added to the ruse.

On another occasion, Manasseh and a group of Rangers had set camp in the woods. Although in the winter, there had been a thaw followed by a freeze which had resulted in a crust on top of the snow. Around mid-night, the sound of the crust being broken by many snowshoes aroused the group and they prepared for a bloody fight against a large number of Indians. Eventually, the sound began to move off accompanied by a whistling snort. What had sounded like a large number of Indians turned out to be a herd of Moose moving along the trail.

The Rangers regularly encountered Indians on their missions. Jonathan Sanders, one of the serjeants, had a harrowing experience that he recounted in his support of John Martin's pension application:

I remember that a short time before Genl. Burgoyne was taken Genl. Gates sent me to go and find out the Situation of the enemy and Said I might take one man with me any man I

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Chos and I took said John Martin with me and made the Discovery the Genl wanted but the Indians Discovered us but we Discovered them first and run in the Wood, till we came to a steep ledge and we Jumped Down the ledge and hid under a Rock and the Indians Could not find us and we made a safe return to Genl Gates.

It is interesting to note that General Gates had thousands of men to choose from in the American army blocking Burgoyne's advance. Not only did he choose men from Whitcomb's Rangers but he allowed Sanders to choose whomever he wanted to go with him—a strong statement of confidence in the abilities of Whitcomb's men.

As more of these stories come to light in the on-going research, they will be published in the *Morning Report*. Take the time to read them and tell them to both other re-enactors and the public. They bring life to the past.

CONCLUSION

During the Revolution, many people—including General Washington—knew of Benjamin Whitcomb and his Rangers. History subsequently forgot about them—until recently, that is. The re-created Whitcomb's Rangers have begun to bring them back to life in a small way. Further, other historians are beginning to discover Whitcomb and his men on their own. Most notably, Richard Ketchum utilized several primary sources relating to them in his book *Saratoga*. Not only did he paraphrase the British description of Whitcomb included in the orders following the shooting of Patrick Gordon, but he combined those orders with other information to write the following:

. . . He [Whitcomb] and others like him were progenitors of a new breed of American known as the Long Hunters for the length of their stays in the wilderness: loners, with the unmistakable mark of the frontier forever on them, they were always on the move, insistent on their own way of life, which might be described as total, unfettered freedom. They endured hardship and disease, prolonged periods without food, and encounters with Indians and wild animals, and even in a strange country-side their instincts were such that they were seldom lost.

Although, from our perspective buried deep within details of the rich history of Whitcomb's Rangers, Mr. Ketchum's description may seem a bit melodramatic, it nonetheless does make the point that Whitcomb and his Rangers were something of a breed unto themselves. It was that distinctiveness that made them remarkable in their day.

If you ask a member of most organizations within the re-enactment hobby about the history of the unit he/she represents, you will be lucky to receive much information. If you get any answer at all, it is usually a suggestion to go talk with another member of the unit who happens to have done some reading about the unit. In contrast, the re-created Whitcomb's Rangers are encouraged to go beyond the above sketch and read some of the other materials concerning the original Whitcomb's Rangers. In this manner, it is hoped that each member of Whitcomb's Rangers will be able to answer questions about who the original Rangers were, what they did, and where they performed their duty. Further, that reading should give members some grounds on which to take considerable pride in the history of the original unit. The original Rangers deserve it.

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DETAILS ON THE MEN OF BENJAMIN WHITCOMB'S INDEPENDENT CORPS OF RANGERS

Note 1: Includes the men of Captain Thomas Lee's company.

Note 2: Includes only those men who enlisted for one year or more.

