

1) Trip to England Aug 24 - Sep 2

This trip is now 'on'. We currently have 32 Men-at-arms and 10 Followers enrolled and there is plenty of room for anyone who wishes to come along. Our improved ratio of Followers to troops of 4 to 10 still stands.

We are attempting to obtain financial assistance for students and have indications that this will be forthcoming, so those of you who have decided not to attend because of scholastic/funds restrictions can now reconsider; however, you still face the fact that over one week of earning power will be taken up by this trip. More on this later.

We will have to deliver all firelocks to the Airport, one to two days before departure so that they may be inspected and packed securely. Details later.

Anyone wishing to add their name to the list, please send me a cheque for \$250 as an approx. $\frac{1}{2}$ downpayment. Don't wait too long as we have commitments to make.

2) Winter Party in Review

Many thanks to Marilyn and Norm Agnew for the organization of the buffet first course. There were a number of people who unfortunately did not get to eat as our attendance of 130 persons was 20 more than expected and 35 more than last year. The situation was not helped by a few guests who ate enough to choke a horse and by those who took early seconds.

Thanks to all the Followers and wives who contributed desserts. The variety was super and there was more than enough for all.

Special thanks to Al Joyner for the preparation of the video and scramble to obtain the projection equipment. Peter Johnson's Calendar was again more than popular with many muttered threats and vague promises and Norm's Pin as a memorial to the wettest year, we hope ever, certainly hit the spot.

John MacLeod's winning of the Yorker of the Year trophy was universally acclaimed especially with his pledge of rounds for all at events in 87 where more than 40 attended. Well done, John!

Apologies to all the smokers for the last minute change in rules. Apparently this regulation has been in place for all of the years that we have enjoyed the use of the Fort and, yet, we have never been advised.

A great many of us felt that this year's party was not as successful as previous ones. Certainly the crowding didn't help as it forced the constant use of both floors of the building, as did the heating problem. The packed conditions made it impossible to effectively conduct the awards ceremonies and general Regimental hoo-haw.

We seem to have outgrown the Centre Blockhouse and efforts will be made to locate another facility with some historical atmosphere, in-building washrooms, good heating and room to accommodate our numbers and activities. Many members wish to expand the event somewhat and we will try to find a location which will allow this without encroaching on our usual programme.

3) Upcoming Event: "An Era of Elegance" Apr 11/87 Jackman Hall, Art Gallery of Ontario, 317 Dundas St.W., Toronto 9:00AM-4:00PM

This activity is for all Camp Followers and Troops who wish to gain an understanding of the clothing of our period, the social activities and mores of Europe which of course set the tone in America.

The Keynote speaker is Dr. Aileen Ribeiro, Head of the History of Dress Dept., Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London. Her two hour address occurs at 1:15.

Registrations must be received before Mar 27 although at-the-door admissions are also possible. The cost is \$30 ea and there is a Period Luncheon at \$15 ea to be served in the Art Gallery.

Make your cheque payable to the Costume Society of Ontario and mail it to:

"An Era of Elegance" CSO Box 931, Station F, Toronto, Ont. M4Y 2N9

We currently have no plans to make this a group activity; however, if you decide to attend would you please give me or Nancy a call and we will see the potential.

4) Period Eyeglasses

We all recognize that we exhibit many historical inaccuracies in our presentations and we know that we will never correct all of them.

Probably the worst of all of them is the wearing of obviously modern eye glasses. They simply stick out like a sore thumb and even the uninitiated can recognize that they are wrong.

I would like everyone, soldier and follower, to make the greatest possible effort to do something about this for the coming Campaign. I recognize that we're talking about an additional expense; but, when you consider the time, money and effort that you've already made in getting kitted out and studying the era and its customs, it is simply illogical not to take this next step.

Reasonably good frames can be found in many antique stores and are certainly less expensive than currently made versions. They can be either steel or brass and the metal should surround the lens. If the antique type bother you because they do not have enough viewing area or if you can't find them, then current frames are available which look the part. The advantage of the latter is that with careful selection, they will be useable for everyday, or at least, for emergencies.

5) Arms' Maintenance- the Firelock and Bayonet

We have often stressed the necessity for the care of one's arms, not only to ensure their function, but also to protect your investment. And, of course, there's the question of Regimental pride.

We all know that every soldier in the unit is to have his bayonet polished bright and the firelocks of the Grenadiers and Colonels are to be bright as well. The muskets of the Lights are to ^{be} brown, which is not to say that they are to be dirty.

See the following commentary found in the General Orders of Governor General Haldimand, dated Head Quarters, Quebec 1 March 1779.

"The care of the Arms is considered as of the utmost Consequence and a first principle in all well disciplined Regiments."

6) Ladies of the Light Company

The startlingly great influx of potential followers arising from the growth of the troops leads me to an observation to which the new men must pay heed.

Do not encourage or allow your lady friends to make the mistake of making a quick and simple entry into the kit question. Modifying 20Century 'formals' etc.. is not the way for them to get into garb.

If your girlfriends, wives, sisters, whatever want to get into the unit, do it right and send away for a starter's kit. It's \$10 well spent and avoids much grief and heartburn for all concerned.

