A Journal of
The Rochambeau March to Yorktown
as Kept by
John F. Denis
of the
Regiment de Saintonge

Friday, 9 October 1981

After 22 months of preparation, we begin this night to bring the bicentennial period to a fiiting close. The reality of this fact, the sense of an ending has not yet really hit most of us.

My largest problem of this day was the need to prepare lesson plans for six days for the benefit of my substitute teacher. Usually I am only able to see a day or two ahead, yet I managed to fill the planbook as required; and with this chore accomplished, I felt my excitement grow as the day advanced. It was as though I were facing AEQ-75 once again.

Upon completing the drive from Springfield to Lexington, I immediately set about double-checking the list of necessities which I had filled out two nights before. As each series of items was cross-checked, I loaded them into the car. At the conclusion of this business I found missing only the kielbasa which I had left in Springfield.

Farewells to Judy completed, I departed Lexington at 6:17 PM. The sky showed the same darkly melodramatic yet unproductive clouds that it had for the past several days. It was 50° at this time.

I drove out Rte 2A to Rte 2 and then over Sudbury Rd. to the lot behind the Sudbury Town Hall. Here a convoy was to gather for a 7 PM departure. I had pictured a rather large caravan, but at 6:44, when I arrived, there were about five vehicles.

Several weeks before, Les Longworth had offered me a berth in his van, and I had decided that this would be far preferable to the Rhode Island Natl. Guard busses.*

At Les's arrival I was pleased to find that his van was towing a camper and that we would therefore have adequate room. Our little party included Leslie III, Adam Longworth, and the Wrong Reverend Newt Hinckley — Pere Raoul for this operation. Some dismay was expressed at the amount of kit which I was bringing, but we shall see whether I have erred.

There was no clear indication of how many had planned to join our convoy, and it was 7:25 before Lt. Ron Davis, commander of the convoy, got us under way.

The ride out Rte 20 and south on 495 was uneventful. The fun began when we attempted to find East Greenwich, R.I., site of our camping area. The CB set buzzed with confused directions and derisive retorts. Ron was soon dubbed with the "handle" "Froggy Leader," which he inadvertantly changed to "Foggy Leader." At this time the name seemed all the more appropriate.

The local authorities added to the confusion by not marking the entrance to the E. Greenwich High School, our campsite. We passed the school and moved several miles along before seeking help from a local citizen. With his information in hand, Les fell out of

column — we had already taken another wrong turn — and led a mutinous line of vehicles to a street called "Avenger Drive." Sure enough, this was the school's driveway.

It was around 9:40 now. At the school we stopped to register. In the hallway between the auditorium and the cafeteria stood several tables. Signs listed the five French regiments and for each a registrar waited with a box of large manila envelopes, one for each registered participant. When the name was checked off against the list, an envelope bearing the participant's name and address was issued. Inside were a laminated id card and the reenactment medallion. If the participant had a car along, the envelope included id bumper stickers and travel directions for various stages of the march.

Heading back to our van, we found Capt Leo Zschau. Most of our comrades in arms had come down much earlier in the day, and now Leo directed us to the area taken by the Saintonge. A green dumpster had been spray-painted with the regiment's name and an arrow.

In an open field which lay between the school's driveway and a highway, campers and tents had been set up in two parallel lines. The second line being incomplete, we easily found a space in between Dan Moylan and George Hamilton.

The housekeeping situation was no problem for us, and the rest of our evening was spent in small talk with friends.

It was around 11 PM when we turned in.

Note

*: Les's wife, Jane, would have the use of my car for the duration of this campaign.

Saturday, 10 October 1981

Snide comments were offered about people who can function as early as 5 AM. It was about 7 o'clock when I decided to rise. It had been cool overnight but not unpleasant. I was greatly helped this morning by a down-filled vest which Bob Childs had lent me the night before.

After dry-shaving in front of Les's side-view mirror, I headed for breakfast in the school cafeteria. There were two food lines, both offering scrambled eggs, English muffins, sausage patty, and hash brown potatoes. The whole thing was substantial enough, if not terribly tasty, and I washed it down with orange juice.

Having eaten, I walked to the hallway, where several vendors had set up their wares. I received no special discount despite having helped one group haul its boxed goods out of the storage area. I did pick up a quality medallion commemorating the Rochambeau landing of 1780, a rather good Rochambeau March tee-shirt, and a book on the French in Rhode Island, which turned out to be about contemporary characters rather than our predecessors.

There was a call to "fall in" in full dress at 9 AM, and I now headed for the camp, delaying en route just long enough to purchase the obligatory "RMY" mug. At $15 this item cost twice what its sister AEQ mug had in 1975.

The business of dressing inside a small trailer is at best cumbersome, but it is greatly complicated by the character of a full French uniform. The 20-button gaiters are the great mischief-makers. In our hurry there were often three trying to share the cramped quarters simultaneously. I soon learned the challenge of trying to squeeze through a door while wearing cartridge box on right hip and sword on left.

Assembly was held in the narrow field between our camp and the highway. The ground was littered with much dead scrub which caught on gaiters and made marching quite awkward. Overhead the skies became more and more threatening.

In the end it was about 10:15 before the officers began to take us through drill. Col. Palmer True has finally found the right device to save his voice. Quietly he speaks a command to Sgt Major Warren Coulter, who very effectively barks the commands to the full regiment, Captains Leo Zschau and Joe Bausk repeating them to their companies. (I should note here an alteration in regimental organization, which has occurred since it was first developed. Originally there were to have been four companies, each with one lieutenant, the first and third with captains as well. At some point during our summer drills, these units were consolidated into two companies under the captains. The old "four-company system" is maintained only for use in combat.)

Numerous members of Saintonge were to straggle in at different times, but we were surprised at how many appeared to be absent at this time. In fact some of those missing from ranks were at this time sitting in campers trying to finish uniforms or were off seeking help for malfunctioning vehicles.

The drill itself was short enough. We let it go at a brief run through of the manual of arms. The "demi-tour" or about face caused the most trouble, with undergrowth tangling our feet.

Palmer passed on an outline of the afternoon's schedule and then

Saturday, 10 October 1981

dismissed us to pick up the one pound ration of black powder being issued by the march organizers. There seemed too little time to roll cartridges now, and I had already prepared 130, so I just spent a while visiting and working on this journal before lunch.

The lunch was a beef potpie with gravy and carrots Although the crust was a touch doughy, the food was quite acceptable.

The camp was still quite deserted, and I decided to risk my uniform while rolling a few cartridges. Setting up the gear on the tailgate of Bob Harrison's truck, I rolled about ten before conceding that the wind was just a little too blustery.

Around 12:30 we fell in once again on the parade ground where we had drilled this morning. With the arrival of several more of our men during the morning, the ranks were now a bit more filled out.

Upon falling in, each company formed in three ranks, a sergeant to the right and a corporal to the left of the front rank. The Sgt Major stood to the center, facing the ranks and seeing to their ordering. Ens. Barry Real would fall in to the extreme right of the front rank, the sergeant of the Premiere Compagnie falling in just to his left and the first two companies aligning on the white, colonel's drapeau. At the center of our formation stood Ens. Bob Bruce with the kaleidoscopic regimental drapeau, and to his left I, as sergeant of Troisieme Compagnie, fell in, the last two companies aligning on us. Within the company, men were posted according to height, the tallest to the right of the column. In marching out, the men were first ordered to face "a droite" thus placing the taller men to the front of each company and forming the regiment into a column of threes.

Off we now marched through the camp as the Deuxieme Compagnie played fifes and drums. We moved a distance out along the driveway named Avenger Drive in our first full regimental performance.

We were to board Natl. Guard busses for the drive from East Greenwich to Providence, yet although vehicles appeared to be available we waited on the grassy slopes by the drive for sometime.

At 1:15 we boarded several of the busses. A portion of the available transport was army trucks a la AEQ, and Palmer advised us to get quickly to the busses so as to keep from soiling our uniforms on the dirty truck seats. By now large sections of sky were bright blue and the sun was warming us.

In time our convoy moved out, crossing the neighboring highway and advancing over some side roads before getting onto Rte 95. Our progress was remarkably slow, and Eric Vollheim soon was airing complaints about the entire matter of riding a bus, a vehicle to which he objects for reason of principle rather than claustrophobia.

So long was this trek that it was 2:40 when we finally stepped off the bus and onto a rather wide street, which runs alongside a large cemetery. Here there was more delay as units shifted into position and camp followers sought good locations from which to view the proceedings. At this point I had no idea of the afternoon's program.

I believe that it was now that I saw Crosby Milliman for the first time on this trek. He was mounted on a gray horse, bewigged, and decked out in a full general's uniform — dark blue coat with

gold lacing all about it. It was said that his French officer's gorget was an original.

His outfit confirmed our earlier information that he would portray General le Comte de Rochambeau during the march to Yorktown. Now this might prove awkward during the coming week, for he would apparently be our supreme commander, and yet there was no love between him and the men of Sudbury.

I digress here in order to explain the source of animosity — or should I write sources? Back during AEQ, when Milliman portrayed Major R.J. Meigs and commanded the third division, there occurred a march over the Great Carrying Place. This 8-mile hike was turned into a divisional race, with Meigs's Division trying to catch and pass Greene's Division, under command of Tony Walker.

Now Ward Company — a principally Sudbury unit — was with Greene's and was quite loyal to its colonel. Joe Kolb, having falling back while tying a boot lace, found himself in short order marching with the van of Meigs's unit, where he overheard Milliman explain a gag to be played on Walker: as Meigs's passed Greene's, the men were to whistle "Waltzing Matilda."

Joe quickly double-timed ahead to warn his commander, and of course there was then no chance for Milliman to win. In fact the tables were turned, and as Milliman reached the end of the trail, he found the Sudbury men serenading him with his own tune.

