Welcome to this issue of your Colorado River Chapter, Red, White and Blue Newsletter. This Newsletter is an official publication of the Colorado River Chapter, AZSSAR.

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

Chapter Meetings

Next Chapter Meeting September 9th
Mohave County Library
Lake Havasu City

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 is Calico’s Restaurant, 4318 W Beale Street, in downtown Kingman.

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

In Memoriam
James Thomas McConnell

James and his wife Ora Lorene

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of James Thomas McConnell, Colorado River Chapter member since 2001, of Vancouver, WA.

James was born in Minco, OK, 4 Mar 1926 and passed away 20 Feb 2017. He joined the U.S. Merchant Marines in Oct 1943 and served in the Pacific, Atlantic and Mediterranean Middle East war zones during WWII. After a two-year break to become a farmer in OK, James returned to the Merchant Marines where he served until his retirement as Chief Engineer 1 Dec 1985. James also
served in the Vietnam war zone and was awarded a Vietnam Service Bar.

James’s Patriot ancestor, Manuel McConnell, enlisted in May, 1780 Abbeville, South Carolina as a Private in the Continental Line under Lieutenant Lawrence and Colonel Pickens. Fall 1780 Manuel served under Captain’s McCall, Liddell and Colonel’s Washington and Lee and was at battles of Hammond’s Store, Cowpens, and Siege of Ninety-Six. His final service was in May 1782 where he served under Captain Hurd and Colonel Jackson of Georgia. After the war, Manuel moved to Morrisville TN, where he lived until his death 9 Sept 1842.

2017 JROTC Awards

The 2017 Air Force JROTC Awards Ceremony at Mohave High School, Bullhead City was held on 12 April. Colorado River Chapter President Don Reighard made the presentation for our chapter!

AFJROTC Color Guard presentation of the colors

Don Reighard makes the presentation to this year’s recipient Cadet Robert Reed

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 Bennington (Saratoga Campaign). I hope you find it interesting and informative!

Battle of Bennington (Saratoga Campaign)

6-16 August 1777

The weather was hot and humid, overcast with intermittent rain. The area where fighting occurred was ten miles southwest of Bennington, VT (now Walloomsac, NY).
British fortifications were erected atop the dominant high ground just east of the village of Walloomsac. Another smaller British earthwork was established at the road entrance of the village where it crosses the Hoosick River. As American soldiers encircled the defending British soldiers, the Hoosick River restricted Baum’s safe movement and trapped his men within their positions.

From a British perspective, Major General Burgoyne and his army, having secured key facilities and terrain surrounding Lake Champlain and outposts along the northern Hudson River Valley, found themselves with a myriad of problems with logistics and communications.

They were having problems of procuring adequate resources in this sparsely inhabited forest, and so suffered serious shortages of food and other supplies. Moreover, American forces, while retreating southward from Lake Champlain, had procured most of the resources they needed along the way leaving little for the British.

These shortages caused Burgoyne on 20 Jun 1777 to issue a desperate proclamation to the few locals in the region that if they did not assist his army he would authorize his Indian allies to wreak havoc throughout the valley. At the same time, British raiding parties were organized to sweep through the surrounding countryside in pursuit of subsistence. Burgoyne’s logistical crisis threatened to turn his campaign into an epic failure.

German Major General Riedesel, dispatched Colonel Baum with a large raiding party of 800 soldiers from the Brunswick Dragoons (375 Hessian Dragoons, 50 British Infantry, and a mixed force of 375 Indians, Tories and Canadians). The choice of Baum was odd since he did not speak a word of English and it seemed odd that he could have rallied the English-speaking region for support.

Baum’s raiding mission began on 9 Aug 1777, as his men moved east through the fertile farming communities of Fort Miller, Batten Kill and into Cambridge four day later. His plans had been to link up with Burgoyne farther south near Albany, NY. During these raids the Indians with Baum’s column freely took civilian life and destroyed and confiscated the property of the region’s inhabitants.

Once in Cambridge, Baum learned that 400 Militiaman were camped in the village of Bennington and he made the decision to move against them at 9:00 a.m. on the morning of 14 Aug. As he made his move a brief skirmish broke out between Baum’s advance party and men from Colonel Stark’s Colonial Militia at Sancoick Mill (also known as San, Saint, and Van Schaick’s Mill) about eight miles west of Bennington, where the Militia had been camped. Patriot forces retreated east across the Walloomsac River heading towards Bennington, where they made camp for the evening.

Baum’s initial contact with American Militia convinced him that the rebel force was much larger than he had originally believed, and this prompted him to send a messenger back to Burgoyne requesting reinforcements.

But in the meantime, Baum moved his forces into a position to secure fording sites on the Walloomsac River, where he hastily set up fortifications on either side of the waterway and then had his men retire for the evening.

During the night, Burgoyne learned of Baum’s request for reinforcements and early next morning dispatched Lieutenant Colonel Breymann with 650 men.

While a heavy summer rain delayed a second engagement with the Americans on 15 Aug, it also delayed the arrival of Breymann’s reinforcements.

