

Saturday, 27 September 1975

At 12:10 AM a new janitor arrived and put some radio station on through the intercom. After a while I clambered into some clothes and got him to turn it off. On the way back to my quarters (the "hospital") I met Jim Ferguson. There had been trouble on the picket line as some local creeps had wanted to drag through our camp. Our guards stood them off until the state police arrived. I do not know the results, but our camp remained secure. Our best sleep having been ruined, Peter, Terry, and I slept fitfully the rest of the night.

This morning Peter went after my sleeping bag while I repacked my sea-bag. Most of the dampness is gone from my clothes now and the sleeping bag is fairly dry and warm. I had arisen at 6:30.

There was a breakfast of powdered eggs, oatmeal, and coffee from the civil defense van this morning, but I just took two glasses of milk. Terry's cold is pretty bad now, and he plans to see the doctor. I am still holding the line, though Peter thinks I should join Terry. I intend to stay with this army until I collapse and have to be carried away. Otherwise I'll get to Quebec with the rest.

Because of the rain the major has cancelled 8 o'clock assembly.

At 8:45 6 NG trucks and one tow arrived. Terry and I boarded #37 with some of Colburn's boys. After a wait of a few minutes it developed that there were not enough trailers for bateaux, and so the bateau belonging to Dearborn's Co. was shoved into the back of our truck with seven of us jammed around. Better than 30% of its length protruded over our tailgate.

You don't see much scenery from the back of an army truck with a bateau in it. We drove to a wooded river bank, presumably the east, and helped Dearborn's men unload and launch their bateau to Augusta. At this point our driver was unsure where to take us, finally deciding on an area, parklike, with a large granite (?) building. Without much confidence Terry and I walked along and soon discovered Meigs's Division on a street leading up a hill to the right. We were just a little late as most of our company had already arrived. By now Hanchett's Co. showed at least thirty men.

Col. Arnold addressed the assembled army by Carling's loudspeaker and reminded us of the absolute need for discipline in behavior as guests of local people. He then introduced division commanders and staff personnel, each of them receiving a moderate three huzzas. At the conclusion of this bit the Colonel received three hearty, spontaneous huzzas. I believe that he is well liked by most of the army. He does not appear to take himself too seriously.

We set out through the streets of Augusta with moderate numbers of on-lookers, and after about a mile, mostly downhill, we turned right into Ft. Western. The courtyard was somewhat crowded with the whole army drawn up. The colonel was greeted with a speech and introduction of local officials. He responded by praising Arnold's army, but disclaiming any honor to its commander. I dislike this attitude intensely. We are reenacting 1775, and Arnold was as great a patriot as any of them at that time. I believe that the services he performed far outweigh the treason in which he failed.

By 11:45 we had been dismissed for lunch. I promptly got into a line of no more than fifteen people at the post office and spent 45 minutes there. I talked to the wife of a local news reporter during this wait in line. Well, I would have had to wait in a line of 600

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soldiers for a box lunch anyway, so I couldn't complain much. Afterward I quickly got my box lunch: four small sandwiches (egg, ham, tuna, and some other salad spread), potato chips, pickles, two cakes, and coke -- all you could drink. I finished this quickly and then set to taking slides and chatting with tourists. Next to the fort was a hardware store, where I bought some rust inhibitor for my weapons.

At 1:30 all companies were called to order on schedule, but there was a good twenty minute delay before we marched. We marched a good two miles or more through Augusta and up a steep hill to get to Capital Park, a green before the state house. After a short delay here the trucks delivered our gear. For once the rain didn't fall on it. Capt. Davis loaned me his tent and by 4:10 it was ready for occupation. Temperature was 72°.

I was discussing history with a chap from Lewiston, when assembly beat at 4:30. I fell to and continued my chat from the ranks. At length we were marched down the line, placed in lines of ten, and put next to the last unit, McCobb's. We listened to the National Anthem and then a speech by Gen. James B. Reed. The governor managed not to show. After this the entire army marched by divisions and companies in review. It was truly a magnificent spectacle. The sun even threatened. When we had marched off, Major Meigs told us he was damned proud of us. We huzzaed him in response. Morale is really up now that the full army is together.

