

Accoutrements of militia soldiers on the eve of the Revolutionary War Part 2, bayonets and cartridge boxes

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Introduction

This essay focuses primarily on the prevalence and use of bayonets and secondarily on cartridge boxes by militia (minute companies are considered as a special component of the militia) at the beginning of the Revolution. Four independent lines of evidence are considered:

- Documents of the period
- Contemporary context
- Technical capability and capacity
- Militia battle tactics

A number of towns organizing militia and minute companies resolved that bayonets be among the accoutrements obtained by soldiers.¹ However, these warrants did not necessarily result in the acquisition of the stipulated equipment. The combination of evidence convergences in a way to suggest that few militia units were fully equipped with bayonets and cartridge boxes on the eve of and early during the Revolutionary War.

Discussion

Returns of "warlike" stores reported to the Provincial Congress on April 14, 1775 included a total of 21,549 muskets and 10,108 bayonets about one bayonet for every two muskets (Massachusetts Provincial Congress, 1838, 756).² At the end of April 1775 General Gage agreed that the residents of Boston could leave providing they deposited their weapons with the selectman. Those that left turned in 1778 long arms and 973 bayonets, a ratio of about one bayonet for every two muskets.³ Neumann (1998, 121-166) illustrates forty-six Revolutionary War American muskets many of which have a New England provenance. Twenty-six appear to be modified to fit a bayonet as determined by the presence of a bayonet lug.⁴ This broader geographic sample is consistent with the two returns above in that about one in two muskets are modified to accept bayonets. Two other returns from Massachusetts militia units document a smaller ratio of bayonets to muskets—one of about two bayonets for every five muskets⁵ and another of about one bayonet for every five muskets.⁶ The latter return is for a total of forty-three companies raised by five commands of which only one command of eight companies listed bayonets

(three bayonets for every four muskets). These five samples, if representative of the population, confirm that bayonets were in short supply prior to and early in the Revolutionary War and that a number of companies may not have had any bayonets.

Consider this account of the Battle of Bunker Hill June 17, 1775 that is consistent with the returns above: "The breast-work on the outside of the fort was abandoned; our ammunition was expended, and but few of our troops had bayonets to affix to their muskets" (Swett, 1827, 30). There were 14,000 Massachusetts militia (including minute companies) at the siege of Boston. However, it is estimated that the battle involved between 2,400 and 3,200 troops from Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts under the command of Colonel William Prescott. How many of them possessed bayonets and how representative this contingent might have been with regard to the rest of the New England army is not known.

The documentation and surviving examples of weapons suggests that even though thousands of bayonets were manufactured in Europe and used by European troops in North America for some reason they were not readily available to the colonial militia. The large number of surviving blacksmith forged American bayonets⁷ further evinces that European bayonets were in short supply among the militia (Neumann, 1991, 45-50). Cain (online) argues that two factors—economics and policy—influenced the paucity of bayonets. Making bayonets was not profitable for blacksmiths and government policy discouraged bayonets because they were not especially useful for the type of warfare in colonial America. The bayonet charge used so effectively by the King's troops in the open field was not effective in wooded terrain (Spring, 2008, Chap. 10, especially 255-262).⁸ Some period documentation, however, indicates that government policy actively encouraged the use of bayonets.⁹ Because no open field battles employing linear tactics with bayonet charges were fought in New England, except for chance individual encounters, the question of the effectiveness of the bayonet in New England terrain is moot.

Cartridge boxes also were in short supply as evidenced by the situation at Bunker Hill. "Every man was immediately supplied with two flints, and a gill of powder with fifteen balls to form into cartridges, but nearly all of them were destitute of cartridge boxes, employing powder horns only; and scarcely any two of their guns agreeing in calibre, they were obliged to hammer their balls to a proper size for the pieces" (Swett, 1827, 25). General Washington issued orders at Cambridge in 1776 to remedy the lack of cartridge boxes: "Such of the Regiments as are in want of Leather Shot-bags with Straps, to hold Ball and Buck-Shot, may have them by applying to the Adjutant-General; it is intended that every Non-Commissioned Officer and Soldier be supplied"¹⁰ and "The General is surprised to find the Militia applying for Cartouch Boxes and other Accoutrements, when he had not a doubt, but they would have come compleatly equipt-- As the case however is otherwise, he directs that they should be served with Powder-horns and Shot pouches, in lieu of Cartouch Boxes..."¹¹