Send to Nancy Watt, 55 Ferrier Ave., Toronto, M4K 3H5

7) The New York Provincial Regiment of 1758

This new project of the Museum is off to a good start with Eric Lorenzen as the leader, coordinator and Serjeant. Many of you will have seen the experimental uniform worn by Eric for part of the Party. The coat will be green faced green. The turnback colour is yet to be decided.

Hats will be tricorns and Scotch bonnets. The 1st Bn. Yorker waistbelts will be worn as well as the haversacks and canteens, although the latter will ultimately be replaced with wooden ones. The musket, bayonet, scabbard, axe, shirt and neckstock of the 1st Bn. are all useable. A new cartridge pouch is a requirement, although we will start with belly boxes. Oddly enough, the Regt was not issued with waistcoats for the summer season.

Cyd Paul Girdwood is our seamstress and her labour charge is \$100. NB: materials extra.

All individuals who are interested, please contact Eric at 416-690-3732. Our first event is Fort Niagara on Jul 4.

History with a bang

by Glen Smith

One of the more interesting historical activities taking place today concerns the men and women who recreate old regiments which fought in Canada's early conflicts. People who are bitten by this particular hobby find themselves engrossed in the fascinating task of researching all available information and turning it into physical reality.

This article is the story of how one of these living history organizations turned its hand to recreating a cannon that was part of its equipment in its heyday. The organization, then and now, is the King's Royal Regiment of New York, a Loyalist unit raised in Canada in 1776. Many Loyalist Regiments of the American Revolution were named after the state from which large numbers of the soldiers fled. This causes some confusion today, as we associate these states as being American.

The King's Royal Yorkers were a large two-battalion regiment which, in association with other Loyalist and regular British regiments, fought a courageous but in the end a losing war. One result of their labours, however, was the prevention of the American rebels from spreading their brand of revolutionary republicanism beyond their own frontiers. This allowed English Canada to develop from the ashes of failed dreams further south.

Two hundred years later, in 1975, eight men met and decided to recreate a long-lost chapter in Canadian history. It was about time, they felt, that a genuine article of national heritage was put on public view.

What evolved is Canada's largest living history organization and a legend in its own right. Growing to over 100 men-at-arms plus camp followers, these men and women completely outfit themselves in authentic copies of the clothing and equipment of the Revolutionary period. They then participate in various reenactments and historical festivals using the methods of drill and manoeuvre standard to the time.

Along the way they felt it was high time to look into a seldom-mentioned addition to the regiment during the campaigns into rebel territory. This was a "Grasshopper".

To those people who are very familiar with the vernacular names for various military ordnance, it could only mean one thing: a small 3 pr. brass field cannon.

The North American wilderness caused tremendous difficulties in transporting large pieces of ordnance. A smaller but still effective field gun which could be broken down and carried by horses would avoid these pitfalls. There was a real need for some sort of artillery to add its weight in combat, even in North America, but it had to be practical. The 3 pr. was practical, the more common and much larger 6 pr. was not.

The Royal Artillery, perceiving this need, had designed several versions of the 3 pr. specifically to answer these problems. Rather than have these small guns exclusively handled by Royal Artillery gunners, who were never very numerous and were needed in Forts and Army batteries, it was decided that Infantry Regiments could make use of them. Various types of small guns and mortars were sent to a few of the larger Loyalist Regiments as well. Royal Artillery gunners accompanied them and trained selected soldiers on how to operate artillery. After the lessons were well learned, the Royal Artillery returned to their own units.

The Yorkers now had a "Grasshopper" and a small Cohorn mortar. The reason the nickname stuck on the gun was that wooden handspikes could be fitted into brackets on the gun carriage and by this means could be lifted

over obstacles and manoeuvred with ease. Its appearance with these poles sticking out of it strongly reminded people of the leggy grasshopper itself. Another slightly larger 3 pr. was named the "Butterfly", although one has to use a lot more imagination to see any comparison.

The Cohorn mortar was the smallest of its type, easily broken down and transported. When set up, it could fire exploding shells high over obstacles obscuring the target.

It is thought that the Yorkers were familiar with and used small artillery during most of their existence. References to them occurred periodically in official returns or reports on the results of a campaign. In 1780 there was

more reference than usual on their use of the "Grasshopper." During that campaign, the mortar was found to be more of an encumbrance than useful and was buried in order to get rid of it and keep it away from the Americans.

The gun was well used in spite of recorded difficulties in bringing it into action through the dense bush. One tactic was to place it in ambush along a path, towards which the Loyalists would drive the Americans in seeming pursuit but actually into the blast of the gun, hidden further along. As well, it was used in more open situations to maul the enemy who were formed up and engaged in battle. It is also known to have punched holes in the walls of a church, wherein the Americans had fortified themselves — a dastardly use of sacred architecture! One hopes that the gun gave them a lesson in the Sword of the Lord and the Wrath of Gideon.

By the war's closing there were seven Grasshoppers in Canada, two of them at Carleton Island, one of the Yorkers' major garrison posts. Certainly the records show that the Yorkers were exercising in Artillery from 1777 to 1783, virtually the entire period of the American Revolution.

