



This is NewsLetter Issue No. Four ~ For the year 2021

The Sinks Of Human Life

In the United States today there are many veterans of the recent Middle East wars who are missing limbs as a result of their encounters with IEDs (*i.e.* improvised explosive devices). There are so many veterans who have had one or more of their arms and legs replaced by prosthetic devices. One might be tempted to think that the recent wars have been more hazardous than prior wars because there seems to be so many more injured vets nowadays as compared to past periods. The fact of the matter is that recent wars haven't necessarily resulted in more injured veterans; but rather, injuries are treated more successfully than before. In wars from the dawn of time to World War II, if you were injured on the battlefield you probably didn't leave that battlefield ~ or you died of an infectious disease soon after you left.

During the American Revolutionary War, more men died of infection than fatal gunshots. According to John Adams, as quoted in Commager and Morris' book, *The Spirit of 'Seventy-Six*: "Disease has destroyed ten men for us where the sword of the enemy has killed one." Benjamin Rush also noted that: "...hospitals are the sinks of human life in an army. They robbed the United States of more citizens than the sword."

The recent coronavirus pandemic was very devastating and spread swiftly, especially at the

beginning when its pathology was not fully understood. But during the Revolutionary War viruses rampaged through the Continental Army with similar aggressiveness. Again, in John Adams' words "Smallpox [was] *ten times more terrible than Britons, Canadians and Indians together.*" Dr. Lewis Beebe participated in General Benedict Arnold's 1776 expedition against Canada. His journal included many entries referring to smallpox. He noted on 26 May that he had witnessed "*large barns filled with men in the very height of the small pox and not the least thing to make them comfortable...*" On the following Sunday he noted that General Thomas, who had recently returned from Quebec, died from smallpox. On the 7th of June Dr. Beebe noted that "*Last evening one died of the small pox...*" and his next entry of the 10th stated that "*This day died two in Colo. Pattersons regiment with the small pox.*" On Wednesday, the 26th of June, Dr. Beebe wrote: "*The regiment is in a most deplorable situation, between 4 and 500 now in the height of the small pox. Death is now become a daily visitant in the camps, but as little regarded as the singing of birds...*"

Dr. Jonathan Potts wrote from Fort George on 10 August 1776 to fellow Dr. John Morgan. He noted "*The distressed situation of the sick here is*

not to be described: without clothing, without bedding or a shelter sufficient to screen them from the weather. I am sure your known humanity will be affected when I tell you we have at present upwards of one thousand sick crowded into sheds and laboring under the various and cruel disorders of dysenteries, bilious putrid fevers and the effects of a confluent smallpox..."

Dysentery is the name by which diarrhea was known during the War. In the 1770s there was no Pepto Bismol or Imodium. Suffering from dysentery, a man might dehydrate to the point of dying. Dysentery was often brought on by drinking water because it was usually the breeding ground for bacteria.

Bilious putrid fevers referred to typhoid bred in the unsanitary conditions of army life.

The name *confluent smallpox* was a rather virulent form of the disease. Instead of scattered pustular scabs or 'poxes', in confluent smallpox, the scabs spread quickly and merge into large areas or sheets of rash. George Washington was an advocate of inoculation after seeing his wife, Martha survive the disease after being inoculated. He insisted that his troops be inoculated and the number of cases were drastically reduced.

In addition to the diseases already mentioned, our Patriot ancestors were also subject to yellow fever, malaria, diphtheria, influenza, scarlet fever and impetigo. A disease nowadays associated only with infants and young children, impetigo was a common ailment of troops who spent a great deal of time in close contact. Impetigo was commonly called 'the itch' because that is primarily how it manifested itself. The itch was a superficial infection caused by either the staphylococcal or streptococcal bacteria. It usually started between the fingers and toes and spread throughout the body.

