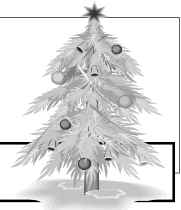




TAC Tanker Tales

Volume 15 Issue 2

December 2013



Introducing the Father of our Country, George Washington — Our Host for valley Forge PA

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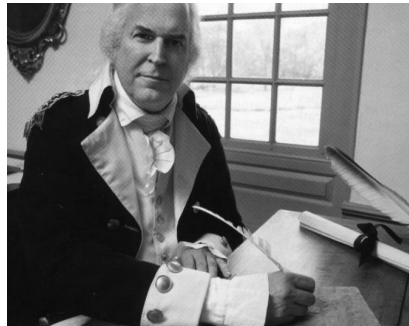
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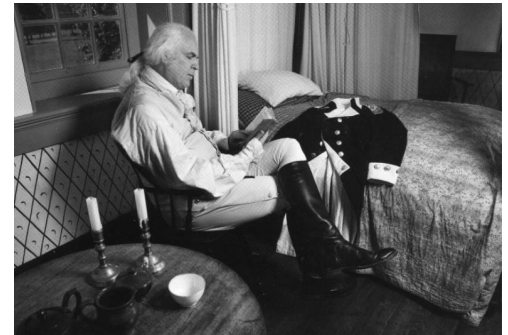
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George checking the merchandise in one of the local shops.



Greetings to all you TAC Tankers: I want to send my personal invitation to you to attend the next reunion in Valley Forge and its **Historical Park**, which is a special place for me.



We have arranged for you to stay at comfortable quarters in the **Embassy Suites** in nearby Wayne.

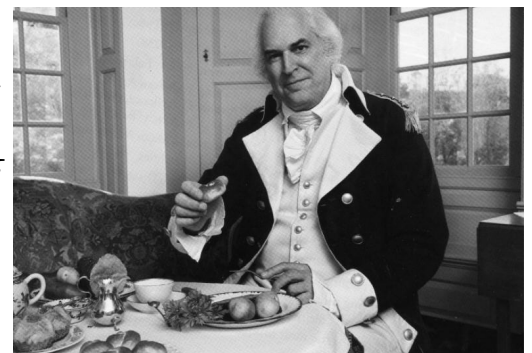


Each day we will travel to someplace of interest in the local region. Some of my fellow colonials from **American Heritage Landmark Tours** will be your guides on your "carriage." We will see the Park, Shippack Village, Philadelphia, the grand King of Prussia Mall and the Brandywine valley attractions: QVC Studios, a Helicopter Museum, Longwood Gardens & Chadds Ford Winery.

Naturally, we all must have nourishment, so you will be taken to dine at the colonial Kimberton Inn or in the town of Phoenixville, Winberries in Wayne, a luncheon cruise on the *Spirit of Philadelphia*, and a selection of restaurants in and near the King of Prussia Mall.

A highlight of your visit will be the special **Memorial Ceremony** on Memorial Day in the Washington Chapel in the Park. Please join us! Your registration form may be found in this issue of the Tales.

Sincerely yours, George



President's Corner *By Nate Hill*

Good Day one and all! ! What a lovely year it has been for TAC Tankers. Every member who has been telling us that they are going to do various things when "I get **around to it**" now has one. Vice-President Lou worked extremely hard to complete that project prior to this newsletter so that you would have a **ROUND TUIT** and be able to join us in Valley Forge PA.

Now for the REALLY EXCITING news. I received an email from Mike Leister, curator, at the **AMC Museum** at Dover AFB. He tells us that one of the benefits of the sequestration at the federal level is that the folks at MacDill AFB no longer want to spend their limited funds to maintain our KB-50 and they don't seem to want it so much now. Guess the KC-135R that they wanted so badly also went by the board.

Mr Leister has no idea when all of the paperwork will be complete, but he asked me if we were still committed to helping with the move from Florida to Delaware. The good news is that the same company that moved the airplane from Wright Pat will be contracted to move it from Florida so the price will be less but still in the neighborhood of \$75,000. Mike thinks that he can shake loose a C-5 from Dover to help with the move.

