



#3 1996

## A Chronology Of The Revolutionary War *with emphasis on Bedford County, Pennsylvania's role*

### Continued

## 1775: The British Relinquish Boston

The siege of Boston did not end with the rout of the American Patriots at Breed's Hill and Bunker Hill. If anything, that confrontation goaded them to continue the siege if only to get even with the British. Prior to the battle on the Charlestown Peninsula, the colonial troops had been accused of being rough and undisciplined. Their refusal to lift the siege earned them another epithet: obstinate. Through the winter of 1775/76, despite shortages of victuals and other supplies, the Patriot stranglehold on the city of Boston continued through sheer obstinance and perseverance. A point had to be proven by the colonials; they would not back down now. The trail of civil discontent that had been commenced by the instigation of the Coercive Acts had traveled through Lexington and Concord and ultimately led to this siege of Boston. Too much Patriot blood and emotion had been spilled already. If the Americans gave in now there might not be recourse for any justice. There was the possibility that the British Parliament might not only take vengeance on Massachusetts-Bay (and the various colonies which had tried to help her), but indeed might enact even harsher Acts to restrict colonial rights and privileges.

The British continued to accept their role as the captive in the effort to prove a point also. With an open door to the Atlantic, General Gage could easily have left at any point. The British troops complained to their commanders but to no avail. If they vacated Boston they would be admitting defeat. Great Britain had succeeded in ousting the French from North America only ten years earlier and had gained strategic footholds in Africa, India and elsewhere throughout the world; she was truly becoming an *Empire* in every sense of the word. She would not admit defeat - especially at the hands of such a rabble as the American colonists. To King George III and a majority of the Members of Parliament, the American colonies and their inhabitants were no more special than any of the other colonies scattered throughout the empire. In the opinion of a majority of the residents of the motherland, the Americans did not even deserve citizen status equal to themselves. Was that not one of the primary reasons the Coercive Acts were imposed on Boston ~ to punish her inhabitants for presuming to possess rights equal to other *Englishmen*? To allow the colonists to have their own way and regain control of the city would be seen as a direct insult not only to General Gage and his army, but to the superiority of the British Empire. Indeed, the British would stay put until the colonials themselves would go home and accede defeat.

Through the late summer of 1775 the Americans reinforced their fortifications around Boston. To the west of the Charlestown Peninsula new redoubts were constructed on Cobble Hill and Ploughed



Hill. Now and then, through the remainder of 1775, both sides engaged in small-scale raids and skirmishing. The British cannon would occasionally fire upon the American camp, but no formal battle was started by either side. For the most part, both armies were simply waiting each other out.

General George Washington sent a dispatch to the President of Congress dated 10 July, 1775 in which he noted:

*"...Upon my arrival I immediately visited the several Posts occupied by our Troops, and as soon as the Weather permitted, reconnoitered those of the Enemy... Their advanced Guard 'till last Saturday, occupied Brown's Houses, about a Mile from Roxbury Meeting House and twenty rods from their Lines; But at that time a party from General Thomas's Camp surprized the Guard, drove them in and burnt the Houses."*

The incident noted by General Washington took place on 08 July, 1775 and involved a party of militia from Rhode Island and Massachusetts~Bay under the command of Major Crane and Major Tupper. No injuries were reported for either the militia or the redcoats. Four days later another letter was sent by Washington to the Congress in which he stated the following.

*"Last Evening also a Party of the Connecticut Men ftroll'd down upon the Marsh at Roxbury and fired upon a Centry, which drew on a heavy fire from the Enemy's Lines and Floating Battery, but attended with no other Effect than the loss of one Man killed by a shot from the Enemy's Lines."*

On the 4th of August, General Washington sent a letter to the Congress in which he expressed the assumption that the general inactivity of the British, apart from scattered skirmishes, might be a sign of their intention of waiting until winter to launch another large scale assault on the American encampment. He noted that:

*"...I am inclined to think, that finding us so well prepared to receive them, the Plan of Operations is varied, that they mean by regular Approaches to bombard us out of our present Lines of Defence, or, are waiting in expectation that the Colonies must sink under the expence, or the Prospect of a Winter Campaign to discourage the Troops as to break up our Army."*

The General had ordered a contingent of Rifle Men to go toward Charles Town to "make a Discovery or bring off a Prisoner" where it was believed that the British were extending their lines. The Americans were discovered by the redcoated guards and a small skirmish broke out. Although unconfirmed, several of the British troops were killed in the encounter. Two prisoners were brought into the American camp. General Washington continued by stating the following.

