



# The Friends & Neighbors of Putnam Memorial State Park

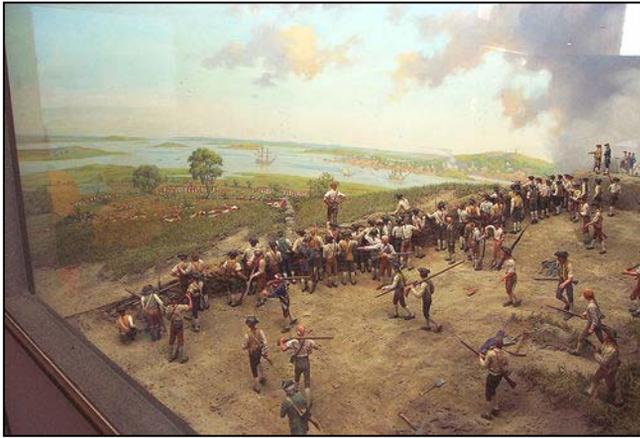


*"Connecticut's Valley Forge"*

**Bethel/Redding CT**

## June 2009 NewsLetter

### June 17, 1775 – Bunker Hill



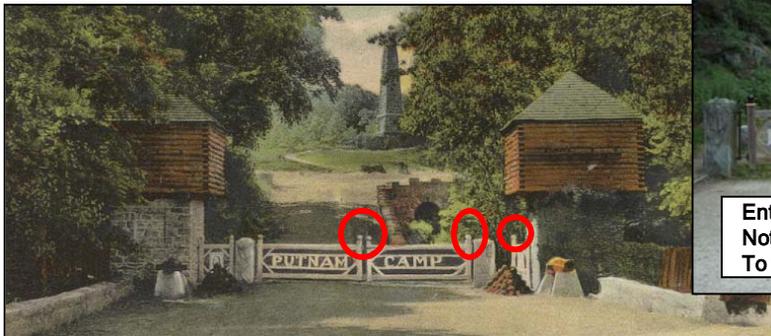
The diorama at the Bunker Hill Monument in Charlestown MA gives visitors a good visual perspective of the Americans in their redoubt on Breed's Hill waiting for the many columns of British troops marching up the hill. Boston can be seen across the Charles River.

**Boston – Beacon Hill - 2009**, politicians all over the Bay State are looking under every rock and stone for money. Money that they can then use for their own pet projects. Massachusetts has three holidays that are up for the noose by the legislators: Bunker Hill Day (June 17<sup>th</sup>), British Evacuation Day (March 17<sup>th</sup> – yes, also called St. Paddy's Day), and the biggest one ... Patriot's Day, on or about April 19<sup>th</sup>. State employees currently get these days off.

The Battle of Bunker Hill was the first bona fide battle between the colonists and the British Army. While the British won the day in the end, they had more casualties (40%), especially their officer corps, than any other battle in the entire war. The two top commanders on the American side were Gen. Israel Putnam of CT and Col. William Prescott of MA. Prescott was in charge of the famed redoubt. This battle took place prior to Geo. Washington's arrival in Cambridge where he established the Continental Army. During the Bunker Hill Battle,

however, the American war effort was still made up of militia units from different towns and states. Confusion was the order of the day. Command leadership resulted in geographic units following their own officers. One or more of the officers reminded their troops to "wait until you see the whites of their eyes ..." before firing. This was a common phrase to remind the troops not to waste ammunition. The phrase was actually used in the Prussian Army years before. In addition to Gen. Putnam, another of Putnam Parks officers participated – Henry Dearborn, then a Capt. with a company of New Hampshire Militia. Three huzzahs for the Bunker Hill defenders ... three Bronx cheers for the Massachusetts politicians trying to deep-six history.

### Cannon Balls Added to Gates



Entrance gate circa 1900. Nate Hale noticed the small cannon balls on the gates.



Entrance today sporting the new cannon ball additions. Also Note that the original name was "Putnam Camp" which referred To the army campground.

The first commissioners of Putnam Campground were adamant that it was not a pleasure park ... but a memorial to the soldiers who camped there in 1778-79.

Notice the new additions on the main entrance gates? Replicas of cannon balls have been made for the gate posts. No, the new cannon balls are not for the two huge cannons sitting in front of the blockhouses, but for those of a smaller caliber used in the field cannons by the troops. The additions were made by Rob Smith, who used to be the Putnam Park Supervisor back in the 1970's. Rob retired from the state park service in 2007. Great job, Rob!

## New Displays and Themes at the Museum



A Continental soldier sits by his campfire. The display is just in its early stages. The room will take on another scope when the wall murals are created this summer.



