Official Newsletter of the Michigan Company of Military Historians & Collectors

August 8, 2016

"A British Admiral wirelessed Churchill. 'The ***Bismarck*** *is a wreck. The crew has left her but she won't sink. And I've got just enough oil in my ship to get home.' Churchill replied, "You stay there until the* ***Bismarck*** *is on the bottom; and we'll send out and tow you in.'"* General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower, The Military Churchill, 1970.

"Strike an enemy once and for all. Let him cease to exist as a tribe or he'll live to fly at your throat again." Shaka Zulu, c. 1811

"We need to destroy not attack, not damage, not surround—I want you to destroy the Republican Guard." General Norman H. Schwarzkopf, 1992. First Gulf War

"I remind you that the road home leads through Baghdad. That's also where our next 'rendezvous with destiny' is." Major-General David Petraeus, March, 2003. Second Gulf War

"Major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed." --speaking underneath a "Mission Accomplished" banner aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln, May 1, 2003, President G.W. Bush.

Our August speaker will be Rosemary Posekany. She served in the Navy, 1981-2001, in aviation electronics. She has worked on P-3 aircraft and her last 4 years of service were with a carrier squadron. She will be speaking about her Navy career.

MEETINGS *take place the second Monday of every month at the* ***Riverfront Hotel Grand Rapids*** *270 Ann St NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504 (616) 363-9001. Socializing begins at 6:00 (1800 hrs), dinner at 7:00 (1900 hrs), business meeting 7:15 (1915 hrs), and program at 8:00 (2000 hrs).*

GENERAL STAFF OFFICERS OF THE COMPANY

Commandant - Bruce Whitman
Executive Officer - Fern O'Beshaw
Adjutant - Gregg Metternich
Judge Advocate -Jay Stone
Mess Officer - Mike Krushinsky
Sgt-at-Arms - Richard Foster
Editor Cannon Report - Kingman Davis
Editor Emeritus - Jose Amoros
Open Mess Chairman - Jay Stone
Membership - Kingman Davis

Military Notes

- **The F-35A Lightning II fifth-generation fighter aircraft was declared 'combat ready' by Gen. Hawk Carlisle, the commander of Air Combat Command, Aug 2 The $385 Billion project is the second of three variants proposed The F-35B, the VSTOL model slated for the Marines was accepted in July. The USMC didn't want it or needed it. The F-35C, the carrier version, has yet to pass qualifications. The USN also does not want or need it either. To keep the unit cost down the USAF forced it down the throat of the other services. Hawk may run for Congress.**

The editorial opinions and articles in ***The Cannon Report*** do not represent any official position of the Michigan Company of Military Historians and Collectors (MCMH&C) only the opinions of the editor. The MCMH&C is a non-partisan, non-ideological association. All members are welcome to submit material, letters, "For the Good of the Company items", etc. Direct inquiries or comments to kuziaks@me.com

Honor the Soldier-Forget the Veteran

With a few exceptions, the general population has historically revered our men and women who are and have served in the military; but when they return to civilian life and are no longer wearing a uniform they become almost invisible. When they seek benefits they were promised and entitled to they are put in a queue and told to wait their turn. When their time in service has rendered them less capable of dealing with the transition back to a non-military environment many are left in a situation that they find difficult to navigate and in some cases impossible. Never quite able to believe the validity of some statistics, I do know that there are a number of veterans in my own Michigan county that do not have a permanent residence. How large a number, I do not know. A more disturbing number is that more twenty veterans a day commit suicide (2014 VA statistic, most by self-inflicted gunshots). This is not a recent phenomenon. The treatment of veterans has been abysmal since the end of the Revolutionary War. Ambivalent feelings about soldiers and their due will remain remarkably constant for the next two centuries and beyond. Richard Severo and Lewis Milford have documented the treatment of veterans in "The **WAGES OF WAR** When America's Soldiers Came Home—From Valley Forge to Vietnam", starting from Shay's Rebellion to the book's publication date in 1989. Although the text is more than twenty-five years old, their conclusions and predictions are still true today, if not more so.