*"Since that Time we have on each side drawn in our Centries and there have been scattering Fires along the Lines. This Evening we have heard of three Captains who have been taken off by the Rifle Men and one killed by a Cannon Shot from Roxbury, besides several Privates; but as the Intelligence is not direct, I only mention it as a report which deserves Credit. The other happened at the Light House; A Number of Workmen having been sent down to repair it, with a Guard of 32 Marines and a Subaltern. Major Tupper, last Monday Morning about 2 o'clock landed there with about 300 Men Attack'd them killed the Officer and 4 Privates, the remainder thereof, which are badly wounded he brought off Prisoners with 10 Tories, all of whom are on their Way to Springfield Goal, But being detained by the Tide on his Return, he was Attack'd by several Boats, but happily got thro' with the loss of one Man killed and another Wounded. The Enemy in Return endeavored to surprize our Guard at Roxbury, but they being apprized of it by a Defertor had Time in some Measure to prepare for it,*



*but from the Misconduct or negligence of the Officer they burnt the George Tavern on the neck and have every Day since been cannonading us from their Lines, both at Roxbury and Charles Town, but with no other Effect than the Loss of two Men. The Rifle Men in their Skirmish lost one Man who we hear is a Prisoner in Boston Goal. On our Part, except the frizzling Fires on the Lines which we endeavor to refrain, we have made little or no return."*

Another incident occurred in late-August. In a letter to Richard Henry Lee dated 29 August, General Washington noted that:

*"On Saturday night last we took possession of a Hill advanced of our Lines, and within point blank shot of the Enemy on Charles Town neck. -We worked incessantly the whole night with 1200 men, and before morning got an Intrenchment in such forwardness as to bid defiance to their Cannon; about nine o'clock on Sunday they began a heavy cannonade which continued through the day without any injury to our work, and with the loss of four men only two of which were killed through their own folly -The Infult of the cannonade however we were obliged to submit to with impunity; not daring to make use of artillery on acct. of the consumption of powder, except with one nine pounder placed on a point, with which we silenced, and indeed sunk, one of their Floating Batteries.*

*This move of ours was made to prevent the Enemy from gaining this Hill, and we thought was giving them a fair challenge to dispute it as we had been told by various people who had just left Boston, that they were preparing to come out, but instead of accepting of it, we learn that it has thrown them into a great consternation which might be improved if we had the means of doing it -Yesterday afternoon they began a Bombardment without any effect, as yet."*

General Washington did not make any additional reports on encounters with the British until early November. In his *General Orders* of 10 November and a letter to Congress dated 11 November, he noted that:

*"The General thanks Col. Thompson, and the other gallant Officers and Soldiers (as well of other Regiments as the Rifles) for their alacrity yesterday, in pushing thro' the water, to get to the Enemy on Letchmore's point... a party of the Enemy, about four or five hundred taking the advantage of the High Tide, landed at Leechmore's point, which at that time was in effect an Island, we were alarmed, and of course ordered every man to examine his cartouche Box, when the Melancholy Truth appeared, and we were Obligated to furnish the greater part of them with fresh ammunition. The Damage done at that point was the taking of a Man, who watched a few Horses and Cows, Ten of the latter they carried off. Colonel Thompson marched down with his Regiment of Riflemen and was joined by Colonel Woodbridge with a part of his and a part of Patterfon's regiment, who gallantly waded through the water and soon obliged the Enemy to embark under cover of a Man of War, a Floating Battery and the Fire of a Battery on Charles Town Neck. We have two of our Men dangerously Wounded by grape shot from the Man of War and by a Flag out this day we are informed the Enemy lost two of their Men."*

The *Regiment of Riflemen* commanded by Colonel Thompson, which General Washington mentioned was one of the "companies of expert riflemen" raised in response to the Resolution issued by the Continental Congress on 14 June, 1775.

