

Volume I

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Number 2

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OTHER DRUMMERS, OTHER DAYS

by a "New England Fifer"

Isn't it strange how the various stages of the year can draw out the urge for introspection among different corpsmen? Some like to picture themselves tearing into an old number - in the Springtime - when the land begins to blossom. Others want nothing so much as a summer's afternoon - I remember one old-timer lauding the ecstasies of playing in blast-furnace heat, shirt plastered to his chest, face streaked with sweat.

Personally, I'm most partial to Autumn. To me, there's an aura of enchantment surrounding the Harvest-moon, and - try as I may - I cannot keep

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thoughts from turning toward the not too long ago - back to the Golden Age of the Fife and Drum Corps - Field Music - Martial Music, call it what you will. No - perhaps "Field Music" would not be an apt term. It conveys the impression of a Fife and Drum Corps forever fettered to the overpowering cacaphony of a brass band. The type of Corps I have in mind is, in reality, bound more closely to the land than to a band (forgive the unwitting play upon words.)

I recall having read somewhere that today's modern Corps is the result of musical efforts of the city folk (immigrant workers' transposing their old country recollections into the type of musical groups they knew in their youth.) This theorist went on to say that the Ancients, uncultured as they were, in the small back-country communities, during the days when even the smallest town boasted at least one Corps, were actually products of the American soil. Of course there are the Gadflies who look upon the Ancients of olde as cases of arrested development - small towners, that is, who failed to keep abreast of their city cousins. Never adding keys to their Fifes (whatever happened to that fad?), or Rods (Heaven help us), to dehydrated Drums ----- therewith falling by the wayside of "progress".

Each year, as the leaves start turning and the first hint of Arctic breezes waft in - my thoughts, irrevocably, take a well-worn tack.

At the risk of sounding insular - I should like to add that I consider Southern New England an ideal location for indulging such reveries. The Fall is enjoyed to a wonderful advantage here and, only a few miles away, ("Over East O' The River"), you have the added inducement of a trip back into time - this is achieved via the simple expedient of a motor trip through the many hamlets and villages, that seem unchanged since Colonial days. Skimming along the back roads, you can almost feel the Autumnal colors and smells seeping into your bones ----- crowding your very soul until you feel you must burst and be scattered to the four corners of the paint box into which you have blundered.

Who, upon viewing one of those long disbanded Corps; topping the rise of the distant horizon; would be surprised? Here --- elusive and wraith-like, within these textured confines, dwells the spirit of yesterday. Once properly attuned to the forces that swirl about you, you will be almost deafened by the echoes and roars of the Fifers - Drum Corps - and Drummers past - marching ponderously through the hills of time; for this is the place for such ghosts, this is the Valhalla of the Ancients.

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THE CHESTER CORPS



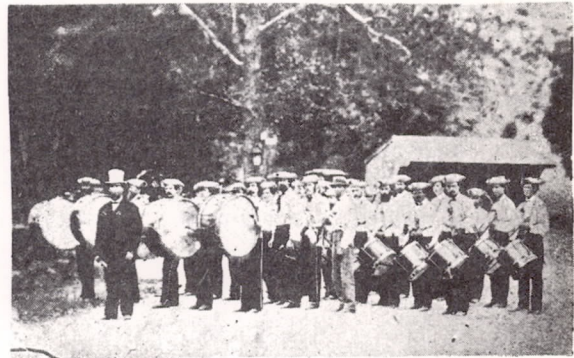
Daniel
D.
Silliman

Organizer of the
Chester Fife & Drum Corps.

The history of the Drum Corps that we know and is still in existence, though the old members are replaced by others. This Corps was organized by D. D. Silliman, a Chester manufacturer, in 1868. In an old photograph of this Corps there were 25 men and boys, and

their musical instruments were six snare drums, six bass drums, bugles and fifes. Their uniforms seemed to be dark-colored trousers, white shirts, and light-colored three-cornered hats. Daniel Silliman, the leader, wore a stove-pipe hat. D. D. Silliman, organizer of the old Chester Drum Corps, remained a member until his failing strength caused him to resign.

In 1862, during the Civil War, a colonel was sent from the New York State Militia into Connecticut, to look for drummers for a newly-organized Regimental Drum Corps. He met with little success until one evening while sitting on the porch of his hotel at Southington, he heard the sound of drums in the distance. Upon inquiry, he learned that the sound came from the Wolcott Drum Band at rehearsal six miles away. He made the trip to Wolcott (by horse and wagon, of course) and was able to sign up a number for Army Drum duty.



When General Grant assumed command of the Army he reviewed all the troops. As he and his staff passed this 71st. Corps. they played: "Hail to the Chief." When they had finished he remarked: "Well boys, I never heard such a whale of a racket from so few drums in all my life." "What statement could have been sweeter to Connecticut drummers?" It seems that even in 1862, they knew where to find drummers and this is no less true today.

There are probably more good drummers in Connecticut than in any state in the Union. The Corps for which Connecticut is famous are the "Ancient" Drum Corps which have been in existence there since Colonial days. Corps of this style, with their fifes, their strict rudimental playing of deep rope snare drums, and their two-stick rudimental bass drumming, are, for the most part, seldom seen

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or heard except in this one section of the country. Some of the finest drummers of the country have come up through the ranks of Corps of this type--not alone Rudimental Champions, but men who later went into other fields -- band, symphony, and dance band.

In the old Drum Corps, there were two men, George Warner and T. Cook Silliman, who enlisted in the 24th Conn. Volunteers and were in General Grant's army, from Sept. 1862 to Sept. 1863. George Warner was a fifer, and was a member of this old Corps where he again played his fife.

T. Cook Silliman enlisted as principal musician in the Civil War, and in the old photograph, he was one of the members of this old corps with a bugle.

Fred Silliman, who was a boy of 18 years at this time was a snare drummer. He taught many of the later members how to play the fife.

1874 - - - The Chester Drum Corps played for the opening of the Valley railroad at Walkley Hill in Haddam, Conn., and after the official exercise were invited into the mansion of Governor Walkley for refreshments.

1888 - - - In 1888, the Corps decided to have new uniforms, and in a short time ordered and received them. It was a fine equipment - blue-gray and gilt, with helmets, caps, and ostrich plumes on the helmets. At a convention of all the Drum Corps of Middlesex Co. during this year the Chester men won first prize for making the best appearance.