All of the various diseases that plagued the armies of the American Revolutionary War were devastating and incurable, but the intensity of their symptoms could be lessened to some degree. Doctors who accompanied the army were knowledgeable in the efficacy of herbal plants and minerals. The apothecaries maintained by those doctors consisted of dried leaves, seeds and roots of the plants and chunks of rock comprised or containing the minerals.

In order to utilize the herbs and minerals, the doctor employed a two-part device called a mortar and pestle. Pictured here is a mortar and pestle dating to the 1600s. The base or bowl shaped part is the mortar and the club shaped object is the pestle. The doctor would place an amount of the material to be ground up into the bowl of the mortar. The pestle would then be used to repeatedly pound against that material until it was thoroughly pulverized.



The material that had been ground into a fine powder with the mortar and pestle would then be mixed (or infused) with some sort of liquid, such as alcohol. The 'infusion' would be heated and brought to a boil. When finished boiling, the resulting 'essential oil' would be collected in a small vial or tube to be administered to the ill soldier. Large quantities of an essential oil might be stored in a closely stoppered glass bottle for future use.

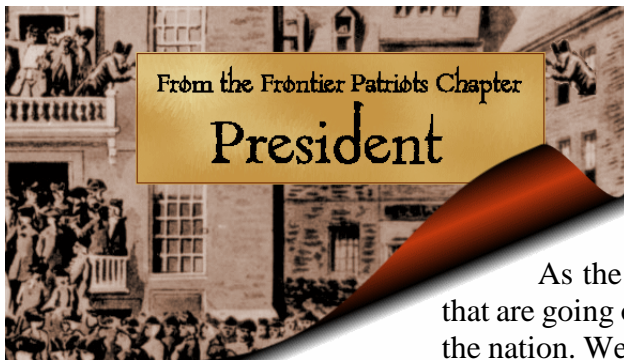
The types of herbs and other medicinal plants used by army doctors include Prickly Ash bark which was used to relieve toothache and rheumatism. The dried root of Indian Poke alleviated circulatory problems and was used as a diuretic. Bitter Apple and the root of Ipecacuanha were used to induce vomiting. Deadly Nightshade or Belladonna helped to stop muscle spasms. The leaves of the Wintergreen shrub was mixed with

pigs lard and used as a salve to relieve muscular and joint aches and pains. The gum of the Tragacanth shrub was used to treat burns.

Minerals used in apothecary included zinc carbonate which, when mixed with iron rust and lard would result in a salve that was soothing to burns and rashes. Today we call the concoction, calamine lotion and coat poison ivy rashes with it. Antimony is a silver-white metal that would be ground up and mixed with alcohol to be swallowed by a soldier who had eaten something causing him digestive stress. It was a powerful emetic, causing the soldier to vomit up the offending material. The only problem with antimony is that it, itself, is a poison similar to arsenic. Verdigris was the product of exposing copper to vinegar to induce the formation of a green patina on the metal. That

patina was scraped off and mixed with oil or lard to treat consumption (*i.e.* tuberculosis). Although the treatment of consumption with verdigris was seldom successful, it apparently gave relief to sore eyes. It might be noted that not all of the medicines cooked up by a doctor tasted foul and disgusting. Honey was often used as the vehicle for the ground up minerals to be ingested. It made the medicine easier to swallow and masked the typically bitter taste.

The word 'sink' has many meanings. One of those meanings is *becoming increasingly and dangerously ill and approaching death*. Perhaps Benjamin Rush felt that hospitals were primarily the places where soldiers met their deaths ~ if they had not already done so by a sword or musket.



The next meeting of the
Frontier Patriots Chapter
of the Sons of the American Revolution
will be held at The Dream restaurant
at 1500 Allegheny St., Hollidaysburg
on Saturday, 11 December 2021
starting at 12 Noon.

