

## This is NewsLetter Issue No. One ~ For the year 2014

*Opening comments by Larry D. Smith, Historian of the Frontier Patriots Chapter ~*

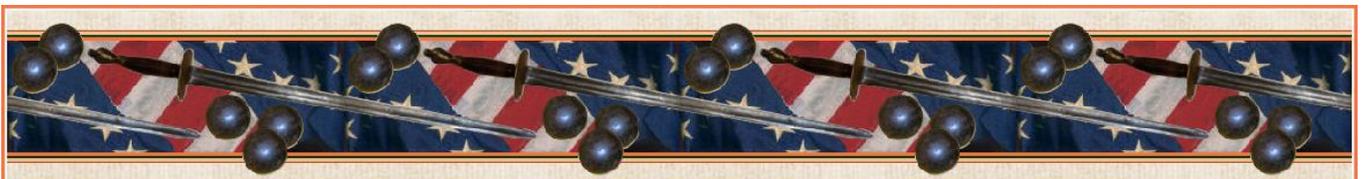
A newsletter for the Blair County Chapter, PASSAR had been published in 1986 and '87 with Edgar R. Hartt as its author. For whatever reason(s), that newsletter was discontinued after the initial two years. Then, in 1990, I was asked to (and agreed to) take on the task of resurrecting the publication.

Beginning with the first quarter of the year 1991, the new incarnation of the chapter's newsletter continued to and included the first quarter of 2007 (albeit with a few issues missed toward the end of that period). During that sixteen year run, the newsletter covered a range of topics related to the American Revolutionary War including a serialized chronological history of the War of American Independence. One purpose of the newsletter, which was published on a quarterly basis, was to announce the eminent quarterly meeting. With the growing popularity of personal computers during the early 2000s, the newsletter was discontinued per the suggestion that upcoming meetings could be announced via email. I accepted the decision to discontinue the

newsletter despite regretting that fact that the majority of the chapter's Compatriot members would be deprived of one of the few things they received from the chapter (other than the yearly dues notice).

On 25 August 2007, the name of the chapter was formally changed from *Blair County* to *Frontier Patriots*.

And so once again it has been decided to resurrect the quarterly newsletter. This is the first issue under the name of the Frontier Patriots Chapter. I plan to present articles on a wide range of topics as I had with the previous run. That means that I plan to present articles pertaining to topics appropriate to the central Pennsylvania region that our chapter encompasses, along with continuing the serialized chronological history of the American Revolutionary War. I would like to point out that your contributions of either articles or suggestions for topics will be welcome. One thing to keep in mind if you do wish to contribute to the newsletter is that it is intended for historical educational, genealogical and fraternal purposes; overtly political submissions will neither be accepted nor published.



# About The Masthead

I want to talk a bit about the masthead that I have designed for this newsletter.

The central panel was created as a logo in August 2007 with the intention of being used for a newsletter following the name change of the chapter from *Blair County* to *Frontier Patriots*. That central panel consists of a number of authentic American Revolutionary War objects.

The piece of fabric is a *linsey-woolsey* blanket. Linsey-woolsey was a combination of two types of thread: linen (derived from spun flax) and sheep's wool. In traditional linsey-woolsey the linen thread was used for the warp while the wool thread was used for the weft. The resulting fabric was very strong, and although they were quite scratchy, their warmth was unbeatable. The Patriots who carried these linsey-woolsey blankets and covered up with them on chilly nights, would have been snugly warm.

Displayed on the blanket are a number of items used by Patriots during the War. There are two powder horns in the display. The most prominent powder horn is multi-colored. The purpose of the multi-coloring was partly functional and partly decorative. The lighter portion of the horn is the part of the horn which was uncarved; the lighter color represents the original horn in its unfinished state. The darker portions of the horn represent the result of having been scraped thin by the hornsmith. The thinner the horn was scraped, the more translucent it became, allowing the Patriot to actually see how much powder he carried. In this particular example, a light colored ring was carved into the horn; that was strictly for decorative purposes. The base, *i.e.* a piece of wood shaped to fit tightly into the wide end of the horn's body, is flat and has an eye-screw screwed into it. A piece of leather 'string' was tied on one end to the eye-screw in the base and tied on the opposite end around the horn's spout. The base and only a small portion of the horn's body of the second powder horn is visible at the left side of the panel. The base of that second horn was carved into a round or dome shape.