"THE
ACADEMY
OF MUSIC"

On April 11, 1896, the Mill in Chester on Water Street, owned by Pond's Extract Co., and used by them for several years as a witch hazel distillery, was destroyed by fire, together with the outbuildings. Not a timber was left standing, the fire

making a clean sweep of the whole structure. The property consisted of a large two-story building, a single story addition, sheds, and an office building, which stood across the street from the Mill. This building across the street was much older than the main building and was originally used as an office and Blacksmith Shop. For a number of years it was known as the "Academy of Music," the old Chester Drum Corps and the Union Cornet Band rehearsing there.

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The old Drum Corps was organized in 1868, and the Union Cornet Band was organized in 1878. It was used for the same purpose by the later Drum Corps at the time of its destruction by fire, their drums and other property being gotten out barely in time to save them.

1905 - - - The Drum Corps was re-organized by Fred Silliman, son of D. D. Silliman.

THE CHESTER DRUM CORPS

1906



THE CHESTER DRUM CORPS

1926

1939 - - - The Chester Drum Corps with about 35 other corps from various parts of the state and adjoining states, journeyed to Hartford during the summer of 1939, to participate in the immense Y-D parade. The Chester Corps attracted much attention in its new Colonial uniforms, being the only corps of that type in the parade, and they won third place in the drumming contest.

1939 - - - A letter was received from the New York World's Fair Committee asking the Chester Fife and Drum Corps to play at the Fair Grounds on the 15th of July; they also requested a complete history of the Corps, the names of the pieces they were to play as well as a photograph of the Corps in their new uniforms.

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Communications with the Fair Committee were received a year before. They had been requested to select a date which would be most convenient to appear on the program of special events. The new uniforms which the Corps chose were Continental style, resembling those worn by George Washington's army.

1939, July 15 - - - 23 members of the Chester Drum Corps splendidly attired in their new colonial uniforms, with cocked hats and gaitered leggings, boarded a deluxe coach of the Shoreline Bus Co. at 6 O'clock on Saturday morning and went on their way to New York to play on the World's Fair Grounds to capture the "World of Tomorrow" with music of an ancient and martial tempo. The Corps arrived at the fair grounds at 10:30 A.M. and were invited to stay over and play another concert Sunday afternoon. The Corps made a big hit at the fair. Everywhere they played they drew huge crowds, estimated at times to reach a total of over 6,000.

1940 - - - The Chester Fife and Drum Corps added another chapter to its long history in June 1940 when it took part in the parade of 20,000 men through the streets of Boston as a feature of the Yankee Division reunion.

1946 - - - Some of the events at which the Chester Drum Corps provided music during the summer of 1946, were the 300th Anniversary of New London, the Convention of the American Legion in Hartford, the Welcome Home Parade in Norwich, the 175th Anniversary celebration of the Governor's Footguards at Hartford, the Firemen's State Convention at Torrington, the Durham and Chester Agricultural Fairs, and acted as escort to the Governor at a Republican rally at Norwich and the Navy Day parade in New York.

1947 - - - In the summer of 1947, the Chester Drum Corps made a trip to the National American Legion Convention in New York. 23 men made the trip, led by Major Albert Berg and Majorette Ruthe Krohn. It was the only ancient Drum Corps in the great parade, which included hundreds of corps and bands.

Twenty-six members went to Washington by train, in a private car, on August 18th. On the following day, after a thrilling forenoon of sight-seeing in our National Capitol, the Corps gave a concert on the steps of the Capital Building at 2:00 P.M. In the evening they were scheduled to be featured in a Sesquicentennial Connecticut Honor Day Pageant, but, due to a terrific storm, the pageant was not held.

It was their great privilege to be the featured guests on the aircraft carrier "Tarawa" on the 4th of July, 1951, when she was anchored in New London Harbor, and open to the public for inspection tours. As far as can be learned this was the first time that a civilian organization of this kind had been so

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honored. After an afternoon of drumming for the crew and visitors they were treated to a real Navy meal, following which the Corps went to Ocean Beach, New London, and gave a concert on the Board-walk.

The Putnam Phalanx Drum Corps of Hartford, Connecticut, was taught by Mr. Daniel D. Silliman of Chester at his home. They came to Chester on the last train down the valley at night, got off at Hadlyme Station and walked to Mr. Silliman's home. He taught the fifers for one hour, then the drummers who used nail kegs to drum on. The men stayed overnight at Mr. Silliman's home and returned to Hartford the following morning on the first train.

It is fitting to note that the Corps consists of members of both sexes and a wide range of ages. The youngest active member is thirteen years of age, and the oldest is nearing eighty. Their vocations and occupations are as varied as their ages, but these differences merge into a common interest however, when they meet once each week for intensive rehearsal, or when they are called upon to participate in a parade or concert.

One instance of this great interest may be seen as follows: "Jim" Grote, one of the longest time active members, pictured in this folder as one of the "young boys" in the roster of 1906, and for many years president of the organization, rode a bicycle a distance of five miles one night each week to take lessons in the art of two-stick bass drumming. In inclement weather he walked the ten-mile round-trip.

The oldest member, "Clayt" Holmes has made numerous old style snare drums of unexcelled quality in his little home workshop. Harold and "Dick" Watrous have also made drums, and perform most of the maintenance work on the Corps' drums.

Thanks are due Miss Kate Sillman, a granddaughter of D. D. Silliman, for her part in giving much of the history contained herein. She is compiling a complete history of the Drum Corps, which will be published in book form at a future date.

THE CORPS AT
WASHINGTON, D. C.
AUGUST 19 AND 20, 1950



THE DRUMMER'S ASSISTANT

Published in Williamsburg, Va. for
the Expressed purpose of preserving
and presenting the martial music of
our historic past.