I volunteered to stand guard over the company camp while Meigs's Division was trucked off to supper at a local school at 6:00. By 7:00 they had returned, and Capt. Davis brought me my supper and relieved me of duty. There had been no incidents during my tour of guard.

I then scoured the camp for Scott's Co. where I might find the suttler offering AEG pewter mugs. At Morgan's camp I questioned a sentry who called me sir and spoke in a most military manner. In Greene's Division I questioned soldiers who didn't even know the names of their own companies. Quite some contrasts in this camp. (Topham's Co. from Norwich University is the greatest disappointment. Their hair is too closely cropped, some wear dungarees, some carry percussion locks, and some even carry toy guns). At length I was shown the way when I simply inquired after the mugs. I never did find Scott's Co.

When I returned, Terry was not well, so I sought Capt. Davis, and together we sought a doctor. No officers and no doctors could be found. Mrs. Davis, a nurse, took a hand, and Terry can ride in their camper until he is better.

Down by the communications van I inquired for a phone. They had to call the local phone co. to find the nearest public phone, in a place about a mile away. Immediately a civil defense lady got me into her car and drove me there and waited to bring me back to camp. (These people are incredible). I called both my homes and had good chats. By now I really miss my wife. I don't intend to leave her behind me ever again.

When I arrived back at Hanchett's camp, I learned that Terry had been taken to the hospital for X-rays. He returned within the hour and will continue with us under Mrs. Davis's care. In the interim Maj. Meigs and an orderly came through with more beer to make up for our botched rations this night. The major's reputation is on the rise.

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Terry was brought back to camp in an hour or so — bronchitis is his ill.

There has been much talk of keeping our little company together throughout the bicentennial.

Double guards were posted at 2-hour intervals from 11 PM. There was a rumor that some of Colburn Co.'s local friends planned to hit our camps. A few harassing yells were heard, nothing more. I sat through at least one tour just to have some company. I met a Rogers's Ranger from Grand Rapids, Mich. and got some good info. I sacked out around 1:30 AM.

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Tom Reed fified reveille at 6 AM, the first in our army to do so. By 6:15 I was over at the mess wagon just beyond McCobb's camp, halfway across the whole army, and I was among the first ten soldiers to get my two pancakes and syrup. By 6:30 I was rolling up my gear and breaking down my "new" tent. Nothing was absolutely dry, but simple dampness is a vast improvement over our customary situation. A number of men in our company spent the night in Augusta hotels.

Although the sky was overcast, there was no rain as we broke camp. There were even some hints of sun breaking through. As usual, you could see your breath quite easily.

The trucks were on hand at 7:30, and Hanchett's Co. immediately commandeered truck #29, the first in the column. Peter Arnold swung himself up into the back, and we tossed up to him all of our gear for compact storage. After carefully policing our area and even cleaning one area messed up by local civilians, we climbed aboard our trucks to wait.

We received news of a rather serious incident. A mess cook was sleeping on the floor of his van, when a propane leak occurred. He managed to stagger out the door and collapsed. One soldier — whose tent-mate had just become ill on too much beer and made their tent uninhabitable — saw this, as did a park ranger, and they both ran to lend aid. The fellow's heart was palpitating and then stopped. The ranger revived him while the soldier ran to summon an ambulance. At latest report the cook is doing fine and will rejoin the army.¹

At 8:00 our convoy of all three divisions moved out. You can't see much of Maine from the back of one of those trucks. Along Rte 2 the various divisions dropped off for their assigned locations, while we proceeded until a bit before Skowhegan. At 9:15 we stopped and got out under arms. After a bit of delay we were marched to the banks of the Kennebec where the bateaux were launched. Our parade was scheduled for 10:30, so I was in the middle of a sandwich (one of two distributed at breakfast for our lunch) when Major Meigs called us to order at 10:00. While the bateaux were rowed upriver to Skowhegan, the musket companies marched the one and a half miles along the east river bank. Although the sun was starting through, the rain began to fall anyway. We actually marched past one bateau, whose crew eventually turned back. The bateaux were troubled by some rapids in an east channel past a small island. A two man canoe made it through while the bateaux fell back to the west channel.

