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This day marked the opening of the Yorktown bicentennial celebrations per se. Be it noted that I write these lines on the 2nd of November. Furthermore, whether from lack of time or lack of ambition, I failed to take any notes over these final four days. The basic schedule of events and my feelings about specific occurrences I have no doubt I can record accurately. It is little incidents, for which my memory can recall no context, which may be listed out of true sequence.

We were able to stay in bed this day until after sunrise since we did not have to be in uniform until late morning. Nevertheless, registration was to begin around 8 AM, so most of us got out and on to the road early enough to make the head of the line. (I believe we made use of the shuttle busses which had been provided for participants).

Word was that the registration facilities were to be set up near the intersection of Surrender and Union Roads, but at our arrival there were no Yorktown Bicentennial Brigade officials to be found. This lack of a specific target made it difficult to form a nice line, and as more of the troops arrived it was clear that a free-for-all could result the minute a booth was set up.

More than a few minutes late, a vehicle swung onto the field and deposited four or five uniformed colonials, a couple of long tables, and numerous sheets of paper. On the tables were placed caricature drawings of the different 18th century troops, the most common dividing line being nationality.

Of course it was a mess when we tried to line up now. One of the officials tried to convince us to form separate, shorter lines according to our divisions. I do not know how long it was before he got the fact that, with one or two exceptions, everyone in front of him was "French."

Les and I were quite close to the head of the line, and we could soon see that the help had not been hired for its clerical efficiency. Then a group of our camp folowers was sent to cut in at the head of the line: they had camp tending duties to begin as quickly as possible. Then one of the clerks called all family groups to the head of the line: this would be more efficient. I think that Les was on the verge of st angling that quill-pusher.

When I finally got to the table, I had to produce an id (photo-bearing preferably) before being checked off the master list. For this I received a rather plain id/meal ticket. This business was rather a disappointment after the way things had been handled in Rhode Island.

There was a further problem for certain individuals. Some of the ladies had been confirmed verbally as participants some time ago, yet now their names were not on the master list. Palmer was on hand and promised to take care of it, and apparently he did just that.

I did not hang around this area but instead headed back to the camp — a good mile or so away — to clean my musket. On both sides of the road up in the area of the registration tables, the presence of the modern army was overwhelmingly obvious. On the south side of the road was the camp area. On the north were various weapon systems on public display.

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I had just about finished working on the Charleville when we were called to formation in an open area near Palmer's RV. It was about 10:30. The main point of the meeting was to settle details about our move to the 18th century area this noon. We had agreed that we should march in with full fifes and drums; therefore, Deuxieme Compagnie's muskets would have to be transported by vehicle to the French 18th century camp.

The meeting ran a little long, and there was a rush to get into uniform. At 11:47 the Saintonge Regiment stepped off and marched the full distance to the battlefield. Not knowing the proper route behind the siege lines — or possibly wishing to make the best impression — we put our route directly across the no man's land of 200 years ago.

The first structural remains to be found beyond the British defenses are the trenchworks of the Second Parallel. In the vicinity of Redoubt 9, a modern road breaks perpendicularly through the trenchwork. As one faces the Second Parallel, the British/Hessian camp lay to the left of the road, the Allied camp to the right, both camps being situated behind the trenches.

The French encampment was placed in the corner formed by the trench and the road and we were thus on the most conspicuous site in our army. The Allied camp formed a great hollow rectangle which was open to the road and to the woods. Tents — about a half dozen in depth — formed a line along the inside of the Second Parallel and extended for a good 120 yards from the road to the woods. A few tents were set along the wooded area, while tethered horses indicated the presence of the cavalry here. A good 80 yards across from and parallel to the first line of tents lay the great mass of the Continental Army in neat rows of white tents. The open space between the main lines was the parade upon which the army would muster before marching into action.

The French camp itself was set up in this fashion: The tents of a couple of dozen private soldiers were set up in two divisions so as to form a path dividing the camp in two and leading up to the commander's marquee. This axis, along which all tents were aligned, was parallel to the modern road. To the left of the commander's tent was a long and tall tent containing a long table. To the right of the commander's tent was the open work area where all camp activities would take place. All camp areas were roped off with yellow plastic cord along their perimeters. The plastic was a nice touch.

The Saintonge campfollowers were quite busy at various tasks, but there was little time to observe them, for a park ranger was on hand for safety inspection. We fell into formation on the parade, and the ranger came along to sound the muskets and check the half-cock. As a sergeant I was detailed to sound the muskets of Troisieme and Quatrieme Compagnies. The result was a pair of dirty hands, for some of our boys had not been too meticulous this morning.

As soon as the barrel had been rung, the ranger checked the half-cock with a good, sturdy trigger pull. If the piece passed inspection, a small green adhesive dot was pressed onto the trigger guard. Our inspector was business-like yet pleasant to deal with — not so with all the rangers, we heard.

Returning from an officers' meeting, Palmer inquired of our

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success. Only one musket had failed, and this brought a scowl. Who failed? Bruce True. Well whose musket had he borrowed?! His father's. Oh.

The food service for the entire army was being handled in an area beyond the cavalry quarters. A long, open tent covered at least six serving tables allowing some dozen serving lines. The area in front of this tent was roped off so that half a dozen volunteers could check our official id's. One can only imagine how many cheapskates would rig themselves out in full uniform in order to get free meals. Those hot dogs and beans of this lunch would surely be worth a freeloader's efforts.

Dining was strictly alfresco and on the ground out behind the tent. It was at this time that the Saintonge received its first compliment. A Hessian grenadier expressed his pleasure at seeing worthy representatives of France. In our usual outfits it would be hard to get more than a sneer from a Hessian.

Back at the camp we had some time during which to look things over. A particular fruit concoction was being prepared over the fire. These fires in the 18th century camp areas were the only ones to be permitted in the park.

In the early afternoon there was a call to fall in in preparation for the grand entrance parade of the entire 18 century force. The French forces, Saintonge to the middle — I recall that regimental numbers seemed to influence placement — formed just outside the French camp with the column facing the road. The Continentals seemed to fill in the rest of the parade ground.

There was much bustle among the French staff officers at the front of the column as decisions were made and changed regarding the formation. Most of the Saintonge companies were arranged to provide a six-man front, but Troisieme could best do it with five across.

Then occurred the first of several serious — shall we call them "breaches of etiquette"? Col. Mike Vaquer, commander of all French forces at Yorktown for this occasion, is also the commander of the Regiment de Foix. This regiment numbers about eight rank and file and therefore would look quite weak in the massed formation. Perhaps judging that the Foix's green facings were at least somewhat akin to those of Saintonge, Vaquer had his men assigned to fill in the final ranks of our companies. Naturally there was strong resentment at this violation of our self-regulated uniformity.

I understand that there was also some unpleasantness when we declined to brigade our musicians with the massed music. It was irritating enough that we would not be allowed our three drummers; there was no way that we would give away Deuxieme Compagnie as well.

It was the American division which led the parade this day, marching down the modern road and then turning right onto the field before the defense works. As we watched the Americans pass by us on the road, there seemed something quite strange about a few of the muskets. They had awfully slender barrels. And then it was clear that some men were marching with musket stocks and no barrels. I recall one company of which at least a third of the men carried only stocks. In considering this curiosity later, I could only surmise that such men had failed safety inspection and therefore had been

denied access to the field with a faulty musket.

The weather was continuing fair as it had been all day. The sun was warm, but I noticed no particular discomfort caused by the wool coat.

When we marched out we had to maintain the beat of the massed music, which was off the the front of the columns. Occasionally an officer might call cadence, but frequently this was off from the actual beat so it was better left unsaid.

About fifty yards beyond the Second Parallel trenches the column wheeled right and advanced across "no man's land." In the vicinity of Redoubt 9 the column wheeled left and advanced in the direction of the several tall bleachers which had been erected in front of the British earthworks. Workmen were still hammering together and painting the presidential reviewing stand at this time.

As we approached the bleachers, which stood to the right of our line of march, the several units were identified by an announcer on the large p.a. system. Saintonge was assigned to the state of Maine and Soissonnais to Massachusetts. Perfect.

A few dozen yards yards beyond the reviewing area, the column wheeled left to regain the road back to camp. At this point we were closer to the massed British music than to our own and this had an unfavorable effect upon our step.

And so we marched back into the camp to enjoy a few minutes' break. Alcohol was forbidden in the camps during the hours when tourists might be present, but I was quite happy to get some water. This water was to be found in a couple of wooden buckets by the campfire. Its surface was greasy with woodsmoke, and unidentified particles floated here and there, yet it tasted rather good and I saw no one refuse it. I remember how eagerly helpful Bradford MacInnis was in bringing the water and ladles around. All of the regimental children were helpful in running that camp.

