A Journal of
The Rhode Island Campaign
as Kept by
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of the
Fourth Middlesex Regiment of Massachusetts Militia

Friday, 25 August 1978

I departed Watertown with Bob and Audrey Childs at 5:46 PM, Bob's car towing his fold-out camper. Moving out through Newton toward Rte 128, we were surprised at the lightness of traffic. We stopped briefly to pump up the air shocks and then moved along. The only delays were a few tight spots for construction work along the southern loop of 128.

For two days it had been raining or threatening and the air was cold and damp. In August 62° counts as cold. The forecast for the weekend was uncertain and at first did not look good. But as we moved south some sunlight appeared and patches of blue.

The printed directions didn't seem too clear, so Bob called for and got info on the CB. Our only problem occurred when we did follow the print and went the wrong way on Rte 138. It was only a few minutes before we knew enough to swing about, and we arrived at Portsmouth High School at 7:27.

After I had registered for us, we drove onto a field next to the school at the direction of Bruce Kidder, who had been there since early afternoon. We settled in next to Joe and Winnie Rose, and by 8:36 all was set up.

At registration each participant received a packet along with an I.D. card. When Bob opened his we found that the campaign medal was already included. The detail of information in the packet was quite impressive.

The early evening was spent in visiting old friends. Then around 9:40 the caravan of the IVth Middlesex, some dozen vehicles, arrived in the parking lot. They had been delayed by following the printed directions. Having reached Rhode Island once, they had somehow wandered back into Masstts. Eventually a police escort with lights flashing led them to the right spot.

Once the IVth appeared to have settled in, Bob, Bruce, and I wandered over and began to chat with Ron MacInnis. Of course the conversation got around to AEQ-75 and then the troubles which Ward Co. had with Major Meigs. Ron spoke of the Great Carry and the race between Meigs's and Greene's Divisions. Although Crosby Milliman (Meigs) has denied any feeling but friendship for Tony Walker (Greene), Ron says that there was hard feeling between the two. The march really was a race between the two, which explains why we had no halts over the eight miles. The tune "Waltzing Matilda" apparently has some unpleasant significance for Milliman because Walker had his men whistle it as our division reached the end of the trail. Milliman reportedly was furious and turned on Joe Bausk, threatening, "I can have you thrown out of this army!"

Ron also spoke of Topham Co., the unit from Norwich University,

whose dungarees, plastic hat buttons, and toy muskets had irked us so. Ron put in a good word for them. Ward Co. had disliked them for their lack of authenticity as had the rest of us. But in Canada Topham Co. had carried its bulky bateau to the summit of a high hill in order to present it to the town officials. Their enthusiasm was most admirable.

It was growing more chilly, so we started back for our tents, but we were cut short by the sound of "Isn't It Grand, Boys," coming from around a roaring campfire. We gathered around and joined in as Les Longworth strummed his guitar in various musical forms from Irish to calypso.

Several times Palmer came by and cleared his throat, but he was given no heed. Gradually our numbers decreased, but the hardcore stayed on until 2:15 AM. As I returned to my tent a few statrs could be seen between the clouds.

I had set up my old army pup tent for old time's sake and I had decided to stay in it. I lay on sleeping bag and pulled a wool army blanket over me, and it seemed quite adequate for this night.

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The noise from children in the camp awakened me at 6:15 AM, but I resisted for another hour. There was also the sound of a helicopter which made numerous passes over our campsite, or so it sounded.

The sky looked quite ugly and it seemed more than likely that rain would fall. Hearing that the lines were still short, Audrey, Bob and I set out for breakfast. Along the way we heard the first of the trouble up at the 18th century encampment on Butt's Hill behind the high school. Someone in the night had stolen a musket, a spontoon and some lanterns from one of the companies. Apparently no guards had been posted in that area, although I had seen one sentry pacing a perimeter two tents down from us. I had, while making a brief visit to a nearby field, seen a group of a dozen or so teens walking quietly through the school parking lot around 1:30 AM, but as they were not heading toward our campsite I thought little of it at the time.