The significance of the tune has never to my knowledge been explained, but one suspects a more than playful point to the game, for witnesses report that Milliman exploded and vented his rage on the eternally innocent Joe Bausk, threatening to evict him from the Expedition. Walker soothed his colleague and all seemed to blow over, save in the hearts of Sudbury men.

Les Longworth added that Milliman's accolades for the companies of his division at the final dinner in Quebec further stirred bad feeling among the other companies. I must confess that I myself had rather enjoyed sharing in some praise from my commander on that night, so I am partly guilty of any breach of good taste at that time.

The following summer, during the big bicentennial parade in Marlborough, another incident occurred of similar nature but more serious in detail. While waiting for the lead divisions to pass, the Sudbury Fifes and Drums began to jam at their side street staging area. Milliman stepped from the rear, drew his sword, and stalked toward the musicians. Expecting nothing more than horseplay, the men were shocked as he slammed the sword across Dick Ruquist's drum and ordered them to cease playing on penalty of eviction from the parade. Ruquist exploded with threats of physical consequences shouls sword touch drum once more, pointed out Milliman's complete lack of authority, and sent him scuttling away.

A few years later, when Milliman had marched from Sudbury to Concord on the 19th, an incident which might have passed without remark, seemed — in view of past experience — to firmly fix the cap of contempt on all views of the man. A stickler for authenticity and a collector of fine military antiques, Milliman appeared in sunglasses with his new hat wrapped in plastic for protection from the mist. Caustic observations about those who wear "breadwrappers" on their heads moved him to set himself aright.

Saturday, 10 October 1981

Now I had heard of a touch of shrewishness in the man back in '75, but I'd no direct unpleasantness from him. And after an experience such as the march to Quebec, I was content to overlook what may have been exaggerations by agrieved parties. A kind of affection for all involved has grown up over the passing time. Yet with the repeated complaints against this man by "comrades-in-arms" for whom I feel a much more immediate respect and affection, I must confess that at this time my feeling toward our "Rochambeau" was merely indifference.

As Milliman passed the Soissonnais, his own regiment this time out, those men came to full salute. As he approached Saintoge, officers turned their backs and made no move to get us so much as to fall in. Milliman short-circuited the snub by not riding past us at this time.

The Soissonais now marched past, providing us the first opportunity to view them in formation. From certain individuals in their ranks we had heard much of their superior appearance over the past several months. Indeed their officers were very well decked out with full uniforms. In the ranks the numbers seemed quite impressive.

It was the close inspection of the ranks, which ruined the first impression. Uniformity was the exception rather than the rule. Absurd white hunting frocks were evident. Women carried muskets and children musical instruments. Perhaps the first twenty or so men in wore good, passable uniforms of small clothes; from that point back it was a shambles. It could scarcely be credited that more than a handful would be admitted to Yorktown, where authenticity was a ferocious watchdog.

With the sky once again overcast, at 3:05 the parade stepped off, moving downhill along the street and then turning sharply to the right to enter the cemetery. As we moved along the cemetery drive, it was no more than fifty yards before we turned left. At this point our music fell out to form off to the side with the other music units, and their absence was quickly felt by the musket men, who had troubles keeping step.

The column took a second left very shortly and then halted along an asphalt walk. The divisions of our army were now ranged side by side, and the Saintonge was — I later noticed — placed next to the small gray monument to the French soldiers buried here.

There was a series of speeches delivered from a stand off to our right front. I could see little of the speakers. A priest fluent in French offered the opening prayer and included a translation. The mayor spoke for a bit. But the key figure seemed to be a certain professor of history from Providence College, who thundered on about the Irish and the British foe ad nauseam. For a professional man of history he was far too ready to slip from the topic at hand. All but dragging the current situation in Ulster directly into the proceedings, he was a keen embarrassment to many of us.

I should note a threat to safety which occurred during the prayer. We were ordered to perform the "genu en terre" and did so. However, the asphalt was slippery for leather-heeled shoes, and within seconds a man to the rear of Premiere Compagnie had slipped and nearly put his bayonet into the face of another.

Wreathes having been laid and battle ribbons awarded to the

regiments, we faced front and marched counterclockwise around the area to pick up our music once again and to move on out of the cemetery. Commands unheard at the head of our company indicated that officers would have to take special care to pass the orders all along the line.

The column now marched along that first street upon which we had originally formed. The streets were almost devoid of traffic and pedestrians. At first we were inclined to pass it off as an indifferent neighborhood, but in time we found that all along the route the audience was never greater than occasional clusters of two or three individuals. There must have been a really great bowling match on television.

As we neared the bottom of the long slope, the sun once more broke through. To the right we turned and advanced up a steep slope to the grounds of the state capitol building. We now took a long way around so that the army might proceed in all its splendor up the front walk to the capitol steps, but we might have saved the shoe leather, for the front lawn was empty of spectators. Moreover, the smooth bricks of the walk further threatened those of us with leather heels.

The army halted with divisions formed side by side as before. The Soissonnais was to our right and the Lauzun's Legion, with red-coated infantry from Dillon's regiment, stood to our left. Beyond these units I could see little.

From a lectern on the capitol steps we received yet another prayer in French. Governor Garrahy, the patron of the Rochambeau March, offered a few words and was clearly quite pleased at our turnout. A delegation of two Hungarian diplomats, their presence unexplained, presented a bronze plaque to the State of Rhode Island and requested that the governor take good care of it.

At the conclusion, our own Rochambeau came down from the steps to review the troops as artillery pieces blasted from the far side of the building. Saintonge was the one regiment to fail to present arms, and I could not help but think it something more than an oversight.

During the speech-making I had examined the crowd of spectators on the capitol steps. At least 40% were in Natl. Guard uniforms and present on assignment. Carefully guaging the rest of the group, I found that it would be an exaggeration to number them at as many as 120. Apparently only in publicity had our sponsors failed in their preparations.

Division by division the army now marched past the capitol steps and off to our left across the lawn. The manoeuvre went nicely enough until they marched us up a short, steep slope. Although to my knowledge no one fell down, few were able to maintain step and the lines wavered.

The column halted along the north side of the capitol building, and almost immediately ranks were broken in a charge for supper. It looked like the storming of a palace in the French Revolution as the armed mob swept up the stairs and over the verandas in search of food.

It was back at the front, just inside the main door, that tables had been set up bearing boxes of Col. Sanders-style chicken and

fixings. Many troops sat in the hallways to eat, but I went back out and selected a granite banister as my table. The food seemed fair enough.

Recalling Palmer's advice about the advantages of the busses over the trucks, several of us set out to find seats in the convoy now lining the street across the statehouse grounds. It was 6:15 when I boarded, but it was 6:45 before we set out. Since all of the troops had long since been on the vehicles, I assume that the delay was required in order to coordinate traffic control. Once we had set out, our movement was slow but steady.

We later learned that Winnie Rose, who was to have been picked up by a friend, was left behind. She had with her her son Joey, who was born only this past July. Since he is not yet fond of chicken dinners, she sought out a place to feed him privately. Joe Rose suspects that his son may be the only baby ever to have dined in a broom closet of the state house of Rhode Island.

It was 7:23 when most of us got back to East Greenwich in the dark. Somewhere en route I had noticed a temperature reading of 48°.

There was activity up at the school itself this evening. In particular there was a showing of Errol Flynn's "Charge of the Light Brigade" in the auditorium.

No campfires were allowed — at least no wood had been provided. There was an impromptu gathering around a lantern, and soon two more lanterns were added to our "fire." Empty bottles and cans were thrown on the fire as "logs," and in good time there was music aplenty, albeit without the Longworth guitar. Newcomers to the regiment found this to be one of the more endearing aspects of our activities.

We roused more of the neighbors until Palmer himself turned his lights back on and came to join in. Bad timing, for within minutes everyone was drifting off for sleep.

I note here that early this morning I had torn the rotting liner of my sleeping bag. Down feathers everywhere. I stitched the wound as best I could at noontime, but it was clear that I would not be able to use the bag as more than a mattress for the rest of this trip.

Sunday, 11 October 1981

This being our first day for convoy travel we rose early enough. It was cold. I tried shaving indoors, but I found that the mirror fogged too readily and I made a horrible job of it.

Breakfast was the same as Saturday's and again was quite welcome.

The sky was quite clear, and we were treated from time to time to vees of low-flying Canada geese en route to or from their ponds.

Our bachelor pad on wheels was one of the easiest homes to prepare for the road, for it was never unhitched and never leveled from campsite to campsite.

While the others were breaking camp, I hitched a ride into town with Mark Dodge. He was in search of gas, and I hoped to find a Sunday newspaper. From the gas station I spied a CVS down the block. There was a short wait for its official opening, and then I picked up a Providence paper. In it I found but one photograph — Crosby Milliman and a Natl. Guard general — below which was a brief notice of yesterday's activities. With such media support it's no wonder that we had drawn such throngs.

Upon arriving at the campground we found the whole Saintonge Division drawn up in four parallel lines. I suppose we presented a sight not uncommon in St Jo, Missouri, in the 1850's. There was much noise at our tardy return, yet we still had plenty to wait before setting off.

During the anticipatory lull, Leo came along to introduce his attack frog. On his head squatted a stuffed, felt froggy with tongue jauntily extended from the side of his mouth. He was a birthday present who had arrived with a fifth of Wild Turkey in his arms.

At 9:14 came the call to move out, and so one last time we headed up old Avenger Drive and left across the overpass. I did not follow our route too closely in these early stages, but I did note that we soon were on Rte 49, a remarkably rough and narrow road over which to send a convoy. I believe that at least in the early stages we were quite close to the original path followed by Rochambeau.

Along one particularly steep stretch we found the transport vehicle with all of our artillery sitting by the side of the road in an apparent breakdown. It was on such long hills that one could best get a grasp of the size of this operation.