As we marched past the north end of the island we saw our crew on the island signaling to us that they had broken an oar. Another bateau, which had already landed, raced back with a replacement. We cheered our crew on from the shore as they worked the bateau over a log boom that blocked the landing bay. The captain called for five volunteers and I responded to help carry the bateau ashore. This was the only way to get out of the jam of musketmen along the riverbank. Our crew was drenched. We have a genuine Arnold bateau: it leaks.

Once we got back on the truck — seventeen people in #29 — we were driven through downtown Skowhegan to the fair grounds. Naturally, the sun first showed itself when we were in the truck. At Skowhegan Fair Grounds we pitched our tents on ground littered with broken glass. Here I got a chance to dry my sleeping bag for a few hours in the sun. After pitching "my" tent and getting my gear stowed, I changed my hat

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and got to Mass, which was held in the horse show pavilion, no more than ten minutes late.

There was some free time after this, so I lay on my sleeping bag in the sun and worked on my journal. We were to be mustered for parade at 2:30 and the whole company was on time. We practised the counter-march manoeuvre a few times and then took our place at the tail of Meigs's Division. We then marched out of the fair-grounds at 3 PM and did better than two miles through the streets of Skowhegan. All went well. The sun popped in and out all along, and the day was cool — pleasant marching weather.

At the parade's end we waited a good hour on the streets, in formation, for our supper. We decided that the powdered eggs served by AEQ were truly "eggs Benedict" and that our staple item of diet is to be called "beans Benedict". We also redubbed AEQ-75 as "Arnie's Army". At last we went to the Grange and were treated to hot dogs, beans, cole slaw, rolls, apple pie, and Indian Pudding. The servers were a scratch team called in at the last moment, and they did a fine job. Most of us were trucked back to camp, but a small portion of Hanchett's Co. marched all the way back with the major.

Our two-can beer ration was issued in an orderly fashion as the sun went down. A fire-wood party soon returned and a fine blaze was started. A camera crew from Canada's CBC arrived to photograph our bonfire. Eight of us had volunteered for "sandwich duty" — the making of tomorrow's lunch — earlier, and so we marched in step through camp whistling the "Dwarves' Song" ("Hi-Ho, Hi-Ho"). At the mess wagon we worked in two four-man shifts making 360 salami sandwiches for the 180 mouths of Meigs's Division. It was assembly-line style and went quite quickly, until the bread ran out before the half-way point. Mrs. Milliman, the major's wife, was right on top of the situation, and my shift was finished by 8:30.

I returned to camp to get my camera and journal and then went to the horse-pavilion, where the dancing ("hoe-down") was in progress and light was bright. During the evening an officer from McCobb's Co. presented a "Ballad of Arnold's March" which he had just composed. We hope it will be recorded. I spent the latter portion of this evening with Pete Murray and Joe Rose (who, with Ben Soule, composed this morning's bateau crew).

After the dance, which must have ended around 10:00, I returned to our fire to discover a guard-duty roster of two men on two-hour shifts. I did not draw duty tonight. Pete and Joe went into town, where the VFW has an open bar all night long plus shuttle service to the camp.

I have learned that Colburn's Co. plans to leave in Quebec a memorial casket to one of their men who drowned last summer.

I turned in at 11:15 under crystal skies. I can see my breath.

Notes

- 1: Ken Cookson was the casualty. The details I recount are purely hearsay and were recorded within one day of the event. Later reports claim that Mr. Cookson left the expedition at this point.

Monday, 29 September 1975

Tom Reed sounded reveille at 6:00, once more the first in camp. We arose to find a cold (36°), foggy morning; but it was obvious that the sun would quickly burn through. The guards had kept our fire going all night and so a number of us attempted to warm up a bit. This was the first morning I had worn my scarf and rifle-shirt over my coat. By 6:15 I was on my way to breakfast at the far end of camp. Inside one of the exhibition buildings the Rotary Club provided hot coffee and doughnuts. For once I was glad to have non-Irish coffee. After this I hit the regular mess wagon for "eggs Benedict", oatmeal, and cider. The food wasn't good, but it was hot.