Breakfast was unspectacu ar but caused no complaints. There was Tang, Corn Flakes, two small Danishes and a carton of milk — I decided against the coffee, hard peaches, and green bananas. As soon as I sat down, Frank Gould* — known as "Manchez" (Vermin P. Crock's demolitions man) in the IVth — recruited me to participate in the shooting booth at Sudbury's Fair at the Wayside Inn on 30 September.

Even better than the food was the chance to brush my teeth. The facilities in the high school were not in the best of condition, but a sink with running water is better than a National Guard "water buffalo." Also there were none of the usual "sentry boxes" posted around our area.

As we headed back to camp we found Peter Murray and his friend Stacy just arriving, a happy sight for me since Peter was bringing all of my cartridges. He planned to spend just this one day with us. I heard him say that he had felt a "premonition of disaster" about this event, but whether he meant a serious mishap or just a bungled event I could not decide.

The morning was rather long since no parade activity had been assigned to us, and everything was quite casual. My problem lay in deciding what to wear. I changed from civvies into my old Concord uniform, which seemed insufficient when the sun was hidden and I could feel only the cold damp of the sea air. Since the clouds seemed to be winning out, I put on my heavy wool campaign coat and then slung on all my kit.

At the beat of assembly the company fell in for the 10 o'clock drill. While other units marched about for fifteen minutes or so, we spent a full hour at making Capt. Palmer True hoarse. I was near the end of our column, having had to dash back to the trailer to fill up on cartridges, and when we counted off along the line to form sections, I was in a four- instead of an eight-man section. When we first wheeled into line of march by sections, my section was a bit awkward; but veterans adjust quickly and soon we easily moved from four abreast in marching to two before two in line of battle and back again. Of course, as soon as we had settled this, two drummers were added to our section and we had to readjust. As always we were expected to maintain our drill positions in the battle, and as always we could not do so.

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There was no break for us. The IVth was still struggling with that two year old nemesis, the oblique step, when 11 o'clock came along and we had to go off for safety inspection. The whole American army seemed to have formed behind the school quickly enough, but nothing further occurred for the longest time. None of the commanders of the army in our area inspected anything, rather the job was left to company captains. Palmer had already checked all safety equipment on our muskets, so he had the lieutenants run ramrods to check the barrels. Unbelievably several muskets were still foul from the Battle of Monmouth two months before.

The one thing that brigade officers did do was force all musicians from their companies to march together at the rear of each brigade. The departure of our musket-toting fifers and drummers naturally screwed up the order of our lines, and much of our drillwork was lost.

At 11:46 we were finally dismissed for lunch, but seeing the huge line at the cafeteria most of us resorted to our own food supplies in camp. I made a couple of sandwiches from cold cuts which I had brought along. It was a leisurely time, and now the sun was beginning to break through in earnest.

Bob faced a problem. Having chipped his ankle several weeks earlier, he was still limping in some pain. The scheduled two-mile march to battle would move over some rough terrain, and Bob could ill-afford chancing more damage. Now he decided to take his car down to the battlefield and join us there.

There was no organized move to the assembly area, so it was twelve minutes past one when everyone was finally ready to move out. Along the ranks there came an interesting bearded character in an Uncle Sam suit of day-glo colors, flag over his shoulder. Whenever a camera appeared, he would strike a crouching pose, his index finger pointed straight at the lens. A young lady traveling with Sam would then hand out a flyer to the photographer, but I never learned what it announced.

At 1:17 PM the army moved out on a street along the eastern slope of Butt's Hill. At the foot of this street the column turned left onto a road and climbed over the north flank of the hill. Much of the route was uphill, and although I suspect that the temperature never got above 70° it became a rather hot march. As we marched across a highway overpass a very pleasant sea breeze from the north brought relief.

Crowds by the roadside were generally sparse and quiet. An occasional enthusiast applauded our efforts.