Only problem is that it may take some months of "no's" before we get the "yes" and then the AF Museum will want to move very quickly. We would like to help as much financially as we can, since Mike's funds are short also. He tells me that he will not ask for us to send our contribution until it is certain that the airplane is moving.

I am suggesting that we fund this project just as we did our memorial at the Museum. All who want to help and to whatever level please send your donations to me so that I can log them. I have asked our Treas., Gary Myers, to maintain close records on all the donations. He will keep these funds separate so that if, after we collect them, the airplane doesn't move, we can return your donations to you.

If you have questions or just want to talk about the project, don't hesitate to call me at 740 653-3835.

We are now contracting with a service in Columbus to take our newsletter pages via email and print, label, stamp and mail our entire issue of **TAC Tanker Tales**. Natalie decided her back would not hold out doing another mailing which she has been doing all the above tasks (except the copy machine job-that's mine). So she contacted a friend who also did her newsletters that way. So.....Natalie has retired, but will continue to do all the "put together stuff" that we send to the service.

Natalie and I send our warmest wishes for a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of you and I want you to notice the upgraded appearance of the Newsletter. What do you think?

The Board Chairman's Corner *By Bill Wolford*

To all our Tanker family I want to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I guess this is still permissible in our new, post-modern era.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you at Valley Forge in May. This morning here in Vermont we have a sparkling morning due to the freezing temperatures affecting the dew. Got to take the good with the bad. If it has to be freezing, might as well appreciate the beautiful view. At least the government hasn't changed what God made, yet.

At the risk of sounding a little bit radical, it's time for each of us to contact our representatives and senators to express our outrage at the direction in which our country is moving. We all need to speak now, while we still can.

Our Social Security, Tricare, and our Retirements are all on the chopping block for this government. Many of you probably already know about the purges in the military for any person criticizing or disagreeing with our Commander - In - Chief. For anyone who is a student of history, this sounds like what happened in Russia and China before Communism took over and then it was too late.

As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: "When they came for the Jews I didn't say anything because I wasn't Jewish, when they came for the Catholics I didn't say anything because I wasn't Catholic, when they came for me it was too late to say anything." Let us not be caught in the same situation.

On a happier note the blood clots I had in my lungs have dissolved, but this means I have to take yet another pill. We are definitely in the sandwich generation and have Shirley's mom and brother living with us. Please keep us in your prayers because adding two adult members to our household is an adjustment especially when they both have big health issues. Again happy holidays and God bless America.

LC/Ret. Nate Hill meeting with General George Washington to help plan the reunion during tea.



Vice President's Corner

By Lou Chapman

Before I get to other things, I need to acknowledge several mistakes from the last issue of Tanker Tales. First was the mis-spelling of a new member's name. We had everything listed correctly in the Database, but when the fingers, eyes and the brain got busy, well that's where the breakdown occurred. In my column, I spelled **Thomas "Tom" Cardarelli's** name wrong. Now, to add insult to injury, his name under the New Life Members section was also spelled wrong. At this point, I will gladly throw Nate under the bus as that was not my doing. Our apology to Tom for this FUBAR.

The next one was a comedy of errors also. The September newsletter came back to Nate that was sent to **Gene McClurg** in Weslaco TX. He called and asked if I could find a new address for the database. Using all the websites I normally do, I could find nothing on Gene. No new address, and the phone number we had was no longer in service. Most everyone has heard about making assumptions, and this is what Nate and I did.

I called Nate and went through all the possibilities, such as maybe Gene had moved into a Senior housing community, was in assisted living, sold his house to travel to some exotic location, or lastly, he was deceased. This last one must have stuck, because in the Bits and Obits, that's where he ended up.

Shortly thereafter, we got a call from Jim Holbrook in Burnet TX telling us that he had recently talked with Gene about getting together for lunch. I must have had a brain freeze, because at the time I didn't even think of e-mailing Gene to see if his e-mail address was still good. It was, and he sent me a reply with his new contact information, so I called him. When he answered, I told him there were rumors (originating from TAC Tanker Headquarters) that he was deceased, and what did he have to say about that. He was surprised to say the least and vigorously denied it. I told him, if you read anything in print or on the Internet, it must be true. I guess this time it wasn't. So we can say, Miracle of Miracles, Gene has come back from the recently departed. Welcome back.