In a short while there was a call to fall in once again. The National Park's own cartridges were to be distributed at this time. The Park Service issued its own for safety reasons, and these babies could scarcely be safer. Made of oaktag and dipped in a brown wax, they were next to impossible to open. Furthermore they were of such a diameter as barely to fit into our cartridge blocks. Within moments of handling these tubes, one's fingers were covered with a foul mess of wax and powder grains.

To top it off, there were not enough cartridges to fill the blocks. Sharing my original fifteen, I was soon reduced to nine. There were delays as officers went in search of more supplies.

I learned that these preparations were being made for the re-enactment of the assault on Redoubts 9 and 10. Earlier in the afternoon I had scouted Redoubt 9 and found it fully prepared for the assault with its ditch cleared of the usual thorny scrub and an abatis of leafy tree limbs carefully placed. Now Iheard that only a handful of French would be permitted to make the assault: only two men from each Saintonge company would be assigned to this force.

The lieutenants were to draw lots or assign the men from their companies, but Ron Davis was not around. Impatient to move it along and eager to participate — a few years ago I had considered enlistment in the Light Infantry in order to get in on this action should

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it ever take place — I pulled rank and fell out with the assault force, telling the others in Troisieme Compagnie that the first one to join me could come along. Matt Sargent beat the crowd.

In the entire French force for the assault there were no more than thirty men. We were placed under the direct command of Capt. Dick Wilson of the Soissonnais, and we marched at the head of the French column.

It must have been after the 4 PM schedule when the army moved out in column to form its line behind the trench of the Second Parallel. We approached the trench perpendicularly from the wooded end of the camp, the assault forces turning right, the support forces left. This put the French assault force on the far right of the Allied line, right up against the road. This "position of honor" was historically inaccurate, the French having allowed it to the Americans throughout the original campaign.

From this position I could see the British inside Redoubt 9, about sixty yards away, and more British along the walls of the main defenses across no man's land. Thus far the only specific information which I had received was that the assault force would not shoot. Clearly this was incorrect.

I believe that artillery opened the action and then volleys of musketry picked up all along the line. Our force had been divided into three ranks in order to permit a more continuous fire. The front rank stood part way up the inner wall of the trench on a non-existent firestep. The second rank was down in the trench, and the third was practically out of the trench in order to find room to reload.

Precious time was wasted as we struggled to pull out cartridges jammed into the blocks and glued there by the wax. Some cartridges ripped open rather than come free and so caused a safety hazard. Seathrun O'Corrain, a drummer by training, was having a fine time trying to adjust his borrowed Brown Bess so as to avoid misfires; and I was trying to load my musket while offering advice to him. Mike Vaquer was behind our trench and clearly directing our efforts.

I had just fired my third round when I saw the Americans to our left rising out of the trench. There was Mark Schendeldecker, no longer an engineer as at Camden, waving his troops to the attack. Our officers did nothing other than watch the Americans go for the French redoubt, #9. There was no coordination of effort.

Istill suspect a conspiracy on the part of someone in the Brigade of the American Revolution. The whole show was plainly set up from the start to squeeze the French out. Otherwise, why a hundred or so Americans to thirty French in the re-enactment of an action in which each had played an equal part? Clearly Vaquer was upset at the American move. Finally, only the Americans were provided with ladders to use on the ramparts.

The American sappers were cutting away the abatis before some one of our officers ordered us to charge. As I reached the redobt ditch I found that my sword and bayonet carriage had flown up over my left shoulder. Somehow I had lost neither blade. I also found the few openings in the concrete fraising to be filled with Americans, more of them waiting in the ditch for a turn on the ladders.

My only chance for gaining entrance lay somewhere else. Of

course the entire action had been done with bayonets sheathed. We had also let slack out in our musket slings so that our hands might be free to climb the walls. However, the slope into the ditch was so steep that I feared to take a tumble and break my back with a slung musket, so keeping the Charleville firmly in hand I raced down the slope.

Surprised to find myself unhurt and on my feet in the bottom of that ditch, I raced counterclockwise around the wall hoping to find a broken fraising.

No luck until I had covered three quarters of the circuit and come to the back entrance. Inside I could see most of the Americans with the already captured British. French soldiers were just gathering on the parapet. I was so pooped from exertion — I wouldn't run to catch a plane — that I could barely join in the "Vive le Roi" to signal victory.

The French were not in a cheering mood at this point. We stayed clearly away from the Americans and there was much cursing and muttering against the treatment we had just received.

Looking around the ranks of the Americans I found one woman in a Light Infantry uniform. Clearly she represented Deborah Sampson, who had in fact been here in 1781. But Deborah had served as Robert Shurtleff in order to keep her gender a secret. However naive, no one here could be fooled into mistaking this Deborah for a Robert.

Now for years the BAR has boasted its authenticity, sneering at militia who have not quite got the right materials or precise clothing patterns. And of course the authenticity requirements for Yorktown were the strictest ever. Hadn't we all shaved this past summer for the sake of authenticity? Hadn't we all invested in reproduction spectacles?

Well not all of us. Beards could be found all through the ranks of the Americans. Worse, they could be found on the British. Oh yes, and then there were the sunglasses. What blaitant hypocrisy!

The shooting continued along the main lines of the two armies for a little while after the redoubt's capture. And then we just stood around waiting to march out. When neither the Americans nor the British to our front seemed ready to budge, Vaquer formed us up and marched us up onto the parapet. On this path we circled around the other troops to the gate and then marched out and back to camp.

For the rest of this day I did not hesitate to say that the "Alliance" was in very shaky condition indeed. When we got back to camp, the compliments which we received came from an officer of the Welch Fusiliers. I was finding that we had more in common with our "enemies" than with our "allies." Had Washington treated Rochambeau in so shabby a manner, he'd have awakened the next morning to find the French army aboard de Grasse's fleet.

Our activities for this day were now officially ended, so I thought it a good time to view the park's visitors' center. Young Les joined me in the hike. We walked around the defenses to the park entrance behind the Horn Redoubt for we were unsure that we would be allowed to climb over the ramparts directly.

In the area just outside the entrance it was clear that this bicentennial event was being handled like a state fair with all manner

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of activities unrelated to the event being commemorated. The Siege of Yorktown was being reduced to the status of a side show.

At the door of the visitors' center was the sign forbidding entrance to anyone carrying his musket. How hospitable. The perfect end to a perfect day.

This time we just went over the ramparts in order to get to supper as quickly as possible. En route to the Second Parallel I found an unoccupied telephone located under a small tree. I tried to call Judy but again had no luck.

I don't recall any details about our supper, but I recall being surprised at the quality. The army had declined to undertake kp responsibilities, and a private caterer had to be called in. Despite a clientel of reportedly more than 4,000, no one waited more than two minutes in line and the food was always hot.

On the way back to our 20th century camp several of us stopped by a vendor's stand along the Surrender Road. The items showed a certain quality, but I was not in a buying mood.

The walk home was in the dark, and I was surprised at how much traffic was running along the road. At the camp there were several gatherings of Saintonge people. In the distance we could hear but not see a grand fireworks display.

Leo was making the rounds of the camp in order to collect a list of specific grievances for Palmer to take to an officers' meeting. Oddly enough, after all that had happened, my complaint was about the troops who had not shaved. I suppose that after experiences such as the Battle of Princeton I have always expected us to get the shaft from the B.A.R., and therefore the afternoon's combat had not really surprised me. Again it was not that I had shaved as required that bothered me, for we could take pride in having a regiment which had done it right all the way. Rather it was that open hypocrisy which galled me, and I wanted them called on it although nothing might result.

Our regiment is a very special group of people, and the combination of good company and good wine soon soothed away much of the hard feeling from most of us. There would be no "mutiny" tomorrow.

The one word of the morning's activities was that a half dozen or so volunteers should be at the French camp by 8 AM to walk picket duty and talk with the tourists. Well, I figured that that was why I was here with the army, so I turned in fairly early.

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Another gorgeous day, the first hour of which was wasted in cleaning the Charleville and getting the uniform on. I hoped to find time for breakfast, but even as I approached the check station near the chow tent someone reminded me of the hour and I hastened straight to the French camp.

There was more activity than expected because of a battle about which we had not heard. Although the re-enactment of the initial request for a truce was on the printed schedule, there had been no mention of a role for the infantry. Presuming the action to involve artillery, I had forgot about it. There had been no further mention of it last night.

It is a pity that something had not been said, for I am sure that most of Saintonge would have been on hand for the fireworks. As it was, the six of us who had come to walk the perimeter were now being issued the damned "cardboard" cartridges. As we struggled, we were joined by two more men of Saintonge.