The citizen band radios, which most of our vehicles carried, were set by pre-arrangement on Channel 7 for the convoy. I have heard it said that efforts had been made to reserve 7 for us exclusively, and in fact there was almost no chatter from the outside to be heard.

Now the CB's were without doubt of great benefit in the long run, but within the hour novelty was giving way to irritation with the blather. Deadly earnest voices would call out information of dubious importance, and a dozen or more voices would relay the message up or down the line. Les made several attempts to lighten things up, but "deadly Earnest" was clearly in charge.

In time we moved over to Rte 52 and then onto 32/2. As we rode along we began to dig into the bagged lunches which we had picked up from the cafeteria after breakfast. There were cold cut sandwiches, potato chips, apples, and canned soda — not a bad meal.

Near Hartford we moved onto Rte 84 for the rest of the run across Connecticut. I believe that Saintonge was moving as far across the state on this first day as any division.

Sunday, 11 October 1981

It was now that I learned that vehicle bumper stickers had been color-coded by divisions, Saintonge having blue and Soissonnais red. So there was much concern on the radio over the appearance of a green sticker. As it turned out this lost sheep was one of our own who had been issued the wrong stickers.

Around 12:30 we left 84 at Newtown, Connecticut, the ninth campsite of Rochambeau's army in 1781. While the rest of the convoy moved along under escort, Les stopped at a filling station. Through use of the CB, we easily got back on the right trail and within minutes were in the lot of the middle school.

There was a delay in the lot, and then the column moved around to the fields on the other side of the building. Later the word was that at first it had been intended for us to camp on the hardtop. As we were shifting location, we could see the Essex Militia setting up the 18th century camp in front of the school. Les placed our rig next to the goal post of a soccer field.

With a fall-in scheduled for 2 PM there was plenty of time for getting into uniform. It was 2:05 when the regiment formed in standard order at the near end of the camp. Busses took us through the small town, and from the ride it appeared that our march should be chiefly downhill.

We debarked and formed up in the lot of the town fire/ambulance station. Step off came at 2:55 and we did in fact move downhill along the main street toward the town hall.

It is interesting that in smaller towns there is often no parallel route along which to detour traffic, and so a parade may take only half of the roadway. Thus it was here.

At the town hall we halted and then faced right, directly into the sunshine. The traffic continued to flow behind us, and there was a good-sized crowd in front. Either from its weakness or from its absence, the p.a. system could not compete with the little extraneous noise, and we were left in the dark as to the program. At one point I could hear recorded music and could see a gentleman filming some activity. I later heard that a little girl in a ballerina rig had performed. The connection between our presence and her performance was never entirely clear.

After half an hour of nothing to do, we resumed our march down the very handsome main street past small groups of spectators. We were in open country before we came to the intersection at which we turned left. At the end of our climb up this street, we were facing the middle school once again. It was 4:15 when we fell out on the "muster field."

Palmer set a ten-minute break before we should fall in once again for the ride to our battle re-enactment. The battle was to take place on the football field at the high school some distance from our campsite.

When we arrived at the high school, we were ordered into parade formation on the hill above the field. The field itself was cut into a long, low hill in such a way that one end zone was open while the other three sides were paralleled by steep slopes.

As our officers moved about on their business, I climbed the short distance to the ridge to get a look at the battlefield. The two "redoubts" were located at the open end of the field and there was no attempt to recreate the abatis.

Sunday, 11 October 1981

I chatted for a bit with some locals who were quite interested in our outfits and the history of the Yorktown campaign. We had so much time to chat because the proceedings were being held up by a flight of hot-air balloons. There were four balloons being filled in sequence, three of which were actually able to take flight. Whatever the problem, the fourth never cut its tether and then slowly fell into some trees.

It was getting noticeably darker already when we were moved up to the walk approaching the stairs which lead down to the field.

Now I could hear the voice of Henry Rugo reading the program which I had prepared for our battle performances. Then there came a blast from a 4-pounder of the Newport Artillery, and I could feel the concussion strike my gaiters.

Warned against the treacherous footing of the earth and log steps, we carefully picked our way down to the field. I could now see the redoubts which held the Essex militia men and Fred Lawson's Royal Irish Artillery. At the other end of the field the Newport men served their two brass fieldpieces.

The artillery provided a strange contrast, the fieldguns roaring out while the Irish mortars "poofed" a response. There was smoking litter covering the ground for some distance in front of the fieldguns.

Through the end zone we marched and then counter-marched seemingly in some confusion. Three of our companies were in full uniform, while the remaining one wore fatigues — small clothes and the infamous "baker's hat" foraging cap. The one outcast company was needed to serve as auxiliary to the 9th Masstts Line Regiment, which had only seven or eight muskets. The wearing of small clothes would help to distinguish these auxiliaries somewhat from the men actually portraying the French.

The narrative continued from the speakers and the artillery continued its safe, slow pace of fire. Now the three "French" companies performed "genu en terre" and Newt Hinckley, bedecked as Pere Raoul, intoned a battle psalm over his boys. This particular action seemed to be a crowd-pleaser.

The first cannon shot had come around 5:15, and it must have been considerably later when our infantry advanced into action. Premiere Compagnie, having drawn the auxiliary duty for this evening, was off to our right with the Americans portraying Alexander Hamilton's column. Deuxieme, Troisieme, and Quatrieme were drawn up in that order across the left of the field.

Once the guns had fired two shots to represent the original assault signal, we advanced under command of lieutenants and without drum accompaniment. We must have reached the 50-yard line before drawing enemy musket fire. And from then on we advanced to the drum.

The defenders seemed to employ the street-firing manoeuvre in order to keep up a good, steady fire. On our side we tried to keep the companies firing separately for the same purpose.

Occasionally in the heat of battle errors were made in the commands. One lieutenant began to revert to English words. But the troops were well-trained, and the volleys were brisk enough.

Without the abatis there was no attempt to portray the halt at

Sunday, 11 October 1981

the true abatis which should have held up our advance. Casualties fell here and there, and Newt was quick to rush up and comfort the afflicted. The defenders had "bodies" draped all about their position.

In all we had fired around sixteen volleys when the order came to assault the redoubt. According to script the right redoubt had already fallen to the Americans by now though I had had no time to witness this act. And now we — some fifty in number — pelted toward the plank walls as the defenders withdrew safely. It was a good charge with much shouting. While some hardy types went over the walls, I opted to go around. Mel Fuller bunged his bad knee at this time.

Three shouts of "Vive le Roi," and it was time to reform. In my scenario I had suggested a "feu de joie" as a suitable conclusion to the program, but since we'd not drilled it I was surprised when we were ordered to form a single line. It was sloppy at best in the forming, and the shoot was not as smooth as might be wished, but for a first try it was not really bad. Then I noticed that most of our audience had already departed.

Joe Bausk now discovered that the tip of his officer's cane had snapped off at some point, and as we marched out the open end of the field several men began the search for the lost brass. By this time it truly qualified as dusk, and it was quite noticeable that the football scoreboard had been left on during our entire show.

On the bus the word went out that I had authored the program. There were complaints aplenty about its length. Since everyone had approved its form during a meeting at Ft Griswold, I can only think that the delivery was far too slow.

Back at the middle school there was no attempt at a marching formation; rather we just straggled to the campsite. I recall hearing a strange background noise in the distance as I approached our trailer. Walking toward the woods, the apparent source of the sound, I found it to be the twittering of countless birds. Although they remained unseen, their noise left no doubt as to their numbers.

Supper was served in the cafeteria, but it was hardly cafeteria style. On each of the tables were place settings of plastic-ware. With each setting were placed a scroll bearing a copy of Berthier's map of the Newtown encampment, a program of activities, and a proclamation of welcome.

The food was satisfactory, chicken fricasee over potato being the main course. From the number of girl scouts swarming about the place, I imagine that they had much to do with supper's preparation.

It was at Newtown that Dan McLaughlin fell in with us, although an incomplete uniform had kept him out of action today. At this time he was still wrestling with the question of whether to shave his beard. The thought of rejoining the light infantry at Yorktown in order to avoid the razor was in his mind for a while. He was still undecided when I left him after supper.

Most of us were still in uniform since an invitation had been extended to the townspeople to come visit us. I had not yet seen sign of a response.

Hearing of a public phone in the faculty lounge, I waited in line a while and then called Judy. The muzak being pumped through

that room made conversation nearly impossible.

Still seeing no sign of the public, I decided to change into my civvies and avoid catching a chill. It was noticeably colder after the sun had gone down. By the light of the full moon I cleaned my musket as best I could.

It was reported that the school showers were in good order. Realizing that such opportunities might be rare, I went along to give them a try and found the reports to be correct.

Still trying to avoid a chill I remained in the building for a while after showering. In the cafeteria I found contra-dancing with Steve Taskovics and a friend providing music on the tin whistle. The audience was comprised of colonials only.

After the previous night's doings, I opted for sleep now. It was about 10:10 when I crawled beneath my blankets.

Monday, 12 October 1981

It was not too cold this morning, and I suppose that the growing overcast was helping to moderate things. The chest cold which I had brought along was none the worse this day.

Breakfast was good enough, though I do not recall its details. Each man got a boxed lunch to take on the road. This turned out to be cold, fried chicken with potato sticks, cookies, and the ubiquitous apple.

A grumbling Dan McLaughlin appeared without his chin whiskers.

The convoy leaders really meant business today, and they assigned each vehicle a number. Thus they hoped to keep us in line and to cut back on CB noise when messages were passed along.

A serious fellow came to our door and said to Les, "You're 45!", but Les denied that he was a day over 39. This was around 8:05.

As we were approaching the overpass above Rte 84, word was passed along that the French camp of 1781 had been situated in this very area.