A British regular stands by his tent. No, there were no Redcoats at the Redding winter camps, but the visitors should at least know what they looked like.

Since the opening of the Visitor Center, the park museum has relinquished a lot of its duties to the new facility. One of the new thrusts of the Visitor Center Committee is to redefine the purpose of the museum. The visitor today will find that the museum has been rearranged and newly painted. The building will remain the main depository of the artifacts found on the old 1778 army campground. Another addition which is "in the works" is the addition of mannequins dressed with uniforms of period soldiers. The uniforms are being loaned to the park by FANs member and reenactor, Rob Doscher. The new room which contains the soldiers will have murals added to the walls, which will tie-in with the costumed warriors. Hats off to Rob for the terrific uniforms and equipment.

Scott Stetler and his Visitor Center Committee are working with Al Levere and Nicole Chalfant from the Parks Division Hartford Headquarters on both the museum and visitor center improvements.

---

**NY Post Sunday June 14<sup>th</sup>**

## 234, AND STILL KICKING BUTT

*June 14, 2009 --*

On June 14, 1775, Congress in Philadelphia authorized a new Continental Army to prosecute what had just become a shooting war with British regulars around Boston -- dispatching Gen. George Washington to organize a siege of the city. The army's first major victory came only months later, as a daring nighttime expedition to install artillery at Dorchester Heights forced the British evacuation of the city.

Today, the United States Army celebrates its 234th birthday -- marking a proud history in which it has triumphed everywhere from the breastworks of New Orleans to the beaches of Normandy and New Guinea to the streets of Baghdad.

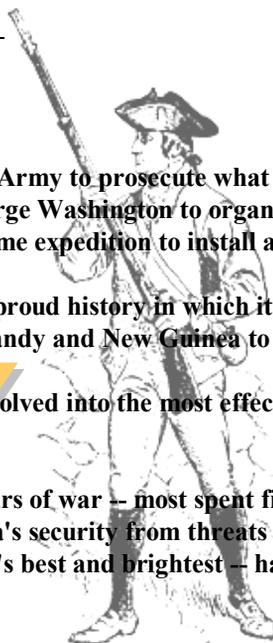
Indeed, the ragtag force that nearly froze at Valley Forge has long since evolved into the most effective defender of human freedom in world history.

Not a bad record, that.

To be sure, today's Army faces daunting challenges: After nearly eight years of war -- most spent fighting a pair of grueling counterinsurgencies -- it still must be prepared to defend America's security from threats all over the world. Yet the men and women who wear the uniform -- some of their generation's best and brightest -- have never shrunk from the task.

Clearly, the country's freedom remains in good hands.

Happy birthday.



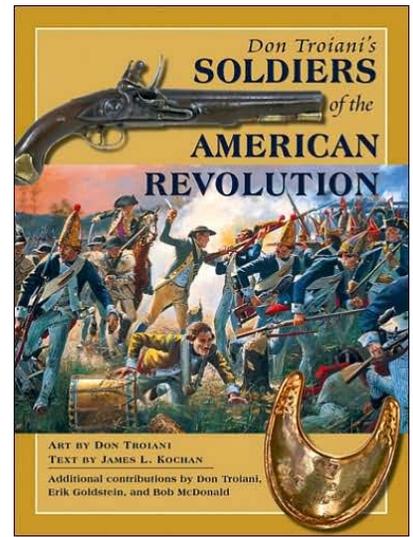
# New FAN's Regimental Representative



Painting by Don Troiani  
[www.historicalimagebank.com](http://www.historicalimagebank.com)



Artist Don Troiani in his Connecticut studio, contemplating his next project.



Troiani is today's preeminent artist who creates both Civil War and Revolutionary War subjects.

About a year ago we wrote to rev war artist Don Troiani to ask him if we could use a couple of images that he had created years ago for the National Park Service at Valley Forge. Don called us and said that he would rather we not use the images in question, but that he would create a soldier that Putnam Park could use on all their newsletters, stationary, museum displays, etc.

The image to the left is now ours to use. The painting is of a private in the Continental Line, 4<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Regiment, dressed as he would have at the Reading Camps in 1778-79.

Putnam Memorial Park is a memorial to the troops of all three brigades in Maj. Gen. Israel Putnam's Division, who occupied the three separate camps in Reading during the winter of 1778-79. The 4<sup>th</sup>CT was quartered at the middle camp in Brig. Gen. Samuel Parsons camp of the first Connecticut Brigade, of which the 4<sup>th</sup>CT was a part. The regiment was led by Col. John Durkee.