The music's marching at the rear of our brigade was a new wrinkle. Normally the men at the front can best hear the drumbeat, and those to the rear simply watch the feet ahead of them to maintain the step. Today the front troops had to listen carefully to know the step. Compounding their troubles was the tendency of the musicians, many unfaniliar with each other's repertoire, to alter the beat when moving from tune to tune.

To help overcome this problem, Lt. Ron Davis (Captain of the old Oliver Hanchett Co.) from time to time called out the step. Perhaps he overdid it a bit — I don't recall any other officer of the

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IVth having called the step — and there was grumbling up front after a while.

In time we marched down a wooded slope, toward the bottom of which a path led off to the right into woods. A National Guard sergeant guarded the entrance to the path turning back all but combat participants. Three women were nearly in tears pleading with him, but protected by his very dark shades he remained unmoved and directed them away.

The forest was remarkably thick, being in some parts a tangled swamp. At one point a brief series of meadows lay to the left of the path, and several spectators had used them to reach the line of march.

The roadway itself was a mess. It appeared to be quite old, being paved after a fashion with broken stones, and its surface was badly rutted. We had not gone too far along when Palmer agreed with a request that we switch to "rout step" — this was necessary so that we could pick out our steps carefully. The drummers, however, risking broken ankles persisted in playing all the way.

In a while this path ended, where another of the same quality crossed it. The column turned right and climbed a gradual grade still surrounded by woods. The trail was scattered with souvenirs. I noticed one pewter button between the stones, and I picked up the F.I.D. card of one David Wilson of Medford. I hope he doesn't need it before I get it to him.

Shortly I could see open sky through the trees up ahead, and soon the column halted at the edge of an extensive field of tall corn. A bunch of us immediately fell out along a side path to relieve ourselves of an excess of used beer. We were back in line in plenty of time before the column turned right and marched through the woods skirting the edge of the cornfield. We moved uphill, for in this battle we were to defend the high ground. In fact we would fight on a slope over which the British had advanced against the militia 200 years before.

About two thirds of the way up, the column turned left and filed out across the field, which appeared to be a recently mown meadow. Twice we halted and then were ordered to shift farther down to allow the last of the troops on our left to get onto the field. And then we waited.

The slope was gradual, although here and there were brief drops and levels. 200 yards or more below us the corn stalks ran all the way across the back of our meadow. Beyond the corn lay the water of Narragansett Bay, though to the right the view was ruined by a large multi-storied building which some said was a nuclear plant and others a plastics factory. To our far right the slope faded away into more woods above which were visible the distant spans of the Mt. Hope Bridge. The one feature on the battlefield was a small wooden redoubt slightly to our left and about 50 yards below our line. Here were two fieldpieces reportedly handled by Lamb's Artillery. And farther up behind us stood a reported 10,000 spectators.

Now Palmer had us count off by fours to form sections, and since our musicians had ditched the drums behind the lines we somehow had full sections. I was number two man in the front rank of the last section on the left of our line.

We had three young musicians in our company, and one of them —

apparently the oldest — was allowed to remain on the field as a brigade runner. The others were ordered off but came back. Palmer understandably got quite upset, for no one should have to take responsibility for kids on the firing line. Their father seemed to be a bit thick about this and it was some minutes before Palmer could get through to him and the kids moved up among the spectators.

At 2:28 there was some very casual firing from the woods well off to the left front, but we could not even see the smoke. A three-masted, yellow sailing vessel, with all sails set, drifted across the bay from behind that large building. It looked like the H.M.S Rose but some men said it was a new replica vessel from Newport, the Providence.

Now the British entered the field from the left on a path just in front of the cornfield; and as they formed, the guns aboard the Rose** — as the ship indeed was — opened fire in sequence. There was a three to four second delay between the flash and the sound of the fire. Now our artillery responded. Ther appeared to be five or six pieces stationed behind us but out of our sight. Lamb's fire was quite spectacular with some gunpowder additive causing a star-burst effect in the smoke.

Even before the artillery duel, Palmer had ordered "prime and load," so it was impossible to take pictures of this action. Now at the command of the brigadier Palmer told off five men, including Peter Murray and Bobby MacLean, to join the brigade skirmishing line. This line advanced as did those of other brigades, and Lamb's redoubt ceased firing for the while.