THE PANORAMA OF
"YANKEE DOODLE"

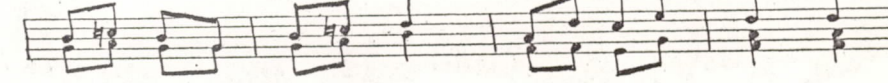
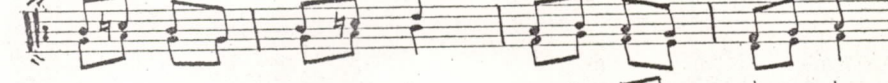
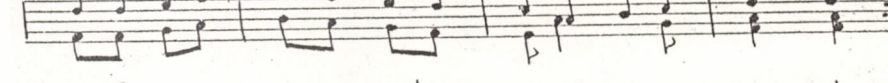
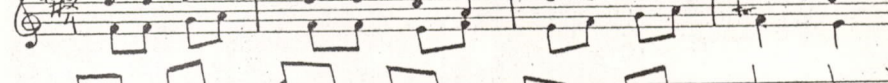
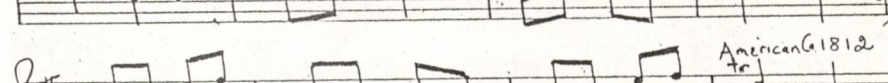
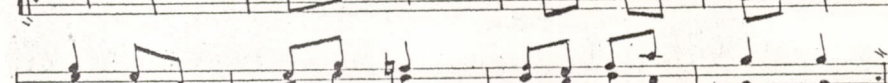
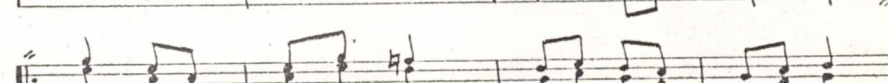
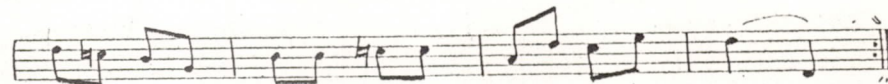
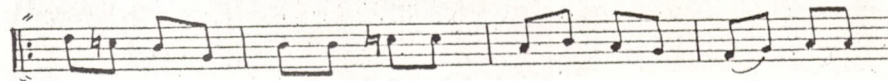
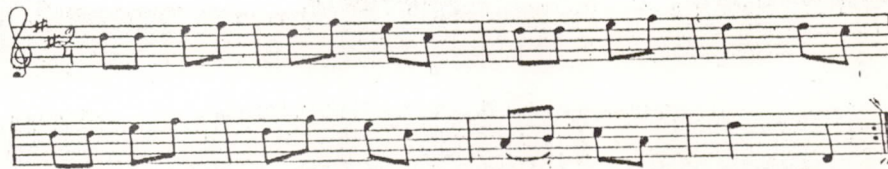
By George P. Carroll

EDITOR - George P. Carroll

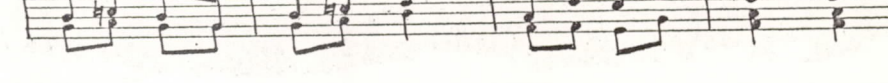
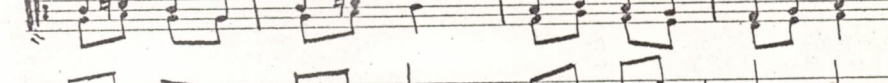
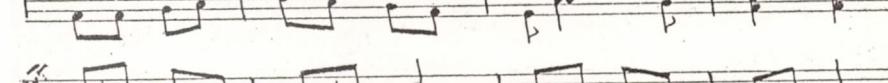
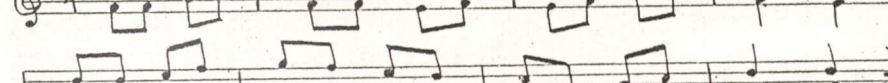
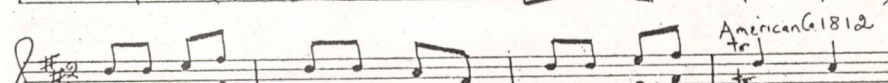
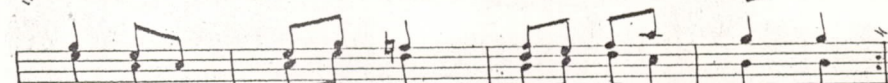
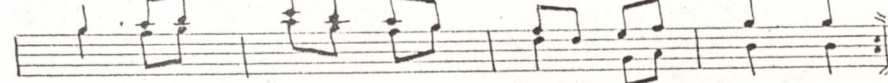
ASSISTANT EDITOR - William D. Geiger

Yankee Doodle

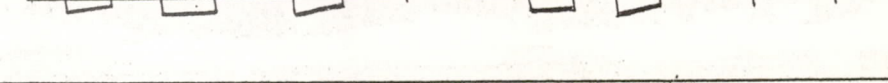
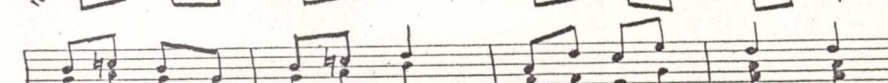
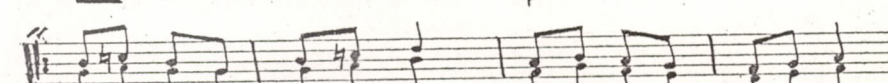
British 1775



American ca. 1805

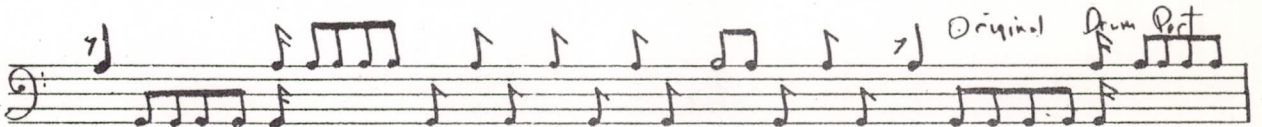
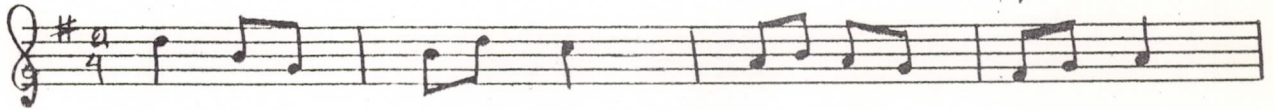


American 1812

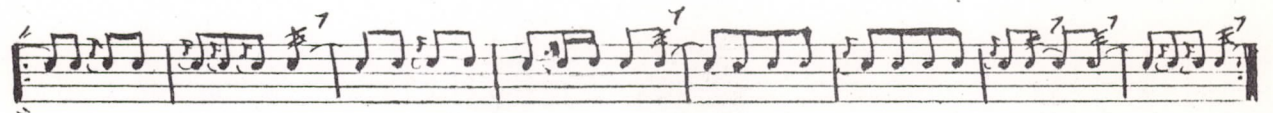
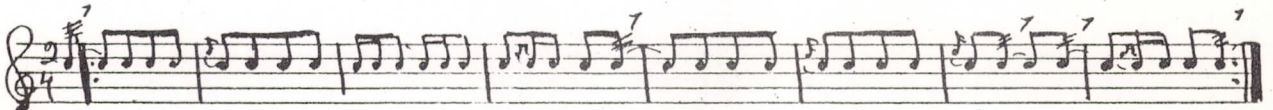