NAME [(A) = Aldrich's Company; (L) = Lee's Company; Others = Whitcomb's Company]	RANK	ENLISTED (for duration unless noted otherwise)	TOWN FROM (NH unless noted otherwise)	TOWN "WENT FOR" (NH unless noted otherwise)	BORN— AGE AT ENLIST- MENT	OCCU- PATION	REMARKS ("in room of" = hired as a substitute by the man named)
Agaton, Samuel	Priv	2-1-1777	Boscawen	Boscawen			deserted 7-10-1777
Akeley, Francis (A)	Priv	2-17-1777	Guilford, VT	Westmoreland	?-?- 1750—27	farmer & laborer	
Aldrich, George (A)	Capt	11-4-1776	Westmoreland		3-11-1738—38		
Andrus, Benjamin (L)	Priv	12-21-1776 for 3 years	Pittsford, VT		?-?- 1740—36		
Barkley, Robert (A)	Priv	4-7-1777	Haverhill	Haverhill	4-15-1756—20		discharged 11-12- 1780
Barlow, Abner	Priv	12-30-1776	Stratford	Stratford	4-?-1757—19	farmer	prisoner 10-15- 1780
Barr, Alexander (L)	Priv	12-19-1776 for 3 years	Rutland, VT		?-?- 1755—21		
Berry, Simon	Priv	5-25-1780	Cheshire	Cheshire			deserted 2-5-1781
Billings, John (A)	Priv	12-29-1779	Westmoreland	Westmoreland			in room of Witt discharged 1-20- 1781
Blodget, Josiah	Priv	12-30-1776	Stratford	Stratford	?-?- 1755—21	farmer	prisoner 6-25-1779
Blodget, Thomas	Priv	12-30-1776	Stratford	Stratford			killed 10-24-1777
Bonatt, Lymos (L)	Priv	4-16-1777 for 3 years	Springfield, VT				
Bowen, Enoch	Priv	6-5-1780	Moretown, VT	Moretown, VT	?-?- 1756—24		
Boynton, John	Priv	1-1-1780	Gilsum		6-4-1754—25		in room of Fifield
Boynton, John (L)	Priv	12-19-1776 for 3 years	Pittsford, VT				
Briant, William (A)	Priv	11-12-1780					in room of Barkley
Burbank, Jonathan	Priv	3-11-1780	Boscawen	Boscawen	?-?- 1764—16	laborer	deserted 1-20-1781

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Burbank, Josiah	Priv	3-2-1777 for 3 years	Boscawen	Boscawen			
Butterfield, Jonas (A)	Lieut	12-14-1776	Westmoreland		4-27-1740—36		discharged 2-7- 1780
Carpenter, Nathaniel (A)	Priv	2-17-1777	Guilford, VT	Westmoreland	1-13-1743—34	farmer	discharged 12-31- 1780
Chandler, Abiel	Priv	late 1780			10-20-1765—15		in room of J. Rosebrooks
Chandler, Joseph	Priv	11-8-1776	Moultonborough	Moultonborough			deserted 6-5 or -15- 1779
Clark, Clement (L)	Priv	12-19-1776 for 3 years	Rutland, VT		?-?- 1751—25		
Clark, Samuel	Priv Serj Lieut volun- teer	2-5-1777 7-?-1779 12-6-1779 5-1-1780	Shutesbury, MA	Walpole			Assist. Commissary of Issues 9-7- 1778—5-1-1779 discharged 1-18- 1781
Cleaveland, Acquilla	Priv	2-17-1777	Guilford	Westmoreland			killed 6-17-1777
Coffeen, Michael	Priv	3-8-1777	Cavendish, VT	Sanbornton	3-2-1753—24		discharged 11-1- 1780
Coffin, Michael (L)	Priv	2-2-1777 for 3 years	Cavendish, VT				
Cooly, Gideon (L)	Corp	3-8-1777 for 3 years	Pittsford, VT				
Crommett, Phillip	Priv	12-2-1776	Newmarket	Newmarket			deserted 7-20-1778
Crown, William	Priv	11-8-1776	Durham	Durham			died 7-15-1777
Danford, Joshua	Serg	2-10-1777	Boscawen	Boscawen	?-?- 1743—34		reduced 11-10-1780
Dustin, David	Priv				9-20-1762—18		in room of Coffeen
Eaddy, Peleg (L)	Drum	12-28-1776 for 3 years	Clarendon, VT				