Technical factors also influenced the availability, suitability, and quality of bayonets and cartridge boxes. There was no interchangeability of parts at the time. Bayonets were hand fitted to individual muskets and numbered to that musket and the musket and bayonet issued as part of a stand of arms to outfit an individual soldier (Bailey, 2009, 96). A bayonet might have to be modified to use with another musket. As noted, arms carried by American militia varied greatly as to type and caliber. Fitting a

bayonet to an individual weapon required that either the bayonet or gun or both be modified.¹² Modifications to civilian fowlers and muskets would require brazing or soldering on a bayonet lug and cutting back the forend if it extended to the muzzle. Although they appear simple, sophisticated metalworking techniques and knowledge of metallurgy are necessary to manufacture a bayonet. The triangular blade is made of steel and forge welded to a softer iron socket (Prengel, 1771, 13-15; Bailey, 2009, 96, 265). These parts had to be heat treated and tempered properly so as not to break. Special swedges¹³ are needed to forge the fluted (fullered) triangular shape of the blade.¹⁴ Local village and town blacksmiths would have the metallurgical knowledge to forge weld iron and steel, but how many would have the special swedges to form the fullered triangular blade? They, however, likely could forge flat blades and possibly non-fullered triangular blades (see, e.g., Neumann, 1991, 49,50).

Manufacturing quality cartridge boxes also required a high level of technical competency and quality components. Indeed, the poor quality and design of cartridge boxes was a major concern of General Washington throughout the Revolution as attested to by two examples from his correspondence on the subject.

The Cartouch Boxes made in this Country, are generally very bad, and I see little chance of their being made Substantial and fit to turn the weather until we can bring our manufacture of leather to a greater perfection; which is only to be done by letting it lay much longer in the Vats, than we can afford, under our present wants.¹⁵

I have long found the ill effect of the Wretched Cartouch Boxes generally in use, and I am very glad to find that Colo. Lee has found out a kind that will preserve the Ammunition; you will admit him to have them made and I should be glad of one by way of pattern.¹⁶

Militia soldiers were not accustomed to using either bayonets or cartridge boxes. There is no documentation that New England minute companies ever trained as a regiment and practiced linear formation battle tactics in the third quarter of the 18th century (Galvin, 2006, 67). Marching on the town common and practicing the manual of arms would not train soldiers in the use of the bayonet and how to maneuver skillfully in massed linear formation.¹⁷ One contemporary account attributed the success of the King's troops against American soldiers early in the war "...to a better supply, and a more dexterous and effective use of bayonets, which gave them a great superiority over Americans, who were poorly furnished with this kind of arms, and were by no means expert in the use of them."¹⁸ After Baron de Steuben introduced a new drill and discipline (Lockhart, 2008) crack regiments of the Continental Line became as effective as the British in the use of the bayonet later in the war. But this essay focuses on militia units at the beginning of the revolution.

This F&I War account attests to the militia's unfamiliarity with cartridges and cartridge boxes:

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 hornes and pouches for carrying bullets would be more useful, keeping the cartridge box, however, to use in case of a sudden night attack.¹⁹

Clearly, both bayonets and cartridge boxes were not only in short supply in general at the beginning of the Revolutionary War but also militia soldiers were unpracticed and unskilled in their use. Traditional edged weapons carried by militia include hatchets, tomahawks, cutlasses, and short swords as stipulated in many militia regulations; bayonets are less frequently listed (Cain, online; Neumann, 1998). Powder horns and shot pouches are essential for carrying loose powder, balls, and shot and were staple militia accoutrements.²⁰ Indeed, the experience of the British in North America caused the light infantry and rangers to emulate the backwoods fighting techniques of the American militia and to carry tomahawks, horns, and pouches (Spring, 2008, Chap. 10; Bailey, 2009, 120, Chap. 6, 260-263).