Col. William Thompson's Battalion of Riflemen was the designation given to the eight companies which formed in Pennsylvania in the summer of 1775. By the 11<sup>th</sup> of July, Congress was informed that two companies instead of one had been raised in Lancaster County, and so Thompson's Battalion of Riflemen was comprised of nine companies when it set out for Boston. Captain James Chamber's



Company and Captain William Hendrick's Company were raised in Cumberland County, Captain Michael Doudle's Company was raised in York County, Captain James Ross' Company and Captain Matthew Smith's Company were raised in Lancaster County, Captain George Nagel's Company was raised in Berks County, Captain Abraham Miller's Company was raised in Northampton County, Captain John Lowdon's Company was raised in Northumberland County and finally Captain Robert Cluggage's Company was raised in Bedford County.

Captain Robert Cluggage's Company consisted of the following Bedford County men:

*Captain:* Robert Cluggage; *First Lieutenant:* John Holliday; *Second Lieutenants:* Robert McKenzie (died 12 February, 1775) and Benjamin Burd (promoted October, 1775); *Sergeants:* James Holliday, Daniel Stoy, Querinus Meriner, David Wright; *Corporals:* Aquila White, William Lee, Joseph McKenzie, Angus McDonald; *Drummer:* Timothy Sullivan; *Privates:* Adam Anderson, Philip Bechey, John Bowman, Thaddeus Broughdon, Thomas Brown, George Bruner, John Campbell, Thomas Casek, Stephen Cessna, Patrick Clark, Philip Conner, James Corrowan, Joshua Craig, John Crips, Alexander Crugen, Thomas Cunningham, James Curran, John Davis, Cornelius Dilling, William Donelin, Matthew Dougherty, Laurence Dowling, Daniel Francks, George Freeman, Amariah Garrett, Daniel Gemberland, Reuben Gillespy, Conrad Hanning, Richard Hardister, Francis Jamison, Andrew Johnston, Matthias Judry, John Kelley, Peter King, James Knight, William Laird, Charles Lenning, Robert Leonard, John Lesley, Thomas Magee, Daniel Mangam, Henry McCartney, Daniel McClain, John McCune, John McDonald, Patrick McDonald, Thomas McFarlane, Michael Miller, Robert Piatt, John Pitts, Samuel Plumb, Martin Reynolds, Daniel Rhoads, Philip Ritchie, Thomas Shehan, Francis Shires, Alexander Simonton, Emanuel Smith, Henry Smith, Daniel Stoy, John Stuart, Jonathan Taylor, John Thompson, James Turmoil, Andrew Tweed, Daniel Vanderslice, James Vanzandt, Thomas Vaughan, Samuel Wallace, Solomon Walker, James Warford, Thomas Ward, Alexander Wilson, George Whitman and Samuel Woodward.

The roster of Captain Cluggage's company, as it appears in the Second Series of the Pennsylvania Archives, included the notation alongside John Kelley's name that he had shot a fellow Patriot. "September 14, 1775, John Kelley, one of Capt. Cluggages' men, shot one of Capt. Chambers' men through the head, for stabbing him." There was no indication what punishment Mr. Kelley may have received for that offense of apparent self-defence. It serves, though, as an appropriate example of the disciplinary problems that General Washington was confronted with.

The truth of the matter was that General Washington was faced with more problems than could be attempted to be recounted here. First and foremost were the problems he encountered in his attempts to bring the various militia units together into a disciplined Continental Army. His letter of 29 August to Richard Henry Lee expressed his frustration in that respect.