A pair of steel spurs are positioned to the

left of center, below the prominent powder horn. Although it cannot be seen easily in this image, the arms of the spurs culminate in rings, to which leather straps or catgut strings would have been tied. The spur would have been positioned onto the back of the Patriot's boots, hugging the heel, and the straps or strings would have been pulled tightly forward and tied on the front of the boot. The short tail of the spur holds a tiny spoked (free to rotate) wheel, which was used by the Patriot to goad the horse to move. The Patriot who wore these spurs on his boots, by jabbing his heels against or into the sides of the horse, would poke the horse's hide with the tiny spokes of the spur's tails. The tiny spokes would not have been long enough to penetrate the horse's hide and cause lasting damage, but they would definitely have made the horse uncomfortable, causing it to move. Cavalry officers, and other commanders who would have ridden horses, could afford to buy, and often did buy, expensive spurs made of silver, but the ordinary cavalry soldier wore spurs, such as this pair, made of steel. Steel was strong and durable and could withstand getting wet without rusting.

There are two metal balls resting in the upper, left corner of the panel. The smaller of the balls is a *musket ball*. The musket ball preceded the bullet used in later rifles, and because the muskets' barrels were not 'rifled' the projectile fired from them did not need to be cast with a conical shape. The Patriots, themselves, while bivouacked in camp, would melt down whatever metal objects they could scrounge up and pour the molten metal into hand-held molds. The larger metal ball, which measures about two-and-one-half inches in diameter, is a cannon ball. This particular cannon ball is solid ~ some were hollow, into which were inserted powder and a fuse to enable them to explode in transit or upon impact. Whether solid or hollow, an American Revolutionary War cannon ball was called by its weight, rather than by the size of its diameter or circumference. This solid cannon ball was called a *two-pounder* because that is what it weighs. Cannon balls tended to be cast of either iron or steel; the steel ones which survive, such as the

one included in this display, have not rusted. The only blemishes that appear on this cannon ball's surface tends to be slightly flat spots ~ evidence that the ball must have struck a solid object.

Flanking both sides of the central panel are twelve flags which were used by various factions of the Patriots who supported the Patriot Cause during the American Revolutionary War.

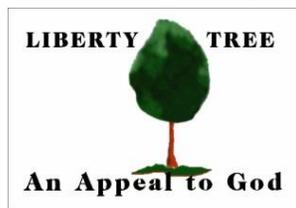
Occupying the top position on the left side is the "Liberty" flag. The British *Red Ensign* was the standard flag used by the English prior to the War. It consisted of the Union Jack in the canton on a field of solid red. The solid red field was



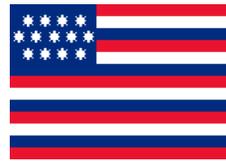
often comprised of damask fabric. *Damask* was a type of fabric woven with an overall floral pattern. Many people nowadays do not

know what damask was, and are surprised to see the floral pattern covering the surface of the red field. And it should be noted that there was also a British *Blue Ensign* and a British *White Ensign*. The different colored flags were used in different situations (e.g. naval, fortifications, etc.) When it became evident that the colonists would come to blows with the British mother country, the British Red Ensigns, at the time being flown from just about every land fortification throughout the colonies, were taken down to have the word "Liberty," or the phrase "Liberty and Union," painted on the bottom of the red field. The Patriots instantly had a flag to express their position and attitude toward the mother country.

The flag occupying the second from top position on the left column was known as the "Liberty Tree" Flag. It was included in a portrait of Commodore Esek Hopkins by Thomas Hart. In 1776 Hopkins was commander of the fledgling "American Fleet". It is not known if this flag actually existed, or if the artist simply fabricated it himself.



The third flag was designed by Benjamin Franklin and John Adams in 1778. It consisted of thirteen repeating (top to bottom) red, white and blue stripes. The canton consisted of a blue



background on which were thirteen eight-point stars in three rows of four / five / four stars.

The "Gadsden" Flag has recently been embraced by numerous factions advocating for a variety of socio-political issues around the country ~ perhaps because it bears the image of a coiled rattlesnake and the legend "Don't Tread On Me." The image and legend make it appear fierce and formidable. This flag has been acclaimed as the official flag of the United States Navy since it is claimed to have been the 'first' flag used by the Commander-In-Chief of the Continental Navy. Unfortunately none of that 'history' is true. No original flag exists to show what the design was. The flag that is proudly embraced today as the 'official navy flag' was designed in 1849 by B.J. Lossing for his book, *The Pictorial Field-Book Of The Revolution*. Christopher Gadsden has been credited with designing this flag, but that is only because he presented a flag bearing the image of a rattlesnake and the "Don't Tread On Me" legend to the South Carolina Provincial Congress in February 1776. The notes for that assembly states only that Gadsden 'presented' the flag, not that he 'created' or 'designed' it. Irregardless of the actual facts, this design has been embraced as one of the truly 'revolutionary' statements of the War.