At the cessation of hostilities in 1783 many returning veterans had yet to be paid. The Congress of the United States was trying to find the funds to pay their veterans. Many were farmers who had delinquent tax obligations that had gone unpaid in their absence due to their wartime service. Many states were understanding of their situations except for Massachusetts, Connecticut and Vermont. The war debt had to be paid. The Massachusetts legislature voted in a new scheme for directly taxing citizens. The taxes were based primarily on real estate. Merchants calculated their assets in the goods they had for sale, and so were taxed comparatively little. Farmers, who earned their living from the land they worked, were taxed at a much greater rate. In short, the people who were profiting most from postwar spending were paying the least taxes; those who profited the least were taxed the most. And the commodity everyone wanted—coin—was in extremely short supply all over the state, but especially in the countryside, where it had never been all that important. Yeomen could remember when they could barter the promise of a bushel of corn or a calf to satisfy a debt. The Federalists dominated bankers and merchants of Boston demanded payment to be made in specie, money in the form of coin rather than paper, as did the government of Massachusetts for taxes.

As founder of the Massachusetts First National Bank and governor of the state, James Bowdoin, had found a number of ways for making money in the postwar period. He had accumulated an abundance of Continental securities purchased at great discount from former officers and soldiers who were near destitute and had to sell their Government paper at a fraction of their value. The public securities represented the pay the Army had clamored for, and speculators purchased them because they assumed they would eventually be worth more if the Congress, still trying to establish American credit, backed the paper with gold. But debt-ridden veterans needed hard currency immediately for their creditors. Although this was not a situation of Bowdoin's personal creation, he and his friends saw no reason why the profit motive should not be pursued. Men like Bowdoin felt strongly that investors should be properly rewarded for risk-taking and were outspokenly critical of those, like the veterans, who could not pay their debts in "real money"—coins made of silver or gold.

Tax delinquency was rampant. The state was sharply divided as to how to pay off its debts—and to maintain the way of life to which it had grown accustomed. The people of the maritime towns of eastern Massachusetts "relapsed into the voluptuousness" that stemmed from the "precarious

wealth of naval adventures." It was a wealth understood and cherished by sailors, merchants, lawyers, judges, shopkeepers, artisans, and others who lived in the growing urban settlements such as Boston and Salem. It was a wealth measured in specie by the people who saw the accumulation of currency as their way to the good life (and so did most members of the state legislature, many who speculated in Federal securities). The judges who sat in various courts in Massachusetts could not see anything wrong with this sort of speculation, especially since they were involved in it themselves. But in western Massachusetts, feelings about money and its requirements ran in quite a different direction. The value system there was based upon trust, the recognition that humans needed each other more than anything else, and that the appropriate conduct in the new republic was now of self-reliance, firmly based on hard work.

The merchants along the coast supplied the interior with manufactured items. They found that although Americans might not have cared for the king's government, they had developed a certain taste for the way the king's subjects made things. The British, losers in war, were winners in the economics of peace. The English sensed an easy, lucrative market in the new world. The British wanted no part of what passed for American paper currency. They demanded specie—not strange-looking paper whose value seemed to have endless downward mobility. And on the coast of New England American merchants who savored the good life that grew out of the postwar spending spree were determined to provide it, to keep the goods coming. New England tax collectors were as stridently insistent upon specie as were the British exporters.

As farmers in western Massachusetts saw their land confiscated for nonpayment of taxes petitions were sent to the state legislature in Boston, asking for relief, asking for time, asking for the acceptance of paper money. The petitions were ignored. Boston began to assume the intransigent mantle that had been worn by King George. The farmer-veterans felt abused both by the inexplicable myopia of urban-oriented government and by business. The justice they had fought for in the Revolution was being compromised. They had just come through a war and perceived that the winning of that war was the end of something old and oppressive and the beginning of something new and promising. Perhaps the lessons they had learned during the war could be applied to a post-Revolutionary problem. But they were not predisposed to taking up arms again; for one revolution in a lifetime was quite enough.