It was exasperating to have such a small showing when the other French regiments were coming along at nearly full strength. There was just no way to send back for reinforcements in time.

One of our number began to do a great deal of bitching and moaning about this turn of events. He had come up to do a little light guard duty and then to go off as a tourist. He didn't want to mess up his musket by firing today. It seemed pretty clear to me that one enlists in such an army as ours with the intention of being the show rather than looking at it. A soldier comes as a soldier, a tourist as a tourist, and seldom the twain do meet. I kept my thoughts to myself.

Despite our small showing, the Saintonge was placed at the head of the French column. The only colors to be carried into combat were the white colonels' drapeaux and we therefore left the regimental flag in the camp.

Then the Soissonnais came up to join the column and all of that regiment's colors were flying. On two separate occasions I heard Vaquer send the order back that those flags were to be returned to camp.

Around 9:30, without music, we advanced in column toward the road, wheeled left toward the trench, and then wheeled left again to march along the back of the trench. Today the position of the Allies would be correct to some extent, and so we had to march west while American units in the trench marched past us to the east. Curiously we were brought to halt at a point where the head of the French column — namely Saintonge — was placed almost directly under one of the park's Betsy Ross flags.

Lt. Ron MacInnis was duty officer this morning and so was our commander. His biggest responsibility lay in having us make the adjustments of position which the staff officers wanted. Our column faced "a droite" and then marched into the trench.

At first it was expected that we should form two ranks and take turns on the firing line, but at the end of the manoeuvring we were formed as one rank because of the space to be covered.

At our location the trench was so deep that when standing on the bottom level one could see nothing of the battlefield. There was a narrow earthen firestep which permitted one to see easily over

the parapet. Here we dug in toe holds and waited for further orders.

There was a considerable space of waiting prior to the action. The American Light Infantry to my left — I was the last man on the left of the French line — began to sing, led by someone with a remarkably good voice. I was informed by the American ensign that this corps was formed of men from various units.

I think that it was the artillery which opened the action once again. There was a battery operating over by Redoubt 9. Our muskets had been loaded since shortly after our entering the trench, so we wasted little time in beginning to fire. The commanders wished a battalion volley to begin our action, and John Seitz, Adjutant of the Soissonnais, was to pass on the command. But a single command is lost on a firing line about 200 yards long, and the volley was ragged.

From here on it was the individual units which fired volleys for the most part. I can recall doing most of my shooting at a tree off by the main road. The British were standing atop their parapets instead of behind the ramparts, and frankly they looked ridiculous. I was pleased that the American volleys lacked precision.

We were having the usual problems getting the thick cartridges free from our blocks, until Garth Moss and I worked out a system. I would pull a cartridge for each of us from his block for each volley until he ran out. Being able to get directly at his block I had better leverage on the cartridges. Once his block was cleaned out, he would begin to empty mine in the same fashion. The system worked rather well.

Our lines kept up a pretty lively fire which was to cease once the British drummer appeared to beat for parley. I wondered how anyone would hear him over all the gunfire or see him amid all the redcoats on the distant parapets. We were beginning to run out of ammunition. How ironic if we were forced to seek the truce first.

Two more Saintonge men, happening along with a view to relieving the active sentries, now jumped into the trench to join us. Since no ammunition was being delivered, Ron advised us to slow down on volleys. In fact we were down to one per man when the shooting stopped.

It now occurred to me that we were at the proper place 200 years almost to the minute after the original beating of the drum. That felt good.

We rested our muskets on the parapet now and watched from the firestep, but I could see nothing in particular. When I looked to my right along the Second Parallel there were sights to make the blood boil. In the center of the Soissonnais line was a clown in a green jacket, with a round hat, and carrying a blunderbuss. What the hell was he doing in the middle of the French ranks when dressed like a militia man? Behind the trench stood ensigns of the Soissonnais still carrying their regimental colors. That they had heard the orders against carrying the flags was plain from the way in which one of them had his flag half furled. There is no way that any commander worthy of his office should have allowed these flagrant violations of regulations.

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The light infantrymen were now collecting their empty cartridge papers and placing them into a plastic trash bag. Garth and I added ours to their collection.

At a certain point we were ordered to climb onto the parapet to form a single line facing the defense works. The divisions of the army gave the "huzza" or "vive le Roi." We then formed the column and marched back to our respective 18th century camps.

In the French camp we found more food being prepared. There was a thick pea soup and a beef and onion stew. The dearth of utensils caused no great problem as the troops willingly shared trenchers and spoons. I noticed that Lt. Sargent dined first, then handed the trencher to Sgt Denis, who then passed it along to a private. Only when an ensign picked it up was washing the trencher required before dining. The food tasted wonderful with all of the woodsmoke enhancing its flavor.

As noon approached and more of our men came into camp, there was a sudden bustle of officers when special guests paid a surprise visit. The current Marquis de Lafayette and a Madame Rochambeau and their families were being escorted into camp. Those of us under the rank of ensign saw this event from a distance.

Madame Rochambeau now presented a regimental drapeau of the Bourbonnais Regiment, which had been carried during the siege of 1781. As the finest example of an ensign then present, Barry Real was awarded the privilege of carrying this flag in his leather sling for the benefit of the many French newspaper and television cameramen.

Crosby Milliman now appeared in his Rochambeay suit. I suspect that he had received special permission to don the general's uniform for this one occasion. The rules of this re-enactment stated clearly that no particular historical personality was to be represented by any re-enactor.

When this bit of excitement had passed, I headed to lunch at the mess tent. Again the line moved very smoothly. The entree today was hamburger, and I lucked out with an issue of two.

It had been decided that on each day the Saintonge should march in with full colors and music. Therefore, around 1 PM we all fell in on the field where we had registered on Friday morning. We marched down Union Rd. and through the woods behind the Allied lines. At the point where the mess tent stood, Union Rd was crossed by a dirt track which led to the Allied camp. Here we turned left and then marched straight out to the French camp.

Again there was time to be spent before our afternoon's performance. During these lengthy periods of our relative inactivity the visitors were being entertained elsewhere. On several occasions we saw overfights by formations of as many as twenty-five F-15s. From time to time we could hear in the distance the rattle of machine guns. On a more peaceful note a chorus or two might sing over the p.a. system near the bleachers. Clearly the modern military was making the most of its p.r. opportunities.

Again there was a distribution of cartridges, and again there were too few. It is odd that such problems should have arisen, for the publicity handouts from the organizers had promised the public 200,000 rounds of musket fire. At some length our officers were able to find sufficient cartridges to prepare us for the scheduled

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tactical demonstration.

We had received some information about Palmer's meeting with the high commanders last night. Our colonel had with some spirit expressed the regiment's anger with the handling of Friday's show. Among other points, he demanded that no outside troops be brigaded with Saintonge. Any repetition of the previous screw-ups and he would march us straight out of formation and back to our camp in full view of the public. Vaquer, upset with the rest of the Brigade for its treatment of the French, seemed to be in agreement with Palmer. We would have to see how it went today.

It was about midafternoon, as I recall it, when we finally fell into formation on the parade. Today Saintonge was placed at the head of the French column without guests. Again the American forces advanced to the field first.

The line of march was much as it had been yesterday with the right turn into no man's land. Although I did not notice it, the next left turn of the Allied column occurred in three stages so that there were three lines of battle. All of the French forces formed the left wing of the third line of battle.

Despite its general appearance of flatness the battlefield at Yorktown undulates to a surprising degree, and thus from our position toward the eastern end of the field we could see nothing of the troops in front of us to the west. A number of men took advantage of the long lull to run off to the woods by the river bank. This move seemed to concern some of the park rangers.

We faced into the sun, seeing only the ridges of the ground between us and the distant line of trees beyond the Second Parallel. The volleys from the unseen battle lines were shallow because of the absence of ramming of charges. We would hear a muffled popping and then see a white cloud dispersing above one of the ridges. An announcer was using the p.a. system to keep the spectators informed, but I paid him no mind.

Eventually the first two "all-American" lines withdrew after failing to dislodge the British, and we began our advance to the firing line. The British must have been on or very close to the modern road, but we were so keen on maintaining our lines that I did not really look ahead. I can really appreciate the use of this nitpicking discipline in keeping organization in combat, for there is little chance for a soldier to notice the action around him when he is trying primarily to maintain a precise line.

With the regimental drapeau again in camp and the four companies moving and firing independently of one another, there was little sense of the regiment here. The Lieutenant Colonel was in nominal command, but the lieutenants were the ones giving the audible orders. From time to time a battalion command would come along through the Adjutant, but something was missing and there was a distinct lethargy in our fire.

Those cartridges were horrible. It is a wonder that teeth weren't lost in tearing them open — possibly the wax that collected on the teeth kept them glued fast to the gums. Everything was contributing to a pervasive ennui. This had to be one of the worst ...

