

THE WHITE COCAK DE



The Official Newsletter of the Lexington Training Band

Volume 1

Issue 1

“I am sorry to say that no body of men in this Province are so extremely injurious to the peace and tranquility of it as the clergy. They preach sedition openly from their pulpits. (Nay, some of them have gone so far as absolutely to refuse the sacrament to the communicants till they have signed a paper of the most seditious kind, which they have denominated the Solemn League and Covenant). So much with respect to the inhabitants.”

~Letter from Percy to the Duke of Northumberland, July 27, 1774~

UPCOMING SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

July 20, 2002: Southboro Encampment, Southboro, MA

August 10, 2002: Militia Muster, Hartwell Tavern, Minute Man Historical Park

October 12/13, 2002: Battle of Saratoga, Saratoga, New York

MESSAGE FROM THE 1ST SERGEANT

Welcome to the first issue of *The White Cockade!* I hope this will be the first of *many* issues to come. The Lexington Training Band has experienced a productive season so far, having successfully engaged His Majesty's troops from the fields of Lexington and Concord to the redoubts of Crown Point, New York. However, the work of the provincial forces of Massachusetts Bay is far from finished. With the recent reports of General Burgoyne descending from Canada, it appears the LTB will be forced to return to New York to defend its liberties at a little known place named Saratoga. Currently, we have 20 muskets enlisted for the

venture and are planning several drills and a workshop to prepare for this endeavor.

In this month's letter, you will find an article on cartridge box rounds, the lyrics to a period song popular at New England reenactments, a listing of upcoming events and much more!

We are always looking for article submissions, event reviews and comments. Please feel free to send your articles to alex.cain@state.ma.us and mass1775@aol.com.

Your Servant,

Alex Cain

SONGS OF THE PERIOD

O'er the Hills and Far Away

Hark now the drums beat up again
For all true soldier gentlemen
So let us list and march I say
And go over the hills and far away

Chorus:

Over the hills, and o'er the main
To Flanders, Portugal and Spain
Queen Anne commands and we'll obey
And go over the hills and far away

There's twenty shillings on the drum
For him that with us freely comes
'Tis volunteers shall win the day
Over the hills and far away

Come gentlemen that have a mind
To serve a queen that's good and kind
Come list and enter in to pay
And go over the hills and far away

And we shall live more happy lives
Free of squalling brats and wives
Who nag and vex us every day
So its over the hills and far away

Prentice Tom may well refuse
To wipe his angry master's shoes
For now he's free to run and play
Over the hills and far away

No more from sound of drum retreat
When Marlborough and Galway beat
The French and Spaniards every day
Over the hills and far away

AN OVERVIEW OF PRE- REVOLUTIONARY WAR CARTRIDGE BOX ROUND DIMENSIONS

By Alexander R. Cain

In the spring of 1775, Massachusetts residents struggled to equip its fledgling provincial army of minute and militiamen. One problem the Committee of Safety recognized was the need to properly carry bullet rounds,

commonly referred to as cartridges. Although hunting pouches were more commonplace among Massachusetts soldiers, cartridge boxes of French, British and Provincial origin were utilized on April 19, 1775. A short review of Massachusetts's militia laws and resolves on the eve of Lexington and Concord reveals the urgency for the adoption of cartridge boxes by provincial militia men.¹ Yet despite this demand for the adoption of such an item, by 1776 the results were discouraging. For example, of the 678 men and officers in a Bristol County militia regiment, only a mere 274 men had obtained cartridge boxes.²

In light of this attempt, the question arises what did these boxes look like? Naturally, the design varied from maker to maker. A

¹ "Each soldier to provide himself with a good fire arm, a steel or iron ram rod and a spring for same, a worm, a priming wire and brush, a bayonet fitted to his gun, a scabbard and belt thereof, a cutting sword or tomahawk or hatchet, a . . . cartridge box holding fifteen rounds . . . at least, a hundred buckshot, six flints, one pound of powder, forty leaden balls fitted to the gun, a knapsack and blanket, [and] a canteen or wooden bottle to hold one quart [of water]" Journal of Arthur Harris of the Bridgewater Coy of Militia.; "Militia minutemen [who were to] hold themselves in readiness at a minutes warning, compleat in arms and ammunition; that is to say a good and sufficient firelock, bayonet, thirty rounds of powder and ball, pouch and knapsack." Town of Roxbury Resolves, December 26, 1774; The Town of Braintree required each soldier furnish himself with "a good fire lock, bayonet, cartouch box, one pound of powder, twenty-four balls to fitt their guns, twelve flints and a knapsack." Town of Braintree Resolves, January 23, 1775.

² "List of Men & accouterments of each man [illegible words] Regiment in Bristol County [Massachusetts]" from private collection. Dated 1776: "Men including officers - 678, Firearms - 446, Ramrods - 129, Springs - 9, Worms - 160, Priming wires - 193, Brushes - 138, Bayonets - 175, Scabbards - 142, Belts - 181, Cutting swords & hatchets - 255, Cartridge box and powder - 274, Buckshot - 10373, Jackknives - 403, Tow for men - 258 flints for men - 2084, pounds powder - 244 1/2, Bullets - 11934, Knapsack - 365, Blankets - 386, Canteens - 295".