For the Americans, the lead up to this battle had been different! As had been planned, American Major General Stark and his men had regrouped in Manchester, VT around 30 Jul 1777, following their battle with the British at Hubbardton, VT. Colonel Warner’s Green Mountain Boys also reorganized there, allowing the Militia to coalesce into a viable fighting force.

Major General Schuyler who was commander of the Northern Department of the Continental Army, made the decision to dispatch making the dispatched Major
General Lincoln to join with Stark’s men and lead them from Manchester back to the main army in Stillwater, NY. The Patriot leaders at Manchester had already sent a 400-man unit to Bennington to keep an eye on hostile Indians reportedly operating in that area.

When these men learned that Baum’s raiding party was threatening the region, they decided to move closer to Bennington, but heavy rain delayed their arrival until 16 Aug. When they finally arrived, they faced the British and their hastily prepared defensive positions along the banks of the Walloomsac River. Stark’s men took up a position about one and one-half miles east of Baum’s with a loop of the river dividing the opponents.

General Stark decided to divide his column into three units for a difficult double envelopment to the British. The first column under Colonel Nichols with about 250 men was tasked with moving around the British left flank into Baum’s rear against what would be called the “Dragoon Redoubt”. The second column of the pincer with about 300 men under Colonel Herrick, would have to cross the river twice to get into position behind or west of the British defensive works.

The third column with about 300 men was ordered to launch a more straightforward assault against the “Tory Redoubt”. This column was divided into two arms, one under Colonel Hobart and the other under Colonel Stickney. Their movement was designed as a smaller version of the larger plan, and once the men were in position, Stark planned to bolster the movement around the right with another 300 men. He put this plan into action early on the afternoon of 16 Aug 1777, and the stage was now set for the Battle of Bennington.

Somehow as the fighting began, Stark’s nearly impossible plan was executed flawlessly, assisted along the way by Baum’s incompetence. Although Baum had seen the Patriots leave their camp, he thought they were retreating.

Baum spotted the Americans moving toward his rear and he mistakenly believed they were Tory allies. When the attack began at 3:00 p.m., the Hessian dragoons stood their ground and many were killed and wounded while most of the Tories, Canadians, and Indians put up a short resistance before fleeing.

As the battle raged, Stark moved out of this camp with the balance of his men, somewhere around 1,200 men, down to Bennington Road. Within two hours the Hessians, with the fortification, had used up their ammunition and their only chance for re-supply ended when an ammunition wagon exploded. The Brunswick Germans tried to cut their way out, but when Colonel Baum fell mortally wounded with a shot to the stomach, the survivors surrendered.

British Colonel Breymann finally arrived with reinforcements from Burgoyne’s army shortly after the battle had ended. Added to their late arrival, his men were exhausted from their arduous, lengthy march, much of it conducted in the heavy rain.

Stark’s men were also tired and scattered, but Stark decided to stand his ground and fight. At one point the Patriot’s tried to use captured British field pieces against the enemy, but found to his dismay that his men did not know how to operate them.

The second part of this battle was much more confused than the earlier action, and at one point it looked as though the German reinforcements would swamp the American right flank and defeat Stark’s men. Over time the battle seemed to settle down to a heavy exchange of small arms fire, but by dusk Breymann’s men were running low on ammunition.

A British attempt to ask for terms for surrender was not understood by the Militia on the field when Breymann ordered a retreat as the battle turned into a confused rout. The badly wounded British commander bravely led a rear-guard action that saved much of his column from capture. But like Baum, Breymann was also mortally wounded.

This largely forgotten American victory was a resounding Patriot success that, with hindsight, echoes today as the beginning of the turning of the war in America’s favor.

Indians and Tories began deserting the British ranks, making General Burgoyne’s already difficult 1777
The American victory in the Battle of Bennington, coming as it did on the heels of the Battle of Fort Stanwix, sent British hopes for a successful campaign in 1777 spiraling out of control.

Casualties; British: (Hessian and Allies): 207 killed and wounded, 700 captured. American: figures are widely disputed, some sources suggest 30 killed and 40 wounded, but ratio of wounded-to-killed is suspect. Stark reported 14 killed and 42 wounded.

Source: A Guide to the Battles of the American Revolution by Savas and Dameron.

NEXT: Battle of Brandywine (Philadelphia Campaign), 11 Sep 1777.

**Bennington Battle Monument**

Bennington Battle Monument park is a Vermont State Historic Site, and is located at 15 Monument Circle, Bennington, Vermont. This monument was dedicated in 1891 and stands 306’ high and is the tallest structure in Vermont.
Map showing location of battlefield
If traveling to Vermont, plan to check it out!

Chapter Member Birthdays

**June 2017**
Samuel Andress – 28th

**July 2017**
None

Calendar of Upcoming Events

**June 1st**
Chapter Newsletter Mailed

June 14th
Flag Day
Fly Your Flag!

June 18th
Father’s Day

July 4th
Independence Day
Fly Your Flag! Remember your Patriot!

August 1st
Chapter Newsletter Mailed

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.

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Newsletter Editor

Hope you enjoyed this newsletter and I look forward to any comments or suggestions. Jimmie Bodenhamer, Editor, jimmieb@frontiernet.net. Need another copy of this Newsletter? It is on our AZ SAR website link.