And then Palmer charged in like Phil Sheridan come from Winchester, shooing junior officers to the rear, barking commands to the regiment

as the unit which it was meant to be. That he had to ask someone for one of the French commands made no difference, there was a cheering and laughing along the line: "The Colonel's back!"

Now we fired with a will, volleys cracking clean and sharp. It seemed so at least. And when we advanced to our drums it was as one unit, the three ranks of the regiment now aligning properly together as in the good old Fourth Middlesex days.

The full battle line advanced to the road and was then halted on the far soft shoulder, from which we could look down onto the redcoats on the field, which fell away from the road. Time Magazine photos show us to have been opposite the grenadiers of the Xth Foot. Within a volley or two the "tactical demonstration" was over.

Be it noted that during this action the Park Service had again inserted its officious nose. "Casualties" were not to fall because medics could not then find truly injured men; furthermore, mock casualties would demean the memory of those who had fallen 200 years before. Oh yes, and furthermore one might fall upon a small cactus and sustain a real injury. Of course there's nothing like county fair sideshows to display respect for the fallen heroes of old.

The army now returned to the 18th century camp by marching in column first toward Yorktown and the counter-marching back through the Second Parallel. Following the American troops we were the first unit into the Allied camp. Halting in front of the French camp, we faced left to hear some final words from our Colonel.

Suddenly from the back rank a voice called out: "Vive le Colonel!", and the three cheers rang out for the whole army to hear. Mike Vaquer and Crosby Milliman, who were passing by just then, tipped their hats in acknowledgement of our cheers. Vaquer had the presence of mind to return and state to Palmer that the cheers had clearly been for Palmer.

There was some time yet before supper, so Leslie and I stashed our muskets in a tent reserved to the Saintonge and set out once again to the visitors' center. In so doing we blew one of the rare treats of this campaign. Mark Dodge's brother-in-law,
, is an aide to President Reagan, and in the past he had mentioned to Mark the strong possibility of Saintonge's being singled out for some special attention. Last night that possibility of a tour of the presidential yacht Sequoia had been mentioned for this afternoon. But since we heard nothing further, I forgot completely; and of course as soon as I had departed, the whole program began to roll. It was especially proper that the ladies receive some such break, for not only had they worked hard at maintaining the camp, but after the "tactical demonstration" they had picked the field clean of cartridge papers.

Leslie and I walked directly to the center by climbing over the ramparts this time. I noticed that the rest rooms were as popular as any of the displays. We first went through the large display room, which contains some remarkable mock-ups as well as excavated artifacts. We completed our visit with a stop at the museum shop, where I picked up a few booklets and prints. The business here was quite brisk.

Before leaving we added our names to the center's guest register. Under the heading of "comments" I noticed a cryptic plea: "Let us

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die!!!" After a moment's perplexity I recognized this as the protest of a "soldier" against the Park Service's policy for "tactical demonstrations." A year from now what would the casual reader make of such a "comment," I wondered.

Leslie and I now hiked back through the camp and went to supper. I think that we received a ham slice as the entree. Whatever the vegetables may have been, the effect was quite delicious.

It was here that Saintonge received the one sure compliment of the weekend from an American. An artilleryman from South Carolina dined with us and inquired into our unit's origins. He then explained that on Friday the Americans had heard only that the French would be represented. By whom remained a mystery. When they saw Saintonge march onto the field for the grand entrance parade, the men of his gun crew assumed us to be an honor guard from the French army similar to the Old Guard.

Leslie and I now returned to the French camp to get our muskets and then set out along the trench of the Second Parallel to return to the main road back to camp. It is a rather striking experience to walk these old lines, effectively alone, in the gathering twilight.

There were few folks in the camp for the tourists ha not yet returned from the Sequoia. Some folks had decided against going for one reason or another. Of course this was the first that Leslie and I had heard of the tour.

We also heard of the crash of the Roses' rented RV on the way to the Sequoia. Rumors of damage and injury were rife, but upon the return of the first from the tour party it was clear that damage to the vehicle was not terribly bad and damage to the passengers was nil. It was observed that if there is a good place to have an accident, that place must be here where there were so many paramedics and helicopters with the military forces.

An important piece of regimental business was being carried out at this hour by Bob Childs and a few others. With the scheduled appearance of the President, the Secret Service was going to be very particular about firearms. There would be a search of the camps for any unauthorized explosives. Of course, we had used but a small portion of our black powder before entering the park, and there was no way that we intended to see such a valuable commodity confiscated. Therefore, all powder — about 120 pounds, I think — was packed up in Bob's van to be taken off for safe storage with a certain artillery company encamped elsewhere outside the park. Our deliverymen later reported the reluctance of the artillerymen to accept so much powder, but the matter was finally settled.

There was a surprise birthday party for Mark Dodge, complete with a small cake served off a tailgate. Near the Zscaus' camper the Rochambeaujolais dispenser was set up and did a brisk business. In all this evening was less strained than the previous one since things had gone rather better today.

Later in the evening several folks went off to the Soissonnais area along the front end of our camp field to extend the hand of friendship and join in their regimental singing. By the time I got over there a half hour later, about the only singers left were from Saintonge. The Soissonnais were satisfied with conversation.

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The Soissonnais had long ago turned in before we singers of Saintonge were politely requested to continue the fest at our own area. We obliged and remained singing in the moonlight until the wee hours.

As a post script I mention here our one casualty of the day. A cavalryperson of the female persuasion had decided to ride through the tight opening between the camp rope and our left flank instead of going around to the wide open right on the parade this afternoon. Her horse stepped on Corporal Bobby MacLean's foot. He seemed little the worse for it by this evening, but the pain must be considerable.

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Having slept the previous night in my breeches and gaiters, I did not face nearly so long a task as usual in getting dressed this day. I had taken this precaution in preparation for attending a special drill in preparation for Monday's presidential review. Alas, the drill was to begin at 8 AM sharp and the bunk was just too warm and comfortable to leave at the necessary time. So I spent the morning cleaning my Charleville once again.

I was rummaging through the motley piles of stuff on my bunk in search of something when I found a surprise. Someone had chosen last night — the night before the Secret Service hit town — to restore a couple of packets of borrowed cartridges. With no way of getting them out of camp, I now had the pleasure of opening and sprinkling some thirty cartridges over the wet grass around our camper.

This morning brought us bad news in other ways. The actions of some officious rangers were stirring rebellion in some units. First we saw a woman from some other outfit, who was packing her tent and preparing to leave Yorktown. She told of a ranger who had challenged the authenticity of her appearance in a rifleman's garb and had therefore evicted her. While I concur with the ranger's appraisal of her appearance, his enforcement of the rule was incredibly selective in view of all the violations of a similar nature which were going unchallenged.

Next Fred Lawson came along to state the outrage of the artillery at the actions of the Park Service. The story was that during the previous afternoon's tactical action, a column of infantry had marched in front of a loaded fieldpiece. When a ranger discovered that the gun was loaded, he ordered the crew to turn the gun 180° and discharge it. As soon as they complied he cited them for violation of the prohibition against moving a loaded cannon and evicted them from the park.

Beyond Catch-22 the Park Service had decided that only four fieldpieces should be permitted to fire, the others apparently to be left off the battlefield. The entire artillery was talking of trying to organize a strike of some kind, although since the Park Service clearly would like nothing better than to have us all go away I doubted the effectiveness of any boycotts.

Our officers later pointed out to the grumbling men of Saintonge that there are two sides to every story, but more importantly that we had not yet received any grief from rangers and therefore should not go in search of any. The latter point was particularly well taken.

At lunch we heard of a militia man issued a $500 fine for cutting down a tree despite his ability to show a permit authorizing the cutting of the tree. It would be interesting to see if all of the rangers came out of this weekend with the same good health they had brought in.

Amid the troubles experienced by others, Saintonge was suffering blows of another sort — the loss of men. Bright and early this morning Dan Tanona departed for the airport. Yorktown was simply not what it should be — true enough in many instances — and I guess Dan had just had his fill.

Paul Hansell had been having trouble with his back since our

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arrival here and by now was out of action and hoping to get home. Since he had ridden in the car driven by Rod and Garth Moss, they decided that they should get him home straightaway. Thus Troisieme Compagnie, smallest of the four from the start, was losing three muskets at one shot.

We joked about how it is the best company which always sees heaviest service and therefore takes heaviest casualties. I kidded Paul about desertion in the face of the enemy. Then he reached into his pocket with a comment about something for the sergeant's conscience and then bought his way out of the service with the presentation of a shiny coin of Louis XV. I promised him a good head start on the tracking parties and bade the three of them farewell. In truth they would be much missed in our performances.

