



Ye Olde Goate's Gazette

Official Newsletter of 4th Company, Brigade of Guards

April, 2008

Dedicated to the memory of Martha Edwards 1932-2008

Guards! A Word from the Captain:



I will begin this month's rant by thanking all who participated in the Courthouse event in Greensboro last month. The Company's strong tactical performance as the anchor of the Crown Forces' main body was a pleasure to see and will provide momentum going into the rest of the Campaign season.

Our heavy schedule of combat and rum swilling left precious little time at Guilford for administrative matters, but I took advantage of a small break in the action to convene a Company meeting to solidify the calendar for the rest of the year. Those present agreed that we will support Petersburg (April), Boone's Homestead (May), Under the Redcoat (June), Jerusalem Mill (September), and the Battle of the Hook (October). More information about those events is available elsewhere in this publication and on the Company website.

One additional piece of business was laid before the members, and they agreed that it should be taken up by the entire Company in an electronic poll. The issue is this: the Company has had the same corporate officers since its founding. Under the bylaws, 4th Coy has a corporate president, a vice president, a secretary and a treasurer. The office of Treasurer comes with the actual work of collecting dues, making disbursements and deposits, cooking, er, keeping the books in order, etc. Records are a little sketchy on just what the other officers are responsible to do.

It has been suggested that a decade is a long time for the Company to go without elections. I find such sentiment distastefully democratic in a Guards organization, but it may be well to call for an election, if only so that

we will know who the corporate officers are. Therefore, I shall open the floor for nominations via an upcoming email to the membership, with electronic voting to follow. I intend that the business will be concluded by 15 April, with the first complaints about the new officers expected by sometime on the 16th.

Let the pandering and vote fraud begin!

Upcoming Events

A vote was taken Sunday morning at Guilford Courthouse and the Guardsmen in attendance (or at least those fit for duty that day) voted to attend the following events. Please mark your calendars and begin making plans accordingly.

April 19, Battle of Petersburg The unit will attend for *Saturday only*, using this as an all day drill and an opportunity for potential recruit Scott Ellis (whom Jay chatted up at Ft. Ward) to test drive life in the Guards.

May 17 – 18, Revolutionary War Encampment at the Daniel Boone Homestead All indications are that this will be one of the bigger events of the year and many senior members of the unit have fond, rum-fogged memories of previous battles fought here.

June 27 – 29, Under the Redcoat The membership elected to participate in this centrally located, *paying* event rather than travel to NJ for the Monmouth reenactment being held that same weekend.

September 20 – 21, Jerusalem Mills Located just outside of Baltimore this is an easy commute for the Virginia platoon.

October 18 – 19, The Battle of the Hook The Big 3 event of the 2008 season, located in Gloucester, VA, across the James River from Yorktown. A huge turnout is expected.

2008 Calendar of Events

The Guards will not participate in every event listed here. Individual Guardsmen are, however, encouraged to support nearby small-scale events that are not on 4th Company's official calendar and brigade with other Crown units. More details will be posted on future events as they become available.

April 5-6: Civilian Coat Work, Old Salem (Winston-Salem, NC)

<http://www.barsouth.org/dotnetnuke/>

April 19-20: Battle of Petersburg (Petersburg, VA)

Early indications point to this being a larger and better organized event than in the recent past. 4th Company will attend on Saturday only. (N.B., Petersburg now takes on some Alpha and Omega significance for the unit, being not only the event where the 4th Company was founded but also Lonnie's last event.)

<http://www.petersburg-va.org/revwar/battle.htm>

April 24 - 27: Ft. Frederick 18th Century Market Fair (Big Pool, MD)

A shopping weekend unrivaled in the hobby.

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/fortfrederick.html>

May 17-18: Revolutionary War Encampment, Daniel Boone Homestead (Birdsboro, PA)

This looks to be one of the major events for 2008. More details as they become available

<http://www.danielboonehomestead.org>

May 17-18: "Spirit of the Hornet's Nest" Rural Hill Farm (Huntersville, NC)

Commemorates the Battles of Cowan's Ford (The "Catawba Crossing" led by the Guards, where Rebel General Davidson was killed and O'Hara's horse took a tumble) and Weitzell's Mill (prelude to Guilford Courthouse). There will also be a ceremony commemorating the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence (which antedated the one in Philadelphia by some weeks).