Our thanks go out to Don Troiani for his offer to let us use the art work. His fairly new book *Soldiers of the American Revolution* is available at bookstores or on-line.

*Don Troiani*  
©2007

## HISTORICAL ART PRINTS

Limited Edition Prints

The Gallery

[www.historicalimagebank.com](http://www.historicalimagebank.com)

# June 2009 FANs Meeting

To contact us:  
[friendsofputnampark@comcast.net](mailto:friendsofputnampark@comcast.net)



The June meeting was held at the visitor center on Monday, June 8th, 2009.

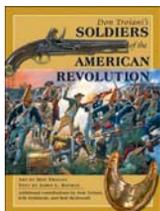
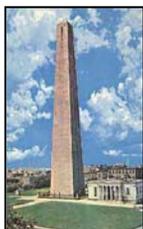
## Notes from the prez ...



- President's Opening:** Steve welcomed the group and thanked Harry, Carlton, et al for the fine postcards that are now on sale. It had been noted by Carlton Kline that the postcard project had been 13 years in the making!
- Treasurer's Report:** T.G. filled us in on the state of accounts and updated us on School Week revenues and expenses with the final results of around \$5,000 added to the FANS account.
- Park update:** Nate filled us in on the status of the Park and the state's budget problems. He said that as of now the Visitor Center and Museum will continue to be staffed with three guides.
- School Week Recap:** Nancy did a fabulous job in orchestrating this event ... assisted onsite with the help of other committed members!!!! This year was a full five-day program with eight re-enactor stations and more students ... a total of 824 from seven schools. While Nancy has no plans on stopping, she encouraged the recruitment of other volunteers to help in planning and running the event. Anyone interested? Contact Nancy at 203-797-8604.
- Summer Crafts Program:** Nancy filled us in on the upcoming schedule of weekend crafters. It will begin on July 4, 5 and continue on weekends in July/August. Still some holes to fill, but Nancy said she's getting there. Anyone interested in participating let Nancy know. 203-797-8604.
- Next Event:** The group approved the first evening event: "The Reel Thing" will give a colonial era music and dance performance on Friday, August 21 at 7pm. Steve will get info and pictures from the group so that Harry can make up a flyer and Brent should post it on the website and get out some PR. We will need 4 or 5 volunteers as we will ask for donations. Steve will handle the Special Use License with the DEP.
- 2010 Events:** We discussed hosting another event similar to the 230th weekend. Brian tentatively thought that the weekend of November 6, 7, 2010 would be good. He said he'd talk to Dave and Jim on it.
- Museum mural:** The British uniform and a Continental soldier's uniform are now on mannequins in a room in the Museum. As Sharon will be available again to paint a mural in July, we decided to bring to a vote the FANS funding of the project. It was approved!
- Visitor Center Committee:** Scott Stetler will work with Nate, Al and Nicole to complete the upgrade of the Interpretive Displays with funds received from the Meserve Grant
- Troinani Image:** Harry presented a fine rendering of a continental soldier that Revolutionary War artist, Don Troiani, painted and has authorized FANs to use as its representative image of a soldier which was at the Redding winter encampment in 1778-79. See story on page 3). Harry showed us stationery and other ways that the art can be used..
- Other Events:** There will be a re-enactor event on Sept. 26, 27 put on by the 4th CT Regiment. We approved paying for straw and helping out with some publicity.  
We discussed the recent re-enactor event that was held on the last weekend in May. Some things went awry with how it was conducted and re-enactors left early. (**Note:** subsequent dialog has transpired since the meeting on how to better monitor future reenactment groups coming into the park.)



JUNE 14th  
234th



## Looking for Volunteers



With the many events that FANs sponsors during the course of the year, its surprising that the true core of volunteers are the same people who keep the events running and on course. Our number one thrust in the FANs organization is the history of the area during the Revolutionary War, and the education of the public to that end; especially school children.

Some of our events are well tuned and fairly easy to conduct. Other events, however, need more on hands manipulation and monitoring. The Living History School Days event each May is one of those events. Lining up the and scheduling the various schools to certain days of the week ... to lining up the reenactors and craftspeople, is one such event. Nancy Cowles, a retired school teacher, has developed this annual event over the past ten years and keeps on refining it. We need some assistants and back-up people to help her plan and run the show. This would also help the event in succession leadership in future years. We have many events, projects, archaeological digs, and historical research that need more hands. Call president Steve Levine for more information at 203-744-4194, or, e-mail us at - [friendsofputnampark@comcast.net](mailto:friendsofputnampark@comcast.net)

The next FAN's Meeting will be on Monday, July 13, 2009  
at 7:00PM at the Visitor Center at Putnam Park.