Beyond these losses, Joe Kolb had been out of action here from the first with torn knee ligaments. Instead of being on the field, he sat in the 18th century camp all day keeping watch on our belongings.

I shall add here that for this day Joe Rose was also lost to Troisieme. There had been no injuries in the accident, but the section of the quarters which sits above the camper's cab had taken quite a shot from the overhanging limb which it had struck last night, and I suppose that Joe was busy chasing insurance agents today.

I took the shuttle bus as far as the intersection of Union Rd. and then walked toward the camp across no man's land. First I saw Bob Childs in the yard of a stone house which stands at this intersection. He and Audrey were trying to arrange a D.A.R. wreath-laying ceremony at an appropriate gravesite in the cemetery next door. Bob was looking for volunteers to participate should the ceremony occur, but I had a few things already in mind and time was tight.

I was with the Longworths and Newt, who were already up ahead examining a couple of the helicopters which had been opened up for display. Such changes in 200 years.

Having checked in at the French camp and found nothing pressing we went off to lunch on Sloppy Joes and assorted side dishes. Throughout the weekend I found the most satisfying drink at the mess tent to be a Kool-Aid style fruit punch.

What I really wished to do was to get to the suttlers before everything was sold out. With the completion of lunch, our little party set out along the end portion of Union Rd., which led down hill into the little glade beyond the American tents. Here three suttlers — Godwin, Avalon Forge, and Geneseeo — had pitched 18th century tents and flies, under which they had set out their wares.

Some items had been quite thoroughly picked over after three days. I found a "cross of Lorraine" made of German silver, which I thought an appropriate item to bring home for Judy. For myself a tompion to fit the Charleville, a new vent and pick for my French outfit — I was tired of borrowing others' — and a horn comb to replace the plastic one which I'd lost. I also got a brass adaptor for my Brown Bess ramrod, which I later found does not really fit. I do believe that the suttlers did well this time out.

We'd heard of another suttler who was selling goods from the back of a donkey cart. There was some question raised as to his having a

vendor's permit — ah, the Park Service again; a little more civility and service from our civil servants, if you please. The day before he'd tried to sell a little something special from one of his bottles. The customer was rather a prig and an officer to boot, so the donkey man was soon on the lam. Later this officer tried to get cozy and purchase the evidence, but the vendor smelled the rat and denied knowledge of such contraband. The whole story could have come from a camp 200 years ago.

When we had come up from the suttlers' area and along the modern road, there was a sound of cannonading from off the river. Adam Longworth and I strolled across the road and past the British camp in order to get a view of the action. We were delayed in trying to find a reasonable path over the old trench works — there is none — and when we came to the bank the shooting was over.

Back at the camp once again, we heard the adventure of Bob Zapasnik, who this morning had thought to take a stroll to see the Yorktown Victory Center, a privately operated museum located on the west end of the old British lines. Naturally he went with full panoply, but as he was crossing the Center's parking lot he found himself in the grip of two plainclothes types and under their guns as well. He was 'cuffed and frog-marched to a small room in the Center, where he was detained and questioned for at least an hour. Afterward he was dismissed with apologies for the inconvenience.

In another sort of Catch-22 performance, for security reasons it had not been mentioned about that President Mitterand of France was visiting the Center at this time. Of course for the same security reasons anyone happening by with a gun — and there were about 4,000 potential candidates for this distinction — was to be scooped up for safe keeping. Poor Bob won the surprise lottery.

Today's safety regulations for the tactical demonstration, as yesterday's had, banned ramrods from the field. As we had yesterday, however, today we authorized one sergeant from each company to carry his ramrod in order to serve as safety officer. On both occasions I kept mine. There was no adverse comment from any of the higher ups.

Cartridges were on hand in the long tent next to the commander's marquee so that individuals could help themselves and so avoid the last minute rush. Some bright lad had observed that if the cartridge were inserted top down into the block, it was much easier to withdraw later. Others added the advice that authenticity should be thrown to the winds and the cartridges should be torn open by hand rather than tooth.

While awaiting the call to "rassemblement" we again sat around the camp and sampled some of the fresh foods. A particular favorite was a fruit-peel and spice punch, which Hatsie Hornblower made up. Despite the absence of liquor it both tasted good and satisfied the thirst. Those who went directly to the water buckets instead soon learned that they had been drinking from the dish water. Frankly I noticed little difference in quality between the contents of the two buckets.

When we were called to fall in, we learned of a slight change of

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plan for order of march. Mike Vaquer had asked Palmer if Saintonge could handle a sixteen-man front, for he wished to form the regiment so as to fill the road from curb to curb. Palmer answered, "Sure," and so we were to try this formation for the first time.

It was decided that the Premiere and Deuxieme Compagnies should hold the left of the formation, the Troisieme and Quatrieme the right in order to balance the appearance of the crimson and gold pompoms above the cockades. A non-com was placed at each end of each line and at the center as well. I found myself as eigth man in from the right on the front rank. Gary Puryear was eight man in from the left. We had three complete ranks for certain, and a check of our roster of losses suggests that the fourth rank must have been a bit thin.

As always we stood shoulder to shoulder in each rank. Now Palmer decided to take us through a few practice wheels. We took four or five wheels to the right or the left as Col. Fred Wahl of the 64th Foot looked on with approval.*

What problems we found were solved when it was decided to guide on the center as we marched as well as when we wheeled. This adjustment may have made for increased precision, but it made for claustrophobia in the center as each end of the line leaned into the center men in order to keep the unbroken contact. As long as arm contact to either side of him remained unchanged to the sense of touch, it was unnecessary for any soldier to look to the side to check his position.

This day had begun with but a few traces of cloud. By midafternoon, however, the sky was thickening in a menacing fashion. Storms had been predicted as a possibility, so it was decided that the tactical demonstration should be shortened and speeded up. Furthermore, bayonets were ordered sheathed before the march-on in order to reduce the possibility of lightning rod effect occurring on the open field.

Saintonge led the French column. In our new shortened depth of ranks, all men could easily hear the three drums of Dan Moylan, Michael Moylan, and Scottie Mitchell. We wheeled left perfectly onto the road and saw rangers push back the spectators to give us room. Ensign Barry Real carried our white drapeau, and Ensign Bob Bruce carried one borrowed from another regiment, both officers and the Sgt. Major marching directly in front of the first rank of muskets.

Palmer, Vaquer, and other officers marched out to our front and now turned to watch us wheel to the right onto the battlefield. Their grins told us all we needed to know about our appearance. Even now I am not sure whether I was surprised that we had mastered the moves in so short a time. Just tell the old Saintonge what you need, general, and it'll be done right. I think the esprit de corps really started at this point. It did for me at any rate.

Once again the French column formed the left of the third line of battle and Saintonge was at the center. During the lull Adjutant Seitz took Newt by the arm and led him along the front of the French Corps so that the troops might be "shriven." It was a rather undignified display as the "genu en terre" rippled down our line

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with men bobbing down and up.

It did in fact look as though there must be rain shortly, but some of our "Down Easters" pointed out signs to prove it would pass us by. Seitz skewered a small cactus and held it aloft on his sword point explaining that this was why the Park Service wished no one to fall. "Aargh!" growled a voice from the ranks; "We wear those things in our jockstraps!"

We had understood that for this day Saintonge would be strictly under its own officers, yet as we advanced it was clear that Vaquer was going to coordinate the line at all costs. We compromised by having Warren Coulter shout the command of execution at the same instant as Vaquer or Seitz.

Today we kept the companies in tight — practically shoulder to shoulder — at all times. I don't think that we fired except as a regiment. When Vaquer ordered a volley by the full French force, it was inevitable to hear straggling shots down to our left. Maybe under these clouds the commander of the Bourbonnais finally gave up his aviator sunglasses, but somehow I doubt it.

It took very little time for us to reach the road today, and then the shooting was over. The column was beginning to form in the field just to the west of the road for the roundabout march back to camp.

Suddenly Palmer took charge of our situation. We former our sixteen-man ranks again with our backs to the road, and then we wheeled to the left straight out of the column. With the rest of the armies still waiting for orders, we marched directly toward the camp.

Now in order to get through the Second Parallel we would have to mount the banking to our left and so get onto the road. Palmer ordered an "oblique a gauche," and for the first time ever, I do believe, we pulled an oblique and kept straight ranks. On the slippery banking, men simply shouldered into the man above or clutched the cuff of the man below and shoved and tugged themselves up to the asphalt without breaking a rank.

Well it was almost perfect. I lost footing and fell on my side and had to scramble, cursing, up to the top. No damage but a flint cut on my right hand. Perhaps I could claim to have been the only casualty of the tactical demonstration despite the park rules.