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American 1820



Irv. Block's Interpretation of Above



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THE CORPS CORNER

By Stuart Spirm

The following advancements have been made in the Colonial Williamsburg Fife and Drum Corps:

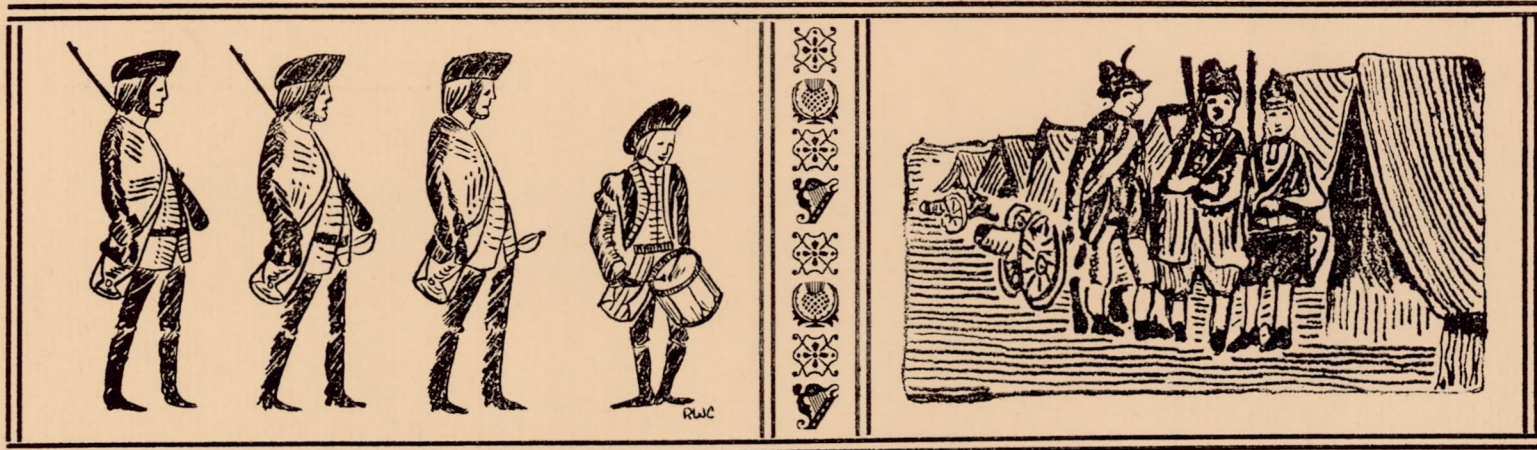
Promoted to <u>Corporal</u> were:	Andrew Babb, Fifer	Bart Denoy, Drummer
	Jim Hewitt, Fifer	
<u>Fifer</u> - - -	Richard Haas	
	Andrew Bradley	
<u>Drummer</u> - - -	Robert Harbour	
	Jimmy Holler	
	John Lowry	

Blake Marion and James Meek moved into the "Stand-by" status because of studies.

New members of C W are Pvts. James Woolley, Charles Ash, Edward Clay and Ben Schwartz. Recruits George Singly and Stuart Smith.

To the ranks of Ancient Corps we welcome The Potomac Field Music of Arlington, Va., who took first place as Best Appearing Jr. in the big Washington's Birthday Parade in Alexandria. Continental Boys of the same community coming in 3rd. in the same category. Also like to welcome The Mormon Troop Fife and Drum Corps, B S A under Scoutmaster G. Carroll.

For those that hadn't heard (I hadn't) there is a fife and drum unit as far away as Mount Vernon, OHIO. A very unique Civil War unit called The Sons of Veterans.

