

This is NewsLetter Issue No. One ~ For the year 2019

Okay, So I'm In Camp, Now What Do I Do?

Our unit, a company in Colonel Thomas Hartley's First Pennsylvania Brigade of the Continental Line, made our way, after the Battle of Germantown, to a campsite south of the City of Philadelphia. The battle was really horrendous, especially around the Chew House. The 40th Regiment of Foot under British Colonel Thomas Musgrave were using the house as a fort and so they had an advantage over our troops. But I don't want to talk about that stuff now.

When we arrived here, we set about erecting our tents. The six of us who are bunking in the one tent together worked quickly to get it set up before dark. We have been doing this often enough that we each know what job we need to do to get the tent up without mishap ~ or at least to keep the arguing at a minimum. The tents the army issued to us are not large enough to do much else in other than to sleep. They are only about seven by seven feet square and five feet high at the ridge pole. And talk about hot ~ the material from which they are made is called 'duck' and is

made of hemp or cotton thread. Although it is October, it's still pretty warm in those tents!

It's not my turn to cook for another two days, so I don't have to worry about poisoning my mess mates tonight. I'm just joshing when I say that ~ I think that I'm a fairly good cook ~ and no one has complained yet about me. They've complained about the fire cakes, but not because I made them. I mention the fire cakes ~ they're

easy enough to make, but they taste like raw flour. Well, maybe that's because to make them all you do is mix some water with flour and form them into discs. Then they are set upright beside the fire and allowed to nearly burn on the side toward the fire before turning them around to nearly



burn on the other side. When you bite into them, you get the taste of the burnt crusty outside and the inside is sometimes moist ~ tasting just like,

you guessed it, raw flour. The meat and stew isn't so bad. The army gives us a ration of a pound of beef per day. Our mess has a single iron kettle in which to cook our meat, and if we're lucky we might find a farmer who will give us some vegetables to make a stew in the broth after the meat is cooked. If there isn't anything to cook with the meat, we sometimes don't waste the time or the water to cook the meat in water. We stick the pieces on the end of our bayonets and position them above the fire so that they broil without burning.

After eating my hunk of beef, I washed it down with the gill of beer that is rationed each day. For those of you who don't know about 'gills,' that's just four ounces ~ or about three shot glass fulls. Sometimes, if we are working on cutting a road or building more substantial log huts for a long stay, we get whiskey instead of beer. The talk around camp is that General Washington, himself, brews beer at his home in Virginia.

After our humble dinner, I like to spend the short time that is left to see in the dim light of the fire whittling things. Even if I just whittle a stick to nothing but a pile of shavings, I like the feeling of solitude I have while I am doing it. Sometimes I try to carve something useful, like a new knife handle or a design on my powder horn. I think that there's a name for that, but to me it's just 'carving'. (A friend just now told me that it's called 'scrimshaw' ~ I think that I'll stick with 'carving'.) I once carved a noggin or cup out of a large knot I chopped out of a tree. It took a while to carve, but it was well worth the effort when I get to a clean flowing stream and want to take a refreshing cold sip of water that doesn't slip through my fingers.

The 'alone time' that we have while in camp is a good time to mend the rips and tears in our clothes. Colonel Hartley's wife, Catherine, is traveling with the camp followers ~ you know the sutlers who supply goods that the army doesn't and officer's wives who launder our clothes and help with other domestic type things. But I don't

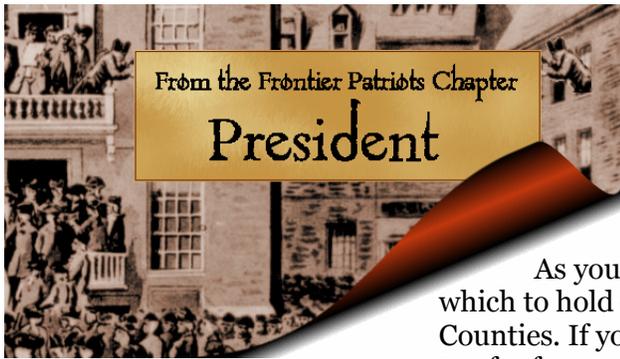
bother them with my mending chores; I actually enjoy doing that sometimes.