As we now moved straight, it seemed spontaneous — for I recall no order — that the regiment began to sing out "Au Pres de ma Blonde" to the beat of the drums. The singing was taken up by true French soldiers and sailors in the crowd, and we were clearly making a hit.

We were still in formation in front of the French camp when Vaquer came by with a grin and "Saintonge — c'est magnifique!" He told our officers that if there were any moisture left in his body, he would have wept with joy.

With the threat of rain still hanging from above, most of us hastened to the mess tents for supper. Steak tonight! In a restaurant perhaps the quality of the cut might have brought some complaint, but under the given circumstances we relished every bit of it. You could actually cut it with the serated plastic knife.

I walked back along Union Road and then turned right onto Surrender Road, where I had previously seen a block of public phones. I was in luck and found a functional one free. All the phones

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around here have been adjusted to permit the placing of a call without first depositing a coin. Judy was home this time and we managed a conversation above the rumble of busses and trucks. Oh for the old phone booths!

Back at our camp I changed to civvies immediately in consideration of the weather. Newt and I struck up a fine conversation while sitting inside the camper and drinking brandy. What made our talk memorable was the amount of activity which swirled all around it. First company — to the number of a half dozen or more — came to demand the attendance of a troubabor, and Les obliged them by stepping outside with his guitar. When the rain began to fall, to a man the singers repaired to our modest accomodations and continued the festivities, complaining often that the conversation was interfering with their pleasure. At the first cessation of rain the revelers went back outside, taking the only lantern with them. And minutes later they were back again for shelter.

When the rain had once again passed by, Newt and I were again left by the songsters. Our talk continued awhile until Hatsie Hornblower came by to see Newt about plans for some ceremony for tomorrow.

At the time I went out to join the singing. We even drew some guests as Adjutant and Mrs. Seitz came along with their folding chairs. As the hours rolled by, I recall, a number of our teen-aged ladies began to cavort wildly around the non-existent camp fire. We'd had no idea that such dancing was possible to such tunes as we prefer.

I also remember hearing the musket shots of some fools across the road, who were getting rid of their cartridges in the fun fashion. It would have worked wonders for all of us had the Secret Service been about.

A final note: Troisieme Compagnie lost Eric Vollheim today for he had to return to his job back home. He will be missed.

Note

*: As we were practicing these manoeuvres, several officers — Continental, British, and Hessian — observed our efforts from atop the road. Once we had been dismissed, a red-coat officer approached me to ask who we were. I responded that we were the Saintonge, though for most of the Bicentennial we had been the IVth Middlesex. His response: "Oh no. I know what those guys look like. Who are you actually?" or words to that effect. Assuring him that we had merely dressed up for this occasion, I seemed to have astonished him. "How long have you been practicing this manoeuvre?" he continued. I told him that this was our first attempt, the Colonel having asked us just now. After a pause this Brit said, "You must love your colonel." Surprised at first by his choice of words, I reflected for a moment. And then I concurred, saying, "Yes, we do."

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It is precisely six years and six months since we set out for Concord's Old North Bridge on that cold, rainy morning. This day dawned beautifully under clearing skies. And there was little time free for reflection on the events which have filled the interval between that April and this October.

President Reagan and President Mitterand would be in attendance today, and therefore in addition to sprucing up for the cameras we had to look to certain security precautions. Absolutely all ramrods must be left behind. Flints must be removed from hammers and spare flints must be left behind. Cartridge boxes may contain only the empty wooden blocks, and any tool which might serve as a projectile must be left behind. Someone wondered if we would be allowed to keep our buttons.

Since the barrels would be sounded once again, I checked mine belatedly and found that it would not ring. In my haste to wash it out now, it seemed to grow dirtier by the minute. Each successive cloth that I ran down the bore came back fouled. Finally I tried the ramrod and found that, despite the mess, I could get a good sound.

In the last minute rush I almost forgot my spectacles. Several of us caught the shuttle, and everyone seemed to be at the French camp on time.

We were called into our formation almost immediately at mid-morning. This came so early in order to allow time for the security inspection. I don't even recall who it was who checked us, but both the musket and the cartridge box were gone over. One of our number had actually brought a flint fixed in his musket. The inspectors were rather good about oversights and collected any "contraband" in a basket to be left in the French camp.

As we stood in formation awaiting the completion of other troops' inspection, a professional photographer appeared in front of our column. He set up a ten-foot step ladder and began to snap pictures from its top. Since we had been unable to contract a professional to take our regimental portrait here, we could only hope that this was a free-lancer who would contact us with some prints later.

It was before 11 o'clock when the 20th century units marched past us: French Marines, U.S. Army band, German Army band, Welch Fusiliers band, Virginia Military Institute band, et al. It was interesting to see the Fusiliers here, for Yorktown is the one defeat in its regimental history. Of course today its members could celebrate a final hoodwinking of the victorious Yankees in 1781. Because of the stipulated denial of the honors of war to Cornwallis, the captured colors had been cased throughout the ceremonies. Thus it had been quite easy for a couple of daring Welshmen to hide the flags beneath their uniforms and surrender only the staffs.

As soon as the last of these units had passed, Saintonge immediately wheeled left onto the road to lead the entire 18th century column onto the battlefield for the presidential review. There was no singing permitted as we wheeled right through a temporary opening in the rope barrier along the road and moved onto the field. About halfway between the road and the British defenses we halted, after first wheeling left to face the presidential stand.

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Once we had been ordered to "repos" it was possible to check the surroundings. Off to our left front the several 20th century military bands were in formation. The 20th century riflemen, however, were off to our right rear as were the men of the Old Guard. It took quite some time for the whole of the 18th century column to enter the area and halt.

A stiff breeze was pushing heavy, fair weather clouds from the north, and behind those clouds the sky was a hard blue. The air was warm enough to be comfortable except for the rare times when a large cloud would cover the sun for a while.

A couple of large helicopters came along, and there was speculation as to which one carried the presidents. When Mitterand and Reagan did in fact arrive, we caught but a brief sight of them, for the press bleachers, which stood in front of the reviewing stand, blocked the left and center of the stand from our view.

There were three speakers today, introduced in turn by the two U.S. senators and the governor of Virginia. First to speak was Lord Hailsham, the Lord Chancellor of the U.K. Initially there had been disappointment that Prince Charles had not represented the British. His participation would have seemed most appropriate since his own regiment, the 23d, had been here in 1781 and his predecessor as the Prince of Wales had been visiting the garrison at New York during the course of the Yorktown siege.

In fact Lord Hailsham was quick to point out how appropriate his appearance was since his mother had been an American citizen. Furthermore, one of his ancestors — a certain Lyttel — had participated in the siege of 1781. Almost as an afterthought, he noted that Lyttel had been on the winning side.

The speech itself was longish, but well constructed and well presented, as the British always seem to do best.

Next, President Mitterand spoke. His effort seemed twice as long, for he employed an interpreter. The main point of his words was to remind the audience of the great effort made by France on behalf of the fledgling America. From time to time he would note the permanent spirit of cooperation which had remained between the two nations since 1778 despite occasional policy differences. As politicians often do, he overlooked the near-war unpleasantness of the 1790's and the 1860's.

Reagan the conservative and Mitterand the socialist did make an odd pair to share a platform. Both took pains to dismiss their essential, philosophical differences as of no consequence to their friendship. Perhaps.

Reagan's speech — it was no surprise to me — was the least appropriate of the three. Politicians in this country just can't resist bringing politics into any occasion, and our President is no exception. Somehow the actions of the Americans at Yorktown were closely tied to his economic policies. In a big push for "volunteerism" over government involvement in social good works, he pointed out that the victorious army at Yorktown had been made not of professionals but of volunteers who were actually farmers and shopkeepers. Having thus dismissed the army and navy of Louis XVI, he had also played a curious trick with Washington's troops, for if the Continentals were not professional — not to say career — soldiers by 1781, no one ever has been.

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This "history lesson" took me back exactly six years and six months to Concord Bridge. There we had listened to Gerry Ford invoke the minute men as the shining examples to justify a mighty military establishment. The Old Hill Burying Ground must have rumbled with the spinning of corpses as the old spirits of '75 had listened to that peculiar perversion of their attitudes and principles.

There's a nice irony in finding the nation's bicentennary thus bracketed by the historical errors of its chief executives. Has anyone listened to what we've been saying for two thirds of a decade? Maybe, but certainly no one in high places.

The speechifying kept us in position until about 12:20 PM. Although we stood at "repos" the discomfort was great. At "repos" the body's full weight falls chiefly on the right foot and it is virtually impossible to shift the weight to the left as one might at the position of "attention." Furthermore, the pressure of the left hand resting on the right wrist cuts circulation to the right hand and thus causes difficulty in grasping the musket for a while later. We heard that some of the 20th century troops had collapsed on the field this noon.