*"As we have now nearly compleated our Lines of Defence, we nothing more, in my opinion to fear from the Enemy, provided we can keep our men to their duty and make them watchful and vigilant; ut it is among the moft difficult tafks I ever undertook in my life to induce thefe people to believe that there is, or can be, danger till the Bayonet is puffed at their Breafts; not that it proceeds from any uncommon prowefs, but rather from an unaccountable kind of ftupidity in the lower clafs of thefe people which, believe me, prevails but too generally among the officers of the Mafsachufets part of the Army who are nearly of the fame kidney with the Privates, and adds not a little to my difficulties; as there is no fuch thing as getting of officers of this ftamp to exert themfelves in carrying orders into execution - to curry favor with the men (by whom they are chofen, and on whofe fmiles pofsibly they think they may again rely) feems to be one of the principal objects of their attention."*

*"I have made a pretty good flam among fuch kind of officers as the Mafsachufets Government abound in fince I came to this Camp having Broke one Colo. and two Captains for cowardly behavior in the action on Bunkers Hill, -two Captains for drawing more provifions and pay than they had men in their*



*Company -and one for being abfent from his Poft when the Enemy appeared there and burnt a Houfe juft by it. Befides thefe, I have at this time -one Colo., one Major, one Captn., and two fubalterns under arreft for tryal -In fhort I fpare none yet fear it will not all do as thefe People feem to be too inattentive to every thing but their Intereft."*

Richard Henry Lee responded to the General's missive with words of encouragement by stating that:

*"I afsure you, that fo far as I can judge from the converfation of men, inftead of there being any, who think you have not done enough, the wonder feems to be, that you have done fo much. I believe there is not a man of common fenfe, and who is void of prejudice, in the world, but greatly approves the difcipline you have introduced into the camp; fince reafon and experience join in proving, that, without difcipline, armies are fit only for the contempt and flaughter of their enemies."*

The progress that General Washington was making, though it seemed inadequate to him, was noticed and applauded by others. A minister from Concord, the Reverend William Emerson, wrote to his wife:

*"There is great overturning in the camp as to order and regularity. New lords, new laws. The generals Wafhington and Lee are upon the lines every day. New orders from his Excellency are read to the refpective regiments every morning after prayers. The ftrictift government is taking place and great diftinction is made between officers and foldiers. Everyone is made to know his place and keep it, or be immediately tied up, and receive not one but thirty or forty lafhes according to his crime. Thoufands are at work every day from four till eleven o'clock in the morning. It is furprifing the work that has been done."*

In a letter to Joseph Reed on 28 November, 1775, General Washington intimated that the Connecticut men could not be prevailed upon to stay any longer than their current enlistments required. In commenting on the fact that the only way he had been able to motivate certain of the troops to reenlist was to grant them furloughs, he noted that "...fuch a dirty, mercenary fpirit pervades the whole..." He also stated that more local militiamen had to be called in to take the place of enlisted troops who were leaving, and that he feared that they, being under no "government" themselves, would no doubt destroy all the progress he had made thus far.

In addition to the problems he faced with getting the militiamen to cooperate and function as an organized *army*, General Washington had to contend with everyday infractions of proper conduct. From the number that appear in *The Writings of George Washington*, he must have spent most of his time writing out General Orders to be given to the troops. Most of those General Orders were directives aimed at changing the behavior of the troops. One dated 22 August, 1775 was aimed at the troops' sense of morality and common decency.

