



COLORADO RIVER RED, WHITE & BLUE NEWSLETTER

Volume 5, Number 3

Welcome to this issue of your Colorado River Chapter, AZSSAR newsletter. The Colorado River, Red, White & Blue is an official publication of the Colorado River Chapter, AZSSAR.

We hope you enjoy this Newsletter and the updates and information it provides.

Our meeting location in Lake Havasu has been the Mohave County Library in the K-Mart Plaza at 1770 North McCulloch Blvd, Lake Havasu City. We meet

December 2014

in the Conference Room just off the Main Library area.

Election of 2015 Officers

At our November 8th the slate of nominated Chapter Officers for 2015 were presented as follows:

President - Donald Reighard

Vice-President - Ray Lackey

Treasurer - Ray Lackey

Secretary – Mike Boop

Registrar/Genealogist - Jimmie Bodenhamer

Chaplain – No nomination

Sergeant-At-Arms – Mike Boop

The above candidates were elected and will serve as your 2015 officers. These new Chapter Officers will be installed at our December meeting in Kingman.

Chapter Meetings

**Next Chapter Meeting December 13th
Mohave Community College
Kingman**

Colorado River Chapter rotates meetings between Kingman and Lake Havasu in hopes that one location will be more appealing to you than the other..

Our meeting location in Kingman has been the Mohave County Community College, 1971 Jaegeron Ave, Kingman, which is about 4-5 miles north of I-40. The meeting room is in the Library Building in a really nice conference room across from the Library itself. A great place to talk about your Patriot Ancestor's contribution to our Freedom and Chapter future plans.

New Members

The Chapter welcomes two new members:

John Duane Large of Fort Mohave

John's Patriot ancestor is Joseph Large who served as a Private in the North Carolina Militia. Joseph was from Virginia and enlisted in a Cavalry Company commanded by Captain Kinsey. He enlisted for ten months serving near Camden, South Carolina where he assisted in capture of Tories. He also served near Ninety-Six, and the Town of Santee on Santee River. Joseph's company later joined the main army and he spent much of his time guarding British prisoners. Joseph received a pension and died in 1842 while living in Jefferson County, Tennessee. John is descended through Joseph's son William Large.

Paul Mauser of Kingman

Paul's Patriot ancestor is Lovell Bryan of Hanover Parish, King George County, Virginia. Lovell provided Patriotic Service by furnishing supplies and horses to Virginia Militia. Lovell died in 1796 and is buried in King George County, Virginia. Paul is descended through Lovell's daughter Sarah Bryan.

We welcome both of our newest members!

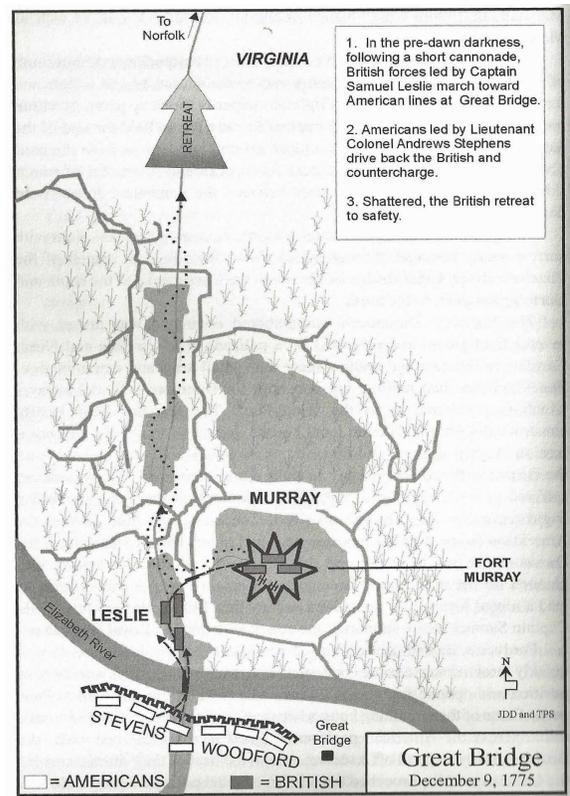
Campaigns and Battles of the American Revolution (1775-1783)

Our series on Battles of the American Revolution continues with this issue's installment – Battle of Great Bridge (1st British Southern Expedition). I hope you find it interesting and informative!