As the year 2021 comes to a finish, there are so many things that are going on in the United States, which are threatening to destroy the nation. We have a flood of South Americans (and others) crossing our southern border and entering the U.S. seeking a better life but without following legal policies. Rather than dealing with that surge of 'illegal aliens' into our presumed sovereign nation, our elected representatives at Washington, DC seem to be more concerned that some of us call them 'illegal aliens' (despite the fact that that name is factually descriptive rather than subjectively pejorative). The closing of schools during 2020 forced parents to become participants in their children's educations. Possibly for the first time in their lives, those parents could see what their children were being taught in school. And in some cases, the parents did not like what they saw. Instead of 'reading, writing and arithmetic', they found 'woke' indoctrination, critical race theory, sex education and the revelation that arithmetic is 'racist.' When those parents exercised their right to free speech by attending school board meetings and expressing their concerns, the current government officials declared them to be 'domestic terrorists'. And despite all the efforts expended from the 1960s to the present day to end racial discrimination and de-segregate the citizens of this nation, certain factions of our society have made concerted efforts to incite disagreement and discord between the races. While proclaiming everything they disagree with as being 'racist', the 'woke' people are proving that they are the true racists themselves.

A student of American Revolutionary War history might recall that the tune *The World Turned Upside Down* was played when the British surrendered at Yorktown. It all makes one wonder if the United States of America ~ so close to celebrating 250 years as a nation ~ will be able to reach that milestone intact.

I, for one, am an eternal optimist. I might get perturbed at particular things at times, but in general I am hopeful that things will work out for the best and that the people trying to destroy our country will be ousted from positions of power. It is important that we, as Compatriot Members of the Sons of the American Revolution, do all we can to promote the ideals of the SAR.

For those of you have not read them recently, here are the ‘Objects’ of the Sons of the American Revolution.

The objects of this Society are declared to be patriotic, historical, and educational, and shall include those intended or designed to perpetuate the memory of those patriots who, by their services or sacrifices during the war of the American Revolution, achieved the independence of the American people; to unite and promote fellowship among their descendants; to inspire them and the community-at-large with a more profound reverence for the principles of the government founded by our forefathers; to encourage historical research in relation to the American Revolution; to acquire and preserve the records of the individual services of the patriots of the war, as well as documents, relics, and landmarks; to mark the scenes of the Revolution by appropriate memorials; to celebrate the anniversaries of the prominent events of the war and of the Revolutionary period; to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom and to carry out the purposes expressed in the preamble of the Constitution of our country and the injunctions of Washington in his farewell address to the American people.

Did you all notice the four words *to foster true patriotism* near the end of the paragraph? The verb, ‘to foster’ means (according to the Oxford English Dictionary) *To encourage, cherish, harbor fondly, to promote the development of, to be favourable or conducive to.* Every year, when you and I pay our annual membership dues, we are, in effect, reaffirming our promise to uphold the objects of the SAR. Therefore we must attempt to ‘foster’ true Patriotism whenever, wherever and however we can ~ and that includes not succumbing to the craziness engulfing the nation.



PASSAR's BOM Meeting To Be Hosted

Mark your calendar for the PASSAR Board of Management meeting to be hosted by the Frontier Patriots Chapter on November 4-5, 2022.

At the last Quarterly meeting, discussion of the future event resulted in the decision to hold the meeting at Bedford for a bit of variety. The Friday evening reception will possibly be held at the Fort Bedford Museum. And the Ladies Program for Saturday morning might be a tour of the National Museum of the Coverlet. Please keep this in mind and plan to attend.



ANNUAL DUES

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ave you have already paid your membership dues for the year 2022? If you have not, please do so before the end of November 2021.

As was noted a year ago, instead of a deadline at the end of December, your yearly membership dues must be paid by the 30th of November. Failure to pay them by that date will result in your being dropped from the membership rolls ~ and to be reinstated will cost an additional \$10. If you think \$64 is a lot, won't \$74 be worse?