Although it is beyond the scope of this essay to analyze in detail the battle tactics employed by the militia in New England early in the war as, for example, during the battle of Concord, the pursuit of the King's troops during their withdrawal to Boston, and the battle of Bunker Hill, it is worth briefly reflecting upon the fighting style of the militia that developed during fighting Indians for over a hundred years before 1775 and how that influenced the accoutrements carried by militia soldiers. Malone (2000) notes, "by the end of [summer 1676] soldiers from all the New England colonies [instead of volley firing in massed formation] were shooting at individuals, using cover when fired upon, and moving through the woods quietly and carefully" (91). "In later colonial wars and the American Revolution, English colonists would further refine and develop this doctrine"²¹ (100). He further states, "Hatchets, or tomahawks, designed for the Indian trade became standard sidearms in some units, replacing the traditional swords"²² (98). The only time the militia could be said to have engaged the regulars in something even remotely resembling open field linear formation battle was at the opening shots on Lexington Green. This mismatch, however, between about eighty brave citizens waiting on the town green and several hundred regulars deploying from columns into ranks is hardly a true example of linear formation combat. At North Bridge after the initial volleys "[m]ilitary order and regularity of proceeding were soon after broken up" (Ripley, 1827, 28). And later in the day as the militia pursued the regulars on their withdrawal to Boston "[t]he minutemen were fighting ... with no discipline or organization whatsoever. One of the provincial participants wrote, 'Each sought his own place and opportunity to attack and annoy the enemy from behind trees, rocks, fences, and buildings as seemed most convenient'" (Tourtellot, 1963, 179). They produced a continual and effective harassing fire from ambush during the British withdrawal to Boston along what is now called Battle Road. The accoutrements carried by militia reflected this fighting style.²³ As noted the effective use of bayonets was largely obviated in terrain conducive to ambush and so lacking them was not necessarily a disadvantage. Similarly the lack of cartridge boxes was not a disadvantage because using natural and built barriers for cover allowed time to load using a powder horn and ball.

Evidently few New England militia units on the eve of the Revolutionary War and during the first few battles were completely equipped with bayonets and cartridge boxes. Indeed, a company so equipped would be the exception. In general, these data suggest that re-enactors recreating this period would increase the authenticity of their impersonations by having a few bayonets scattered among the ranks which can be fixed to their muskets with the majority of soldiers being equipped with a hatchet, tomahawk,

cutlass, or hunting sword. If it can be documented that their company possessed many bayonets or, conversely, few or none, they should emulate what is known of their unit. The use of a cartridge box is mandatory for battle re-enactments. Complementing the cartridge box with a shot pouch and powder horn would match the accoutrements typically carried by militia and minute companies.

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¹ Three examples from those listed by Cain (online) were chosen because they have a provenance and are dated to the period considered herein. "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 to furnish himself with "a good fire lock, bayonett, 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). "The Third Bristol County Militia Regiment wanted their men to have the following at muster: "a good firearm with steel or iron ramrod, and spring to retain the same, a worm, priming wire and brush, and a bayonet fitted to his gun, a tomahawk or hatchet, a pouch containing a cartridge box that will hold fifteen rounds of cartridges at least, a hundred of buckshot, a jack knife, and tow for wadding, six flints, one pound of powder, forty leaden balls fitted to his gun, a knapsack and blanket, a canteen or wooden bottle sufficient to hold one quart" (Continental Journal and Weekly Adviser, January 22, 1778).

² Jim Hollister, Education Coordinator/Historic Weapons Supervisor, Minute Man National Historical Park in an email communication January 8, 2014 provided the following documentation from 1757:

Be it further enacted, That one half of the Non-Commission Officers and private Soldiers, liable to train, shall be furnished with a good Bayonet with a Steel Blade, not less than fifteen Inches long, fitted to his Gun....

And be it further enacted, That the Captain or chief Officer of each Foot Company, as soon as may be after the Commencement of this Act, and before the tenth Day of March next, is hereby enjoined to call his Company together under Arms, and after enquiring into the State of them, is hereby impowered and directed to choose from among said Arms, such as he shall judge most suitable to be provided with Bayonets, to the Amount of one half the whole Number....

He comments, :, "What I find interesting is that the April 14, 1775 inventory lists 21,549 firearms and 10,108 bayonets; just 667 short of the one bayonet for every two firearms ratio dictated by law. In October of 1774, the Provincial Congress allocated 10,000 Pounds for the purchase of 5,000 arms and bayonets."

