



Loyal American Regiment

Useless trivia about the Revolutionary War (from Mark Tully's *Packet II* book):

- Private soldiers often had planks in the bottom of their tents to form a makeshift floor.
- The familiar hangman's noose appears to be a 19th century invention. Hangings during the Revolutionary period involved using a simple constricting loop around the victim's neck.

For Sale:

Trousers: fustian, never worn. Correct for our impression. Un-hemmed 36" length. Waist 31-33. \$35. Buy it new and it will cost you \$70

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Captain Joshua Barns' Company of Marksmen Semi-Regular Newsletter
www.loyalamericanregiment.org

God Save the King!

After-Action Report: Espionage Weekend



*From the desk of the
company serjeant*

Chris New

Ah, to experience Colonial Williamsburg when the city is filled with reenactors. We had arrived to spy on our British friends and live up to tasks our historical



counterparts had performed 225 years ago. On Saturday morning, I deliberately choose Christiana Campbell's Tavern as a meeting point because it is the furthest spot in the city from the British encampment and it was, as I had hoped, beyond the range of the British patrols (with one notable exception as we'll see).

Campbell's Tavern has a large front porch with many comfortable chairs. We quickly made ourselves at home and gazed at the picturesque view of the capitol a short distance away. We chatted for a while trying to decide how to proceed when Mr. Briggs strode into view coming from town. He was dressed in his "pig farmer" best civilian clothing and looked thoroughly disrespectful. While we had been taking it easy, Tom had been actively scouting the British camp and presented us with extensive information regarding troop strength, patrols and location of sentries and check points.

At that point, we snapped into action – we went shopping on the

Espionage Weekend (continued)

main street. I must say that it was quite fun to walk through an entirely 18th century town wearing 18th century clothes. A period rush is pretty easy to obtain. Anyway, it didn't take long before spies from the British wearing civilian clothing spotted us and kept a very careful watch on our movements. We weren't doing anything remotely suspicious so

they spent a great deal of time watching us peruse the various shops for trinkets. They weren't terribly subtle about it either. In fact, they might have just carried signs that said, "Hi, we're spying on you." Somehow, I suspect a quality of spying is being able to drift into the woodwork. I think part of the problem is these guys were just bored. It didn't look like

huge numbers of CW staffers were playing in the scenarios that day and perhaps they were just so glad to find someone to keep tabs on, the sight of us provided a feeding frenzy for them.

The Danger Mounts

At one point, we paused to speak to some reenactor friends who were in town in modern clothes.

Espionage Weekend (continued)

As we talked, we noticed the “spies” were surrounding us. Unsure of what they had planned, we continued talking to our friends. They waited patiently, staring at us intently. The minutes dragged by. When we failed to panic and run away, the “spies” eventually became bored and drifted off looking for action somewhere else.

All of the intrigue was making us hungry so we headed to Chow-ing’s Tavern for lunch. Chow-ing’s is situated right next to one of the heavily guarded entrances to the British camp. I knew it was going to be interesting as we headed for the entrance to the gardens in the rear of the house. Out of the corner of my eye, I spotted several Germans headed toward us to either question us or ask if we had any spare sausages. I rounded the corner, pretending not to notice. One of them called out to me in German. I kept walking pretending not to hear him. Not buying my routine, he came up next to me and there was no way to avoid him. Unfortunately, I was hungry and not interested in some big drama. I quietly gave him the password and moved on. Tom, however, was game for whatever they could dish out and allowed himself to be taken. While he was questioned by the British, we enjoyed lunch. Eventually, Tom returned and joined us.

At this point, I think we all sensed that there was no spying to be done since we were being

watched like hawks. We fell back on our old plan of shopping.

A narrow escape

After finishing lunch, we sallied forth onto Duke of Gloucester Street, curious to have a look around the ultra expensive shop that only reenactors probably buy from: Prentis. As Tom looked over the reproduction newspapers in the rear of the store, I noticed one of the “spies” next to him pretending to look at the same thing. I was getting a little bored and decided to get this guy to do something. I called to Tom that I wished somebody would reproduce Rivington’s Royal Gazette loyalist newspaper like the ones we had seen at Monmouth a couple of years ago. OK, not very subtle on my part to say the least.