A close check was being kept to insure that all vehicles were accounted for, and a driver with the handle "Ten-ten" was keeping count at the "backdoor." Mark Dodge ("Liberty Man") reported that he would be in the school yard for another twenty minutes. Although it should have been obvious that we were already out of radio range of the school, this message was passed along to the front. Within a few minutes Mark was passing by the length of the column.

As we moved westward, the sky grew more threatening. Some of the valleys seemed shrouded in fog. Given the past track record of weather during our various expeditions, I'm sure that we all expected the worst this day.

For all of the dither about keeping a tight schedule, we became entangled in an absurd and time-consuming situation shortly after entering New York. Reportedly our convoy had received clearance to pass toll booths along the way without feeding the state coffers. Yet at the first booth in New York, the attendants had received no such word. So there we sat, the full convoy stretched back along the entrance ramp. There was ample time to visit friends or to visit a convenient tree. Les brought out his styrofoam dartboard and opened a tournament on the side of the van.

In time loud complaints could be heard along the line, the gist of the commentary being: "Pay the damn quarter, and let's go!" Then finally the word was passed back to pay the toll and keep the receipt for later reimbursement.

It remained cloudy through New York. We munched the cold chicken lunches. We seemed to remain fairly close to the original army's route, for I noticed a sign for Suffern along the way.

It was along this stretch that Les grew itchy and decided to check out the front of the convoy. Into the passing lane and "en avant," we waved hellos to one and all. Having satisfied his curiosity as to "where the big guys hang out," Les fell back to a more modest location.

At about 12:55 PM we pulled into the parking lot of the Whippany Park High School. A number of vehicles were directed to park on the hardtop, but we joined a line of others down below the school on the fringe of the playing fields.

The first item of the agenda was to find the facilities. We

soon realized that these rooms could be reached only by a hike all the way around this long building to the front door.

There was plenty of time to get into uniform, and we began to fall in at the front of the school around 2:15. The sun, which first came through after we had entered New Jersey, now shone steadily.

The front rank of Troisieme Compagnie had by now been permanently settled: Garth Moss to lead the center file, Rod Moss to lead the right. Except for our three "no-shows" our ranks were now up to roster-strength with fifteen muskets. This made ours the weakest of the four companies.

The regiment stepped off at the head of our division around 2:35. The street which was the main line of our route was for much of its length quite wide. As we passed a small Catholic chapel, a fellow in colonial rig began to ring the steeple bell and Pere Raoul made a fine show of blessing himself.

At one point we halted, faced "a droit," and primed and loaded for a salute. Immediately it was clear that we were too close to the crowd along the curb. We faced about, marched to the far curb, and then faced about again. The salute was very successful and appreciated by our audience.

As we continued along the way, I really put my foot in it. Figuring that the lock of a just-fired musket would mess up the right sleeve of a white coat, I asked Joe Bausk not to bring us to "advance arms." As alternative to "portez" he brought us to "haute armes," a "high port." This new position did not bring proper relief to the left arm, and soon there was grumbling in the ranks. I later learned that the lock actually lies against the green cuff and causes no damage.

We halted on the lawn of the town hall to hear some speeches. Unlike those in Newtown, these we could hear. Mercifully they were completed within five minutes. Palmer had prepared a few remarks of gratitude in the French tongue, and I must say that he sounded quite good at it.

The parade concluded by covering the route which we had taken to the town center. It was about 3:55 when we halted in the school driveway, and we were given just ten minutes before falling in again for the battle re-enactment.

This day we needed no transportation, for the battlefield was the far end of the playing field near which we were camping. We marched from the side driveway down to the fields and then halted facing the Newport Artillery and the speaker system.

A half dozen or so local dignitaries had decked themselves in the most foppish of 18th century clothing for this day. Their appearance had drawn some sharp comments even as we had first arrived. They were clearly in their glory this afternoon.

With the conclusion of pleasantries, Henry Rugo began to drone through the program. I can sympathize with him, for the speakers, placed some distance from the microphone, sent his voice back to him with a half-second's delay. It is most difficult to read across such a distraction. He must be congratulated for not stumbling on the job. Nevertheless, such calm reasoning is no comfort to soldiers standing in the growing cold.

Monday, 12 October 1981

Around quarter to five, in the growing dusk, we began to form for battle. Newt took the three French companies through the psalm. Deuxieme Compagnie had drawn "American duty" this day.

The redoubts here were not special constructions as in Newtown. There were several white sawhorses — street-sized — and quantities of cut branches and shrubbery. When the Newport guns began the barrage, the Essex men responded to each shot by tossing bits of shrubbery or themselves into the air. The Royal Irish had given up on the use of mortars and now returned fire with a light fieldgun.

The advance of the infantry was much as it had been yesterday. The crowd to our left included some raucous little brutes who chanted, "We want blood!" and who cheered each cannon shot.

The field itself was so short that in our final volley before the charge we had to aim nearly vertically for the safety of those in the redoubts.

The charge itself was noisy and many chose to crash through the flimsy defenses. Upon its conclusion we again formed a line for the "feu de joie." Although this part of the performance was a bit smoother than it had been the day before, it was still the one awkward element in our repertoire.

Again as we marched from the field, much of the audience was well on its way home. It was about 5:15 and Palmer held us in formation in order to pass out information required by those with campers. Our dismissal was not according to the handbook.

The supper in the high school cafeteria was surprisingly good, the main course being a good roast beef. Members of the Sons of the American Revolution worked at serving food. What was of special interest was the selection of home-made breads which were served to the individual diners. Each item was in a separate bag and included a note with the name of its baker. I received one with a request from a second-grader for a letter.

Out in the main hall the locals were selling "Rochambeau in Whippany" tee-shirts and glossy programs. There were no extra-large shirts and the unit commanders had been issued programs for their men so I faced an inexpensive evening.

The school gymnasium/auditorium had already been prepared for the evening's program with the bleachers extended and chairs set upon the floor. The stage had an outdoorsy backdrop and there was an electric campfire. This campfire had a red lamp and a fan beneath its logs, which blew streamers of crepe paper to simulate flames. It really wasn't too bad.

On the stage stood a floral arrangement of the Saintonge regimental flag. This had been given to us for presentation in Philadelphia the next day. It was a rather remarkable piece of work to say the least.

No one had been assigned a particular role in the program, and I had at first planned to take a hand at contra-dancing. Soon, however, it was clear that the main concern was an adequate turnout for the drill team. I hot-footed it back to the camper for my Charleville and then fell in with about seventeen others to the back of the auditorium. Sgt. Major Coulter would command our little troop.

The program opened at 8:15 with more introductions of local

celebrities. Palmer served as master of ceremonies for the evening once the preliminaries had ended.

Our fifes and drums opened the show by marching to the front, then playing three or four tunes, and then marching out. Next came the Essex Regiment of Militia, and their program was superb. Their captain explained the clothing in detail, noting social distinctions implied by style and quality. The musket drill was beautifully handled. In fact we were concerned that our French drill would not be up to their militia standard.

Emulating the Essex format, we had a drummer beat "rassemblement" and our muskets then fell into formation. Warren took us quickly through the drill, and except for a slight hitch on my part, I believe that we put in a respectable show.

Warren marched us to the rear of the hall, and from he e we watched the contra-dancers assemble in front of the stage. Again there was live tin whistle music, and the company performed two dances. The performance was well-received.

Now Palmer introduced Marilyn , a friend of Bob Zapasnik. Accompanied by a fellow with a dulcimer, she offered three selections of vocal music — "laments" I believe was the correct term — which had come down from the 18th century. The point was strongly made that the women of that period wanted to follow the men to war. The selections were performed at length, and Palmer expressed regrets that the night was not long enough to permit more but that the good people of Whippany must be looking forward to getting home shortly.

This concluded our participation in the program, and I now headed out to the camper to change to my civvies. It was quite cold in the clear moonlight.

Upon my return to the school the local portion of the night's entertainment had ended. Preparations were soon under way to take charge of the electric campfire, and in minutes the hats of the Sher Roy Trio had appeared along with washtub bass and guitar. Someone brought the dispenser of Rochambeaujolais, and there was no attempt and no need to hide this elixir from the school authorities.

It was late when this main gathering began to break up, but then some of us discovered a militia pianist with a Clancy Brothers songbook. When the neighbors in the next room complained, we shoved the piano to the far end of the gym and continued to work our way through the book. It was ridiculously late when we finished, and I doubt that I could have been able to read my watch.

I note with a touch of not unreasonable pride in the accomplishment that some hours later I arose, found and put on my shoes, made my way around the building to the main door, discovered and made proper use of the object of this journey, returned safely to the camper, removed my shoes, and got snugly back into my bunk without mishap. A remarkable achievement this fine night.

Tuesday, 13 October 1981

A very frosty morning was this. The sunlight glittered everywhere, and it was an invigorating walk to breakfast to say the least. Peter Murray expressed his surprise to see me in such good health, but it is one of the few blessings granted to my constitution that the morning after is seldom a time of remorse.

The breakfast was good — scrambled eggs I believe — and bagged lunches awaited us as we departed the cafeteria. It was hard to realize that in the normal world this was a schoolday, but teenaged urchins were all about the hallways to prove the fact.

Our van had picked up an extra passenger this day, Joel Bohy, a Concord Minute Man traveling with the Essex Regiment for this occasion. Joel took a peculiar pride in the ragged appearance of his brown uniform. Each new rip, each added stain increased his enthusiasm greatly.

The convoy began to roll southward at 8:10. I had noted on Joe Bausk's thermometer a reading of 30°F. Rush hour traffic made things a bit sluggish until we reached the highway.

A ways before Morristown, Dave Sargent ("Down Easter") reported further trouble with the alternator which he had repaired in East Greenwich. Having jumper cables and assorted tools, Les volunteered to follow Dave off at the next exit to examine the situation, and "Convoy Control" gave the ok — as if that were needed.