³ "Mr. Henderson Inches, who left Boston this day, attended, and informed the committee, that the inhabitants of Boston had agreed with the general, to have liberty to leave Boston with their effects, provided that they lodged their arms with the selectmen of that town, to be by them kept during the present dispute, and that, agreeably to said agreement, the inhabitants had, on yesterday, lodged 1778 fire-arms, 634 pistols, 973 bayonets, and 38 blunderbusses, with their selectmen. (Committee of Safety report, Massachusetts Provincial Congress, p. 526)

⁴ Several fowlers in this group have cut back forends, which along with a bayonet lug suggest a modification to accept a bayonet for militia use. A cut back forend alone without a bayonet stud on a fowler is not necessarily an indication that a bayonet was fitted. Hunting fowlers could also have been modified in this way for militia use to make it easier to grip and remove a ramrod encrusted with powder fouling (Neumann, 1998, 166).

⁵ "List of Men & accoutrements 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" (Cain, online, http://www.18cnewenglandlife.org/18cnel/equipment_of_mass_militia.htm; viewed 11/16/13)

⁶ Of returns of arms submitted to the Provincial Congress on June 15, 1775 by five militia officers seeking commissions in the Provincial Army only one, underlined in the report to highlight it quoted below, includes bayonets. About 79% (estimated 1768 firearms for 2230 soldiers) of the soldiers had serviceable firearms and of these only 22% had bayonets.

“The committee appointed to consider the claims and pretensions of the several gentlemen hereafter named, who suppose that they have just grounds to expect of this honorable Congress, that they should receive commissions appointing them severally to be chief colonels in the Massachusetts army, now raising for the defence of the rights of this and the neighboring colonies, namely: Col. Glover, Gen. Heath, Col. David Brewer, Col. Robinson, Col. Woodbridge, Col. Little, Col. Henshaw, and Col. Jonathan Brewer, beg leave to report the following state of facts to this Congress, viz: That the colonels Glover, David Brewer, Woodbridge, Little, Henshaw, and Jonathan Brewer, have exhibited their claims to your committee, and according to the returns which the said gentlemen have respectively made to us, the said Col. Glover has levied ten companies, making in the whole 505 men, inclusive of officers, and about three quarters of the said number armed with effective firelocks; who are willing and choose to serve in the said army, under him the said Glover; all now at Marblehead: That the said David Brewer has levied nine companies, amounting, inclusive of officers, to the number of 465 men, who choose to serve under him as their colonel; and that 307 of the said men are armed with effective fire-arms; and that said companies, excepting 34 men who are on their way to head quarters, are posted at Roxbury, Dorchester, and Watertown: That the said Woodbridge has levied eight companies, amounting, inclusive of officers, to the number of 354 men, who choose to serve under him as their chief colonel, and that 273 of the said men, are armed with good effective firelocks, and that all the said men, excepting seven, are now in the camp at Cambridge; the said seven men are on the road hither:

And that the said Little has raised eight companies, according to General Ward's return, amounting, inclusive of officers, to the number of 509 men, who choose to serve under him as their chief colonel; and all the said men are armed with good effective firelocks, and 382 of them with good bayonets, fitted to their firelocks; and that seven of the said companies are at the camp in Cambridge, and one company at and one company at Cape Ann, by order of the committee of safety: And that the said Jonathan Brewer has levied eight companies, amounting, inclusive of officers, to the number of 397 men, who choose to serve under him, the said Jonathan, as their chief colonel; and that 302 of the said men are armed with good firelocks; and that all the said men, excepting 27 who are on the road hither, are posted at Cambridge and Brookline; and the said Brewer supposes, from accounts he has received, that one Capt. Murray is on the road from Hatfield hither with a full company....” (Massachusetts Provincial Congress, June 15, 1775, p. 338, 339)

⁷ On February 15, 1775 the Provincial Congress resolved: “it is recommended to the towns and districts in this colony, that they encourage such persons as are skilled in the manufacturing of firearms and bayonets, diligently to apply themselves thereto, for supplying such of the inhabitants as may still be deficient. And for the encouragement of American “manufacturers” of fire arms and bayonets, it is further Resolved, that this Congress will give the preference to, and purchase from them, so many effective arms and bayonets as can be delivered in a reasonable time, upon notice given to this Congress at its next session” (Massachusetts Provincial Congress, p. 103).