Hey, I'm not a total loner! There are times that I like to join in on a game of darts or tomahawk throwing. You have to toss it at just the right speed to have the blade thrust into a tree trunk without it just bouncing off. Gambling is strictly prohibited, but we sometimes throw dice without betting on it (wink, wink).

And then there is bullet and cartridge making. It seems like that is something we do just about every day, or at least every other day. You never know just how many you'll need, and in the middle of a battle you don't want to run out of them. Making bullets could be done by yourself, but my mess likes to do it together ~ it's a lot easier that way. While two of the guys get the fire going and heat pieces of lead that we have hoarded until they are melting, I and another one of the men get the bullet molds ready. They all say that the two of us have the steadiest hands, and so it has become my, and my buddy's, job to hold the molds steadily while the molten lead is poured into the sprue hole. We know by the haze that spreads across the lead that extends out of the sprue hole that the lead is cooled enough to hold its shape. So I open the two handles of the mold I am holding and allow the hot ball to fall down into a pan of water. Then I get the next mold ready as quickly as I can because the molten lead needs to be poured before it hardens in the bottom of our cook kettle.

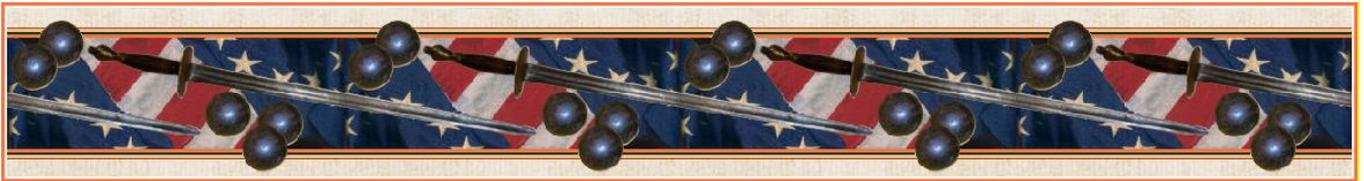
After we have a good sized pile of balls made, and cooled, we start to make cartridges. The cartridge consists of a paper tube, a lead musket ball and some black powder. Paper was a little hard to come by, so only a small piece was used, The paper was rolled around a stick that would fit into a musket barrel. The paper thusly formed a tube and the one end was twisted and tied by a thread or twine. The stick was removed and a ball was inserted. Then a little black powder was poured into the paper tube and the other, open end was twisted and tied. The cartridges were placed in the holes of a cartridge box so that they could be quickly retrieved when in battle.





The next meeting of the
Frontier Patriots Chapter
of the Sons of the American Revolution
will be held at U.S. Hotel Tavern
401 S. Juniata Street, Hollidaysburg, PA
on Saturday, 16 March 2019
starting at 12 Noon.

As you discovered last year, we are trying different sites in which to hold our meetings ~ alternating in Blair and Bedford Counties. If you avoided attending any meeting before because it was too far for you to drive, and you now notice a meeting being held near where you live, please consider joining us. The first meeting, as you see above, will be held at the US Hotel in Hollidaysburg. I haven't eaten there for a number of years, so I can't vouch for the food, but at least we will be trying a new restaurant and it might be great. I hope to see you there. ~ Larry



2019 Meeting Dates

First Quarterly Meeting	March 16
Second Quarterly Meeting	June 8
Third Quarterly Meeting	September 14
Fourth Quarterly Meeting	December 14

Officers For The Year 2019

The officers for the year 2019 will remain the same as for 2018. The slate of officers was presented at the Fourth Quarterly meeting held on 08 December 2018 and unanimously approved. If someone else would be willing and able to serve as the chapter Secretary, though, please let us know.

President ~ Larry D. Smith
schmitt@motherbedford.com

1st Vice-President ~ John W. Betting
scubys@pennswoods.net

2nd Vice-President ~ Robert D. Williams
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3rd Vice-President ~

Secretary ~ Melvin C. McDowell
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Frontier Patriots Chapter website: <http://www.motherbedford.com/FrontierPatriots.htm>