French box from the Siege of Louisbourg varied from a Massachusetts box made for the 1759 campaign against the French. Yet, in light of these differences, the more important question is, given the accuracy of smooth-bore muskets, the intended purpose of a socket bayonet and the shortage of such edged weapons within the Massachusetts army, of those boxes that were present on April 19th, how many rounds did these boxes contain?

It appears that the number of rounds a cartridge box could hold varied from box to box. According to the Reverend Samuel Chandler, the French cartridge boxes he observed during the French and Indian War contained “3 rows, 10 in a row, 30 cartridges and 30 bullets lose.”³ The list of stores for General Braddock’s expedition, dated October 12, 1754, revealed “For service of the two Irish Regiments: . . . Cartouch Boxes with Straps . . . 12 holes . . . 1400; “For service of the Two American Regiments: Cartouch Boxes with straps . . . 12 holes . . . 2000.”⁴ In a letter of Henry Bouquet to Forbes, dated June 14, 1758, the author notes “I have noticed a great inconvenience in the use of cartridge boxes for the provincial troops. They do not know how to make cartridges, or rather, they take too much time. In the woods, they seldom have time or places suitable to make them. These cartridge boxes hold only 9 charges, some twelve, which is not sufficient. I think that their powder horns and pouches would be more useful, keeping the cartridge box, however, to use in case of a sudden or night attack.”⁵

Artifacts recovered from the British man-of-war Invincible, wrecked in the Solent while sailing for the invasion of Louisbourg in 1758, also provide detailed information about cartridge boxes. Among the items recovered in 1979 was a nine-hole belly box with part of the leather flap still intact.⁶ In the “General Orders

³ “Extracts from the Diary of Rev. Samuel Chandler . . .” New England Historical Genealogical Register, Vol. XVII (1863), p. 346-354.

⁴ Stanley Pargellis, “Military Affairs in North America 1748-1765: Selected Documents from the Cumberland Papers in Windsor Castle, p. 486 (1936), p. 2.

⁵ “The Papers of Henry Bouquet”, Vol. II, p. 88.

⁶ The flap has a GR cipher and could have belonged to either a marine or one of the

of 1757 Issued by the Earl of Loudoun and Phineas Lyman in the Campaign Against the French”, the orders indicate effective “July 2d, 1757, at Fort Edward, that Each Man be provided with 24 Rounds of Powder & Ball.” In 1758, the amount of ammunition carried was increased to 36 rounds as found in Montpenny’s Orderly Book. On September 17, 1758, the “Brigade Major (was) to review the men for duty dayly on the parade before they mount Guard & see that they have their blankets & provisions, & also 36 rounds of ammunition.”

Provincial boxes also varied in the number of rounds on the eve of Lexington and Concord. A belly box recovered in Middlesex County had twelve rounds with an additional seven added when a second block was nailed to the first.⁷ Another box unearthed in Southern Massachusetts had 23 rounds,⁸ while a box on display at Fort Ticonderoga had 24 rounds.⁹ Militia laws and resolves also provided some insight into how many rounds a cartridge box should have, although it appears a *minimum* number was left undecided. The Town of Bridgewater expected its soldiers to be equipped with a “pouch containing a cartridge box that will hold fifteen rounds of cartridges, *at least*.”¹⁰ Roxbury required every militia and minute man to carry “thirty rounds of gunpowder and ball.”¹¹ Finally, when the Commonwealth adopted Timothy Pickering’s drill in 1776 for its soldiers and militia, the number of rounds for a cartridge box was never addressed.¹²

Clearly, the variety of cartridge box rounds posed a problem for Massachusetts

invasion force. For a detailed color picture, see Brian Lavery, “The Royal Navy’s First Invincible”, pp. ix, 70 (1988).

⁷ This box may be viewed at Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord, Massachusetts.

⁸ George C. Neumann, Collector’s Encyclopedia of the American Revolution, (Texas, 1997), p. 68.

⁹ Ibid, p. 74.

¹⁰ Journal of Arthur Harris of Bridgewater. (Emphasis added)

¹¹ Town Resolve of Roxbury, December 26, 1774.

¹² One may argue this is evidence of the variety of cartridge boxes and their number of rounds within the colony.

militia on April 19, 1775. However, as Lt. William Sutherland recalled, “[The] fire now *never slackened* . . . as we left Concord, but always found it heavier . . . where we saw these partys upon the heights.”¹³ Whether the heavy and constant fire was attributable to the number of militiamen on the field, the supplementing of cartridge boxes with pouches or both is an issue that remains to be unresolved.

EVENT REVIEWS

Crown Point

Crown Point finally allowed the LTB to demonstrate to both the CL and the forces of evil (Brits/Savages/Germans/Flying monkeys/etc.) that the LTB knows how to fight and how to fight hard.