To all our members, the moral of this is, please keep Nate or me informed if any of your contact info changes.

By now, everyone should have received their **ROUND TUIT** from us. The idea for this came about because everyone *procrastinates* about doing so many things in life, so we decided you might need some help. And just so you know, Nate and I also have one.

Because I wanted to verify information before sending them out, I did my on-line research and found that one member died in 2008, one in 2010 and another in 2012. We were never notified by anyone about these deaths and because of this, their newsletters and annual address books were still being sent out. Their names have since been moved from the Active page to the Deceased page on the website.

I hope all of you had a great **Veterans Day** recently. A salute to all of you, and to all of those who served after us, and to those who are still serving. For those in the combat areas, we wish them a safe and happy return to their families and friends.

Also, we hope you had a Happy Day of **Thanksgiving**. We all have so much to be thankful for, and sometimes need to take a moment to remember that others throughout the world would trade places with us in a heartbeat. And now with another holiday just around the corner, I want to wish all of you and your families a very **MERRY CHRISTMAS**. If you don't get everything you want, then I hope you get everything you need.

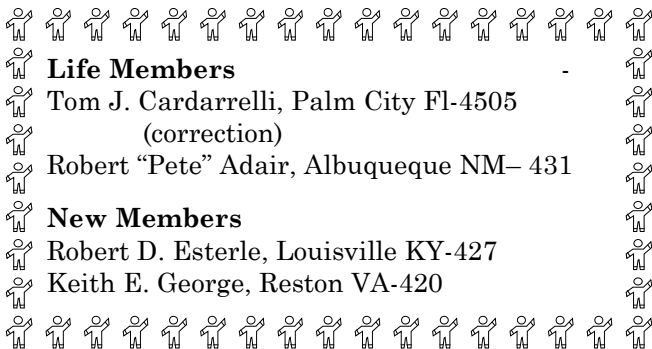
Please take the time to look over the included May 2014 Reunion Registration form and make plans to attend. Remember, you have a **ROUND TUIT** that needs to be used.

I hope we have a large turnout and I look forward to meeting more new people at Valley Forge.

Colonial Lou Chapman
marching the troops
during the Valley Forge
Reunion.

Ten-shun!!!





Life Members

Tom J. Cardarrelli, Palm City FL-4505
(correction)

Robert "Pete" Adair, Albuquerque NM- 431

New Members

Robert D. Esterle, Louisville KY-427

Keith E. George, Reston VA-420

Letters Received from New Members

Keith George October 2013)

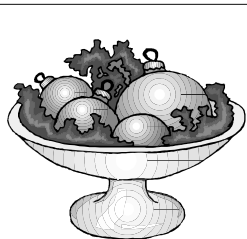
The TAC Tanker Association web site brought back fond memories for my wife and myself of days spent at RAF Sculthorpe in Norfolk County England. At that time I was recently out of navigation training at Harlingen TX having received my ROTC commission upon college graduation. My wife, Bobbie, and I were newly married, also.

My tour with the 420th AREFS extended from Feb. 1959 to Jan. 1961, at which time I was released from active duty (on a program of early release instituted in 1960) and my wife and I returned to Washington State which was our home.

For 31 years, 61-92, we lived in the Seattle-Bellevue area. In 1992, my company transferred me to the WDC area and we settled where we now live in Reston VA. I retired from active business a few years ago.

I lost track of most of the men I served with, but did run into Al Reed (a 420th pilot) in Seattle where he worked for Seattle First National Bank (now Bank of America). On occasion my wife and I also exchanged Christmas cards with Rufe and Rita Mewborn who were at Sculthorpe at the same time.

For a good part of the time at Sculthorpe, I flew with Loman Miller's crew.



Many thanks to those of you out there who send us clippings, emails, letters, and phone calls to tell us of those who pass away. We are getting up there in years and this column is proof of our ages and life span.

Bits and Obits

On May 4, 2012, Life member **Carroll Franklin Reep**, 78, passed away of a heart attack in Hickory, NC, while attending a school reunion. He is survived by his wife Judy and daughter Catherine Ann. Carroll was a member of the 429th.