Among the redcoats a swarm of blue-coated artillery men hauled a fieldpiece through a steep gully just to the right of center, unlimbered, and fired a couple of rounds. Their infantry advanced and were soon obscured in smoke as volleys from our skirmishers responded to their fire. The American volleys were cleanly fired with no straggling.

Perhaps five or six volleys were fired before the skirmish line withdrew and rejoined respective units. Now the second phase of the battle opened. It appeared that every other brigade was ordered to advance down the hill, leaving half of the army, including us, in place. I can't recall our ever having gotten into action early, and of course we all feared another Princeton, where we were sent in too late.

The action below us went on for some time, and the forward units were not withdrawing. Finally it was decided that they were far enough off that we could safely fire over them. And so we began. As always the front rank knelt and full-cocked with muskets upright and the rear rank poised firelocks at full-cock at the word "make ready." "Take aim" brought all muskets to a 30° slope of elevation. The fire was simultaneous. "Front rank up!" After a pause to see that all was in order: "Prime and load." One lieutenant stood by each rank to see that all loaded muskets were brought to "shoulder." At their word that all were ready, Palmer ordered us back through the firing procedure.

The brigade runners were more enthusiastic than bright. Twice kids ran across in front of our lines not twenty yards away as we were quite obviously about to fire.

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I noticed a peculiar sound effect on this field. American volleys echoed back from a section of woods well off to our left front. The sound which came back was a shallow treble like that of a wave washing over a pebbly beach. It added effectively to the atmosphere of the day.

At length our forward units were ordered to withdraw to their original positions. By now H.M.S. Rose had long since drifted south out of sight of the battle. Our artillery fire resumed.

And now we and the other "reserve" units moved down the hill to within fifty yards of the enemy. It was a pleasure to find the Xth Foot — in what is presumably their final battle*** — directly opposite us. We fired a good half dozen or more volleys from this point. I should note here that I have never before "eaten" so much black powder. It tasted more of salt than of soap.

His bad leg troubling him, Bob Childs went down as a casualty at this advanced position. He later reported that, after our withdrawal and the subsequent advance of the enemy to within ten yards of where he lay, he was constantly showered with cartridge paper fired — illegally — from British muskets. As usual we could look straight down the barrels of their aimed volleys. At some point Bob chased off a pushy British officer by drawing his bayonet. It brings to mind the time an officer of the Xth kicked my knee as I lay "dead" before the Jason Russell house in Arlington.

We withdrew and found it difficult to maintain our lines in the ascent, for leather-soled shoes have little purchase on a grassy slope. Furthermore a patch of briars lay before the center of our line. Yet we kept our formation quite well. Once back on the original line a short "left wheel" adjusted us to make room for another outfit, and our muskets went back into action.

Palmer had ordered casualties — second and fourth man in the front rank of each section — and had now found too many men going down. Dan McLaughlin, to my right, had problems. His was one of the fouled muskets discovered during inspection, and as he had attempted to clean it the brush had broken off inside the barrel thus rendering his piece unfirable. All afternoon he had shouted "Bang!" when the rest of us fired. Now he fell as a disgusted casualty. I told him that our next volley would be revenge for Brooklyn.

After my third round since our withdrawal I decided it was high time to get some combat photos, so on the next fire from the redcoats I bellyflopped with a shout. Immediately Ron Davis came up to get my spare cartridges — for once we were firing as many as we had been promised. Counting the ones that he took I found that I had fired twenty-one rounds with only one misfire.

I kept quite busy now firing thirty-two slides. I got quite a shock to my right eardrum when I turned slightly to catch the IVth giving a volley. The muzzle blast two feet from my ear was most impressive, and at every volley thereafter I was sure to keep my head low.

As I lay there camera in hand I was asked for any other cartridges, and I tossed back my two foil-wrapped packets. On my face in the mown field, I was happy to find that my morning hay fever pill was working.