As the confiscations continued the jails were soon overflowing with imprisoned debtors. A system that would continue until 1833 when the Federal government banned Debtors Prisons (they are now enjoying a resurgence as local municipalities begin to outsource the collection of traffic fines resulting in the imprisonment of those failing to pay). By late summer and early autumn of 1786, farmers had come to the conclusion that the state courts in general and lawyers and judges in particular were not just the agents of their agony, but quite possibly the root cause of it. On August 29, 1786 some fifteen hundred farmers, led by Luke Day, a former Colonial Army captain, went into Northampton, Massachusetts and stopped the Court of Common Pleas—the debtor court—from meeting. If it could not meet, foreclosures could not be ordered and life might go on as before. Day's men called themselves "regulators," not insurgents or rebels. It was an effort to regulate—not destroy the court. A petition was delivered to the judges asking them to adjourn their sad and sorry business until the state legislature decided whether it could grant the farmers the relief they had sought earlier. Seventy-three towns, representing a third of all those in the state, had petitioned the legislature to authorize the state's issuance of paper money, so that ordinary people could go about their business without having to ferret out British or French coins that had been floating around the countryside from before the war. Similar actions were taken in the following weeks and the courts were stopped in a decisive and nonviolent manner, but no reform measures were passed or even considered.

Pressure continued to build over the fall, and all manner of court proceedings were successfully interrupted by farmers led by former officers, while other former officers with different interests began to perceive the disruption as rebellion and agreed to put it down. By mid-January of 1787, the protests were perceived as an insurgency. Bowdoin complained of a "spirit of discontent, originating in unsupported grievances," which had "stimulated many of the citizens…to acts subversive of government." It was clear to him "that the object of the insurgents is to annihilate our present happy Constitution," and he announced that he would use the militia to put them down. Governor Bowdoin apparently felt he could do or not do anything to the ameliorate the condition of the farmers. He had a secret meeting with Henry Knox (of Ticonderoga fame), the Secretary of War and sought his intervention in financing Federal troops to put down whatever might come up. With Knox's urging, Congress pledged $530,000 for a special force of 1,340 troops.

The public was led to believe that the troops were to be dispatched to put down Indians. Congress, which had not been able to find the cash pay to pay Revolutionary soldiers their back wages, was now trying to find the funds necessary to pay a new army to defeat its creditors, the very men who had won the Revolution. Congress proved just as unable to support the new army as it did the old; the plan failed due to the intervention of Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe. Bowdoin then suggested that his state create a privately financed army of 4,400 troops. Wealthy Boston area merchants contributed more than Ł6,000 and General Benjamin Lincoln was made commander. Former soldiers, down on their luck and Harvard students signed on for Ł2 a month and provided the nucleus of this punitive expedition by and for the elite and paid for by private sources.

Daniel Shays, a most reluctant leader, was ill served by the press and members of The Society of the Cincinnati (this organization will be explained in the next article). As Severo and Milford write "The New England Press did not cover itself with distinction in explaining the controversy surrounding the farmers who could not pay their taxes to Government and their bills to retailers. Seacoast newspapers could have seized their new found freedom and asserted their ideological independence from the entrenched social and business groups that were their financial support. No reasonable person could have expected the press to condone or support civil unrest in the making; but the problems caused by the newspapers in failing to acknowledge their partisanship and failing to explain what the farmers were unhappy about was out of keeping to their purpose. The mere thought of fallen heroes in debtor's prisons should have been a revulsion to reporters, editors, and publishers. But rather than explain and probe the problem, the press succumbed to vituperation. The pages of some newspapers were not used to explain a bad situation, but to fan the emotions of self-interested or assiduously uninformed readers. Rumors were generated and treated as facts, Boston residents were soon in fear of an invasion of angry farmers. Daniel Shays was vilified and made titular head of this ill-named rebellion solely by the Society of the Cincinnati who wished to further discredit him for his earlier reluctance to join their group.