Even before the speeches there had been a cute little gaff on the part of the producers of this show. A very tall flagstaff made of a single hewn log had been erected the day before off to our left front. Sixteen musket men of the Old Guard were required to carry the folded flag over to the pole. The announcer explained carefully the details of this thirteen-star flag and spoke of the tradition which attributes it to Betsy Ross. When the flag went up the pole, however, it turned out to have all fifty stars. No explanations were offered.

This flag was indeed quite beautiful. Its length was some forty feet, and on a day with any less wind its weight would have pinned it to the pole. Instead it flowed with beautiful ease in a breeze which caused regimental colors to snap.

The presidential review began almost immediately upon the conclusion of Reagan's speech. The first units through were the four 20th century military bands. Next came all 18th century troops, and again Saintonge had the post of honor at the head of the entire column. Marching from right to left past the stand, we were ordered to "tete a droite" as we first approached the stand. Thus we were able to get a very fine view of the presidents.

It occurred to me later that I have now performed for the past four presidents, and each time that I have ever seen a president in the flesh it has been with a gun on my shoulder. Truly remarkable in this security-conscious era.

In a few seconds it was over and we were back on the road for the march to the French camp. "Allouette" was the tune once we were on the pavement. State police and park rangers moved the crowd back so that our formation could pass through smoothly.

Once in the camp there was a quick move to get lunch ahead of the rest of the army — a distinct advantage to earning the post in the vanguard. Today's lunch was a combination of leftovers — chiefly Sloppy Joe's and hot dogs. Again I made it through without spilling extra stains on the uniform.

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Back in the French camp I found that someone had bought a two-volume set of the Rochambeau journals. This publication contained a scholarly handling of three officers' journals plus maps of all campsites and associated prints relating to Rochambeau's actions in America. Originally priced at $100, it was now being sold off the back of a truck for $50. Having heard of such a possible deal several months before, I had budgeted money in case the books should be available. I now hot-footed it to the truck by the mess tent area and secured a set.

There was no way to get the purchase back to our camper, so I stashed it in the small regimental storage tent. Again this afternoon Joe Kolb would be sitting as guard to the camp.

Just about everyone seemed to be taking advantage of the last opportunities to get photographs, and since I would have no need of a cartridge block this afternoon I decided to get my camera from Audrey and keep it in the leather cartridge case. I would not be able to use the broken light meter, but one way or another the film had to be exposed so I might as well try for some shots.

Taking up the camera I first activated the light meter, chiefly from force of habit, and to my surprise it functioned. With some hope I now set to using up at least that one roll of film.

I think that it was around 2 o'clock when we fell in that one last time in preparation for the surrender ceremonies. Again it was the sixteen-man front and again we would lead all forces onto the field. The surrender would not occur on the field of 1781, possibly because of the distance from the tourist stands, but rather would occur where our battle lines had formed for the tactical demonstrations. This time the camp followers would be permitted on the field as witnesses and participants.

We moved out and got onto the field without a hitch, but there was much confusion about where our line should form. We obliqued here, wheeled there, and made more than half a dozen adjustments, including a 180° wheel, before Vaquer was satisfied. All through this the staff officers spluttered like ruffled hens and the lines took it in stride. I don't think we once lost formation in spite of it all.

Finally Saintonge was facing the west with the French — and I imagine some American troops — extending down to our left. The American troops formed a parallel line facing us about fifteen paces away. Now we awaited the "conquered" British.

There was a bit of a wait, during which Matt Sargent took out my camera and got a few shots at my request. I was especially interested in getting shots of the cavalry, for I had never before this weekend seen so many.

As the surrender procession was beginning, certain officers across the way began yelling at the French to put away their cameras since the television crews were aiming toward us. Some of our men were upset at such orders since so much of the American line was shutterbugging all along.

We behaved as the French had, I am pleased to say, and there was no snickering or making of remarks as the "enemy" filed before us. The British played their part well, most of them pointedly staring away from the Americans and toward us. Only one unit played "The

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World Turned Upside Down," though. I recall that all the others did play British tunes as required, and all colors were cased. At the end of the column came the camp followers, a properly motley lot. Some were defiant, some apathetic, some "weeping" openly.

Even from my vantage on the front rank I was unable to see the Brits lay down their arms. I'm told that one of them smashed his musket to the ground in keeping with tradition. This made quite a stir, but in fact he had a specially prepared breakaway stock.

When the column marched back through, arms in hand once again, all colors were uncased. At the command of our Sgt Major, Saintonge gave the "presentez" to each unit as it passed. A great laugh went up as a Hessian officer smiled to us and gently reminded: "Waterloo, gentlemen; Waterloo."

The British were first from the field, and the French were second. We wheeled left from our line, and since the entire French force moved at one time, Saintonge — first onto the field — was last French regiment off the field. It was a real pleasure to receive the cheers of various American units as we passed between the lines, again singing "Allouette" under the lead of Lt. Ron Davis.

Our return to the 18th century camp was different this time, and we marched past the French camp as the whole column moved counterclockwise around the parade's perimeter. In due time the entire 18th century force of all armies had halted along the perimeter for the final formation. The British and Hessian line covered the end by the modern road and then extended some distance along the American camp on the south of the field; the French completed this line; the Americans covered the wooded end of the parade and extended the entire length of the camp along the north side.

It was not long before most of us realized that what we saw at this moment would never be seen again in our lifetimes: thousands of 18th century soldiers — so many that you could scarcely pick out individuals from the crowd — all in a single formation in the midst of rows of white tents and regimental flags. There was pride at this achievement; there was regret at its passing. In a sense it was like a most peculiar graduation exercise in the feelings which it evoked.

In the near corner across from us the light infantry raised helmets atop bayoneted muskets and began war chants like those of the Zulu impis. Welch Fusiliers down the other end sang "Men of Harlech." Pipers droned various tunes, and Cavalry cantered back and forth on the parade. Staff officers of the various armies gathered at the center of the field, popped a bottle of champagne, and from glasses taken from an antique officer's box drank a toast to all. These officers then walked along the front of the formation with hats raised, thanking each unit and receiving the soldiers' salutes.

There was an awkward delay now — perhaps no one really wished to dismiss this last, grand assembly. And it was Palmer who took things in hand, calling the Saintonge to attention, wheeling us a bit to the right, and marching us diagonally across the parade to the French camp. Singing "Au pres de ma Blonde," we marched the sixteen-man front one last time across the face of the whole complement of troops. It seemed a fitting end.

Yet we were not quite finished here. The ceremony which Newt and

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Hatsie had conspired over last night was about to begin: a wedding for Jackie Jones and Barry Real. Only our regiment was involved, and we gathered in the working area of the French camp to receive instructions for our roles.

Barry was fixed up with a bunch of wild berries added to his cockade. Brook MacInnis was the flower girl, and it was Ron MacInnis who escorted the bride, while Dan Moylan fifed the "Wedding March." There was much picture taking as Newt began the service.

Now Newt is a Congregational minister with the militia, is nominally a Catholic priest with the Saintonge, and now was a rabbi for the wedding. Quite a feat of ecumenism.

When Newt inquired who gave the bride, there was a general shout: "We do!" And when the wineglass was broken under foot, everyone shouted "Mazel Tov!"

There was a most curious wedding present given at this point. A fellow in a Balmoral bonnet — not a soldier, though — and apparently a relative stranger to one and all, had been quite touched when he had heard of the wedding plans earlier in the day. To show his feeling he now presented to Jackie and Barry a rusted cannonball which years before he had dug from the shore of the York River. His advice to Jackie: "Don't drop this on Barry's foot."

Quickly all musket men ran to grab arms, fix bayonets, and form a lane between two facing ranks. The "bridal path" was formed all the way from the "chapel area," down the main walk of the French camp, and to the camp's entrance. As the happy couple began to walk from the camp, the men crossed bayonets over the path as a military canopy. Again Dan followed the couple with his fifing.

The sun was getting quite low to the horizon by now, and I hoped to get a few more pictures taken while the light would allow. Audrey, Bob, and I crossed the road to get over by Redoubt 9, which we felt would make a fine backdrop for a few portraits. I had once hoped that we might contract a professional photographer to prepare a regimental portrait on this spot, but there was no interest among the local pros, and the regiment had never found the opportunity to do the job on its own. I don't believe the entire Regiment de Saintonge was ever present at any one time here, anyway.

At this late time there were few tourists about, and it was therefore pretty easy to set up some clear shots. Off on a far corner of the redoubt a couple of dozen redcoats and Yankees were setting up an assault tableau for the benefit of their photographer. Bob snapped a shot of me, and then I was approached by a French naval officer who wished to have his picture taken with me. Bob performed the honors, and I insisted that the officer hold the Charleville, which fact pleased him greatly.