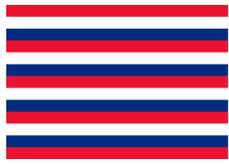


The only flag used during the American Revolutionary War to bear blue and white stripes and a canton of white stars on a red background was the "Fort Mercer" flag flown at Fort Mercer in 1777. Fort Mercer stood on the New Jersey side of the Delaware River, opposite Fort Mifflin. No one knows why the flag had the red and blue portions reversed.

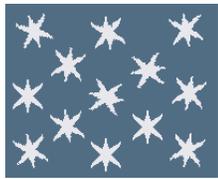


The flag shown at the bottom of the left column was known as the "Tri-Colored Stripes" flag. It consisted of thirteen alternating red, white and blue stripes (top to bottom) filling the field without any canton. This flag was flown on the

brigantine, *Lexington*, and in 1777 was hoisted over Fort Stanwix. F.J. Hudleston, in his book, *Gentleman Johnny Burgoyne* stated that tradition told that the flag was made from a woman's petticoat, a soldier's shirt and Colonel Gansevoort's military coat.



Now we come to the six flags displayed in a column to the right side of the central panel. And topping that column is "Washington's Headquarters Standard."



Throughout the War, General George Washington flew this flag alongside the marquee that he used as his traveling headquarters. The flag

consisted of a solid blue field onto which were affixed thirteen six-pointed white stars. The orientation of the stars varied from one to the next. They were arranged in a 3 / 2 / 3 / 2 / 3 top to bottom pattern.

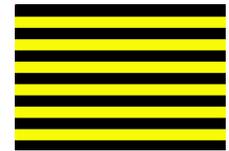
The second from top flag on the right side column is the well known "Betsy Ross" flag. It has thirteen alternating red and white stripes filling the field and a blue canton on which lies a circle of thirteen white stars. Traditionally, the stars were five-pointed, but the flag was often depicted in artwork with stars that had six points. The *tradition* that Betsy Ross created the flag's design as a response from a request by General George Washington has been proven to be just that ~ a 'tradition', rather than a fact. Apparently two of Mrs. Ross' grandsons began telling the story of their famous grandmother in 1870, but there exists no proof of their story. This is the flag that came to be known as the "Stars And Stripes" and is the one depicted as being carried on the boat carrying General Washington and others across the Delaware River on Christmas Eve 1776.



The flag occupying the position of third from top in the right side column is one of the

more unusually colored ones: it consisted of a field of alternating yellow and black stripes and no canton. This flag was called the "Naval Privateer" flag. There was also a variation of this flag in which the black stripes were substituted by white stripes.

One of the most unique flags of the American Revolutionary War was the one displayed fourth from the top of the right-side column. This flag, known as the "Bedford Militia" flag was named for Bedford,



Massachusetts. It was carried at the Battle of Concord on 19 April 1775 by the Bedford Company of the Middlesex Regiment of the Massachusetts Militia. The flag's field is made of crimson damask fabric on which is painted an arm covered in armor and holding a sword upright. The arm is emerging from a cloud. A floating ribbon banner that surrounds the sword holding arm bears the motto: "Vince Aut Morire," which



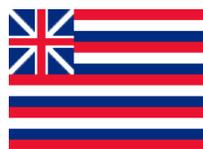
translates as "Conquer Or Die." The Bedford Militia Flag is sometimes referred to as the "Concord Flag" due to it having been carried at the Battle of

Concord.

The flag that is displayed second from the bottom on the right side is an example of a French regimental standard. It was used by the French army's Champagne Regiment. A detachment of that regiment participated in the Siege of Savannah on 09 October 1779 and carried this standard.



The final flag displayed on the right side column was called the "Continental Union".



Similar to the British Red Ensign which bore the Union Jack in the canton, this flag, instead of having a solid red field, had thirteen stripes

consisting of alternating top to bottom red, white and blue stripes.

## Reminder

The next meeting of the Frontier Patriots Chapter is scheduled for

06 September 2014 at King's Restaurant, at 3000 6th Avenue, Altoona.