We turned off at the exit for Jockey Hollow National Park, site of the first night I had ever spent with the old Ward Company back in '77, and sure enough a dozen vehicles followed us into a motel parking lot.

After shooing the others back to the convoy, Dave discovered his problem in a loose wire. This having been quickly fixed, we set off in the company of Mark Dodge — a man not to be shooed away — to follow the convoy, which was now out of radio range.

Rolling along the by-ways of West Jersey, we soon found a shopping center with all the standard conveniences. While I picked up some rather expensive soft drinks in a supermarket, others made straight for the package store. In addition to beer and ice, which most of sought, there was a green liquer with a licorice flavor — foul stuff — which Newt picked to serve as spiritual fluid. Putting the stuff in his leather wine bottle, he went on to make something of a nuisance of himself by administering it to unwilling converts.

It was while finishing a drink in the parking lot that we determined to be known as the "Lost Patrol."* Carolyn Sargent donated a square of white cloth, and Les created the inverted "L" with a magic marker. Soon our new guidon was affixed to the van's aerial and we were ready to roll.

The final touch, now that we were detached from the main convoy, was to establish proper "convoy control." There fore we assigned numbers: Les #6, Dave #34, and Mark #87. We also affixed proper signs in our rear windows to designate our roles. Les became "Cap Com Six Pac," Dave was "Convoy Control," and Mark was "Last Vehicle in Convoy."

Once the lights had been turned on we set out in pursuit of the fabled Philadelphia. By agreement we kept to Channel 11, a very clear frequency, and we kept tight control, informing all and sundry

Tuesday, 13 October 1981

of our every move: "I am approaching a red — that is R-E-D — a red light. I am activating the braking mechanism; the mechanism is now engaging and I have in fact stopped."

The main convoy leaders would have been proud of the manner in which the Lost Patrol upheld the finest of CB traditions: "This is Liberty Man. I am about to put the hammer down ... Crash! Oh damn! There's little pieces of plastic all over my dashboard!"

Thus we whiled away the hours until we reached Rte 95, and at this point a conference was required. Disbelieving the printed instructions, our leaders decided to head south on 95 since that would seem the likely way to Philadelphia. A few miles down the road, however, and dissension broke out in Mark's van. Someone who had once lived in Philly for "a long time" started a debate.

At the next cloverleaf it was decided to reverse course. We had almost completed our second loop when someone yelled: "No, no, no!" and immediately we were making the third loop with a view to return to our initial course. Coming out of the fourth (and presumably final) loop, we were seized by doubt and began to reverse one more time.

By the time we had completed the sixth loop and actually started north on 95, all aboard were in hysterics of laughter. "Liberty Man" advised us to look back and catch the magnificent sight of our convoy all strung out along the curves. We speculated as to the thoughts of any helicopter pilot who might have followed us. We also wondered at the knot we could have tied had we been leading the whole convoy.

Although we continued from this point without mishap, the Lost Patrol felt the need of a rest stop. Of course we missed the entrance to the rest area and had to park in the nearby breakdown lane. It was here that we lunched and found that the good people of Whippany had provided excellent sandwiches with deli-rolls.

It was not long after we resumed the journey that we spotted a military helicopter, which may have been scouting the roads for Rochambeau's strays. Within minutes a state trooper was along, signaling us to follow him in.

By agreement the Lost Patrol would now tune to Channel 7 and employ it for conversation, but on no account would we respond to messages from the main convoy. We entered the outskirts of Philly, earnestly parodying the big-time CB chatter until we heard Palmer advise that we could very well back up to Boston if we chose.

Chastened we soon found ourselves sitting in a traffic jam approaching the entrance to a large National Guard complex. It was gratifying to see that members of the main convoy were just now passing through that entrance.

It was about 12:05. We were directed to the far end of the field in which the entire Rochambeau force was to camp this night. Beyond a stretch of swampy ground was a huge, multistory, brick building in which many of the troops would sleep. There was a bit of a hike through the basement corridors to find the men's facilities, but the arrangements were not unsatisfactory.

Somehow the time moved too fast. There was a 1 PM assembly for the regiment but I was still struggling into uniform. The main body had already marched out of our fenced in compound and my gaiters

were yet unbuttoned. When Audrey Childs had finished putting Bob together, she gave me a welcome hand. Of course after running to catch the busses, I found that we had not yet boarded.

I helped relieve the tedium of the long ride into town by regaling the back of the bus with tales of the Lost Patrol. I had forgot that we had been asked not to speak of our fun lest more vans seek to join us tomorrow.

Our driver got lost. We missed the debarkation point by a couple of blocks and had to sniff our way back through the oneway streets.

We reached the west end of Washington Square only to see the main body of the Saintonge marching off through the park. Through the park we ran, heedless of passersby and shrubbery alike. And then we found that the regiment had merely been advancing to its staging area to await the start of the parade.

The park itself was quite pleasant with plentiful shade. The order of the regiments appeared to be the same as that in Providence. We certainly drew little attention from the residents.

At 2:35 we stepped off on what I had feared would be one of the 5-mile marches through jammed and noisy city streets. In fact we simply circled the park, marching sometimes on the sidewalk, and then we advanced up a side street (Seventh St.) and turned right onto the thoroughfare (Chestnut St.) which passes in front of Independence Hall.

At some point along the way our fifes and drums of Deuxieme Compagnie were removed from the column. Therefore, as we passed the reviewing stand in front of the Hall, we had to keep cadence to the call of "gauche."

As we turned left onto the street which runs down the side of the Liberty Bell park, we passed a band of true French soldiers, who applauded our efforts. Turning left into the park, we now were rejoined by our music though for too short a time. Premiere Compagnie turned left again to march directly toward the reviewing stand. But Troisieme Compagnie did not at first notice this move and continued to follow the music across the park. Just in time our captain spotted the truth and we recovered well enough. Again our music would be off on the side, apparently brigaded with the other musicians. The fusiliers, on the other hand, formed in a column facing Independence Hall. It was very much like the situation at the Rhode Island statehouse.

The ceremonies were surprisingly brief. They included again a prayer in French with translation. Gov. Garrahy was in attendance, but it was not clear whether Pennsylvania's governor or an aide was present. Again our Hungarian friends had a bronze plaque, but this time they explained their presence as honoring the secon -in-command to Gen. Pulaski, Michael de Kowatz, a native Hungarian.

At the conclusion of all of this business, we were invited to enjoy the historic sights of the city and were advised that the last transport to camp would leave at 6 PM. Saintonge remained in formation while the officers discussed some point, and at length we were dismissed at 3:40.

I joined Dan Tanona in touring the historic grounds. Although we were not required to check our arms at the door, only group tours

were permitted into Independence Hall. It was not long before a sufficient number was on hand and the door was opened. We first received an explanation of the old court room to the north side of the building, and then we crossed the hall to see the room in which the Continental Congress had debated and then voted the Declaration of Independence. Although I should have known better, I was nevertheless surprised at how small this room truly is. Our guide here was an older gentleman in period garb, and he was clearly most enthusiastic about his responsibilities.

There was no rush by the guide to push us out, and we took the opportunity to examine the central hall and stairwell. In the backyard we found the Roses and stopped to take some photos.

Dan was particularly curious about the House, in which Thos. Jefferson had composed the Declaration. Having checked the map which the Park Service provides, we set out to cover the two blocks to our goal. The original building had been torn down some time back, but the Park Service had built a replica to replace it.

The building, we found, is rather narrow and tall. Its façade is properly Georgian, but within it is a museum of quite modern design bearing as little relationship to the façade as possible.

The only other tourists were leaving as we entered, and the two rangers seemed genuinely pleased to see us. We viewed the short film on Jefferson at Philadelphia and found it to be good. Then we walked to the upper floor to view the exhibits. Two rooms had been set up as they might have been for Jefferson, yet the rest of the floor was quite open. I noticed schematics painted on wall and floor to indicated where the garrett stairwell would have been. By the exit there was a small slide and tape exhibit generally extolling the ways of celebrating the Fourth of July.

Although it was not yet truly late, we now set out to find a bus back to camp. I imagine that weariness was what moved us this way. I cannot now believe that I failed to take the short walk to see the Liberty Bell and to take a little time to view the other exhibits.

We sought our bus at the rear of the park where we had first formed up today. There were several vehicles in line, and we learned that one would leave only when it was filled.

Dan and I were standing along the sidewalk exchanging stories when an exuberant National Guard driver came along to herd everyone aboard his bus. I recall that Dan observed how good it is to see a man who can have such enthusiasm for his work. This driver described a brief detour which would take us to the old City Tavern, the oldest pub in the city, where we would stay for no more than half an hour, and he advised that we might sneak a pewter mug or two for souvenirs.

Off we now went and woe to the driver who challenged our progress. I believe that we passed over a portion of sidewalk at one point. Outside a Xerox shop stood a cardboard figure of "Brother Dominic," the company's main sales representative. Our driver expressed his admiration for this figure and then abandoned the bus in order to seize it for his own souvenir. The shop personnel rescued their property in good time, and momentarily our driver was back aboard.

Tuesday, 13 October 1981

It was at this point, as we were held by a traffic light, that several members of the Lincoln Minute Men bailed out for safer conveyances.

In a few minutes we found ourselves parked in front of Independence Hall, where our driver claimed that he must pick up more passengers. I think that he then left to gather riders from off the streets. We waited awhile, and then a non-com came aboard to ask that we move to another bus since our chauffeur was in no condition to drive anything. In addition to the inconvenience, there was to be no stop at the City Tavern.

I could not even get aboard the alternate bus at this time but had to await yet another. To add to aggravations, this was the rush hour on a regular working day, so I was glad to have a fairly comfortable seat at the front of the bus.

We had been advised a special 10-20% discounts available at city restaurants this night to those in uniform, but at least half of the troops opted for camp fare. Again I suspect weariness as the cause.