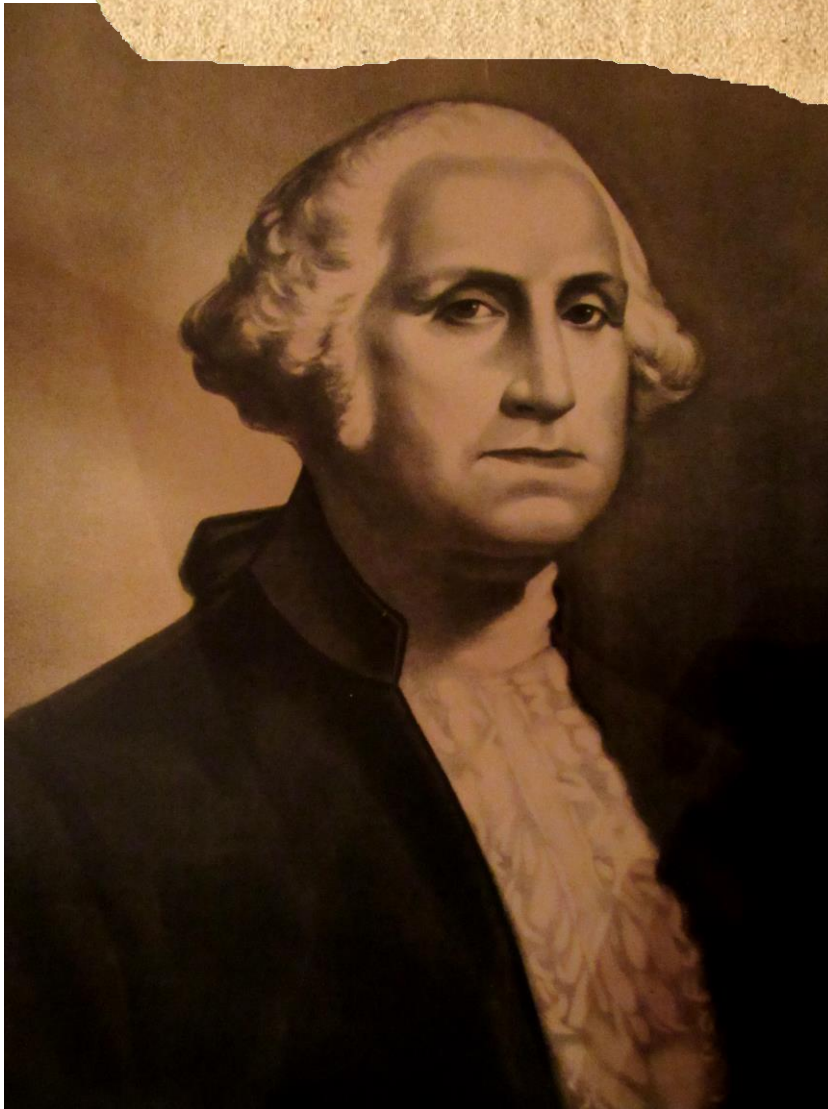


If you wish to pay by credit card online, there is a link on the PASSAR website at <http://www.passar.org>.

Please make every effort to pay your membership dues on time.



George Washington



One of my hobbies is collecting books and artwork relating to George Washington. The thirty-two individual books and the three multi-volume sets in my collection include J. Frost's 1860 *Pictorial Life of George Washington*, the 39-volume set of *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799* published in 1931 and the 3-volume set of the *History of the George Washington Bicentennial Celebration* published in 1932.

The eleven Giclée prints that I have collected include the one shown here that is one of the few in which he is facing toward the right. Most of his portraits were based on the Gilbert Stuart portrait that was found in most public schools.

Frontier Patriots Chapter website: <https://frontierpatriots.com>

For those of you that receive this newsletter by US mail, if you have an email address, we would appreciate you informing us of it to use for future newsletters. Printing and mailing these newsletters is expensive. Please send to our Secretary Larry Smith at schmitt@motherbedford.com