Matthew II. Walence, 87 died on June 1, 2013 in San Antonio TX.. His wife, Helen Faye preceded him in death and he is survived by children Louis, Leonard and Patrice. He served in the 421 and 622. and retired as a Major. Matthew was interred in Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

June claimed another Life member, **William Drewery "Bill or Dub" Slay**, 83, of Nacogdoches TX. He was staying in Hospice of the Pines, in Lufkin TX at the time of his death on the 29th. Bill was a member of the 421st and spent 21 years in the USAF. His wife of 54 years, Raenell had passed earlier and he is survived by son, William Randall and daughters Kaylen and Suzanne and their families.

A clipping sent from Roy Thompson in Oregon shared this news: **Harold "Bud" Wedel**, one of our most loyal reunion attendees, died peacefully 2 days short of his 88th birthday at Willamette Valley Hospice. Bud became a pilot in the Army AC at age 18 flying fighters and bombers in WWII, jets in Korea and trained Korean jet pilots.

He retired a Lt. Col in 69 and returned to Salem OR. His tours with TAC were with the 429th and 421st. Bud was preceded in death by his first wife Shirley, son Jerry and is survived by his other 5 children, Connie, Danny, Ginny, Jeffrey and Eric and their children, plus June his bride since 2001.

If you read the Vice President's Column first, you will note that we unknowingly put Gene **McClurg** in the Obits last issue. However, it was not he who passed away, but his wife, **Ermadean**, of 65 years. She died on April 6, 2013 in Weslaco, TX. She leaves behind her husband and their children, Rick, Suzanne and two grandchildren all living in Austin.

Wayne Warner emailed us the news about another wife who also went to be with her Savior. After 58 years of marriage, **Edna Fay**, wife of Rev. Jerry T. **Lewis**, Life member of the 427th., passed away on October 29, 2013. She and Jerry performed the First TAC Tanker Memorial Service in Tucson at the 2000 Reunion.

The third spouse of a member to pass was **Patricia Renquin**, wife of Paul Renquin for 56 years. She leaves her children Paul Jr., and Catherine, 6 grands and 3 greats. She was preceded by son Scott. Paul, Sr. is a Life member and was part of the 421st.

Historian's Corner

By John Bessette

The 421st and Refueling Navy Aircraft

I have recently come across an article which describes in some detail the history of US Navy and Marine Corps air-to-air refueling. This article, by Brian Gardner, appeared in the autumn 1983 issue of *The Hook*, a naval aviation periodical. There is some interesting early history of Navy involvement, but let me save that until later in this article. Let us first dwell on what it says about the first Air Force/Navy air refueling. This, the article states, was in February 1955, when a 421st AREFS KB-29M, flying from Yokota AB, Japan, refueled a McDonnell F3H-2 Banshee fighter over Japan. A photo taken during this operation shows two KB-29s from the 421st, which implies that more refuelings took place that day, involving more receivers as well as tankers. Unfortunately, there is no mention in the 421st history for this period of that historic event.

The Navy and the 421st were to practice several more times over the Pacific. 421st Squadron histories and the TAC Tanker Archives show that one series began in 1961, after two 421st pilots were invited aboard the USS Midway aircraft carrier to observe operations. That generated an idea to conduct KB-50 refueling training for Navy aircraft. After approval by both services, the missions were flown 24 August, the KB-50s refueling McDonnell F3H Demon fighters from Fighter Squadron 21 (VF-21). Missions later in the year, possibly in November, involved refueling Navy Chance Vought F8U-1 Crusaders, the latest Navy fighter at the time. In May 1962 refueling training again occurred with VF-21, at least three Demons being refueled by the 421st.

The 1983 article by Brian Gardner also mentions Marine Corps involvement. In October 1958 24 North American FJ-4B fighters from two Marine squadrons, VMA-212 and VMA-214, needed to cross the Pacific from MCAS Kaneohe, Hawaii, to NAS Atsugi, Japan. KB-50s refueled these fighters near Wake Island, while

Navy North American AJ tankers refueled them near Iwo Jima. I had assumed that these were 421st aircraft, but the unit history for that period notes that the 421st detachment at Wake had ended in September. So either the 421st deployed tankers to Wake for just that operation (not mentioned in the unit history), or some of the Tactical Air Command KB-50s deployed to the Pacific in support of the CASF to Taiwan in that period could have been involved.