Since I was on so late a bus, most of my friends had already arrived and changed. I stood outside the camper for better room to reach the gaiter buttons, and Les and Mark came along to trade tales of the big city. Momentarily Lt. Ronnie MacInnis joined us. Immediately he positioned me to block the view from one side and Les the other. Poor Ron needed fast relief and it was simply too long a walk to the indoor facilities. Therefore he now faced the neighboring trailer, secure in the thought of a modicum of privacy. All was proceeding in accordance with his plans until he glanced up and found himself face to face with a young lady staring through the camper's window. Surely decades from now when the word "embarrassment" casually arises in a conversation, Ron's mind will hark back to this fine evening.

For the first time on the trail the food issue was such as to recall AEQ. Franks and beans were being served inside an armory which offered seating for perhaps fifty. Les opened a can of ravioli and sliced some of the homemade bread from Whippany, and that was just fine with us.

Once again in the moonlight I tried to clean the Charleville — this time with only moderate success because of the amount of time since the last firing. It was rather cold to stay outside, and this seemed a good night to turn in early.

Note

*: The "Lost Patrol" was a running bit featured in the daily comic strip "Crock." A small band of French Foreign Legionnaires, under the command of a Lieutenant Poulet, was perpetually unable to find its fort and was identifiable by its guidon bearing an inverted "L."

Wednesday, 14 October 1981

It was 30°F when we were awakened around 6 AM. There was no lolling about this morning. Palmer had informed everyone the previous evening that each of the five army divisions was to be sent forth separately this morning. Given the choice of 9:30 or 7:30, Palmer had volunteered Saintonge to take the earlier time and thus to be first division on the road.

It was still rather dark when I walked to the armory to seek out breakfast. Inside the gymnasium many troopers and camp followers were just starting to stir.

No more than a dozen men were inside the dining area next to the kitchen at this time. Coffee and orange juice were available. Inside the kitchen a large amount of scrambled eggs could be seen, already cooked and steaming. Yet because it did not fit the schedule, this food would not be served. The sardonic observation running through the ranks was that the eggs were not yet cold and hard enough to do the army justice.

There were volunteers from our forces, including several from Saintonge appropriately wearing the fatigue "baker's hat," who were making sandwiches for our lunches.

As the mob formed a line four across in the doorway and still no food was forthcoming, I made do with a glass of orange juice and then walked back to the campground. On the way I noticed the artillery resting on flatbed trailers. There were at least thirteen guns there.

As take-off time approached, it was clear that many would not be ready. Maintaining the esprit de corps of the Lost Patrol, Les had determined to be in line precisely when Palmer had stated, so at 7:30 on the dot we pulled out and moved up toward the gate.

Suddenly Leo came running up to our van, and he was not in a good humor. In fact Leo was quite upset with our movement. Acquiescing to his pleas, Les now drove back down to our original parking place to await developments.

During the wait lunch was served: Eric Vollheim, dressed as a courier du bois, came along the line bearing a great tray of bagged lunches and then went back to the armory for more. The bad news was that each bag was meant to feed two men. Certainly Philadelphia would not be remembered for its cuisine.

Fifteen minutes after returning, chastened, to our parking space, we were moving out in accordance with our officers' wishes. I really do believe that our intentions were to behave in a docile fashion for the rest of this day. Certainly it would have been easier to find Havre de Grace by staying with the column.

The fault really lay with the big organizers of the march, for they let the division onto the highway in dribs and drabs rather than maintaining a solid convoy. We waited at the traffic light opposite the armory's entrance and then turned left on the green. In front of us we saw a slowly moving police cruiser with lights flashing. Since he was not rushing to answer any emergency, a not unreasonable assumption was that the officer was an escort. When he turned to the right, we followed, we being the Lost Patrol of yesterday and Rick Butland.

Then we noticed that the only vehicle following our "convoy" was another cruiser. Paranoids among us wondered whether our officers

had arranged to have their headaches decoyed into the wilderness. Perhaps two miles down the side road our escorts departed and we were on our own, out of radio contact with the convoy.

Boy Scout training always tells in a crunch. When lost, ask for directions, and this we did. The gas station attendant first offered to swap info for a big purchase. Eventually we got the story for free, but a short way along we began to wonder whether the "Scrooge" was getting back at us.

We checked once again, and our information seemed confirmed. In fact our path was long but fairly straight back to the main highway. The real trouble was the rush hour traffic, for we were routed down the main highway through the city.

Things got bogged down only when we reached the vicinity of the airport, and by this point we could again hear the noise of the convoy on the CB.

There was one awe-inspiring sight along this part of our path. Where our route diverged sharply to the left, there stood Jennie Knower, reflective armband over her 18th century dress, wildly shouting and waving directions from a traffic island to all who passed. I could only think of Ivanhoe's Ulrica as the castle burned about her. Perhaps commuters thought the apparition was an evangelical bag-lady. At any rate, her efforts got everyone on the right track.

Not far beyond this turning point we found the entire convoy parked in the breakdown lane beside a wetland wildlife refuge. With some reluctance the Lost Patrol now pulled over and rejoined the division. This stop was apparently intended to permit the convoy to rejoin after the rigors of Philadelphia. As we sat by the roadside, the Soissonnais convoy drove past us.

Despite our momentary return to conformity, fortune smiled upon the Lost Patrol once again. Directly in front of us sat Snap Taylor's great rig, "Turtle," which had run out of gas. Of course he could not be abandoned in this wild terrain, so while one vehicle drove off in search of a can of fuel, the Lost Patrol nobly volunteered to stand by a stricken comrade. Of course the rest of the convoy pushed along without us.

Once the scout vehicle had returned, the Lost Patrol — minus the Butlands; plus the Taylors — continued along to the next exit, somewhere near Chester, I think. Here we tanked up and then we returned to Rte 95 for the drive into Maryland. We were a bit more subdued today.

It was near noon when we crossed the Susquehanna River and came into the outskirts of Havre de Grace. By radio contact we approached the camping area and missed it by only one turn. We were not long in affecting a remedy and shortly we entered the grounds of the local National Guard.

The campsite was a long stretch of lawn which lay between the street and a wooded stretch of railroad tracks. An historic marker nearby identified this as the location where the army had camped in 1781. As at Philadelphia the grounds were secured by high chain-link fencing.

Everyone else had already arrived, and our belated presence today drew no special notice. The camp was arranged as two lines of

Wednesday, 14 October 1981

tents and vehicles forming a central avenue. The sentry boxes were just now being delivered, and it was good to see them being placed at different spots instead of being brigaded as they usually are. Yellow jackets were out in force in this neighborhood.

Today there was more than enough time in which to prepare, so most of us were quite comfortable. In fact several men were sunning themselves atop their flat-roofed R-V's. Eric informed me that he would be taking the rest of the day off, for he had overexerted while distributing the rations this morning.

At an appropriate time we fell in down by the main gate and then marched to the nearby lot where the busses waited. The division then was driven into the central area of Havre de Grace. We debarked near and formed up in the parking lot of the American Legion post on the banks of the Susquehanna. And there we passed some time.

In a bit we were informed of an invitation to make use of the Legion bar, and before long that place was pretty well full of our soldiers. Someone had claimed that the delay was caused by scarcity of busses. Whatever the cause, there was ample time for a beer.

I was not a witness, but a reliable source informed me that the captain of the Essex men went around seeing that his men who would be shooting later were now drinking only soft drinks. Some militia!

All too soon Ron MacInnis was in ordering "rassemblement" out in the driveway. If mutiny did not occur at that time, I doubt that we shall ever see it.

It was 2:40 when we stepped off up one of the town's main streets. Again the day was quite beautiful and very suitable to marching. I can recall hearing some sort of gunfire from the rear as we advanced. Then not more than a few blocks along we halted and faced "a gauche."

There was a small reviewing stand and behind this a three- or four-story modern brick building which I first took to be a modest apartment block. It was some time before I noticed the words "Town Hall" on the brick wall. For some reason I also recall a very noisy German Shepherd puppy penned in a yard directly across from where I was standing.

Palmer was introduced and he gave his French speech plus an English explanation of the Saintonge. Local dignitaries spoke of the contribution by the French to this vicinity of Maryland. Then Palmer was awrded the key to the city and was made an honorary citizen.

We fired a salute here on the street, and then the parade resumed. We marched straight along this one thoroughfare, passing through one neighborhood which seemed to house only doctors' offices. Everything we saw otherwise was pleasantly residential.

At the end of the road, we turned left and marched no more than a block before halting by the busses. Here Palmer informed us of the plans for laundering the uniforms tonight. It was about 3:55 when we began the drive back to camp.

In this afternoon's battle Troisieme Compagnie had "Yankee duty." I changed to the white fatigues and began to walk back to our mustering area near the gate. On four separate occasions as I walked through the camp I had index fingers poked into my tummy with calls of "The Pillsbury Doughboy!"

Wednesday, 14 October 1981

There was a short march which took us onto a wide field behind the armory building climax,* and here we found what was probably the best battlefield we had yet seen. There was a good, reasonable amount of space between the Allied position and the two redoubts. Great lengths of yellow plastic rope had been strung on either side of this area. There was also, in front of the plank covered redoubts, a bit of foliage to serve as an abatis.

Our divisional column halted just before the battlefield proper and the faced right into the lowering sun. What little crowd there was — little more than a hundred — was on this side of the field. During the earlier downtown ceremonies it had been stated that admission to this performance would be charged for adults and children. Possibly this had cut back the attendance, although I saw no sign of ticket sales anywhere.

Palmer was standing at midpoint in the audience and making introductions through the p.a. system. Unlike the program at Whippany, here the military drill presentation would take place before the battle.