As soon as I returned to camp, I began to break down my tent and stow my gear. Others didn't do this immediately, to their later regret. The sun came through, and there was not a cloud in the sky. At 8:00 we were called to for divisional inspection. This was no surprise since "Little Meigs", the major's son, had been over earlier, harassing our captain's young son about being in full outfit for inspection. We fell to at the center of the division (I served as brevet ensign this day), and we listened to Meigs explain the financial situation regarding dependents. He also indicated his pride in us for our performance. Ours is the largest division. Hanchett Co. passed inspection with a minor warning about frizzen stalls and flash guards. (We can get these from a sergeant in [Colburn's] Co.). At the end of inspection Hanchett's Co. set a record for speed in breaking camp — all other companies had already done so. We got to truck #29 on time and were on the road by 9:30. It was during this ride that I started "The Ballad of Oliver Hanchett".

Within the hour we were in Kingfield and setting up our camp on the south end of the grammar school playground. We are getting quite adept at this and we were set within ten minutes. Two young ladies of the town came by to assign each of us a private home in which to have dinner tonight. Some 270 families have volunteered to take us in. The captain then sent a troop of twenty volunteers to tour the elementary school. I was not one of these today — I figured to take advantage of the sun to really dry out my gear well. Lunch included those "Hanchett sandwiches", cider, and an apple. This is the most beautiful day we have had. I am recently informed that our nickname in camp is "Hen-shit's".

Around 2 PM the assembly drum was beat (This morning we went over the three key drum commands), and Hanchett's Co. responded promptly. The sun was hot enough that I left both coat and rifle shirt behind. We lined up to enter the line of march, and once again the major put us at the end. McCobb's Co., marching just in front of us, had arranged to be followed by a pair of local oxen. We objected and cut in in front of the beasts. As Peter Arnold put it: "We may have to take it in this army, but that doesn't mean we have to step in it!" We console ourselves with usually being last in line by saying that the Major always puts the best last in order to leave the crowd with the best impression. The parade ran some 2½ miles under a cloudless sky. There was a flag presentation at the town hall.

We were back at camp shortly before 4:00, and I started into town with a couple of guys for some beer and film. At Bud's Deli there was no film. The ring came off the pop-top of my Falstaff can, so I turned my bayonet into a can punch — it worked beautifully. I had to give away my second beer as they moved up our schedule for meeting

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our dinner hosts by fifteen minutes. I could be on time and smell terrible, or be late and at least change my clothes. I opted for the latter, and by 5:00 I was at the "First Bank" where I met Mr. Chesley Pinkham. He took Don King and me in his car to get to his home just two houses away. Our conversation at table began quite slowly, much as I expected, but Don and I persisted, and soon everything was quite congenial. We were served browned hamburger and gravy, mashed potatoes, buttered peas, rolls, and banana creme pie. It is interesting that only Mr. Pinkham and his guests ate together. His wife and a grand-daughter stood aside and watched, while most of the family remained elsewhere. At the conclusion of the meal we were offered a ride to a special program at Mt. Abram Regional High School. We decided to walk over and wait for the school busses.

On the bus I sat next to Major Christian Febiger of Arnold's staff. He is a teacher from Dixfield, Maine. He is carrying a special dagger which will be surrendered to a priest in Quebec as a symbol of the army's surrender.

At the school a local girl singing country and western opened the program. Then Col. Arnold was introduced to present awards to children from grades K-8 for "Arnold Trail Posters".... Dick Day of Hanchett's Co., who has come from Denver, Colorado, was called in to make the last of the awards. This ceremony was followed by a performance of Elizabethan and early American songs by a local group, "The Red House Circus". They were excellent, but not appreciated. The c+w singer concluded the program by 9:00 PM. In the vestibule the colonel recognized me and inquired after the progress of my journal. We then bussed back to the camp.

At the camp Mrs. Kidder came around to collect dirty laundry which she took to the laundramat for us. Tom Reed and two others were going to Maxwell's Inn, and I joined them when I learned there was a public phone there. I called home to request a few items and then called Judy. Dearborn's boys had packed the place, but they welcomed the squad from Hanchett's. They were soon singing their "Major Meigs-Yankee Doodle" song. I later learned that this crew snubbed a squad from McCobb's Co., who quickly left.