After snapping a few shots of Audrey and Bob, I joined them in heading back to get our final supper of the bicentennary. I don't recall what we ate, but again it was quite good.

Afterwards Bob drove his truck over to the French camp to pack up the regimental kit. I decided to walk back to camp the one last time.

I am not sure of the precise time, but at some point after the surrender and dismissal of the troops I had seen a pickup truck filled with men of DeLancey's loyalist brigade. As they rode past

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pedestrians, they sang out cheerily: "Farewell, America!"

I was happy enough to get back into civvies once back at the campground. I had a ticket for a flight out of the Newport-News airport at 2 PM the next day, and I still had to get to a phone to reconfirm the reservation. Since Mark Dodge was about to head out to a convenience store just outside the park, I caught a ride with him. When Mark heard of my plane flight, he offered me the space in his van vacated by Dan Tanona. Since Mark planned to make the run to Massachusetts in a single day, I would be able to save the price of my ticket and still get home in time for work on Wednesday. I made the necessary calls to change my plans.

Back at camp I went over to see Audrey and Bob at their camper. They, along with many others, would be spending a few extra days touring Williamsburg. There were several brass kitchen utensils unavailable through the Williamsburg mail catalogue, and Audrey had offered to pick them up for me directly from the shops. Therefore I was off to deliver both cash and catalogue.

Gary and Marcia Puryear were visiting when I arrived, and I joined the gathering. Among the topics of discussion were some of Gary's plans for policy changes in the Concord Minute Men, as captain of which Gary would be installed early the next month.

I made a fairly early night of it, and so did most others.

There had been one piece of unpleasantness just prior to our wedding service. The medals to be issued to participants had been orderedin specific numbers by brigades, and the French division had received the proper 460-odd pieces. Now these bronze medals differed from those on public sale only in the engraved word "participant" on the rim. The French issue had been stored inside Mike Vaquer's tent. By late afternoon, after most of the distribution had been completed, twenty-nine medals were discovered to be missing. I do not know how the matter was resolved, but one of our lieutenants had his suggestion that officers surrender theirs rejected out of hand. Rightly so, I believe.

Tuesday, 20 October 1981

Although I made the effort to arise reasonably early, I never did get to breakfast. It seemed more important to get my gear packed up in good time, and of course there was plenty of it.

There was all the more reason to step lively as a heavy frost covered everything in sight. I was surprised to find this so early in the fall in tidewater Virginia.

Les had borrowed Leo's van to take Newt to the airport, when someone asked Leo when we could get our gunpowder out of storage. Leo called for volunteers and to our surprise led us off toward the Soissonnais area of our camp. At a certain trailer he turned and broke into the woods beyond. Some twenty yards behind the thicket screen, lay blankets covering our entire cache of ammunition. It seems that our reputed hosts had in fact declined to accept so much explosive. Rather than give the stuff over for destruction by the government, our men had simply put it aside for safe keeping.

Les returned to camp in time for me to thank him directly for his hospitality. And at 8:19 Mark, Bob Lynch, Steve Tascovics, and I set out from the camp. John Zentis and Bob Harrison drove behind us in Bob's truck.

It took us two stops before we found local newspapers covering the events of the 19th. I suppose that other troops had cleaned out the supply from the first store.

Heading west to Richmond, we turned onto Rte 95 for the drive north. We did not stop until Laurel, Maryland, where we picked up gas for the van and got very good sandwiches from a convenience store deli. There were more newspapers to be found here.

I remember nothing special about the ride until about 3:45 PM when we hit a McDonald's in New Jersey for what turned out to be supper. We left 95 in order to avoid East Jersey and NY City, and we then got lost in the vicinity of Trenton. At length we covered much of the same road traveled on the way south.

Crossing the Hudson on the Tappan Zee Bridge, we had a little mix-up on parkways on the east side and finally were on Rte 84. It was during the stretch of riding between Trenton and the Hudson when I set to work on lyrics for a regimental song which Les had started a few days back. To the traditional Irish tune of "Rosin the Bow," we worked out words for "The Mem'ry of Old Rochambeau." This went so well that we went on to create "Crosby's Song." During that final, post-surrender formation yesterday, when Milliman had ridden past the Saintonge, many began to whistle "Waltzing Matilda." Therefore we set some more appropriate words to the tune.

Mark turned off the direct route and onto Rte 91 at Hartford in order to deliver me directly to Springfield. We arrived at about 10:05 and everyone stopped long enough for pie, coffee, and phone calls home. I would need all the sleep I could get and was glad not to have to continue any farther.

It has been a long time in the re-enacting. The mind fails in the attempt to conceive of six and a half years of full-time service under actual conditions such as some men must have given. I hope that our efforts have been worthy of the actual deeds which they commemorate.

The Mem'ry of Old Rochambeau

(Sung to the Tune of "Rosin the Bow")

1. Now Walker he called upon Palmer:
"To Yorktown your laddies should go,
In the frosty month of October,
In the mem'ry of Old Rochambeau."

Chorus:
In the mem'ry of Old Rochambeau,
In the mem'ry of Old Rochambeau;
In the frosty month of October,
In the mem'ry of Old Rochambeau.

2. We'll deck out in Frenchified finery,
To promise the folks a good show;
We'll drink the juice of Longworth's winery,
To the mem'ry of Old Rochambeau.

Chorus:
To the mem'ry of Old Rochambeau,
To the mem'ry of Old Rochambeau;
We'll drink the juice of Longworth's winery,
To the mem'ry of Old Rochambeau.

3. We'll line us all up in a convoy;
25 miles per hour we'll go;
We'll curse a blue streak on the CB,
In the mem'ry of Old Rochambeau.

Chorus

4. Let's form up a 16-man front line,
To give all the army to know,
For Saintonge there's nothing too tricky,
In the mem'ry of Old Rochambeau.

Chorus

5. We tournez a gauche or a droit, sir;
Our fine ranks they never do bow;
"C'est magnifique!" cries out Mike Vaquer,
In the mem'ry of Old Rochambeau.

Chorus

6. Our volleys they crack out like thunder;
We earn the respect of our foe:
"These can't be militia who now serve,
In the mem'ry of Old Rochambeau!"

Chorus

7. The women who work 'round the campfires,
Bring the regiment credit, and so
We toast the camp following ladies,
In the mem'ry of Old Rochambeau.

Chorus

8. We'll tell that old Soissonnais toadie,
Back home on his horse he should go;
Get back to the rear of the column,
Lest disgrace befall Old Rochambeau.

Chorus

9. And when all our marching is over,
And we are back home, we shall know
That Saintonge with pride and with honor
Served the mem'ry of Old Rochambeau.

Chorus:
Served the mem'ry of Old Rochambeau,
Served the mem'ry of Old Rochambeau;
That Saintonge with pride and with honor
Served the mem'ry of Old Rochambeau.

Crosby's Song

(Sung to the Tune of "Waltzing Matilda")

1. Once a grumpy colonel
   Sat upon a grayish nag,
   Down near the shade
   Of the general's marquee;
   And he heard as he sat
   And waited for his troops to form:
   "You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me."

Chorus:
   Waltzing, Matilda;
   Waltzing, Matilda;
   You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me.
   And he heard as he sat
   And waited for his troops to form:
   "You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me."

2. Up jumped the colonel,
   A frown upon his countenance;
   "Who could it be
   With such nerve?" wondered he.
   Could it be the boys
   Of his own beloved Soissonnais?
   "You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me."

Chorus:
   Waltzing, Matilda;
   Waltzing, Matilda;
   You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me.
   Could it be the boys
   Of his own beloved Soissonnais?
   You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me.

3. Down glared the colonel
   And shouted for his adjutant:
   "Find me those culprits
   right quick!" said he;
   "I'll evict the men
   Who dare to sing those awful words:
   "You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me."

Chorus

4. As the army fell in,
   The colonel rode up to the front,
   To hog the limelight,
   Or so thought he;
   From behind he heard
   A snicker and a rude remark;
   "You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me!"

Chorus

5. Turning, he saw a
Nattily dressed regiment;
"What is this troop
Of such fine quality?"
Little did he ken
The men of old Fourth Middlesex;
You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me.

Chorus

6. Up came the general
And stepped in a deposit fresh;
And to the colonel
With fury said he:
"Take your bloody horse
And get back to your regiment!"
You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me.

Chorus

7. As he passed Saintonge,
His pride and wig alike askew,
Out rang a voice
Which was filled with glee:
"Like the soldiers in the song,
You need not die, just fade away.
You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me!"

Chorus:
Waltzing, Matilda;
Waltzing, Matilda;
You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me.
Like the soldiers in the song,
You need not die, just fade away.
You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me.