Battle of Great Bridge (1st British Southern Expedition)

December 9, 1775

The Battle of Great Bridge took place in the Southern Colonies, in Chesapeake, Virginia area (10 miles south of Norfolk, VA). The weather conditions were cold and rainy when this early morning battle took place, which lasted only about 30 minutes.



The Tidewater Virginia area where this battle took place is a swampy coastal plane with narrow sandy passages through which flows the southern branch of the Elizabeth River. Great Bridge then lies between the Chesapeake to the south and Norfolk to the north.

As the Patriot rebellion gathered strength throughout the colonies, Virginia's Royal Governor John Murray (also known as Lord Dunmore) fled from the capital at Williamsburg seeking safety of the British Navy at Norfolk, VA.

Dunmore was an unpopular ruler in Virginia, so he had two British Grenadier Companies providing him protection while in Norfolk. Dunmore, fearing for his life, also raised an additional two companies of Loyalists, including the "Royal Ethiopians", an outfit composed of runaway slaves who served the Crown in return for their freedom.

At this point the early war efforts in the Northern Colonies were not going well for the British and Dunmore hoped he could crush the rebellion in Virginia and thus win favor with King George III.

To further this objective Dunmore imposed martial law, erected entrenchment around Norfolk, and constructed Fort Murray, a small log palisade at Great Bridge in an attempt to maintain control of the causeway connecting Norfolk with the Virginia mainland.

This strategic thoroughfare and trade route linked eastern Virginia with North Carolina. This swampy terrain made it almost impossible to flank his position in Norfolk, and it appeared that only a headlong attack by rebel soldiers could dislodge him from Norfolk.

The Americans realized that with Lord Dunmore in isolation in Norfolk, his control of the port city and its entrance at Great Bridge depended upon Fort Murray, which posed a threat to the Virginians in the area.

It was also known that while many of the local citizens of Norfolk were sympathetic to the British, many more Virginians supported the Patriot campaign for independence.

In mid Nov 1775, two Virginia regiments of Militia Infantry under the command of Patriot Colonel Woodford prepared to engage Dunmore and drive him and his soldiers away. In addition, Patriot

Colonel Howe and 150 men from North Carolina joined with Woodford's men in their quest to defeat Dunmore.

This influx on North Carolinians brought the total Militiamen to 700. As a side note, this composite Patriot force included young John Marshall the future Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court and his father.

In late Nov 1775, Colonel Woodford ordered the Patriots to build entrenchments south of Fort Murray to block the other end of the causeway and isolate and threaten Dunmore's army.

The Virginians expertly threw up parapets within musket range of the fort. Once completed, ninety marksmen were left to hold the end of the narrow causeway while the rest camped and rested several hundred yards in the rear.

Over the next several weeks shots were exchanged between the opposing enemies and a handful of minor skirmishes occurred as well as the destruction of several homes in between the combatant forces.

While Dunmore's forces in Fort Murray were outnumbered by Patriot Militia, they were armed with several artillery field pieces and of course protected by the palisade at Fort Murray while the Virginia and North Carolina Militiamen on the other hand had nothing more than small and great determination.

Aside from all this, the Virginians had nothing but contempt for Dunmore's "Fort Murray" which they referred to as the "Hog Pen". The fort had been hastily constructed with planks taken from local houses, logs, and mud and was not a bastion of great strength should an attack occur.

The British continued to suffer due to weather conditions of rain and cold which made Fort Murray their damp "fortress". At the same time however, Americans were suffering as well, being exposed to the wintry weather in their encampments which made the standoff a frigid nightmare for both sides.

Dunmore was concerned that time favored the Americans. Since he did not know their actual troop

strength; he made the decision to attack and drive away the Patriot Militia. Dunmore planned an assault on the American positions for the morning of 9 Dec 1775. British Captain Fordyce was ordered to lead a mixed force of 60 Grenadiers and another 140 regular Infantry while at the same time British Captain Leslie supported the attack with his 230 Royal Ethiopians.

The battle began when British Grenadiers attacked against the Patriot Militia positions but were quickly thrown back because of some confusion within the British ranks. However, during Grenadiers confusion, British field pieces were moved into position and began to fire on the Patriot Militia, who had moved to their assigned posts after the British initial assault. The British artillery hit some of the remaining houses between the British and American lines which caught fire causing smoke to roll across the American positions.

Aligned in rows six men wide, the British Infantry now stepped off a second time to the beat of their drums, and crossed the causeway, approaching the reinforced rebel positions with parade-like precision. However, at the same time the bulk of the British soldiers slated for the attack did not advance but instead waited in reserve near Fort Murray while the Grenadiers and Light Infantry marched on.