In a while the whole army advanced down the hill as the battle

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moved into its final phase. It was a fine sight, but I could see no details. And shortly a cease fire was ordered. Minutes went by and nothing appeared to happen other than an exchange of taunts. I clearly heard one redcoat shout: "I tried your wife, and I prefer my dog." I later learned that during this interval an armistice was being arranged so that both armies would withdraw from the field without there being a clear victor. The IVth Middlesex gave the British a "present arms" salute, while the IIId Essex to their right turned their backs.

At the conclusion of the parley, the American line faced about and began to march back up to its original position. The entire right wing, a Rhode Island brigade, blithely quick-stepped off at an angle from the rest of the army, and all the shouting of a shil-[lelagh?] waving brigadier could not bring them back. Off to my left two campfollowers hastened down to help one of the wounded — Mel Fuller had wrenched his knee.

I later learned of one other injury. Someone in the IIId Essex had reportedly triple-loaded and so dislocated his shoulder. The blast had blown out his flashguard and some five men to his right had received powder burns.

Once the IVth Middlesex had passed me, I arose and fell in, this time at the head of the column. Then with the fifes and drums in the lead we marched up the hill and out on to the road at 3:55. Once again Palmer had to shout to "Get those damn kids out of the line!"

Since the march back was generally downhill it was an easy pace, and the camp followers tended to mix in among the troops along the way. As we passed behind the high school some brigade officer ordered a halt for no apparent reason, and one of our lieutenants repeated the order. Meanwhile our fifes and drums continued into camp playing merrily, unaware that the rest of the army had halted. After a moment Palmer marched us off, leaving the army to the inefficiency of the officers.

Obviously the lunch lines would be repeated at supper, so none of us hurried to the cafeteria. I joined the Concord crowd sitting around the Kidders' trailer and gladly removed my slings and coat. From the Childs' camper I got my badly depleted bottle of gin, two quarts of tonic, lime bottle, and a box of Wheat Thins. My tin mug will hold a gin and tonic containing a pint of tonic, so between that time and sunset I wiped out my supply in four drinks. With the ice from Bruce's cooler it was far more refreshing than mere beer. Oddly enough I could detect no effect from the alcohol and wondered if the gin had gone bad.

During this respite there was much excitement as the Childs' dog Frosty, terrified by musket fire around the camp, had pulled off its collar, dug under a chain-link fence, and run off through a briar patch. Immediately Bob and Audrey had set out in their car, and Peter and Stacy in his. Happily a neighbor along the main road had found the dog, taken it in, and reported it to the camp H.Q. Within half an hour or so the reunion had been made and Frosty was safely inside the camper.

About 6:30 Peter, Stacy and I went to the school to check on some items being sold, but I was necessarily being frugal for once. The

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end of the summer, a month before the next paycheck, is no time to throw cash around, if you have any. We then went to the cafeteria where the lines were no more than ten persons long. Supper consisted of two broiled hot dogs, beans, tossed salad, a roll, and some kind of orange drink.

After supper I wandered back to finish off my drinking. As the twilight set in a while later a small pick up truck drove through the camp offering 200 left over hot dogs to any takers. I understand that many of the family dogs in the camp feasted that night.

When the Kidders and Chisholms sat down to their steak dinner, I was asked to stay, and eventually I had some salad and a couple of rolls. The talk around the table generally centered on education in Massachusetts.

It had grown quite chilly and so I had happily put on my coat once again. Once the table had been cleared, we all moved over by the Roses' trailer where a small bonfire had been made. Along with conversation there was a peculiar snack called "birdseed": peanuts, raisins, and M+M's mixed. The flavor was not bad, but the mixture is quite rich.

A larger bonfire was now blazing up in the center of the general area held by the IVth. It took some time, but the music finally started and several of our party decided to join the glee club. Judy Kidder was not impressed with the idea of an all-night songfest.

The circle of chairs had been drawn close around the fire because of the chill. Les had is guitar ready, but things went rather slowly as he searched for songs that everyone knew.