The Brian Gardner article actually describes Navy/Marine Corps air refueling efforts going back as far as World War 1 concepts for refueling deploying Navy flying boats to Europe. There were some plans in early 1942 which would have had Navy PBY Catalinas refueling Army B-24 bombers attacking Japan (these were cancelled in favor of the Doolittle raid on Tokyo). Interesting details are covered for the entire Cold War period up to the article's 1983 publication, especially involving the intense operations over North Vietnam, in which Air Force KC-135 tankers, their Navy counterparts, and receivers from all services were involved in a huge joint operation. If anyone would like a copy of this article, please email or otherwise contact me. Thanks!

421st KB-29Ms refueling Navy McDonnell F2H-3 Banshees from USS Wasp. February 1955-Navy Photo



Pay Close Attention!!! What do you think of when you see Apples? Apple Trees.....

What do you think of when you hear stories about Apple Trees? Young George Washington cutting one down.

Well, in honor of our host, the General, the TAC Board has decided to provide a **special treat** for the reunion. **If you sign up for 3 or more of the first 7 events on your Registration Form, your banquet dinner will be free.** It will be up to you to mark it FREE once you have the 3+ events paid for. This is per person.

Book Review By Jim "Pappy" Boyington

In keeping with the holiday season my thoughts have run to giving thanks and to how lucky we all are to have been born when and where. We got a "Pass" on the worst of times.

If you have never experienced the "horror of war", the solitude of prison, or been close to death from starvation: You are better off than 500 million people. If you can go to your place of worship without fear someone will assault or kill you: You are luckier than three billion people. If you have a full fridge, clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep: You are wealthier than 75% of the world's population. If you have money in the bank, in your wallet or a few coins in your purse: You are one of eight of the privileged few among one hundred in the world.

Carroll v. Glines, Col. USAF, retired, co-authored Jimmy Doolittle's autobiography **I Could Never Be So Lucky Again**. A long time admirer of Doolittle, it was my good fortune to acquire a copy of Glines 1964 edition of **Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders**. Very hard to come by. Fortunately it was essentially reprinted in 2000 with the title **The Doolittle Raid: America's Daring First Strike Against Japan** and is available on Amazon.

President Roosevelt pushed for an early strike against the homeland of Japan. A Navy Captain observing the both new aircraft carrier Hornet and the B-25 bomber put two and two together and wondered if such a large plane could be launched from a carrier. His thoughts were passed up the line to Admiral King, Navy Chief. A serious study followed, the concept was blessed.

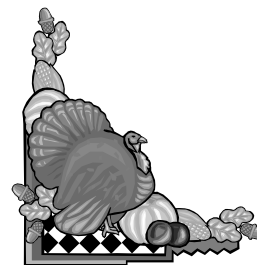
In mid January Hap Arnold Chief of the Army Air Corps agreed. He asked Jimmy Doolittle to head up the Air Corps part of the task, obtain aircraft, modify them, train the crews and proceed to Alameda NAS to load aboard the carrier Hornet. All this with a target date of April 1, 1942.

Doolittle tricked Arnold into letting him lead the mission. When he requested to be assigned to lead the combat part, Arnold told him to check with his chief of staff, General Millard Harmon, knowing full well Doolittle was too valuable to be released. The old "ask your mother trick". Doolittle rushed down the hall to the Chief of Staff's Office and declared Arnold had given him an O.K. providing the Chief of Staff would approve. Not wanting to refuse Arnold, Harmon gave Doolittle the blessing to lead the attack.

We have an abundance of things for which to thank Jimmy Doolittle. Carroll V. Glines, Col. USAF, (Retired) has authored 36 books on aviation and the military. Several focus on the Tokyo Raid. In terms of actual physical damage, not much.

However, the "impregnable" Japanese Homeland now had to be protected. Troops, ships and aircraft were diverted to safeguard the home islands, resulting in fewer resources to oppose our efforts in regaining control of the Pacific. Fewer American lives were lost. Among them, my brother-in-law who survived kamikaze attacks at Okinawa.

In the "Big Picture," I thank the likes of Jimmy Doolittle. We all "stand on the shoulders of giants." These larger than life heroes have inspired generations to rise to the call to defend our nation, free millions from oppression, and maintain the peace.