This is a fun event at a good site with historic buildings and few modern intrusions. It's convenient to interstates and hotels within a reasonable drive. While the battles are not being done at the appropriate time of year (February and March respectively), the weather is a LOT better. Free Saturday evening meal is included along with free BEER! It's been a smaller event, but with a lot of good action over varied terrain. If you have any junk furniture that looks somewhat period and want to dispose of it, they do the "Ramseur's Mill bonfire" as part of the "Race to the Dan" scenario that is worked in with the Catawba Crossing scenario. Since there is very little other activity, it's a great event for taking it easy and socializing between drills and so on.

<http://www.ruralhillfarm.org/>

Crash space with some of us who live nearby (about an hour drive for me; very close to Lloyd and close to Flash).

Cheers!

Jay

May 19-20: Welbourne Plantation (Middleburg, VA)

~Details not yet available~

June 7-8: Fort Frederick Encampment, Tactical Exercise & Firelock Match (Big Pool, MD)

~Details not yet available~

June 28-29: Battle of Monmouth 230th Anniversary (Freehold, NJ)

~Details not yet available~

August 16-17: BAR National Encampment, Fort Ligonier (Sturbridge, PA)

~Details not yet available~

September 20-21: Jerusalem Mill (Kingsville, MD)

<http://www.jerusalemill.org/events.htm>

September 26-27: Siege of Yorktown (Newport News, VA)

~Details not yet available~

October 18-19: Battle of the Hook (Gloucester Point, VA)

What looks to be the "Big Three" event in our area during the Fall.

<http://www.battleofthehook.com/>

Company Business

Guilford Courthouse 2008: After Action Report

4th Company's signature event of the year was once again a success. Despite a shockingly low turn-out for both Crown and Rebel forces and absurd logistical challenges, I believe a good time was had by all. The unit's marching evolutions continue to improve, but constant practice is still our watchword. The manual of arms also is coming along, but Guard's standards are not those of mere mortals. Attention will continue to be focused on the preparatory motion and bayonet drill. Many thanks to Guardsmen Morris and Sahlin for their assistance as we worked to fine tune the Company's drill. The Guards performed well in the field both days. They demonstrated admirable common sense and situational awareness since orders were coming at them from myself, Capt. Sheffer and the Brigade Commander. They executed the commands without a single cock-up, a claim that cannot be made some units on the field. My proudest moment (besides telling a joke that made Duckworth shoot water out of his nose) was the two thunderous and perfectly timed volleys the Guards delivered late in the battle on Sunday. This, Gentlemen, is why we drill. This is why we insist on your weapons being refulgent and well oiled. Let the Doodles or the Shire regiments try that.

I note with displeasure however, that there was some sloppy musket handling in the second rank toward the end of both battles. It is understandable that arms get tired and people get winded. However, double rank volley fire delivered from close order absolutely requires that every Guardsman perform the same motions at the same time *otherwise you are a danger to your fellow re-enactors in the front rank*. So cowboy up and do it by the numbers every time. Your NCOs will be watching. Here endeth the lesson.

Special thanks are also due to Lady Barbara Sheffer for being a one person civilian extravaganza and keeping the troops fed and watered while watching the camp and educating the public.

Oh, and having met the new light in Guardsman Berger's life, the "Oktoberfest incident" is now officially forgiven.

Mark Your Equipment

There are a great many new haversacks, cartridge box straps and bayonet carriages in the unit now. All of these should be marked with the owner's rack number to prevent a repeat of the challenges of sorting through identical looking equipment in the dark as we did at the 225th of Yorktown. If you do not know your rack number, please contact Tony or Rich.

According to the Guardsman's Guide, equipment should be marked in the following manner:

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The location of the marking on various pieces of equipment is:

Cartridge Box Belt inside, at end
Bayonet Carriage inside, behind buckle
Haversack rear, at top
Blanket Roll Strap inside, behind buckle



Wool Updated

The Kochan and Phillips wool is not scheduled to be woven by the mill in the UK until the end of March. Anticipated arrival date in the US is early to mid-April. Once the wool arrives state-side we will move quickly to get a bolt purchased and they begin lining up Guardsmen for new, madder red regimental coats. Recruit Theis goes to the front of the line to get his coat completed as close to his one year anniversary of taking the shilling at UTR as possible. After that we'll have Lloyd schedule coat production according to when checks for wool arrive in the Treasurer's mailbox.