I returned to the camp to chat with the first guard before the fire and enjoy our extra beer. After a while a serious incident occurred: one of Dearborn's decided to cut through McCobb's camp en route to the latrine. He was challenged by a sentry and, taking offense, took the sentry's musket and through it to the ground. McCobb's Co. responded to the alarm, and threats were exchanged. Fortunately nothing came of all this. At several times during these early morning hours some townies (we believe) hurled firecrackers over McCobb's camp. Several of us later complimented a sentry of McCobb's.

Meanwhile, at Maxwell's, some drifter had entered and removed the hat of one of Dearborn's men. The bartender blew the whistle, and the boys were out in the street and on the culprit. They brought him back into the bar, and Cpl. Dan McNerney compelled him to repent with various threats.

I turned in around 1:00 AM. The night was perfectly clear and cold.

Tuesday, 30 September 1975

The day dawned misty and reveille was again at 6:00. I had already arisen and so enjoyed the spectacle of a camp trying to wake up. Our scheduled march to breakfast was cancelled, and I forewent the pleasure of the church's food. This was the day of the 12-mile march over the Great Carry and we were rushed to break camp. By 8:00 I had my gear on truck #29. The first six trucks in the column were to carry only the volunteer hikers and their gear. Now, the major had made a strong suggestion that we leave behind all muskets, and Capt. Davis passed this on as an order. Most of us disobeyed, not trusting anyone else with our guns; and a realistic reenactment requires their presence.

Major Meigs led the truck convoy by jeep, and we went the wrong way and had to turn around. Some soldiers yelled: "Return, Jonathan" to him as we started back. We had wasted at least 45 minutes in this action.

The trucks took us a good four miles up the Great Carry road before we set out on foot. We started at Middle Carry Pond, some nineteen of Hanchett's men participating. It was 10:55 as we set out. All the way we followed an old logging road, so we had it rather easy. It only became difficult as we climbed a one mile grade past West Carry Pond. Some of Hanchett's Co. straggled, but all arrived safely at the end of eight miles. The only casualty was in Dearborn's Co. where one fellow dropped his knife through his boot. He was brought out by ambulance and he is said to be alright.

At the modern road which intersects the trail we were stood to order and received the major's praise. He claimed that we were not the most beautiful, but we were the most authentic looking division. He was most pleased that we had, by not halting the whole way, caught up to Greene's Division, which had started a half hour before us. Greene was pretty sore, I hear. Behind us Morgan's Division had got lost, and the major cautioned us to go easy on these "Pennsylvania backwoodsmen". Morgan's men later claimed that Meigs's Division had moved the trail markers, but I saw nothing of this and doubt it greatly.

After a lunch of salami sandwiches, beer, apples, and orange juice, we formed once again and followed Greene's Division down the trail to Lake Flagstaff. At a recently placed memorial marker we approached by squads and uncovered our heads in silence. At the lake shore we formed for a prayer, and White Nichols of AEHS informed us of Arnold's activities at this point. We then returned to the "highway" and were trucked to our next stop.

A breakdown of a jeep held us up even more than we were already late, so we missed our divisional parade in Eustis. Of this parade I am told that there were so few of our division available that all units were combined and gave a fine show. At Cathedral Pines we began to pitch our camp around 5:30. Supper was provided by the locals: American chop suey, cole slaw, potato salad, roll, and pumpkin pie. After supper I took a hand in cutting firewood. (The night guards must have a fire). Our beer ration soon arrived (3 cans per man, said the major this day), and by evening's end we had better than 3 cases left over (loaves and fishes indeed!). There was much music in camp this night, from colonial fife and drum to George M. Cohan songs. I wrote in my journal by flashlight.

After a while one of Dearborn's boys dropped in for a brew — it seems the major had called his company to order, chewed them out for various infractions, and withdrew their beer ration for this night.

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Any further incidents, and Dearborn's Co. has all meal cards pulled. We sympathized, for while Dearborn's crew is rowdy, it is also quite colorful — authentically so.

Dan McLaughlin of Brooklyn and I took guard duty from midnight until two. The fire was hot and we were hard put to stay awake. All was quiet, a most unusual situation, and our tour passed quickly. I hit the sack immediately. My tent was no more than ten feet from the fire, but that did not help me find warmth. My blisters are tolerable.