⁸ “A similar pattern [to that of Freeman’s Farm and King’s Mountain] occurred at Guilford Courthouse during the attack on the second rebel line, where, as Cornwallis put it, ‘the excessive thickness of the woods rendered our bayonets of little use and enabled a broken enemy to make frequent stands with irregular fire’ in Spring (2008, 258).

⁹ Jim Hollister, Education Coordinator/Historic Weapons Supervisor, Minute Man National Historical Park in an email communication January 8, 2014 stated, “...I do not agree that the Provincial government discouraged their [bayonets] use because of the irregular nature of military operations in America. Here are two laws passed by the General Court of Massachusetts in 1711 and 1757 (to which I am indebted to Rob Welch for his excellent and meticulous compilation):

ACTS and LAWS Passed by the Great and General Court or Assembly of Her Majesty’s Province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New-England; Begun and Held at Boston upon Wednesday the Thirtieth Day of May, 1711; And Continued by several Prorogations unto Wednesday the Twelfth of March following, and then Met.

An Act for further Regulating of the Militia.

WHEREAS in the Fifth Article of the Act for Regulating of the Militia, among other things therein mentioned, "Every Listed Soldier, and other Householder (except "Troopers) is to be provided with a good Sword or Cutlash, under Penalty in the said Act "mentioned:" And whereas it is found by Experience, That Bayonets are of more Use, as well for Offence as Defence; Be it therefore Enacted by the Governor, Council, and Representatives, in General Court assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That, from and after the Twentieth Day of June next, every Person in the Town of Boston, who is obliged by the aforesaid Act to appear upon an Alarm at the Place of Rendezvous, or where the Chief Officer doth appoint, (except Troopers) shall be provided with a good Goose-necked Bayonet with Socket, fit to fix over the Muzzle of his Musket, under the like Penalty, as in the said Act is mentioned, for not being provided with a Sword or Cutlash.

And this from 1757...

Be it further enacted, That one half of the Non-Commission Officers and private Soldiers, liable to train, shall be furnished with a good Bayonet with a Steel Blade, not less than fifteen Inches long, fitted to his Gun, with a Scabbard for the same, for which Bayonet and Scabbard there shall be paid out of the publick Treasury not exceeding seven Shillings; and that the Captain or chief Officer of each Foot Company, shall take effectual Care that they be so provided; and an Account thereof shall be presented by said Officer to the Governour and Council for Allowance and Payment; for which Bayonet and Scabbard each Non-Commission Officer and Soldier so provided, shall be accountable to this Government, unless under the Age of twenty-one Years; and for such as are Minors their Parents, Guardians or Masters respectively shall be so accountable: and each Non Commission Officer and Soldier (Drummers excepted) shall upon every training Day-Muster, Review or Alarm (after they are provided with Bayonets as aforesaid) appear with the same, on Penalty of two Shillings for each Neglect.

And be it further enacted, That the Captain or chief Officer of each Foot Company, as soon as may be after the Commencement of this Act, and before the tenth Day of March next, is hereby enjoined to call his Company together under Arms, and after enquiring into the State of them, is hereby impowered and directed to choose from among said Arms, such as he shall judge most suitable to be provided with Bayonets, to the Amount of one half the whole Number: And the respective Soldier or Soldiers to whom such selected Arms belong, shall observe and obey such Directions and Orders respecting their being provided with Bayonets, as he or they shall receive from the Captain or chief Officer of the Company, on Penalty of twenty Shillings for Non-observance of, or Disobedience to such Directions and Orders as he or they shall receive for the Purposes aforesaid.

What I find interesting is that the April 14, 1775 inventory lists 21,549 firearms and 10,108 bayonets; just 667 short of the one bayonet for every two firearms ratio dictated by law. In October of 1774, the Provincial Congress allocated 10,000 Pounds for the purchase of 5,000 arms and bayonets.

