

The JAG Corps Birthday

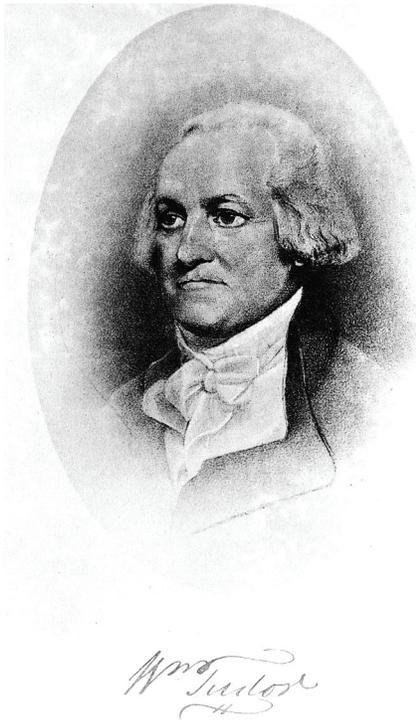
On June 14, 1775, the Second Continental Congress, then meeting in Philadelphia, resolved to immediately raise 10 rifle companies in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, and march them north to join New England volunteers gathered around Boston. That day was the birthday of the Continental Army. We celebrate June 14 every year as our U.S. Army birthday.

The day after creating an Army, the Congress unanimously approved George Washington as the Commander-in-Chief. On June 16, 1775, Washington accepted his commission.

Two weeks later, on July 3, 1775, now General Washington took command of the 16,000 men of the Continental Army, besieging Boston and establishing his General Headquarters at Cambridge, Massachusetts. Shortly thereafter, Washington wrote to the Congress in Philadelphia and asked its members to appoint a Judge Advocate. Washington observed that courts-martial were sitting every day in the new Continental Army, and this meant that a lawyer was very much needed to prosecute these cases. A lawyer also would ensure that the new Articles of War, adopted by the Congress on June 30, 1775, were being properly imple-

mented---and obeyed.

On July 29, 1775, as a result of Washington's urging, the Congress elected John Adams' former law clerk, William Tudor, as the first "Judge Advocate of the Army," with the pay of \$20 a month and the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. The 25-year old Tudor, who had a reputation as an honest, faithful, virtuous, so-



ber, steady and industrious man, immediately joined Washington's general staff.

For the next three years, Judge Advocate General (JAG) Tudor (the position was re-named "Judge Advocate General" in August 1776) travelled with Washington's headquarters. Most of his work involved

courts-martial. Tudor personally conducted trials involving Major Generals Benedict Arnold, Charles Lee, and Philip Schuyler. Tudor resigned as JAG in April 1777, but remained on active duty for an additional year. When he left the Army in 1778, a grateful Congress retired Tudor with the brevet rank of Colonel.

Tudor went on to have a distinguished legal career as a civilian. He served as a magistrate in Massachusetts, as a representative for Boston in the state legislature, and as a state senator for Suffolk. Tudor was the Clerk of the Massachusetts Supreme Court at the time of his death in 1819.

With a birth date of July 29, 1775, our Judge Advocate General's Corps is but 23 days younger than our Army. It is one of the oldest branches in the Army---only the Infantry, Adjutant General, Engineer, Finance, and Quartermaster Corps have older roots. The JAG Corps is older than the United States (since the United States did not exist until the Constitution was ratified in 1789), and older than the Marine Corps and Navy.

This July 29th is our 235th birthday.

By Mr. Fred Borch, Regimental Historian, TJAGLCS, Charlottesville, VA

"If you want to eat the fruit, you have to climb the tree."

- unknown