The farmers marched on the Federal Arsenal at Springfield to deny the private army slogging from Boston from seizing muskets and powder. The workers at the plant met the yeomen at the factory gate, fired over their heads then directed a cannon shot down the middle. The farmers dispersed leaving three dead. The mis-named Shays' Rebellion was over. The contracted army then spent several months trying to find and serve warrants on suspected ringleaders. All fled to neighboring states to escape prosecution. "The man who didn't really want to lead a movement that was doomed to fail by the collective indifference and callousness of merchants, speculators, Government, and a largely mindless press never worked his farm again. Daniel Shays was pardoned in 1788" and died in 1825 at the age of eighty-four. He is buried near his farm in Conesus, New York and never felt at home in his native state again.. *To be continued next month*

The Society of the Cincinnati

Henry Knox, former London bookseller, general in the Colonial Army, Washington's Chief of Artillery, and the savior of Boston when he arrived with cannon captured from the British at Fort Ticonderoga after traveling over 200 miles in the dead of winter was a most unusual character. At only 27 years age the portly 6'3", 280 pound colonel forced the British to leave Boston in 1777, never to return. In 1781 Washington sent Knox, now a general, as a representative to secure aid in the form of food and clothing from the northern states in what Washington hoped would be the last campaign of the war. From New Windsor, Maryland, Washington wrote Knox: "...You will generally represent to the supreme executive powers of the States, through which you pass, and to gentlemen of influence in them, the alarming crisis to which our affairs have arrived, by a too long neglect of measures essential to the existence of the army, and you may assure them, that, if a total alteration of system does not take place in paying, clothing and feeding the troops, it will be in vain to expect a continuance of their service in another campaign." Knox was very successful despite the irony in asking for food for the starving troops when he was over 330 pounds at the time.

Henry Knox was such a self-assured man that he courted and won the heart of one Lucy Flucker, the only daughter of the English Secretary of the Province of Massachusetts, whose father detested her suitor and forbade her to see him. Knox's persuasive powers were so great, as Washington would soon learn, that Lucy became his wife in 1774. Her parents fled to England in 1776 never to return. After the war she inherited a share of the family's domain on the Penobscot River and Bay which belonged to her mother's father, General Waldo. The property had been confirmed by the government to her and General Knox after the peace. Their residence was at Thomaston, a splendid mansion at the head of St. George's River, furnished with taste and elegance. Here the former soldier enjoyed the honors he had won, and spent his time in the indulgence of his literary tastes, and the companionship of his friends. His hospitality was unbounded, and numerous visitors frequented his house; but he wanted more.

He desired more than the bit of ribbon given to veterans denoting military service. His vision and values were typical of the aspiring 18th century army officer. He wanted more than just the esteem of his fellow citizens, some money, and land would be an appropriate reward for services rendered. With Washington's approval, Knox and 288 former officers petitioned Congress to give a portion of the area known as Ohio and divide it up among the veterans. Major generals getting 1100 acres and privates 100 acres; those in between would get amounts commensurate with their rank or grade. Congress rejected the idea. During the war Congress had promised officers a pension for life based on half their pay in active duty, that later changed to five years pay instead of the pension. Since Congress still lacked the power to tax, all that money never materialized. The most tangible thing the officers could now receive were honors in civilian ceremonies conferred upon them by an organization composed entirely of officers. Thus, the Society of the Cincinnati was officially formed on May 13, 1783 near Fish-kill Landing at the Verplanck House, the former headquarters of Baron von Steuben.

The Society reflected 18th century America's interest in Roman history. The new organization was named by Knox for Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, a Roman who allegedly was living in humble circumstances, did not relate well to others who and lived modestly. Legend has it that he walked behind a plow at his farm, but left twice to run the country. Although he returned to Rome with much booty, the virtuous Cincinnatus left it there and went back to his plow. Knox may have picked the wrong Roman for whom to name this new group, for there was no evidence that Washington's officers were eager to live in the apparent penury that Cincinnatus knew. Knox himself did not embrace those ancient circumstances for himself. In any event, part of the founding language reads: "…The officers of the American Army do, hereby in the most solemn manner, associate, constitute, and continue themselves into one SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, to endure as long as they as they endure, or any of their eldest male posterity, and in failure thereof, the collateral branches, who may be judged worthy of becoming supporters and members."

The Cincinnati thereby initiated its controversial policy of primogeniture—an American military group that determined its membership by the same method that had sustained the same British monarchy just overthrown by the colonials. Americans were never shy in their criticism of self-honoring organizations, and this one was no exception for it resembled an hereditary aristocracy. It was seen as just another example of America's succumbing to the very things they had rejected in the English. Among their critics was a Mrs. Mercy Warren, a historian and prominent Bostonian who wrote: "Many of the younger Class…are crying out for a monarchy and a standing army to support it…These are joined by a whole class of Cincinnati who are panting for a nobility." It was not only nobility they desired for they had never forgotten their interest in money and they still wanted their bonus of five years' pay.