One of the ladies directed over to a camp kitchen where my tin mug was filled with "Stillwater Stew," a concoction of Scotch, brandywine, orange juice, tea, and cloves, invented to fight off the cold in upper New York last October. The hot tin felt very good in my hands. When the first batch was gone, a second was prepared.

At 11:30 the parents shagged all the kids from the area and into their tents so that we could get into the "Limerick Song," for which Les had prepared xeroxed limericks to distribute. Some folks evaded participating, while others had trouble in reading their verses. The sounds began to draw men from other companies as well as some of the kids, who had to be chased back to bed.

By 12:15 AM Les's fingers had given out, and the evening effectively ended. There would be an early call in the morning, for Tony Walker had asked Palmer if we would participate in the withdawal from Rhode Island and of course we would. Assembly would beat at 8 AM.

After a last visit to the high school, I turned in at 12:50. I was able to wrap my blanket over my feet and eventually pulled my coat up to my chin and slept in comfort.

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Notes

*: Frank Goulart. "Crock" was a briefly popular daily comic strip spoofing the French Foreign Legion.

**: Decades later H.M.S. Rose was purchased by a film company and converted to H.M.S. Surprise for the 2003 Russell Crowe naval epic Master and Commander.

***: In 1778 the entry of France into the war as our ally changed all British strategic concerns. The "sugar islands" of the Caribbean — far more valuable at that time than the thirteen mainland colonies — and Britain itself were potential targets for French invasion. Regiments would have to be withdrawn from the current theaters of war and redeployed to defend areas unexpectedly under threat. There would not be enough strength to continue to hold the territory reclaimed in 1777, and so Philadelphia had to be abandoned so that New York might be strengthened. In late 1778 the Tenth Foot was "drafted": i.e. ablebodied men were transferred to regiments which would continue to serve in the "colonies." While some regiments were redeployed to the Caribbean, the now understrength Tenth was sent back to England to recruit to its full strength and serve out the war as a force defending the homeland.

Because of this fact of regimental history, Vincent Keogh would officially retire the regimental colors in a ceremony at the end of the 1978 "campaign season." Our concern at this time was that the premiere redcoat reenactment organization was about to disappear.

Sunday, 27 August 1978

Camp wasn't at all noisy when I awoke at 6:15, so I caught a few more winks until 7:00, when sunlight began to creep under the side of my tent. The sky was quite clear and the air pleasantly cool.

We hurried over to the cafeteria so that any delays might not keep us from our 8:00 o'clock assembly. Breakfast was the same as yesterday and lines were non-existent. It seemed that some folks had already departed the camp for home.

As we were finishing, Tony Walker came around looking for Bob Childs, and once he had found him he told Bob to wait for some good news. Momentarily he returned and presented Bob with a Navy Arms Brown Bess, the escutcheon plate of which was enscribed "Battle of Rhode Island; August 29, 1778." Bob had bought the winning lottery ticket as an afterthought the evening before.

At 8:00 we began to fall in near Palmer's camper, and there were noticeably fewer of us than yesterday's thirty-six musketmen. We marched to the parking lot, where I saw George Brooks drilling his nine riflemen. Tony Walker, in his green Continental Marine uniform, was trotting up and down the line trying to get other units organized. At great length he gave up in disgust and, asking if he could join us, ordered the advance. Someone answered that he would have to march with the campfollowers, and another quickly retorted that that was asking for trouble.

At 8:25 we stepped off, the IVth being the lead unit, and marched down the street behind the school. Almost immediately there was a halt, and Palmer asked Joe Rose and the fellow marching beside him to act as crossing guards for the column. No sooner had they agreed than four motorcycle police and a state police car arrived to serve as our escorts.

Down the hill we marched and turned right at the foot. We next turned left onto Rte 138. Along the way people came out into their front yards, many still in their nightclothes. A short way down the highway the column turned right again, and I assumed that it would be a short stretch now to the shore. I was right, but we then marched for some distance along the shore.