The Essex Regiment opened the show with its presentation. I'm afraid that we were not very polite, and chatter continued along the ranks all through this time. We did in fact pay attention, and I noticed that some disparaging remarks were offered against the European tactics of the Continentals and, by extension, of the French. Tom Rolo, commanding the Masstts IXth this afternoon, came over to ask me to present his troop, and we agreed that I should respond in kind to the Essex.

The Masstts IXth was to give the next performance. For a while it was uncertain whether the "French" auxiliary company should participate in the American action, but then we realized that not only would our uniforms cause confusion among the spectators but a sudden return to the von Steuben manual would also cause confusion in the ranks.

I stepped forward and made a few telling points about miserable performances by militia prior to the introduction of European tactics. It now occurs to me that this was a rather self-defeating thing for someone who normally serves in the militia to say, but it's curious how one's attitude can change with a change of uniform.

The order of battle ran basically as at Newtown and Whippany, but for once I was able to see the French in action. Somehow the performance of Troisieme Compagnie was extraordinarily sloppy this afternoon. Lt. Ron Davis had taken the day off, so Capt. Joe Bausk was in charge of our little band. On the far right of the front rank this time, I could not hear Joe's commands clearly over the extraneous noise, including too much chatter in our ranks. Our first "volley" was utter disaster. There was no command to be heard since no command had been given. Rather Adam Longworth had tried to strengthen his grip on his musket by tightening on the trigger. This shot set off fully half of the company's muskets.

As Americans we stormed Redoubt 10 early and then got to watch the other three French companies perform their slower advance. As I now recall it, they did look good, but I was so displeased with our part of the performance that I was not really an unbiased observer.

Wednesday, 14 October 1981

Even though this was our third try, the formation for the feu de joie seemed as bad as ever. I wonder if we were growing a bit cynical at the small audiences. It can be difficult to take something seriously when so few others seem to. Perhaps only I was having a bad day.

The sun was clearly going down when we came back into the camp. Palmer passed along information about food, showers, and the laundry. I hurried to change into civvies so that my uniform might go out with the first batch. Palmer had figured that $6 rather than $5 should be sent since our numbers were smaller than first stated to the laundryman. After checking the name tags on all six items, I hurried along and turned the clothing and the cash over to Joe Bausk, who was undertaking the tedious, all-night job of delivering the laundry.

I now went for supper, which was being served in a large, white h.q. building several hundred yards down the road. The dining room was a large hall on the second floor. The food — sliced pot roast as the main course — was served cafeteria style by local boy scouts. Other scouts circulated to the tables, serving coffee, tea, milk, or water on request.

I dined with Warren Coulter and his family. Warren and I talked shop and I brought up a thought for formation for the feu de joie by having the second and third ranks on standard formation simply extend to the right until one line was formed. Warren had already raised this same idea, but it had been turned down as too time-consuming.

There were showers in the basement of this building, and this would be the last opportunity before Yorktown. I caught a ride back to camp with Mel Fuller, and then walked back to the showers with Les.

The shower stalls were too few and the facilities a little crude, but the water was generally hot and the waiting line not too long. Again my only concern was the possibility of taking a chill in the frosty air afterward.**

There had been talk of an outdoor songfest earlier. I believe some individuals were waiting for the ringleaders to get it going. But this fine night most of us again turned in early.

We noted earlier that this evening was in fact the 200th Anniversary of the assault on Redoubts 9 and 10.

Belatedly I add that after the capture of Redoubt 10 today, Joe Bausk went back on the field to administer with sword the coup de grace to casualty Mel Fuller. He advised Mel that his action was by vote of the company, which wished to end his anguished caterwauling and crying for ale.

Notes

*: "Climax"? I can only imagine that the word I intended to write was "complex."

**: As the statute of limitations has surely run out by now, I can report a federal crime committed by Les and me before leaving this h.q. building. On a bulletin board was a great, official poster with bold letters: "GET CONTROL OF YOUR CONVOY!" We removed this, rolled it into a scroll, and next morning presented it to Palmer.

Thursday, 15 October 1981

This morning was not terribly cold even though we arose in the darkness. The laundry had not been returned before our turning in last night, and we now learned that the uniforms had been laid out alphabetically in the dining hall. Les and I went there and found a sizable number of outfits still awaiting pick-up. Here was the real pay-off in being a sergeant for it was simple to select the right clothing from the silver bands on the green cuffs.

A quick check of the items delivered brought a start of anger. The coat and weskit, which had been dry-cleaned, looked fine. The breeches, gaiters, and neckstock, which had been washed, were rather wrinkled. Then I spotted gray-black stains on breeches and gaiters. It was back at the campsite that we learned of the launderer's innocence in this dirty deed. Some slobs, it turns out, had not washed the leather straps of their gaiters to remove water-soluble dye, as ordered. It was these fine fellows who had caused a possibly irreparable mess.

Breakfast was being served by a McDonald's in toward town, and busses shipped the troops in to dine. We were served orders of scrambled eggs and sausage, and I manufactured a decent sandwich with the help of the English muffins. An Egg-McMuffin chaser and I was set to face the day. There was not time to seek a local newspaper.

A note of coincidence: our launderer of last night was the Post Road Cleansers.

This day we were really prepared to follow the convoy loyally. But we were at the tail of the line thanks to the previous day's late arrival. There was a legitimate delay at the gate while cash was collected by Bob Bruce to purchase RMY mugs for our National Guardsmen.

Separated from the rest of the column by now, we radioed for instructions — honestly — and received no acknowledgement. The-boy-who-cried-wolf reaction on the part of our officers, perhaps.

Facing a choice at the end of Old Bay Rd., we turned left and instantly were heading 180° away from everyone else. The rickety railroad bridge, which could not possibly have supported the flatbed truck with all of the artillery, should have given us a clue.

Heading out on the dual highway we soon figured that the Lost Patrol must be heading farther away from the convoy, so at the first chance we made a U-turn. Somehow a small section of convoy — lost? — spotted us and decided to follow. Minutes later, of course, we passed the real convoy as it moved along in our first choice of directions.

I imagine that the convoy had taken the long way through town because it had to avoid the old bridge. Palmer stopped the procession long enough for all to fall in, and we all then moved off for Rte 95.

We took the -95 circuit routes to avoid Washington, D.C. Then somewhere along the line the whole column pulled into a rest area. It should have caused us no difficulties, but then inexplicably the head of the column took off, leaving the tail to fend for itself.

Lost Patrol and Company spent the rest of the morning chasing and never quite catching the leaders.

In Alexandria at last, but unclear about directions, Les and

Thursday, 15 October 1981

Mark had to seek out gasoline. We also found a convenient package store. It was uncertain what provisions would be available at Yorktown, and this might be our last opportunity.

I recall a picture of Newt standing in the middle of a street to observe a poorly placed traffic light. As it turned green, he signaled, we rolled, and he raced to get back aboard.

By now the sun was cutting through the morning's haze. The CB gave us some information and two police officers helped so that we only circled the same blocks about twice before finding our goal.

The National Guard base was on the banks of the Potomac, and our parking lot was directly beneath the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. As the traffic roared along about fifty feet over our heads, I could just picture someone taking out a guardrail and wiping out a significant portion of our division.

Our arrival was at 12:05 so we had to hasten into uniform for the parade. At 1:15 we assembled and then settled down to waiting as usual.

Although I did not realize this until later, it was here at Alexandria that we were rejoined by the contingent of Concord musicians which had left us after the Philadelphia performance. The Concord Minute Men had received — after an incredible delay — a solid invitation to perform at Colonial Williamsburg on 14 through 16 October. The director of Williamsburg had first approached the company at about the time the first plans for the Saintonge Regiment were being made. But Williamsburg was afraid of any direct contact with the Yorktown activities and coquettishly waited until the last minute before planning any Yorktown-related function. By the time of this invitation, some of the best Concord fifers and drummers had long since enlisted in Saintonge.

There was some hard — perhaps justifiably so — feeling against those departing when the news had first been broken this past summer. Yet the Concord men were in a bind, some being incumbent officers in that company. So these men departed on "detached service" on Wednesday morning. It was considered praiseworthy that they had driven all the way back now just to join us for this one day's parade.

We marched out the driveway, which curved 90° to the right, through the gate, and onto a residential street. Midway down the first block we obliqued the column to the left, halted, and faced right.

On this day we were to share a town with the Bourbonnais Division. Possibly because of its primacy over Saintonge in 1781, this division now marched past us to the head of the column.

On we moved to find some of the best crowds we had yet seen. There were no crushes of bodies, but it was clear that the locals had been informed of our coming and were generally pleased to see us. A line of children from a parochial school reminded old veterans of the towns of Quebec Province in '75. The irrepressable Eric often called "Bonjour!" or "Merci!" to the spectators. I later named him Troisieme Compagnie's ambassador of good will.

The section of the city through which we now marched was known as "Old Town," a restored historic district apparently. The locals had done nice work indeed.

Thursday, 15 October 1981

We turned left onto a main thoroughfare and halted almost immediately. Facing "a droite" we found ourselves opposite a small park, or plaza surrounded by low brick walls. A little way along to our left was the reviewing stand. As we stood, small bunches of flowers were tossed toward us by some of the ladies, and our officers soon had attached the blossoms to their lapels or cockades.

On the reviewing stand were the usual town officials with Palmer and several Rochambeau March staff officers. Of all the speeches the most interesting was one given by a colonel of the army of France. He must have been attached to the French embassy in Washington. He spoke well and noted in passing that as a lieutenant he had been assigned to the 99th Battalion, descendent of the old Royal Deux-Ponts. He seemed pleased that Americans were portraying his countrymen — at least I hope he was.

The parade continued down this main street through the heart of the old downtown, an area surprisingly well kept up. Folks came out of their shops or leaned from their windows as we passed. Again there was no throng, but we felt quite comfortable with these people.