Well, that did it. The guy’s extraordinary undercover work had paid off: without “realizing” it, we had accidentally given away that we were reenactors and therefore up to no good. He headed toward the front door like a shot. I followed him to the porch where he woodenly sat down on a bench and hurriedly removed one of his

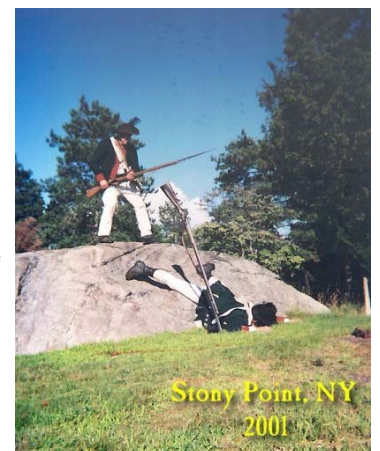
half gaiters while apparently gazing at one of his cohorts nearby. *Oh, my God!* He’s tumbled our game (although what our game was, I’m not sure). It was amazingly obvious that this was his “signal” and I almost leaned over and whispered to him, “Dude, have you ever considered being a wee bit less obvious?” I choose instead to wait and watch the fun. Sure enough, a patrol of dragoons almost immediately began to gather near the front of the shop.

Now this was actually kind of exciting! We were trapped in the store with no place to go. If we leave, they have us. Luckily, Mr. Woolsey quickly scouted out the door to the backyard and hurried us out of the building and down a side street. I wonder how long the “spy” sat on the porch wondering why we weren’t coming out and how he felt when he eventually realized three loyalist scum, a camp follower and a four-year old girl had totally given him and his friends the slip.

But we weren’t out of trouble yet. We hurried undetected along the side streets, heading for the safety of Christiana Campbell’s, just in

Head of Elk, Aug 14-15: Please consider coming! We are trying to see if we can augment the existing redoubt using the skills we picked up from the Stony Point experience. The event organizer seemed very interested when it was purposed. Stay tuned.

King’s Colors: King’s Colors for the LAR have been ordered. They should arrive around the time of the Head of Elk event. Though there are no plans to carry them in the field, they will be excellent to have for small events when there is no British flag in the crown camp.



Espionage Weekend (continued)



A bold new uniform!

The LAR now has one of the snappiest uniforms in the Provincial Corps. Vincent wore his new musician's uniform at Stony Point and made quite an impression. Tom's tailoring skills have truly paid off.



Fascine Building at Stony Point

Here's a close-up of Adam's fascine defense works. We're thinking these are going to last a long time!

case they came looking for us. As we neared our destination, we noticed a dragoon patrol ahead of us headed directly for the tavern. Did they know our meeting point? Had we been spotted there and we didn't even know it? Were they better than we gave them credit for? After a few minutes, we had our answer. They passed the tavern and paused on a lawn several hundred feet away. We went for broke and headed for the tavern steps. If they noticed us, they didn't seem to care. After a few minutes, they moved back into town, without a glance at the insurgents a block away from them.

Thus ended our espionage adventures for the day. We relaxed on the porch and compared notes. To save time, we took the shuttle bus back to the visitor center. We got quite a few looks on the bus and suddenly had a better understanding of how the Amish must feel when they're out in public.

Final Thoughts

The espionage experiment didn't quite resemble a real spy mission. Tom gathered the most critical information, managed to evade questioning, and was never even followed aggressively. On the other hand, we wandered the shops doing nothing remotely out of the ordinary and nearly tripped over the "spies" as they amateurishly tested out their spying skills. I don't think it would have happened that way! In the first place, real undercover guys observing that they were being that closely watched would definitely NOT start doing anything suspicious. They would get out of town and re-think their plans.

Actually, I think we did provide something

very useful to the event and the "spies" – we completely wasted their time. When the "spies" went after us, they didn't get to bust something big that was going down, there was no chase, they got no slap on the back in camp for a job well done, no nothing – just one big dead end for all their efforts with us. THAT defines 99% of spying activities.

Please *don't* take my sarcasm as a dismissal of our espionage weekend – far from it. I think everyone in the unit should try this next year. In fact, more numbers would really make it interesting. Some could be actively spying, others could just be hanging out. That would really frustrate them!

The espionage weekend really makes you look at the war and soldiering differently. Guys in the real LAR did this sort of thing, especially before the regiment was commissioned. I now have a better understanding and appreciation of what they went through.