As we marched along Bobby MacLean pointed out Valhalla St. Quite appropriate to people in our line of hobby.

Eventually we turned off the road — of necessity since we had neared a bridge which had been washed out years before. The beach was fairly narrow and littered with broken shells, and we found it easier to move down to where the tide had packed the sand hard. The IVth moved all the way down to make room for the whole army on the beach.

We faced right and stood at rest looking out over the Sakonnet River. Now Palmer informed us that he needed seven volunteers — all experienced swimmers — to row over to Tiverton, and about fifteen of us responded. Palmer had us select numbers between one and fifty, and as he did so Tony Walker came along to check on the delay. He expressed disbelief at a commander's being so considerate of volunteers. I took #35 and it turned out to be the perfect choice.

Seven of us hiked back up the beach to where six or so rowboats of various styles lay. The Eneguess, Dearborn Co.'s bateau from the expedition to Quebec, was present. There was also the longboat of

the H.M.S. Rose. The other vessels were strictly inauthentic.

Three of us were assigned to a flat-bottom, brown steel boat about ten feet long. One man — the smallest — went to the bow, the oarsman sat amidships, and I sat to port in the stern. The man who would sit to my right first helped to launch us and then carefully stepped aboard. We in the stern had to stretch our legs straight out to clear our knees from the motion of the oarsman.

The water was quite calm and the trip pleasant for all but the oarsman. A small Coast Guard rescue boat was close at hand to watch the crossing and we soon understood why: a tidal rip existed between the concrete foundations of that washed out bridge. At any time that the rip became too severe, the crossing would be aborted.

It was not long before we ground ashore, where my landing was most awkward but successful. A fife and drum band, Barton's Raiders of Tiverton, played tunes from time to time.

Once ashore I went over to check with Frank Gould about the possibility of firing a salute. Because we were reenacting a secret withdrawal, there was to be no firing over on the island, but we felt it likely that a taunting volley might be given once we had succeeded. Frank gave me two of his wax paper cartridges and we prepared to clean our locks.

A spectator questioned Frank about our company's home base, and when he mentioned Sudbury she responded that her brother-in-law had been a captain in Concord. I introduced myself and found that the lady was the sister-in-law of Bill Dolan.* I then got a lengthy talk on the activities of local historical societies and preservation groups, from which I extricated myself by going about the cleaning of my lock.

By now at least two ferryings had been completed and another was in progress, so it seemed that the whole army, which was no more than one half of yesterday's size, might come across. In one of the small boats came Les Longworth and Dave Moylan** playing fifes and flying the company flag — the only colors so displayed on the water. Each boatload that landed was applauded by the very small audience. A news photographer from Providence was quite busy snapping shots and taking names.

I had boarded my boat around 9:50 and the whole operation was over by 10:30. I believe that only a dozen or so men did not ferry across.

Palmer's jeep was now parked in the lot above this beach and a half dozen of us got into it. The ceremony ended by trailing off without ceremony. There seemed to be some uncertainty about leaving. Some of the company children had come over by car and were now temporarily misplaced, but in a bit we drove off to get back to camp. Palmer's voice was completely lost by now.

Back in camp Tony Walker stood by the tailgate of a green station wagon, distributing the left over bagged lunches from Saturday. Each bag contained two balogna sandwiches, a pack of chips, and some cookies. There were cans of cola and bananas as well. Tony was eager to dispose of it all.

The IVth was the last unit to pack up. Bob, Audrey, and I took even longer than most, and we saw the caravan depart while we still

were securing the camper.

At 1:51 we set out leaving but a half dozen cars on the field, including the truck of the commander of the 64th Foot, who was also a suttler and had done a brisk business in black felt hats.

Traffic was unusually smooth for a Sunday, and we arrived in Watertown at 3:10 PM. Typically my face was sunburned and cut in places by my spectacles. My thighs and calves also ached from the kneeling and rising on the front rank in battle.

Notes

*: Bill Dolan was the captain of the Concord Minute Men 1969-1971 and 1973-1975.

**: Dan Moylan, more likely.