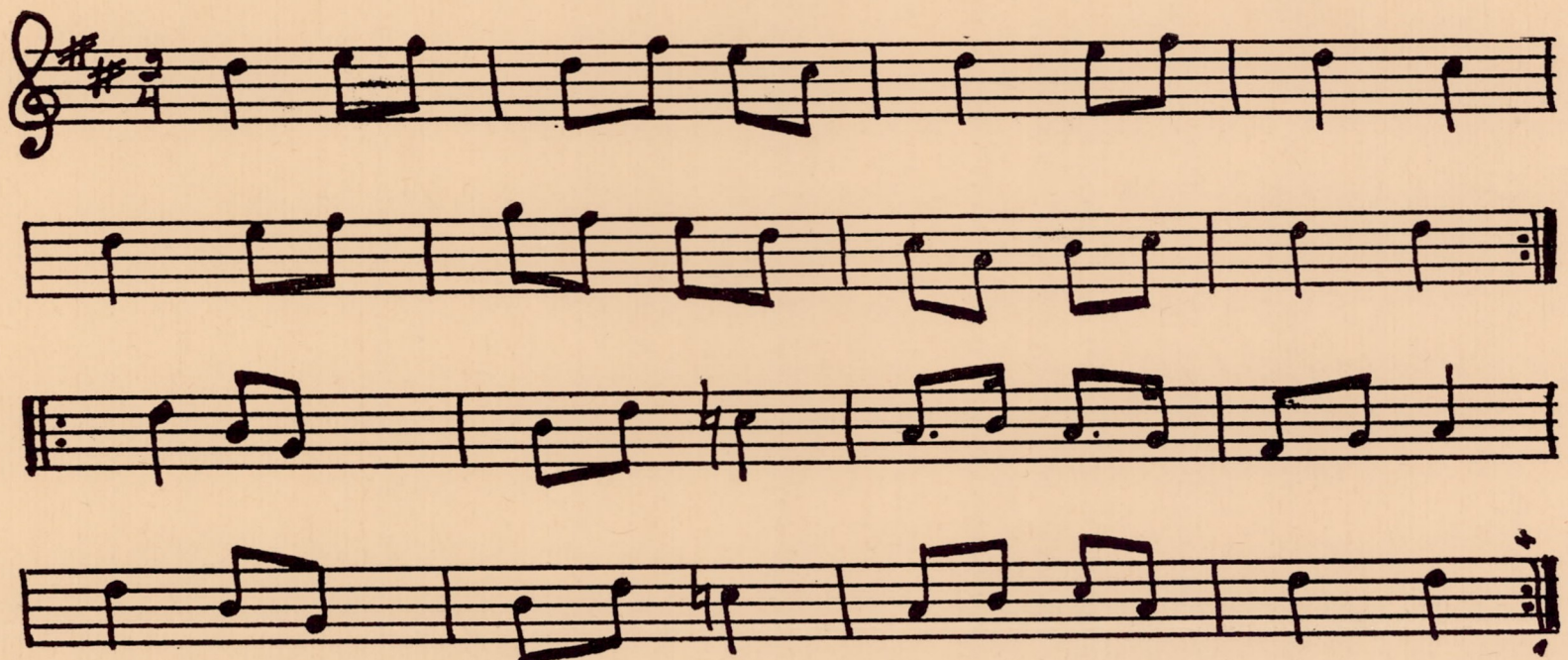


YANKEE DOODLE



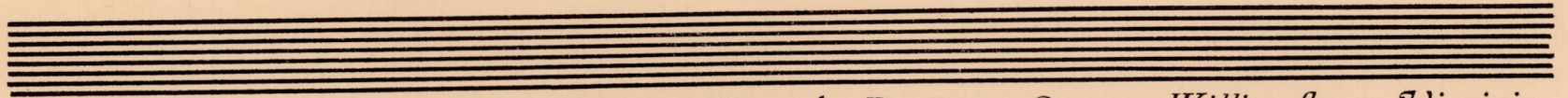
THE exact Year that the Melody of this Tune was Composed and the Name of the Compofer are Facts which undoubtedly will never be known. One version of the Tune's origin is that a young Surgeon, one RICHARD SHUCKBURG by name, who was with *General Abercrombie* at Albany in New York, during the *French & Indian War*, was amused by the deportment of the Farmer-Soldiers. He then wrote "FATHER AND I WENT DOWN TO CAMP," and put it to an old Tune which was known as "*A New England Noodle*." This Tune was used during the first part of THE REVOLUTION by the *British* in derision of the *Americans*, and then adopted by the "YANKEES" themselves.

MUSICK for the FIFES



MUSICK for the DRUMS

Handwritten musical notation for drums on four staves. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, rests, and dynamic markings. Above the first staff, there are handwritten letters: '7', 'R-', 'L-', 'R L R L L L', and 'R L L'. The notation is written in a cursive style, typical of handwritten musical manuscripts.



Composed, and Hand Set, by A. KLAPPER at the PRINTING OFFICE, *Williamsburg, Virginia*

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THE CORPS CORNER - (continued)

Have heard that Terry Hennesy, late of Germantown Fire Dept. F & D is now snare drumming in the only active service Fife & Drum unit, The Old Guard of Ft. Myer, Va. Bob Arruda, of the same corps as Terry, originally, is now with an Artillery Unit at Fort Bragg, N. C.

THE MUSICK CASE

FRENCH & INDIAN WAR

The Grenadier's March
Country Dance(Doubling of the Troop)
This tune currently in use by The
Sons of Liberty of New York, title
used unknown.

REVOLUTION

Irish Reel (Rakes of Marlow)
(Rakes of Mallow)
The British Grenadiers(Free
America)

WAR OF 1812

Roving Sailor(The Sailor's Return)
The Red Coat Fifer

CIVIL WAR

Wrecker's Daughter
Rally "Round the Flag

POST CIVIL WAR

Huntington
Onward Christian Soldiers

THE VON STEUBEN DRILL

REGULATIONS FOR THE ORDER AND DISCIPLINE
OF THE TROOPS
OF THE UNITED STATES

1. The Position of a Soldier without arms. *I

He is to stand straight and firm upon his legs with the head turned to the right so far as to bring the left eye over the waistcoat buttons; the heels two inches apart; the toes turned out; the belly drawn in a little, the hands hanging down the sides with the palms close to the thighs.

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2. Attention.

At this word the soldier must be silent, stand firm and steady, moving neither hand nor foot (except as ordered) but attend carefully to the words of command.

This attention of the soldier must be observed in the strictest manner, till he received the word.

3. Rest. *II.

At which he may refresh himself, by moving his hands or feet; but must not then sit down, or quit his place, unless permitted to do so.

EDITOR'S NOTES:*

- I. This would have to be modified in a drum corps by having its members face squarely to the front. This would enable them to see the Drum Major's signals.
- II. It is felt that a drill movement on the command of REST would make for a smart appearance. In the 18th Century British Drill and in the 1812 American Drill the routine was as follows: "On the words STAND AT, EASE(REST), the right foot is to be drawn back about six inches and the greatest part of the weight of the body brought upon it, the left knee a little bent, the hands brought smartly together before the body, but the shoulders to be kept back, and square the head to the front, and the whole attitude without constraint." I

4. Attention - To The Left Dress.

At this word the soldier turns his head briskly to the left, so as to bring his right eye in the direction of his waistcoat buttons.

5. To The Right - Dress . *III.

The soldier dresses again to the right, as before.

The recruit must then be taught.

EDITOR'S NOTES:*

- III. After the dressings, an order is needed to bring the head and eyes smartly back to the front. The American 1812 Drill states - EYES, FRONT. II

6. The Facings - To The Right, - Face! Two Motions. *IV.

1st Turn briskly on both heels to the right, lifting up the toes a little, and describing a quarter of a circle.

2nd Bring back the right foot to its proper position, without stamping.

7. To The Left - Face! Two Motions

1st Turn to the left as before to the right.

2nd Bring up the right foot to its proper position.

8. To The Right About - Face! Three Motions

1st Step back with the right foot, bringing the buckle opposite the left heel, at the same time seizing the cartridge-box with the right hand.

2nd Turn briskly on both heels, and describe a half circle.

3d Bring back the right foot, at the same time quitting the cartridge-box.

When the recruit is sufficiently expert in the foregoing points, he must be taught the different steps.

THE COMMON STEP

Is two feet, and about seventy-five in a minute.

TO THE FRONT - MARCH

The soldier steps off with his left foot, and marches a free, easy and natural step, without altering the position of his body or head, taking care to preserve a proper balance, and not cross his legs; but to march without constraint, in every sort of ground: The Officer must march sometimes in his front, and sometimes at his side, in order to join example to precept.

HALT

At this word the soldier stops short, on the foot then advanced, immediately bringing the other up without stamping.

THE QUICK STEP

Is also two feet, but about one hundred and twenty in a minute, and is performed on the same principle as the other.

The recruits having been exercised singly, till they have proper carriage, and are well grounded in the different steps, the officer will then take three men, and placing them in one rank, exercise them in the different steps, and teach them.

EDITOR'S NOTES:*

- IV. In order not to confuse the men between the two orders, TO THE RIGHT, DRESS and TO THE RIGHT - FACE, it is well to give the warning DRESSING, or FACING, before the respective commands.