On a smaller scale, I'm thankful for the many friendships that have entered my life. Friends who shared the experience of living in Japan and operating the Boeing Tri-Motor have endured the longest. Thanks to Nate and Natalie, the TTA Reunions have kept us attached and maintained life's greatest treasures.



"Doolittle's Bomber"
North American B-25B as flown by
Jimmy Doolittle and Richard Cole, "Doolittle Raid"

©John molissen



“How About Today?”

When it comes to service, CMSgt (Ret) Earl Spohr has never hesitated, beginning on the first day of his enlistment at age 19. Joining a high school friend to visit a military recruiting center, he took the Air Force test on a whim. By 10:00 a.m., he'd aced the test—the only one to do so that day. The recruiter asked him “When do you want to join?” “How about today?” Spohr responded. With that he went home to pack his bags, say goodbye to his mom, and by 6:00 p.m. that evening, he was on a train for San Antonio.

Thus began a lifetime of dedicated service. As a young Airman, Spohr volunteered with the Red Cross. Thirty-three years later, he retired as a Chief Master Sergeant, having served tours in Korea, Vietnam, and onboard a B-29. For much of his career he was an enlisted advisor, mentoring young Airmen. His dedication to service reached beyond his military duties, and he currently volunteers with the Shriners, at a hospital, and with the Red Cross. He has also served his city as mayor. “The Air Force has given me a long career, a good life, adventure, and travel—everything you want, a good life! It continues to give to me, and now it's time for me to give back.”

Earl chose to make the Air Force Museum Foundation the sole beneficiary of his IRA. In this way Earl can be sure he leaves a legacy to the Air Force he loved so well...a legacy of service that began without a single hesitation.

*“The Air Force...has given me a good life!
Now it's time for me to give back.”*

CMSgt (Ret) Earl Spohr



Yes! That is our own Earl Spohr of TAC Tankers featured in the Fall 2013 issue of the AF Museum's FRIENDS Journal on page 43. Congrats, Earl.

LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY

Fifty-seven percent of adult Americans don't have a will. Are you one of them?
There are many benefits to thoughtful estate planning. Have you made a plan?
How About Today?

For more information on how to include the Air Force Museum Foundation in your estate plan, contact Mona Vollmer at 937-656-9258, or email mvollmer@afmuseum.com.

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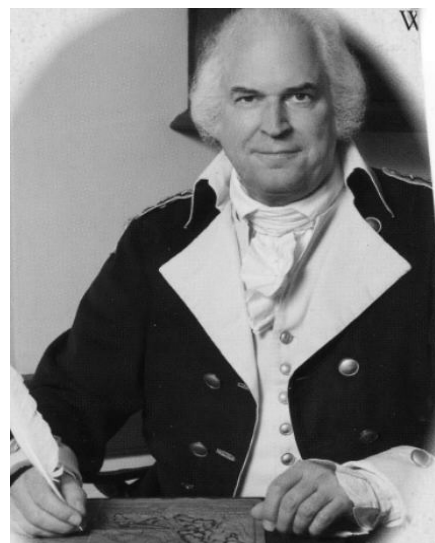
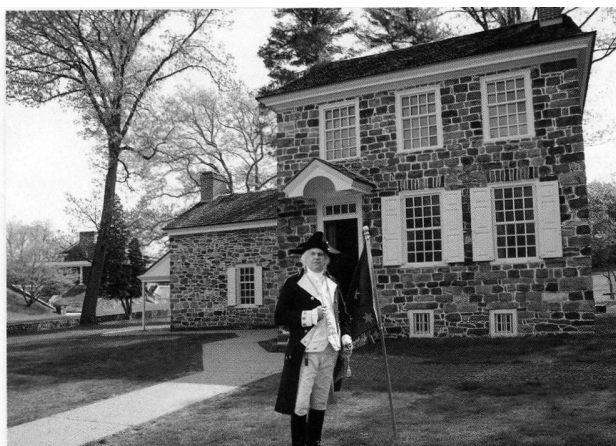
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George is getting ready to greet everyone to Valley Forge next May. He has his Drum and Fife Corp, his Headquarters all prepped and the Chapel awaits us for our Memorial Service on Memorial Day, May 26th, 2014.



See you in Valley Forge...
George Washington