It is well that we enjoyed it so much, for it was a longish hike. And then we noticed the tall building in the distance. As we approached we became aware of the steep hill upon which the tall building stood. And we knew that such a place must be on our route.

While heading toward a highway underpass we saw a newsfilm crew shooting us. This was probably ABC, for that network had been covering our activities pretty well since Providence.

Up the steep drive and around the hairpin turn we marched. The building was the George Washington Masonic Monument and its front steps were crowded. Moving past the front, we marched around the drive toward a grassy slope to the rear of the property.

Along this driveway we had the first showdown of our travels. A busload of swabbies was being taken somewhere in a hurry, and the driver planned to intimidate his way through Deuxieme Compagnie. I believe it was George Hamilton who made the threatening gestures with the stick of his bass drum. The driver halted.

In a moment the column halted and then fell out for a brief break. Someone found a couple of civilian friends who passed a couple of cans of cold beer through our ranks.

A French television film crew came along in search of someone to say a few words to its audience. In French Mark Dodge denied that he spoke French. I don't know that the tv men ever did find a speaker.

One company of the Soissonnais had for some reason been brigaded with the Bourbonnais today. We spoke with one of the lady-soldiers of that regiment. It sounded as though things were not happy over there, and she was ready to transfer into any other outfit.

I don't remember checking my watch, but a fair amount of time was spent during this rest period. Then the companies were formed up to march across the drive and onto the foot of yet another slope in preparation for battle.

I do not know the composition of the Bourbonnais Division, but this day there were sufficient Americans present to allow the entire Saintonge to serve as a unit. Thus did Quatrieme Compagnie escape

Thursday, 15 October 1981

the wearing of the dreded baker's hat in public.

Unlike the other battlefields, this one had a definite slope with the two foliage-covered redoubts toward the crest. Saintonge was at the far left of the line, where the slope was beginning to fall off sharply.

Again Henry Rugo — possibly someone else — read through my script. By now I was as thoroughly sick of the thing as everyone else. The artillery blazed away and Newt took us through the psalm-reading.

We advanced almost directly into the sun. Beyond this I can recall no details of the advance and volleyfire. I think that mine was the front rank, as it should have been but often was not. The officers seemed in something of a hurry.

There was no time to close cartridge flaps before charging into the redoubts, and the first thing I heard after the surrender was that someone had seen something fall from my box during the charge. To my great relief it was not my wallet but rather my ramrod-worm which was missing. I had no chance to search for it, and I suppose that some child of Alexandria has a quaint and inexplicable souvenir of the battle.

So far all had gone well enough, but now came the feu-de-joie. For all the time that we had spent standing around in formations, we still had not developed a neat procedure for forming a single straight line. We therefore did much shuffling and aligning while the audience grew restive.

At first the line, formed by the whole army, ran diagonally up the slope. We faced the sun. Then someone decided we should face about. The men of our first three companies — roughly speaking as there was no proper formation now — were ordered to face about. This newly faced line was next ordered to wheel left by pivoting on the rest of the line. It worked well enough although there was now a remarkable shallow angle in the entire line.

Here we stood for a bit when suddenly one of our lieutenants was chewed out for having his men face the wrong way. The criticism was unjust for every order thus far issued and carried out left his men just as they were found. Guessing the wishes of the commanders at this point would have been impossible. I doubt the high officers themselves were sure of their intentions from minute to minute. What really put the pressure on the officers was the presence of an ABC film crew capturing the whole thing for posterity, or at least the late news.

At last the whole line was facing down the slope in the direction of the building. The firing began — off to our left, I believe, among the Bourbonnais — and carried on well enough. You must drill this procedure in order to get the real stacatto effect, and I think ours is an outfit which could do it. As it was, the feu-de-joie was passable.

Toward the end of our line, almost directly in front of the tv crew, a few of our men got cute with double charges. In volleys or during independent fire, such loud reports may give a rouse to the audeience, but they really screw up the uniformity desired in the feu-de-joie. Leo charged up the slope, cussing the culprits in no uncertain terms. So much for making national tv.

Thursday, 15 October 1981

Leo's anger was justified at this time in view of the fact that our next performance would come at Yorktown, where safety regulations and security checks would be very tight. One funny play with blackpowder in a place where the authorities did not want us in the first place, and all of our efforts might be tossed right out.

It was around 4:56 when the battle had ended. I can find no notes on the end of this performance. The crowd was already well on its way home as we headed down to the busses, which now took us straight to the National Guard base.

Palmer had called for a quick gathering by his trailer upon our return to our parking lot. There was information about supper and about our departure, but on the fringe of the crowd little could be heard of Palmer's words over the roar of rush hour traffic overhead.

The main point of this gathering was the distribution of tickets — paper sheets with maps and directions to the dining halls — for supper. There was a yellow ticket and a green; I got a green.

The green tickets directed the bearers to a St. Mary's School about two blocks from our location. The time on the ticket was 6:45, so there was time to kill and beer to drink. Initially I had wished to change from my uniform to something drier, but the word came along that we should show our appreciation to our hosts by showing up in full uniform. So be it. Only Newt demurred at visiting a parochial school in the garb of a priest.

It was still light enough to make our way through and across a small gully which lay along a shortcut which the guardsmen had shown us. We found the school without difficulty. In the basement cafeteria we found wine and beer for sale at a nominal price, cider and juices for free. We then found seats and had a little "happy hour."

It was not long before a gentleman drew our attention and welcomed us to try the smorgasboard in the next room. The food was wonderful — all homemade and some gourmet. There were many chefs, the meal being a community effort, and these folks were clearly pleased with our response to the effort. Many of us were happy to return for seconds and to seek items for which there had been no space on the plate the first time around.

A little while into the dining our chief host again called for our attention. He showed us a pack of yellow cards which were certificates of citizen to Alexandria, to be issued to each of us by Palmer later on. Our host then noted that our tax assessments were already in the mail.

It was well past our 8 PM departure time — the time to head for Yorktown — when I left the school, and there were many of our number still in the school. In the darkness that gully was a real challenge, but everyone got to the "trailer park" in fine shape.

The previous night I had found a phone in the armory and so had placed a call home from Havre de Grace. Checking this armory, I again found a phone, but there was no answer when I called.

It was here that we saw the last of the Newport Artillery, for whom the Rochambeau March now ended. They explained that their guns were cast in 1797 and therefore could not meet the requirements for authenticity set by the Yorktown Bicentennial Brigade. Again I

wondered just how many of the Soissonnais would be turned back at the gates.

It did not take us all that long to prepare to roll since no one had unhitched a trailer or pitched a tent. Our plan was to drive through the night and get the Saintonge Regiment settled in before the Friday morning rush. Thanks to me our van was about the last to move out. This was about 8:45.

For once we were truly eager to stay with the convoy. Virginia is too large a state for anyone to risk getting lost at night. There were confusing directions given over the CB. They seemed contradictory, and yet when followed they did work.

Joe Bausk missed a turn onto the interstate and started to run in the wrong direction, but within half an hour or so he was back on the trail. The only one not to be accounted for was "Liberty Man." Without explanation Mark Dodge passed the convoy and plunged into the night on his own. How lost can one get on a well-marked, modern interstate?

The convoy stopped briefly once by the side of the road for emergency relief. The cold air helped awaken us and off we went again. Exit signs often gave names familiar in both the Revolutionary and Civil wars. The talk in our van turned to the history of the Civil War, and at that point I ceased trying to sleep and listened in.

Near Richmond we turned from Rte 95 onto Rte 64 and headed toward the Tidewater. The excitement picked up with the sighting of the first sign for Williamsburg.

Now Bob and Audrey Childs had left the regiment in Philadelphia to travel to Williamsburg for the Concord performance. Rather than come back with the musicians, they had remained in Yorktown at the site designated for the Saintonge. It was hoped that Bob would be tuned in on the CB to give directions for our approach.

As we drew closer to the peninsula, the large green roadsigns bore less and less information. For the sake of crowd and traffic control all the usual references to Yorktown had been covered, and it seems safe to assume that the access roads were also closed off.

In fact Bob was not only monitoring our Channel 7, he was waiting on the highway just below our exit in order to lead us in. The move was quite smooth, and "participant" cards in our front windows made for quick passage through the security check at the gate.

It was about 12:15 AM when the convoy found the field with the little Saintonge sign. The field, about eighty yards square and surrounded by thick woods, lay to the right off the road. It was to the back of the field where the several Concord campers had been placed to secure a regimental area.

Our vehicles filled three parallel lines, and it was later when I learned that the Soissonnais was camping over by the road. Again our trailer was ready for immediate occupation once the van's engine was turned off. For others there was the effort of tent raising or trailer leveling.

I took a brief tour around the camp, located the sentry boxes over by the field's entrance, noted the absence of the promised water buffalo, and then turned in. Joe Bausk's thermometer read around 50°F.

I should conclude this day's account with an incident from the

campground in Havre de Grace. The previous evening Les and I had noticed a most striking poster on the bulletin board in the front hall of the National Guard h.q. Because of Guard presence at that time, we postponed the purloining to the early morning hours.

As Les was coming back from breakfast, he met Palmer striding purposefully across the campground, a scowl of efficiency on his face. Les stopped our colonel to say that Tony Walker had just been seeking him — a message which brought a look of surmise, if not concern. Les went on to hand over the message which Tony had charged him to deliver.

Palmer now opened the rather large paper to discover a very official, glossy poster, offering tidbits of advice and admonishing: "Get Control of Your Convoy!" Les reports that our colonel brightened at this.

P.S. "Liberty Man" did in fact fail to beat the convoy to Yorktown, although he did not get lost. A tire on his trailer went flat, and he had traveled several miles before the problem was evident. The wheel looked as though a baby tyrannosaur had used it as a teething ring. These stalwart representatives of the Lost Patrol upheld the grand tradition and came into camp in the wee hours of morning.