THE MARCH BY FILES

Which, being of great importance, must be carefully attended to; observing that the soldier carries his body more forward than in the front march, and that he does not increase the distance from his file leader.

THE OBLIQUE STEP

Must be practiced, both at the quick and common time. In marching obliquely to the right, the soldier steps obliquely with the right foot, bringing up the left, and placing the toes of the right foot directly before the heel, and the contrary when marching to the left; at the same time observing to keep the shoulders square to the front, especially that the shoulder, opposed to the side they march to, does not project, and that the files keep closed.

The recruit, being thus far instructed, must be again taken separately, and taught.

THE POSITION OF A SOLDIER UNDER ARMS

In this position the soldier is to stand straight and firm upon his legs, with the heels two inches apart, the toes a little turned out, the belly drawn in a little without constraint, the breast a little projected, the shoulders square to the front and kept back, the right hand hanging down the side, with the palm close to the thigh, the left elbow not turned out from

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the body, the firelock carried on the left shoulder, at such height that the guard will be just under the left breast, the forefinger and thumb before the swell of the butt, the three left fingers under the butt, the flat of the butt against the hip bone, and pressed so as that the firelock may be felt against the left side, and stand before the hollow of the shoulder, neither leaning towards the head nor from it, the barrel almost perpendicular. When exercising he is to be very exact in counting a second of time between each motion.

THE MANUEL EXERCISE

I

POISE - FIRELOCK! Two Motions

1st With your left hand turn the firelock briskly, bringing the lock to the front, at the same instant seize it with the right hand just below the lock, keeping the peace perpendicular.

2d With a quick motion bring up the firelock from the shoulder directly before the face, and seize it with the left hand just above the lock, so that the little finger may rest upon the feather spring, and the thumb lie on the stock; the left hand must be of an equal height with the eyes.

II

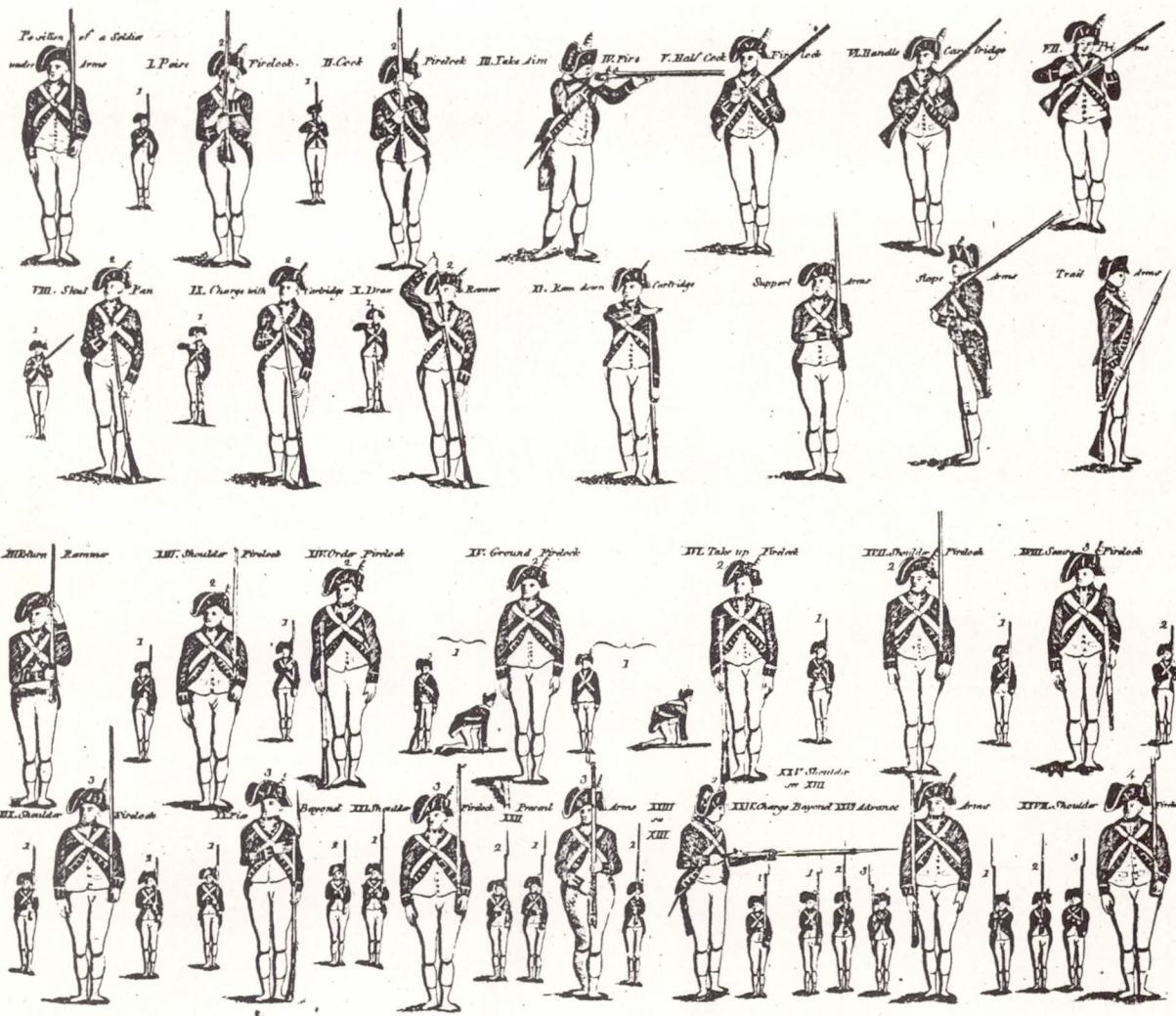
COUNT - FIRELOCK! Two Motions

1st Turn the barrel opposite to your face and place your thumb upon the cock, raising the elbow square at this motion.

2d Cock the firelock by drawing down your elbow, immediately placing your thumb upon the breech-pin, and the fingers under the guard.

- - - TO BE CONTINUED IN FUTURE ISSUES - - -

THE DRUMMER'S ASSISTANT



THE MANUAL EXERCISE WITH THE FIRELOCK. This illustration appeared in a Pamphlet, or within the pages, in Regulation for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States, by Patrick Wolfe et al. in various editions from 1782 to 1807. It is reprinted in America's Gun Manual of Arms, A Day Kington Research Expedition, 1988.

