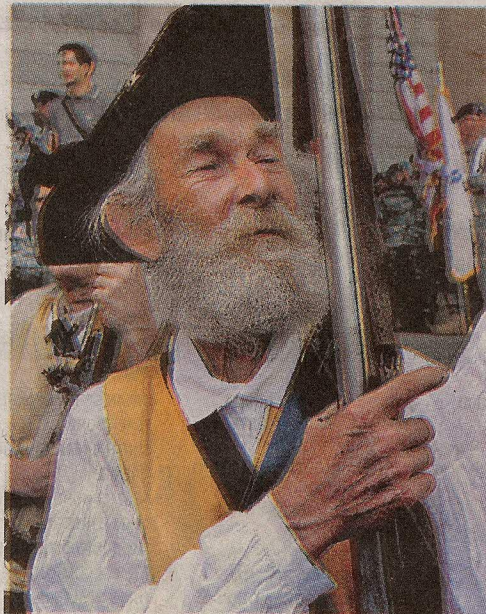


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Parade brings echoes of the past



BILL GREENE/GLOBE STAFF

Mike Bodnar of the Wilmington Minutemen prepared for the parade.

Ancient and Honorables celebrate their 373d year

By Andrew Ryan
GLOBE STAFF

The Confederate battle flag paraded yesterday through the winding streets of downtown Boston can be explained. So can the pikes and lances, and the bonnets and ankle-length dresses. There was even a purpose for the black bearskin shakos — enormous cone-like fur hats fit for Siberia, not a sunny afternoon in June.

Yesterday was June Day, the annual election of officers and sergeants for the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, an only-in-Boston tradition almost as old as the Shawmut Peninsula. That meant a parade filled with antique militias from across the country and echoing blasts of musket fire on streets crowded with bewildered office workers and confused tourists.

“Should we know what this is?” asked

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