¹⁰ General Orders, Head Quarters, Cambridge, February 15, 1776; http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mgw:1:/temp/~ammem_sYIW::

¹¹ General Orders, Head Quarters, Cambridge, February 16, 1776; http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mgw:7:/temp/~ammem_XZmN::

¹² During the French & Indian War "At least one blacksmith sought to cash-in on the shortage of proper arms by offering to produce bayonets for the provincials. Jonathan Dakin 'at the Blue Ball, near the Mill Bridge in Boston...' advertised that he would 'undertake to supply the Province with Bayonets, to be made Workman like, and of good Stuff; without which he knows they will no Ways answer the End for which they are to be made...' Further illustrating the chaos is a petition of 'Samuel Smith Capt. Of the Military Foot Company' dated October 10, 1758. Smith related that he had contracted with a local Blacksmith to provide him with bayonets, although 'The Bayonets appeared well & handsomely made and the Smith demands Six Shillings for each of them', the arrangement produced only six bayonets as 'the guns being of different Sizes the Smith grew discouraged in proceeding to make more' (Mullins, 2008, 120).

¹³ A swedge is a large iron block with various shapes used to forge different implements.

¹⁴ Email communication from Clay Smith, master gunsmith October 10, 2013: “Special swedges are needed for the blade and a monkey tool for the shank which is welded to the flat plate that is folded to make the socket.”

¹⁵ George Washington to Continental Congress War Board, March 6, 1778 (http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mgw:1:/temp/~ammem_NYeO::)

¹⁶ George Washington to William Heath, June 23, 1777 http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mgw3&fileName=mgw3b/gwpage003.db&recNum=301&tempFile=./temp/~ammem_XfrS&filecode=mgw&next_filecode=mgw&itemnum=1&ndocs=100

¹⁷ No battles in New England were fought between American militia and minute companies and opposing British regulars in open field and large-scale linear formation combat during the first year of the war. American troops employed tactics that enabled them to fight behind cover that included stonewalls, trees, buildings, and fortifications, which they learned fighting Indians for decades and during the French and Indian War. They employed this tactic chasing and harassing the King's troops from Concord and Lexington to Boston along what is now known as Battle Road and at the battle of Bunker Hill. Except during isolated individual encounters, there was no need for bayonets.

¹⁸ Murdoch, D.H. (ed.), 1979, *Rebellion in America: a contemporary British viewpoint 1765-1783*: Clio Press, Ltd., Oxford, p. 430.

¹⁹ Part of a letter from Col. Bouquet to Gen. Forbes in Grinslade (2007), p. 5

²⁰ Karl, H., 2013, *Accoutrements of militia soldiers on the eve of the Revolutionary War: Part 1, powder horns and shot pouches*: unpublished Lincoln Minute Men Quarter Master of Musket Note

²¹ Robert Roger's twenty-eight rules or plan of discipline of “ranging” are an example of this refinement (Roberts, 2005, 58-65). Article I and XIII provide clues to the accoutrements carried by the rangers. Article I: “... equipped, each with a fire-lock, sixty rounds of powder and ball, and a hatchet...” (58). Because cartridge boxes at the time typically held about 20 cartridges or fewer, this implies that the rangers carried powder horns and shot pouches. No bayonet is mentioned, which is consistent with Article XIII: “... [when you have] an opportunity of rushing upon them with hatchets and cutlasses ...” (62).

²² Two redcoats were killed at North Bridge—one as he lay wounded with a hatchet (Adams, 1850, 9). Militia soldiers were composed primarily of farmers. Because a hatchet is a common farm tool, it is likely that farmers would have equipped themselves with it as an accoutrement (indeed, hatchets were among the accoutrements stipulated in many resolves authorizing militia and minute companies).

²³ Karl in an unpublished manuscript, *Accoutrements of militia soldiers on the eve of the Revolutionary War: Part 1, powder horns and shot pouches*, Note discusses the accoutrements carried by militia and minute companies. He notes, “Horns are ideal powder storage containers; they are tough and elastic and when constructed well waterproof. In contrast, cartridges are fragile and easily damaged. Cartridge boxes are not waterproof and hardly water resistant.” Owing to this property, horns may have provided an advantage in the “rough and tumble” ambush style of fighting. For a copy contact Herman Karl at hkarl@comcast.net.