THE DRUM SHELF

THE GERMAN DRUM

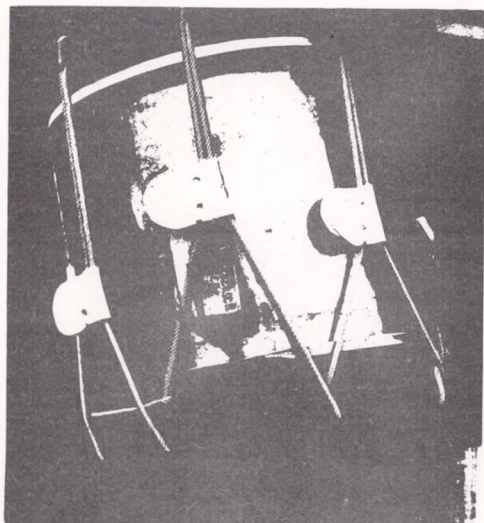
We can say with almost certain accuracy that this is an instrument used by the German mercenary troops at Trenton, New Jersey and was captured by General Washington's Army on Christmas of 1776. There were 12 drums in all captured that fateful morning.

General Rall, the German C.O..... liked to hear his bandsmen serenade him each morning while they played their duties in the cold.

A German Drum was donated to the Colonial Williamsburg Collections where it can be seen on display at the Powder Magazine. The drum was trooped by the Drum Major of C W's Fifes & Drums on the anniversary of the battle, last year.

It would be most interesting to find out which regiment used this particular drum. There seems to be a repaired spot, just big enough to be a musket ball hole, in the back of the shell right between the legs of the drummer, had he been wearing the instrument.

The shell is 14" across by 12-3/4" deep. It is of brass, seamed together in the back and has a rivet on each end of the seam. The hoops are very thick 1/4" and wide 2-5/16". There is a very good snare strainer and a circular type gate cut in the hoop. There is no snare butt. The hoops are painted in a diagonal stripe of alternating colors of black, yellow[or white?] and red. This drum was overhauled by Charles "Buck" Soistman who re-roped, re-eared and re-headed the instrument.



DRUM MAJOR'S DRILL

At the request of some of the members of the New England Drum Corps, I am presenting an article on Drum Major drill as performed presently by myself with the Colonial Williamsburg Fifes & Drums.

This drill is patterned very closely after that which is used by the British Guards Regiment and other units throughout the British Commonwealth. Although the system of playing (both drums and fifes, seems to have changed down through the years in the Guards, the Drum Major's Evolutions have remained relatively static. This is borne out by the numerous contemporary drawings and text which still exist on the subject.



Photo 1

Photo 1 - The position of Attention.

Photo 2 - The position of Rest. Movements of the right foot and Mace are co-ordinated.

To signal the musicians to prepare to play, a 3 motion evolution is performed, remember to count 1, 2, in quick-step cadence, between each movement. The movements should be very fast and the positions steady, whilst counting.

Photo 3 - The 1st motion warns the musicians that they will be bringing this instrument up on the second movement.

Photo 4 - The 2nd position the Fifes & Drumsticks move very smartly to the "up" position.

Photo 5 - The 3rd movement of the Mace signifies to bring the Fifes and drumsticks to the playing position.

Photo 6 - To start the drums & Fifes playing, the Mace is



Photo 2



Photo 4



Photo 3



Photo 5



Photo 6

dropped by the Drum Major, with a slight canting motion of the wrist to the left. This enables him to catch the Mace just under the ball. This is all done standing and not moving as the 6th photo indicates. The Drum Major then resumes the position of attention(photo 2) in one motion and the Corps plays until the end of the piece or until the cut-off signal.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN FUTURE ISSUES]

THE DRUMMER'S ASSISTANT

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S GUARD, 1777 - 1783

The Commander-in Chief's Guard, often called "The Life Guard," was formed by General Orders of 12 March 1776.¹ Although once described by Benson J. Lossing as a "mounted" unit, the Guard proper, during much of its life, was a company-size infantry organization composed of carefully selected men. To it were attached, from time to time, details from the several light dragoon regiments. Apparently, between May 1777 and September 1778, these details were furnished largely by Baylor's 3rd Horse; later, detachments from Bland's, Sheldon's, and Moylan's Horse served at various times.²

It was the duty of the infantry portion to guard the headquarters and to insure the safe-keeping of the papers and effects of the Commander-in-Chief, as well as the safety of his person. The attached dragoons accompanied the General on marches and reconnaissance. They were employed as couriers and also served as patrols and videttes. Both mounted and dismounted portions were used in battle when the occasion demanded.

The Guard proper (the dismounted portion) at first contained about 50 men. It was reorganized in April and May 1777 at about the same strength and included 4 sergeants, 4 corporals and 1 fifer. General Steuben, at Valley Forge, increased the Guard to about 150 men (including 2 drummers) and used it as a demonstration company. But for most of the time thereafter it contained about 50 men. Lossing gives figures somewhat different from these--for example, that the Guard contained 250 men in the winter of 1779-1780--but he may be including the attached dragoons. He also states that after July 1782 the Guard contained a small drum corps with a drum major.

The war largely over, the Guard was disbanded on 6 June 1783 and its men discharged. Headquarters were then at Newburgh, N.Y., and thereafter men were detailed for this guard duty by the Massachusetts regiments stationed at that post. The last service performed by this provisional guard was the delivery of Washington's personal papers to Mount Vernon in November 1783.

About the uniform of the Guard there is that lack of definite information common to all the Continental outfits, due in great part, of course, to recurring clothing shortages and the compromises which had to be made. The

¹ The history of the Guard is given in Carlos E. Godfrey, *The Commander-in-Chief's Guard*, Washington, 1904. References to the unit are to be found in all histories and memoirs of the Revolution, and the various stories about its personnel are romantic in the extreme.

² Godfrey, *op. cit.*, 36-40

first significant reference to clothing is a description of a deserter in the New York Gazette of 17 June 1776.³ This described the uniform as comprising a blue coat faced with buff and a red waistcoat. But it should be noted that the deserter referred to also had a "blue coat faced with green and a round unbound felt hat."

George Washington Parke Custis described the dress of the Guard as being "a blue coat, with white facings; white waistcoat and breeches; black stock and black half gaiters, and a round hat, with blue and white feathers."⁴ He refers here to no particular date and this seems actually to be the dress of the men from the Massachusetts regiments who, at Newburgh in 1783, were detailed to form the provisional guard.