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Ewings, James (L)	Serj	12-19-1776 for 3 years	Pittsford, VT		?-?- 1755—21		
Fifield, Joseph	Corp	11-8-1776	Haverhill	Haverhill	3-22-1740—36		discharged 11-?- 1779
Fifield, Samuel	Priv	12-12-1780			6-14-1735—45		
French, Haynes	Priv	3-31-1778— three years	Northumberland	Northumberland	5-15-1761—16		discharged 1-1- 1780
Gleason, Benjamin (L)	Priv	4-10-1777 for 3 years	Shoreham, VT				
Goodenough, David (A)	Lieut	2-17-1777	Guilford, VT		8-31-1735—41		discharged 7-28- 1777
Goodwine, Elijah (L)	Priv	4-11-1777 for 3 years	Putney, VT		?-?- 1762—15		
Hastings, John (L)	Priv	3-15-1777 for 3 years	New Haven, VT				
Hefferin, Dennis	Priv	11-18-1776	Swanzey	Swanzey			returned 2-15- 1780—discharged 2-1-1781
Hodgdon, John	Corp Serg	11-18-1776 11-10-1780	Haverhill	Haverhill	?-?- 1744—32	farmer	
Hodgdon, John (L)	Priv	1-1-1777 for 3 years	Rutland, VT				
How, Joseph	Priv Drum	1-14-1777 12-1-1777	Westmoreland	Westmoreland	?-?- 1762—15		
Hunt, Moses	Fife	1-1-1777	Epping	Epping	?-?- 1761—16	cooper	
Johnson, Benjamin	Priv	11-1-1780			?-?- 1763—17		in room of Billings
Johnson, Moses (L)	Priv	12-27-1776 for 3 years	Clarendon, VT		?-?- 1741—35		
Johnson, Philemon (L)	Priv	4-10-1777 for 3 years	Tinmouth, VT				

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Knowles, Nathaniel	Priv	3-1-1777	Sandwich	Sandwich			
Ladd, David	Priv	11-8-1776	Haverhill	Haverhill			
Lary, James	Priv Drum	12-6-1776 10-6-1780	Haverhill	Haverhill			
Latham, Thomas (L)	Priv	12-19-1776 for 3 years	Rutland, VT				
Lee, Thomas (L)	Capt	12-9-1776	Rutland, VT				
Levings, Noah	Priv	3-15-1780	Westmoreland	Westmoreland			
Lewis, Ashel (L)	Fife	2-1-1777 for 3 years	Clarendon, VT				captured 7-7-77
Loomis, Ephraim (L)	Serj	2-15-1777 for 3 years	Rutland, VT				
Lyford, Fifield	Priv	3-1-1778 for 1 year	Northfield		?-?- 1762—16		discharged 3-?- 1779
Lyford, Thomas	Lieut	11-4-1776	Canterbury		?-?- 1738—38		
March, Nathaniel (L)	Priv	12-19-1776 for 3 years	Pittsford, VT				dead 3-6-1779
Mardeen, Edward	Priv	12-30-1776	Northumberland	Northumberland	?-?- 1751—25	farmer	
Martin, Isaac (L)	Lieut	12-9-1776	Rutland, VT				
Martin, John	Priv	11-8-1776	Piermont	Rindge	?-?- 1738—38		
Martin, William	Priv	12-16-1776	Westmoreland	Westmoreland	7-7-1753—23	joiner	
May, John (L)	Corp	12-19-1776 for 3 years	Pittsford, VT		?-?- 1734—43		
M ^c Robert, John (L)	Serj	1-1-1778 for 2 years	Springfield, VT				
Moore, Joseph (L)	Priv	12-19-1776 for 3 years	Dorset, VT				deserted 6-30-1779
Mott, John (L)	Lieut	12-9-1776	Neshobe, VT		6-?-1747—29	teacher	
Newland, Jonathan (A)	Priv	1-11-1777	Westmoreland	Westmoreland			died 1-11-1778
Newton, Jonas (A)	Priv	2-17-1777	Guilford	Westmoreland			died 9-1-1777