Washington thought the Society was a good idea but he was greatly embarrassed by the primogeniture clause Even though Washington was enormously popular at this point, most Americans did not share his positive feelings and they were suspicious of the Cincinnati. In particular, the Massachusetts farmers, who were already headed for hard times with the state government, and they made it clear that they did not expect their tax dollars to support a leisure class of officers. Those Massachusetts farmers eligible to join tended to stay away. Of the 443 officers of the Massachusetts line, a full quarter refused to have anything to do with the Cincinnati; and of the 226 Massachusetts men who had been in the Navy and Marines, only two joined the society. Most notable among the former officer critics was a farmer from the western part of the state, Daniel Shays.

Knox justified his group as a way to honor officers and Congress concurred that officers deserved something more than what the Cincinnati could deliver. Newspapers frequently would write about events that were being planned for the heroes of the Revolution. One inexpensive token that demonstrated status and prior service was the awarding of ceremonial swords. The ceremonies were elaborate and accompanied with great pomp when Knox himself made the presentations. When the Marquis de Lafayette personally gave Daniel Shays a ceremonial sword for a particular combat incident, Shays expressed his gratitude but he already had one sword and so saw no need for another. Much to the chagrin of some of his fellow officers, especially those who were looking for status in the Cincinnati and wanted other officers to share their values. Shays did not treasure that sword nor see it as an artifact of honor that he could pass on to those who followed. So he sold it, with all his debts he could dearly use the money.

"This excited the indignation of his company & the officers of his regiment," according to a staunch Federalist judge name Hinckley. "An outcry was made about his means in selling the gift of

Lafayette." The officers refused to associate with him, and talked about trying him by a court of martial law for his base conduct. Shays came home, incensed against the officers and even against Washington and the other patriots. The Federalists tried long and hard and with considerable success to transform a Revolutionary hero who had protested an honest grievance into one that they, in the late 18th and early 19th century , considered disloyal and shameful.

The Eastern press castigated him and elevated his status as the ringleader of the western farmers and spread inflammatory rumors about his actions. Even though he was just a minor figure in one of the many towns seeking succor from the government he became the target and blamed for instigating all this unrest. Already the country was seeing that all was not well within the new Republic and one of the biggest problems were the veterans who had not adjusted to civilian life as well as they might have. Shays was a perfect example plus he was very critical of the Cincinnati, a now powerful organization whose members and proponents occupied the highest levels of government and commerce. Eventually Shays was forced to flee the state or face arrest. His chief protagonist, Henry Knox died in 1806 at the age of 56. He choked to death on a chicken bone during one of his many soirees in his Maine mansion.

The Society is still active today and headquartered just off Dupont Circle in northwest Washington in the former Anderson House. Ambassador Larz Anderson and his wife Isabel built the 50 room mansion in 1905. At a cost of nearly $750,000, Anderson House included a walled garden, tennis court, and three-story carriage house and stable. To the Andersons, their Washington home represented the culmination of what America's founders, including George Washington, hoped their capital city would become—a grand, modern city to rival European capitals, but with a patriotic identity and a sense of history that would make it distinctly American. When Larz Anderson died in 1937 with no children, his widow oversaw the gift of Anderson House and its contents to the Society of the Cincinnati, of which Larz had been a devoted member since 1939.

This National Historic Landmark has been open to the public as a historic house museum where the Society has continued the traditions of collecting, entertaining, and patriotic service that the Andersons began one hundred years ago. The Society has preserved and provided access to one of the world's great collections of books and manuscripts illuminating the history of the War for Independence with a remarkable collection of art and artifacts illustrating that war and the long history of our organization. Admission is free.

The Society sponsors a major lecture each fall, the George Rogers Clark Lecture, which encourages and rewards historians who have made major contributions to the field. The Society supports research in its own collections leading to publication with library fellowships. The Society supports the development of museum professionals interested in the American Revolution and related themes with museum internships. The Society also publishes works and promotes publications of works of particular relevance to its broad educational mission. Effective learning begins with reading. The Society rewards outstanding scholarship on the Revolutionary era with The Society of the Cincinnati Cox Book Prize, which is presented every third year to the author of an outstanding book on the period published during the previous three years.