Meanwhile, two hundred years later, after the recreated Yorkers had been in existence for a while and the infantry aspect of the Regiment was marching in ever larger numbers down the road, the Yorker executive body voted on a new project, to whit: the gun.

With the help of a Wintario grant, the tube was purchased from a company that specialized in casting authentic copies of cannon. Yorker member Victor Zubatiuk filed and burnished the tube until it was smooth. Plans of the "Grasshopper" carriage were found and blueprinted. Construction began on the carriage but for a while it got sidetracked. It eventually wound up in the hands of the author and Bill Severin, both Yorker members.

Mr. Severin, who is well versed in Eighteenth Century crafts, directed the work, using various techniques not usually found in other carriage copies. Reproduced hub borers and reamers were utilized along with a "Sampson" clamp to make the wheels. These little known tools are bonafide instruments used in the old days to build military

carriages. All the hardware was hand forged by fire, anvil and hammer. After some experimentation, a proper dark grey wood finish was achieved.

A question that remained was what the Yorker gunners looked like. There was no mention in the records or histories of the Regiment. The roster didn't denote any special company to run the gun. It is supposed, therefore, that Yorker Loyalist green infantry clothing and distinctions were worn by the gunners.

The gun or "Priapus" (the Roman god of male procreative power) as it is known in the Regiment, has collected its own notoriety. Its appearance at Regimental functions has coincided with an unusual number of pregnan-

cies within the ranks of the camp followers. Many a wondering eye has been cast its way. Is there any connection?

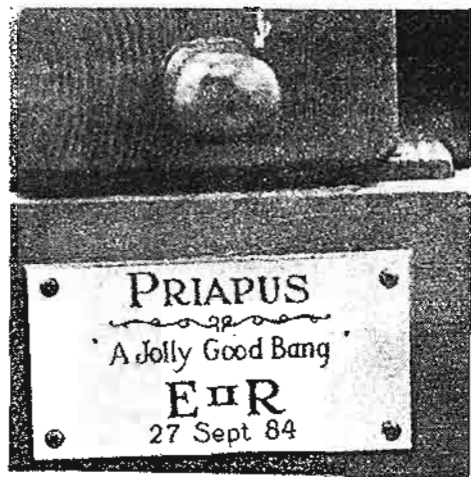
Priapus' reenactment role is part of an exploration of how a field piece can be integrated into the activities of a large infantry Regiment. Being highly mobile, it can move with them over most types of terrain and then be rapidly set up in a suitable firing position. It can take position as a cover on their flank, on a hill nearby, accompany a detached unit, or as a deterrent when the Regiment moves off on a field manoeuvre. These motions are generally not explored by other reenactment guns which portray independent companies or Artillery or due to their larger size and weight tend to isolate themselves in battery situations.

The most rewarding appearance of Priapus was in 1984 when it was part of a huge Yorker show put on for the benefit of Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness Prince Phillip, at Prescott, Ontario.

As well known history buffs, with a special interest in George III and his times, the Royal Couple requested the opportunity to review the Regiment following the show. When they arrived at the gun, Queen Elizabeth directed several questions concerning it, then made the comment that "It makes a jolly good bang!" Prince Phillip was also heard to remark that it was "a beaut!"

Following the Queen's return to England, the Regiment wrote to her expressing their gratitude for her kindness and attention shown to them. We mentioned that her remarks about the gun were quite delightful. Shortly thereafter she wrote back indicating her pleasure that we found her little "sobriquet" amusing. She gave us Royal Permission to commemorate the event by placing an appropriate plaque on the gun carriage.

One can now see on the carriage a small brass plaque stating simply for all to see:



To my knowledge there is not another gun with this distinction.

Priapus continues its appearances, a doughty little gun thundering out its support of the Regiment, or as the Lieutenant Colonel observes: "the loudest mouth in the Regiment, notwithstanding McMartin" (a notoriously garrulous ex. R.C.N. now causing mayhem and deafness from his customary position in the rear rank).

It is an honour to serve in the King's Royal Yorkers, observing the history it made as the first English Regiment raised in Canada. They were Loyalists to the Crown who fought with distinction in the American Revolution and when disbanded in 1784, they chose to remain in Canada and became the bulwark and core of the Province of Ontario.

END

8) Black Powder- A Most Dangerous Substance Requiring Your Respect

Without trying to scare the devil out of all our new, and uninitiated members, I am again on the topic of safety and Black Powder.

We have stressed over and over again the necessity of safe storage, away from strangers and especially children. And storage in a cool place, in the original tin. Be particularly careful with unused cartridges. Keep them in your pouch and the pouch again out of reach of those who don't understand the risks.

Unlike modern cartridge propellants, Black Powder does not require intense heat or tight confinement to explode; indeed, the slightest spark will ignite Black Powder and if enough of it is ignited, one can generate a powerful, nasty explosion in the complete open. To quote W.H. Bush of the Ontario Handgun Assoc., "we are telling you that unconfined black powder ignites more easily and burns faster than any of the other common propellant fuel used in firearms."

TREAT IT WITH RESPECT.

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