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Olds, Garshom (L)	Priv	3-9-1777 for 3 years	Rutland, VT		7-21-1760—17		
Partridge, Jonathan (L)	Priv	12-14-1776 for 3 years	Neshobe, VT				
Perry, James	Serg	2-12-1777	Westford, MA	Westford, MA			died 4-3-1780
Perry, Moses	Priv	1-1-1781					deserted 2-20-1781
Post, Reuben (L)	Priv	12-18-1776 for 3 years	Rutland, VT				
Powers, Moses (L)	Priv	12-14-1776 for 3 years	Clarendon, VT				
Pratt, Asa (A)	Priv	1-11-1777	Guilford, VT	Guilford, VT			
Randall, John	Serg	11-8-1776	E. Nottingham	E. Nottingham			deserted 7-10-1777
Rice, Abel (A)	Serg	2-17-1777	Guilford, VT	Westmoreland	1-26-1760—17		
Roberts, Jeduthan	Priv	2-17-1777	Guilford, VT	Westmoreland			
Rogers, Perley	Priv	3-20-1780	Westmoreland	Westmoreland	?-?- 1758—22	bricklayer	
Rosebrooks, Eleazer	Serg	11-8-1776	Lancaster	Lancaster	?-?- 1747—29		
Rosebrooks, James	Priv	12-31-1776	Northumberland	Stratford	5-28-1747—29		discharged 1-22- 1781
Row, John	Priv	11-10-1776	Moultonborough	Moultonborough	?-?- 1744—32		deserted 2-16-1780
Sahwell, Jeremiah	Drum	1-14-1777	Swansey	Swansey			deserted 2-20-1778
Sanders, Jonathan	Serg	11-8-1776	Haverhill	Haverhill	?-?- 1746—30		discharged 1-1- 1781
Sawyer, Manassah (A)	Corp Serg	2-12-1777 12-1-1777	Westmoreland	Westmoreland	3-27-1759—17		
Simmonds, Britton (L)	Serj	12-19-1776 for 3 years	Pittsford, VT				
Sinclair, James	Priv Corp	12-5-1776 11-1-1780	Meredith	Sanbornton	12-?-1757—19		deserted 6-15-1779 returned 6-18-1780
Sinclair, Joseph	Priv	12-16-1776	Sanbornton	Sanbornton			

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Smith, Curtis (L)	Priv	2-15-1777 for 3 years	Rutland, VT		?-?- 1762—15		
Smith, John (L)	Corp	12-28-1776 for 3 years	Clarendon, VT				
Smith, Samuel	Priv Corp	11-8-1776 6-1-1778	Madbury	Madbury			deserted 3-26-1779
Stafford, Thomas (L)	Priv	12-28-1776 for 3 years	Clarendon, VT				
Stevens, Samuel	Priv	8-5-1779 for 1 year	Charlestown	Charlestown	?-?- 1740—39		discharged 8-5- 1780
Taylor, Nathan	Lieut	2-1-1777	Sanbornton		10-26-1754—22	husbandman	discharged 12-6- 1779
Temple, Urijah	Corp Serj	12-16-1776 4-4-1780	Westmoreland	Westmoreland	7-6-1757—19		
Thomas, Jonathan	Priv	1-20-1781					
Thompson, Jesse (A)	Priv	2-12-1777	Westmoreland	Westmoreland	?-?- 1760—17		discharged 12-29- 1779
Thompson, Moses (A)	Priv Corp	2-5-1777 6-1-1778	Shutesbury, MA	Shutesbury, MA			
Thompson, Samuel	Priv	11-8-1776	Durham	Durham	?-?- 1756—20	farmer	deserted 3-26-1779 returned 1-1-1780 deserted 1-20-1780 returned 5-20-1780
Tibbets, Henry	Priv	3-29-1778 for 3 years	Northumberland	Northumberland	1-7-1756—22		in room of Hefferin
Tuttle, Chandler (L)	Priv	2-2-1777 for 3 years	Neshobe, VT				
Wheeler, Thomas (L)	Priv	12-12-1776 for 3 years	Harwich, VT				

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Whitcomb, Benjamin	Capt Major	10-14-1776 11-15-1777	Westmoreland		7-2-1737—39		
Whitcomb, Nathaniel (A)	Priv	12-29-1779	Westmoreland	Westmoreland	?-?- 1747—32		in room of J. Thompson
Williams, Joseph (L)	Corp	12-28-1776 for 3 years	Clarendon, VT				
Winton, James (A)	Priv	6-18-1780	Westmoreland	Westmoreland			in room of Carpenter
Wisell, Samuel (L)	Priv	12-28-1776 for 3 years	Sudbury, VT				
Witt, Artemas (A)	Priv	12-15-1776	Westmoreland	Westmoreland	?-?- 1749—27		discharged 12-29- 1779

Sources: Hammond 1885, 2:700-4, 723-4; 3:46, 170-3, 174-7, 302-3; White 1992, 1:31, 65, 153, 165, 245, 303, 337, 352, 464, 548, 594, 596, 642, 658, 674, 870, 1142, 2:1187, 1377, 1383, 1661, 1724, 1771, 1842, 1853, 1855, 2019, 2046, 2149, 2188, 2205, 2211, 2233, 2309, 2442, 3:2535, 2739, 2753, 2755, 2808, 2862, 2938, 2954, 2964, 2998, 3011, 3028, 3175, 3223, 3288, 3436, 3446, 3466, 3479, 3481, 3495-6, 3781, 3782, 3861, 3911, & 3919.