To Take Or Destroy

Gregory Martin, while the Assistant Director for Histories and Archives at the Naval History and Heritage Command, wrote an article in April, 2015 issue of *NAVAL HISTORY* about an incident that transpired in September, 1777. The event provides lessons about the importance of command leadership and the confidence of such leadership in the ability of a ships crew to successfully complete an extremely hazardous operation. The qualities displayed by the British officers and seamen are important and appropriate now as they were then.

When the British fled Boston in 1776, the only royal dockyard in North America available to repair English men-of-war was in Halifax, Nova Scotia. For almost 150 years the English had relied upon the forests of New England to provide the needed resources to effect repairs on her fleet. The coast of present day Maine provided all the great masts and spars needed, but the area was now being contested with the presence of the Colonial militias. Sir George Collier was posted to Halifax early in September, 1776 and took command of his flagship, the two decker, 44 gun frigate *HMS Rainbow* built in 1747. His area of operations extended from Massachusetts Bay, north to Newfoundland and included the vital fisheries of the Grand Banks. In an earlier posting in 1775, Collier had routinely engaged in aggressive and audacious actions along the New England coastline exerting tremendous pressure on the militia forces in the area. The continual raids of the Halifax squadrons had pushed the Colonial forces almost to a point of physical and financial exhaustion in contesting the many excursions.

While patrolling along the coast a Tory fishermen approached the *Rainbow* and told Collier that the mast ship *Gruel* was loading single-stick masts and spars about 20 to 30 miles upstream on the Sheepscot river. Collier felt that the cargo was so valuable that he was willing to risk his 133 foot, 300 man ship and sail up a treacherous river with no charts, having an 11 foot tidal range, at night during a storm. Collier wrote in his log that "I thought it highly necessary to attempt any Hazard to take or destroy her (the *Gruel*)." With the Tory fisherman as pilot the *Rainbow* sailed into Sheepscot Bay at 2100 hours on a flood tide, first-quarter moon, and intermittent showers. Four hours later Collier noted that they were sailing east instead of north. He immediately dropped anchor and lowered all sails. The pilot had missed the proper channel and they were now in the Cross River, just downstream from the town of Wiscasset in a perilously narrow and shallow channel.

"Collier thought there was still adequate cover from the storm and darkness to launch a raiding party in two of the ship's boats, manned by about 100 sailors and marines (one third of his complement). In preparation for the raid, one boat had been "armored" with wooden barricades. Both boats shoved off, swathed in darkness and rain, with two to three hours of flood tide to aid their ascent upriver, past the slumbering town of Wiscasset, and beyond to the mast ship.

When dawn broke, Collier and his crew saw how close they had come to the very brink of destruction. The *Rainbow* barely had room to swing on her anchor without running aground. Using her remaining cutter Sir George and his crew managed to warp their ship out of the narrow Cross River and back into the main channel of the Sheepscot River. Five hours later she was anchored in forty-eight feet of water at low tide within easy cannon range of Wiscasset. Shocked by the *Rainbow's* arrival the townspeople waited as Collier sent a flag of truce ashore demanding a temporary armistice, delivery of the town's two small cannons and the surrender of the *Gruel's* masts, spars, and rigging. In order to reach the site where the naval timber was stored the unburdened *Gruel* was towed upstream on the flood tide minus any means of propulsion.

What ensued was a deadly serious but highly formal and polite exchange of of letters over the demands of the British and an attempt to avoid civilian causalities by one side and an attack on the ship by the other. Collier's demands were not met but neither was the *Rainbow* harassed. However, five miles upstream the prize party and rebels were in a desperate fight to control the mast ship. Arriving at the *Gruel* just before sunrise the British had seized the *Gruel* without a fight. The ship was secured and a 3-pounder cannon was dragged aboard to provide an overwatch on the mast ship. The *Rainbow's* sailors and marines then built a defensive bulwark from planks stacked as cargo on deck for protection against musket fire. Purpose-built, mast ships had square sterns with large ports that facilitated the stowage of giant single-stick mainmasts up to 40 inches in diameter. She needed the high tide to ebb in order to clear the shallows and mudflats and carry her to Wiscasset where her masts and sails could be retrieved and rigged.