Thomas Lobster's World

Who Was Thomas Lobster?

The general perception of the eighteenth century British soldier by his fellow citizens was not complimentary. The English citizenry distrusted the Army as a potential threat to their liberties and resented, like the citizens of Boston, the legal requirement that they support the living requirements of the soldiers.

In 1740, the Duke of Argyll claimed that they were men who were "too stupid or too infamous to learn or carry on a trade." Most of the citizens of Boston, New York, or even London would have found this to be an accurate assessment of the typical soldier's quality.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the British army had not been above enlisting prisoners of war and other foreigners in King George's service and some French and German men served in the ranks. In general, though, foreigners were rare outside the officer corps. At the time of the American Revolution, 60 percent of the rank and file were English, 24 percent were Scots, and 16 percent were Irish.

The typical soldier was a young man, capable of the rigors of military life. Recruiting officers and sergeants were ordered to seek out healthy men with good reputations in the area they were recruited and even to check references before accepting them. Perhaps this was due to a concern for quality. We all know that soldiers of this period enlisted for life, so the army and the government had an interest in making wise investments in manpower. Despite this, standards were relaxed in periods when the army required rapid expansion. Late in the American war, for example, recruiters were scouring English gaols and collecting parish vagrants to meet their manpower needs, though recruiting continued to be less problematic in Scotland and Ireland.

Our Thomas was more than likely to have come from a rural area and may have enlisted due to the loss or lack of prospects for employment or trade. Equally likely, he enlisted for the prospect of adventure or the greatly misguided hope of good fortune.

Most of the soldiers would not have questioned the rule of King George, but some were undoubtedly republican in political sentiment. The most pressing political issue at home as well as in America was the nature of political representation and it was this division of opinion that would most undermine the British enterprise in North America.

Despite the aspersions cast against them by their contemporaries, the record of history looks favorably upon the quality of these soldiers. Though not victorious in North America, they certainly performed with both competence and valor.

Brown Bess: A Difficult Mistress

Thomas Lobster's constant companion was a .75 caliber flintlock, known to history as Brown Bess. It is unlikely that a British private of 1781 referred to his musket in this manner. As we all have experienced, it was a cranky piece of machinery under good conditions, infuriating on a humid day.

The flintlock musket was the focus of no small consternation to officers of the British army. According to historian Richard Holmes, it had a life expectancy of eight to ten years, but its barrel was often worn out by constant polishing, giving it a liability to burst when fired. The sear spring also wore quickly. A review of the 11th Foot reported in 1774 that some of the regiment's muskets discharged when the men shouldered loaded weapons.

Sometimes, the musket would discharge when fired, sometimes not, depending on the vagaries of weather, quality of powder, quality of flint, and a variety of other whims of Mars. Most of the flints for the British army came from the Suffolk town of Brandon, but American flints were popular. Thomas Lobster considered "a Yankee flint as good as grog."

We are all familiar with claims of accuracy and inaccuracy of the weapon. The Prussian army tested the accuracy of their musket fire and found it only 60 percent accurate at 75 yards against six foot high canvas targets. Loading the musket with "running ball" (dropping the ball down the barrel but not ramming it down) also decreased the accuracy of the weapon. This sped the loading and firing and process and lessened recoil, but was frowned upon in the British regiments as unsoldierly. A French officer calculated that one shot in 500 fired on the battlefield found its target. Well, maybe in the French service....

Usually fired at close order, the musket belched a cloud of smoke and fire from the pan and the barrel that obscured the battlefield. A soldier unfortunate enough to be shot at close range had his medical condition complicated by the addition of unburned powder and pieces of clothing inside his wound, along with the likelihood of his own clothing being ignited by contact with the flaming debris. Soldiers of the 18th and early 19th century were reportedly recognizable by a telltale tattoo on the cheek burned by the flash of the pan of the musket to his left.

If the dangers of being shot by the enemy were not enough, the musket itself was volatile enough to be a danger in the din and smoke of battle and perhaps the situation was not improved by the constant attention to its care and cleaning, given the roughness of the materials and the methods used.