There is some evidence that British Captain Fordyce believed the Americans light field works had been abandoned because no fire was coming from them. But, in reality, Patriot Militia had been given orders to hold fire until the enemy tramped within point blank range. Fordyce was even heard to yell, "The day is our own!" as he neared the entrenchments.

When the Americans were given the order to fire, the Colonial Militia unleashed several disciplined volleys into the Grenadiers. The British attack faltered as shattered bodies of British soldiers collapsed upon one another. Fordyce's body riddled with musket balls fell a few yards from the Patriot lines. The remaining British survivors stumbled back across the causeway in shock.

Once British artillery ceased firing, the American Militia counterattacked, led by Lieutenant Colonel Stevens, the 100 man "Culpeper Minuteman" forced

the British between the causeway and Fort Murray to fall back into a shrinking enclave, capturing the cannons left behind in the process. These Virginians fought the British "Indian Style" firing individually as they maneuvered closer to the Grenadiers. These unconventional tactics worked well against the British, who were unaccustomed and ill-prepared for such unorthodox warfare. The carnage was later accurately described as a slaughter, as the Virginians picked off their trapped and hapless enemy.

Well aware of the disparity between British and American forces, the Virginians retreated to their own defensive works instead of continuing their assault into Fort Murray. Lord Dunmore finally sent out a flag of truce to recover the wounded British from the battle field. The day ended as it began, with both sides holding the same positions, however that evening Lord Dunmore ordered his troops to abandon Fort Murray and retreat towards Norfolk. Casualties were: British 12 killed, 90 wounded. The Americans had only one wounded soldier.

This small and largely forgotten battle was disastrous for the British as Lord Dunmore's slim popularity waned after his embarrassing defeat at Great Bridge. During the British retreat to Norfolk, the local populace, bolstered by his humiliation, began shooting at the retreating British soldiers.

Within a few weeks of this British loss Dunmore was forced to seek refuge offshore on British ships anchored in Norfolk. An after effect of the battle was that in retaliation for the American victory, on 1 Jan 1776 British ships shelled Norfolk; their bombardment burned about two-thirds of the town and destroyed nearly 800 structures. After the bombardment British ships retreated from Virginia and Dunmore escaped to England.

The overall importance of the Battle of Great Bridge to the revolution was that this was the first battle fought in the South, and was also a tremendous morale-boosting victory for the Patriots and their ideals of liberty.

Sources: A Guide to the Battles of the American Revolution by Savas and Dameron, and Wikipedia.org.

NEXT: Battle of Quebec (Canada Campaign),
December 31st 1775.

Member Birthdays

December 2014

Paul Mauser – 27th

January 2015

Craig Vallon – 9th

Current Officers

Donald Reighard – President – (928) 680-4087

Ray Lackey – Vice President – (928) 754-1941

Mike Boop – Secretary – (928) 753-7968

Ray Lackey - Treasurer – (928) 754-1941

Jimmie Bodenhamer – Registrar/Genealogist – (928)
692-6636

Michael Boop – Sergeant at Arms – (928) 753-7968

Membership

If you need assistance with a membership issue, or know someone interested in joining the NSSAR, please provide me the contact information and I will work the issue for you.

Jimmie Bodenhamer, Registrar/Genealogist,
Colorado River Chapter AZSSAR, 5805 N Cedar
Ridge Lane, Kingman, AZ 86409-9345,
jimmieb@frontiernet.net, (928) 692-6636.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

December 1st
Chapter Newsletter Mailed

December 13th
Chapter Meeting
Installation of 2015 Officers
Mohave Community College
Kingman

December 16th
Hanukkah Begins

December 21st
Winter Begins

December 24th
Christmas Eve
Hanukkah Ends

December 25th
Christmas

December 31st
New Years Eve

January 1st
New Years

January 10th
Chapter Meeting
Mohave County Library
Lake Havasu City

January 19th
Martin Luther King Birthday

February 1st
Chapter Newsletter Mailed

February 14th
Chapter Meeting

Mohave Community College
Kingman



Newsletter Editor

Hope you enjoyed this newsletter and I look forward to any comments or suggestion. Jimmie Bodenhamer, Editor, jimmieb@frontiernet.net.

Need another copy of this Newsletter? It is on our AZSSAR website link.