The *Gruel's* cook had escaped the seizure and went to warn the local militia. Around 0900 the soldiers assembled and began to fire down from the heights above the river onto the would-be prize crew. Pinned down by musketry from more than 150 rebels lining the shore, the prize crew was unable to move and sought refuge with the hull. Waiting for nightfall, the British escaped and rode the ebb tide down to the *Rainbow* without their prize. But before leaving they shoved some of the masts and spars into the river and holed the mast ship, scuttling her in the river. Early the next morning the *Rainbow* was in a dilemma. Without a favorable wind and tide she could not navigate the narrow channel of the Sheepscot. Meanwhile, Collier set his crew to barricade the fighting tops of each mast and sent a flag of

truce ashore.

In a number of locations the navigable channel of the river passed closed to the highlands that afforded plunging fire to the ship's deck. To navigate under fire would have been extremely dangerous. Yet while the *Rainbow* remained at anchor only a few hundred yards from town and with prisoners onboard, Collier still held substantial leverage over negotiations. He offered to leave the town unscathed if the militia desisted from attacking his ship and men. The militia demanded the surrender of the masts and spars recovered from the river and to turn over a small schooner seized earlier. Collier replied that they had an hour to evacuate the town before he began his bombardment. Just before the hour was to expire Collier sent another flag of truce ashore, offering one last chance for neutrality. Both parties agreed to an armistice and Collier did not give in to the demands of the rebels.

By 0530 the next morning the winds had shifted, the tide was favorable and the *Rainbow* weighed anchor to began the tricky passage back down the narrow, hazardous channel of the river, safe and unmolested. At some point that day Collier saw fit to release his prisoners, putting them aboard the captured schooner. Three weeks later the *Rainbow* reached Halifax with one third of her crew sick. The British captain had recovered three large masts and one mizzenmast. The cost to his crew was only one man wounded. This was a successful mission, although it could have easily swung to extreme failure. Capturing even four masts meant that one or more British ships could sortie that would otherwise be laid up.

Taken by itself, the raid was only a modest success. However, the attempt to take the *Gruel* fits within a larger context of an expansive and aggressive strategy put into motion by Collier. The mast ship raid was one of many spoiling attacks by the British against rebel forces and commerce, designed to force the militias to protect their own coastline and prevent Colonial ground forces from attacking Nova Scotia. It also demonstrated the extraordinary seamanship required by both the captain and his crew to navigate a river in a square-rigged sailing ship. Even with favorable winds and tide, navigating a narrow channel with a large tidal range and the current of the Sheepscot was an amazing feat. To have attempted that at night and in a storm seems evidence of a commanding officer of either supreme recklessness, or supreme skill and exceptional confidence in his crew and ship.

How would a modern frigate, corvette,or littoral combat ship fare in similar circumstances? How many ships' commanding officers are ready to lose two or three department heads and have division officers ready to immediately move in and take over not only the department-head duties but more important, the key battle stations? Spectacular and equally daring raids in the 20th century like the one at St. Nazaire in 1941. An operation where a small flotilla of Royal Navy ships and a crew of commandos sailed up the Loire River in France to attack a strategic dockyard, but that was a one-way trip. It maybe hard to imagine a similar situation where a U.S. ship would need to penetrate as far up a river into enemy territory as the *Rainbow*.

Sir George Collier's aggressiveness, balanced by his calm while under duress, and his ability to manage events according to his plan are attributes worthy of emulation by commanding officers of any era. Though it happened more than 230 years ago, the mast ship raid by the men of the *HMS Rainbow* offers a compelling case study of extraordinary leadership and performance. Collier's ship and crew were not specially trained and equipped for their mission, it was done as a routine operation, and that is something to think about. Although overshadowed by Collier's well-known defeat of the Continental amphibious assault on Castine in 1779 during the Battle of Penobscot Bay, his mast ship raid makes for an incredible tale all by itself."