The description accompanying the 1784 drawing of an officer of Washington's "Independent Company," by Chodowiecki, and the drawing itself, give the uniform as light blue faced with a "reddish yellow buckskin."⁵ This is the only known contemporary picture of a Guardsman, but we cannot be entirely confident of its details.

Washington, in a letter to Captain Gibbs in April 1777, vaguely substantiates the blue coat faced with buff; and an item from Elijah Fisher's journal suggests the men wore caps in 1778.⁶ Andrew D Mellick described the Guard's uniform (on the authority, probably, of the New York Gazette, quoted above) as follows:⁷

...blue coat, faced with buff, red waistcoat,
buckskin breeches, white body belts, and a
black felt cocked hat bound with white tape.

This description is followed by John C. Fitzpatrick in his article on "The Continental Army Uniform," with the added note that the blue and buff coat was "of the old First Virginia Colonial Regiment," a very questionable assertion.⁸ This is also the uniform always shown by Harry Ogden, and for that reason has become the one usually associated with the Guard.

³ Quoted in Charles M. Lefferts, *Uniforms of the ...American Revolution*, New York, 1926, 86.

⁴ *Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington*, New York, 1860, 256-257.

⁵ Daniel N. Chodowiecki in *Allgemeines historisches Taschenbuch.....*, Berlin 1784; reproduced in *MC&H*, VI, 91.

⁶ Captain Caleb Gibbs commanded the Guard in 1777; the letter is quoted in Godfrey, *op. cit.*, 40-41. "Elijah Fisher's Journal" is in the *Magazine of History*, Extra Number 6 (1909).

⁷ *The Story of an Old Farm*, Somerville, N J., 1889, 478.

⁸ *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine*, November 1920.

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Later accounts repeat one or more of these sources, usually the Gazette description. Godfrey goes into great detail, but actually adds nothing new. He shows on page 99 a miniature of Captain Bezaleel Howe, who joined the Guard in 1783. The colors in the miniature are not described but the cut of the coat looks more like Wayne's Legion, in which Howe later served, than the Guard.

The uniforms shown in the plate are based upon the references mentioned above and represent at least one phase of the Guard's history. The cocked hat probably preceded the bearskin cap, but both could have been worn simultaneously.

[Many thanks to the Company of
Military Collectors & Historians
for use of their plate. Also, to
Messrs. McBarron, Jr. and Todd for use of their article]

H. Charles McBarron, Jr.
Frederick P. Todd

Interesting Excerpt from:

Col. Jas. Wilkinson-
Gen. Gates Adjt.

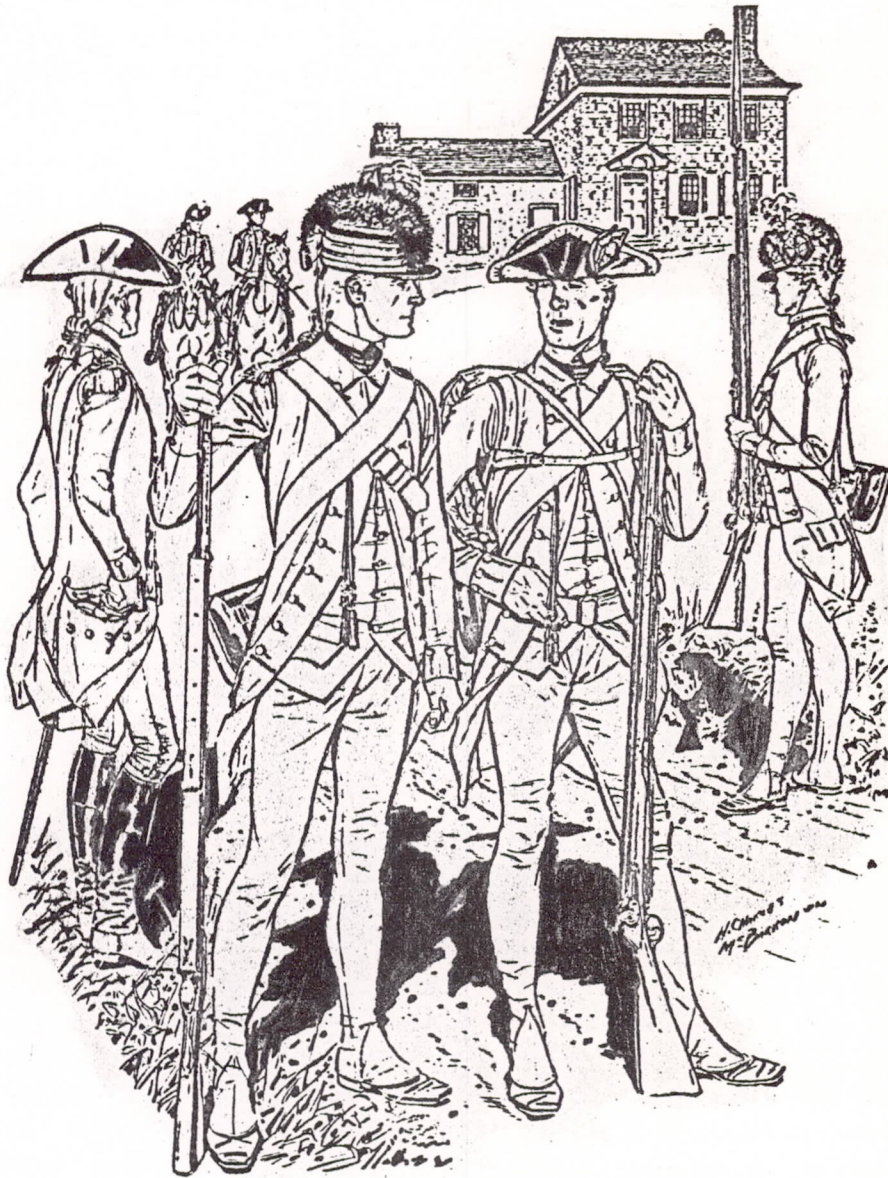
Saratoga - 1777

"I crossed the angle of the field, leaped the fence, and just before me on a ridge discovered Lieutenant Colonel Butler with three men, all treed. From him I learned that they had "caught a Scotch prize," that having forced the picket they had closed with the British line, had been instantly routed, and from the suddenness of the shock and the nature of the ground, were broken and scattered in all directions....

I then turned about to regain the camp and report...when my ears were saluted by an uncommon noise which I approached and perceived Colonel Morgan, attended by two men only, who with a turkey call was collecting his dispersed troops."

F I N I S

THE DRUMMER'S ASSISTANT



Commander-in-Chief's Guard, 1777-1783