We arrived late Friday afternoon to set up camp with the 4th Middlesex. Eight of us were present as the LTB. (A 9th, Mr. Dan aka Patrick Higgins took a wrong turn somewhere and was found amongst the midst of rowdy and immoral sailors.) After an uneventful evening, the LTB awoke to patrol duty along the shores of Lake Champlain. Although the patrol took us through the woods, fields and shorelines of Crown Point, we met no hostile forces. Despite the uneventful task, the powers that be dispatched us for a second time to locate and dislodge any detachments of the British force located beyond one of our redoubts. Meeting no opposition for a second time, we took it upon ourselves to probe the British camp. It was our hope to ascertain numbers and admittedly stir up the hornet's nest. Yet, despite our best intentions, they were dashed as we heard the rumble of thunder in the distance. Choosing between the safety of our camp or the possibility of electrocution, we chose the camp.

We spent most of the day under the 4th Middlesex's dining fly trying to stay dry. In between bursts of rain, we managed to visit sutler's row, where the LTB collectively put many sutler's children through college. Around 2:00 in the afternoon, the LTB fielded with the rest of the American army to meet General

Burgoyne's army. Sadly, the British quickly occupied a high ridge and maintained control of the battlefield throughout the engagement. Despite the militia's efforts, under our very capable Captain, Steve Tascovics, to hold the left flank and then the center, we were swept off the field under heavy fire and bayonet charges.

That evening, some of the members of the LTB attended a tavern held in the ruins of the fortifications. The evening was filled with songs, stories and a game started by Colonel Bailey's 2d Mass Regiment called "What does LTB stand for?" So far, the guys from the 2d Mass have, among other names:

"Let's Try Bowling"
"Like the Taste of Beer"
"Let's Try Belching"

In response to Colonel Bailey's 2d Massachusetts' game, we have come up with the title of:

"Let's Take Bailey's women"

But I digress.

Sunday, the LTB was sporting for a fight, as several of our men pleaded with the officer's to unleash us and allow us to fight the British. We were reigned in until late Sunday morning when we finally took the field. The LTB was grouped into two separate militia companies along a ridge on the left flank. Our orders were simple: we do not move, we do not retreat.

About fifteen minutes after our arrival, British artillery was detected along our extreme left flank. Members of the 4th Middlesex and LTB were dispatched to deal with them. After a tense half hour of hiding in the brush, we struck . . . drawing the fire of rangers and savages. At the same time, the Corps of Select Marksmen, Iroquois savages and the 40th Foot, three well disciplined groups, lashed out at the remainder of militia.

The fighting was intense in both locations, as the militia refused to move from its position, even as the American forces crumbled around them. When reinforcements relieved the militia snipers, we were directed into the woods. Despite clawing our way through thick brush, we hit the Corps of Selectmen hard along their left flank,

¹³ Report of Lieutenant William Sutherland to Major Kemble, April 27, 1775.

forcing them to withdraw. As the fight continued, the LTB/4th detachment emerged from the brush, took up a position behind a small knoll and proceeded to snipe at the 1st Foot and a gaggle of highlanders. Yet, despite our best efforts, we were eventually pushed from our position and forced to withdraw.

The battle was both heavy and rapid. Coupled with the heat, it made for unpleasant work. Halfway through the battle, I had to take myself out because I started to show signs of heat exhaustion. Larry Connley, to his credit, also took himself out of the fight to remain with me and make sure I was OK. He secured water, shade and food for me. The guy gave up an additional hour fight to remain with me just to make sure I was OK. He didn't have to, but he did. So, I wanted to publicly thank him, as well as Bill Poole and Myles McConnon, for their concern for me (Although Myles...I did notice my bag of candy had decreased significantly after you retrieved my car for me...).

As I sat in the midst of a field, I was able to observe our guys as they fought once again like wolves, refusing to retreat and defending every inch of ground they held. For every piece of land the forces of evil (Brits/Savages/Germans/Flying monkeys/etc.) took, they had to earn it. Sadly, the Brits eventually took the field, but not before they offered the militia company their praise and salute.

A couple of side notes:

I think the motto for the weekend should have been...Have you seen Colin? The man was everywhere doing everything (including belting out period songs in the Tavern Saturday night). Furthermore, his kit is great.... correction, it's outstanding. Although it's simple, it's effective. His goal to portray a poor farmer is well done. Heck, take a look at the photos Bob Elliott took. He looks like he crawled out from under a rock!

Also, Dan Higgins (aka Patrick Higgins) informed me at the tavern Saturday night the LTB was the talk of the weekend and that many people came up to talk with him about the group. Nice job everyone.

Lastly, on Sunday morning, as we waited for the British to arrive, American riflemen and snipers kept reporting an officer in a red coat and striped

trousers on the field, perhaps part of a larger British force. It took orders all the way up to the battalion major to ease the scouts that it was "just Alex Cain from the LTB." Realizing the trouble I may have posed, I want to assure each of you that a purple smock and checked trousers are being made for your benefit and viewing pleasure! And speaking of checks, it appears that members of the LTB and the 2d Mass are engaged in a dubious plot to obtain checked smocks and breeches. It's bad enough that both units are fashion challenged (Saul excluded), but to expand upon this disability? As the man who brought the checked look into style, I will not accept pretenders to the throne! Wear that checked smock at your own risk!



Members of the LTB at Crown Point