*"The General does not mean to difcourage the practice of bathing whilft the weather is warm enough to continue it, but he exprefsly forbids, any perfon doing it, at or near the Bridge in Cambridge, where it has been obferved and complained of, that many Men, loft to all fenfe of decency and common modety, are running about naked upon the Bridge, whilft Pafsengers, and even Ladies of the firft fafhion in the neighborhood are pafsing over it, as if they meant to glory in their fhame: -The Guards and Centries at the Bridge, are to put a ftop to this practice for the future."*

Many of the men who had enlisted in the regiments, including Thompson's Battalion of Riflemen,



had done so in the exhilaration and fervor occasioned by the rush of events that was taking place. The news of Lexington and Concord had electrified the colonies and ignited the passions of the men who lost no time in enlisting. They were spoiling for a fight and swarmed like locusts toward Boston. The battle of Breed's Hill and Bunker Hill had, of course, functioned as a means for those who were already there to let off their steam. The relative inactivity of the siege gave the newcomers no outlet for their ardor. Naturally, they resorted to other things ranging from simple horseplay to more serious misdeeds. The men who answered the Second Continental Congress' call for volunteers on 14 June (even many of those from neighboring colonies) arrived too late to join in the fight on the Charlestown Peninsula. In the case of Colonel Thompson's Battalion, its quota had been filled within a month of Congress' call, had begun the march toward Boston around the third week in July, and arrived at the American encampment by the 7<sup>th</sup> of August. One can well imagine that they were anxious to get into some military action, and if it didn't come to them, they would go looking for it. James Chambers, Captain of one of the two companies raised in Cumberland County, noted on 13 August:

*"We arrived in camp on the 7<sup>th</sup> ultimo, about twelve o'clock. We were not here above an hour until we went to view the lines where the English camp is all in plain sight. We crossed the lines, and went beyond the outposts to a small hill, within musket shot of a man-of-war and a floating battery, and not further from the works at the foot of Bunker Hill, where we could see them very plainly. Whilst I was standing there, some of our riflemen flipped down the hill, about a gun-shot to the left of us, and began firing. The regulars returned it without hurting our men."... "The riflemen go where they please, and keep the regulars in continual hot water."*

While the fervor expressed by Captain Chambers was a noble thing, and something of which he apparently took pride in, it was uncontrolled. The problem with uncontrolled passion and fervor is that it may not be directed toward the mutual good of all concerned. That is precisely why, in any endeavor, and especially a military one, there are leaders and there are followers. The long running list of court-martials and punishments which the Continental Army's new leader recorded in his correspondence and General Orders shows only too clearly that Mr. Washington had his hands full with quite a few followers who didn't particularly wish to follow.

The psychological effect that the lethargy of the siege had upon the Patriots might have been largely responsible for the difficulties General Washington experienced in attempting to impose law and order. It must be remembered that the colonies were fiercely independent up to that point, and the idea of a Virginian giving orders to a Connecticut man wasn't exactly something that Connecticut men cared much for. Then there were the simple conflicts that arose between a *gentleman* and a *frontiersman*, and between a German and an Irishman and so on. There were just so many points of contention that had to be overcome between all of those men who had gathered in the encampment around Boston, that the idleness inherent in the siege was bound to provide the time and place for problems to arise.

The lengthy inactivity of the siege of Boston also had an effect on the strengths of the two opposing armies, which changed as the year wore on. Although the British army had been reinforced after the battle of Bunker Hill, those reinforcements only increased Gage's total force to approximately six thousand. The losses sustained by the Redcoats on the Charlestown Peninsula had had a major effect on General Gage's decision making process, and may have been the reason he did not begin any other offensive moves. About fourteen hundred of the British troops were incapacitated through either wounds received in the battle at Breed's Hill or general sickness, and were languishing in the hospitals.

It is somewhat ironic that the British, because of their condescending attitude toward all colonists, did not take advantage of one particularly accessible resource. There were quite a number of Tories who had either stayed in Boston when it was taken over by the British or had traveled there from the outlying districts during the course of the hostilities at Lexington and Concord, and prior to the establishment of the rebel camp. Although it is believed that they applied to General Gage (and later to General William Howe who replaced Gage in October) to be permitted to assist the British Regulars, they were refused because they were not true Englishmen, and therefore not fit for service in the British Regular Army.

The American army, on the other hand, dwindled due to lack of interest. One estimate given for



the American camp at the end of the year set the figure at 9,000. Other estimates have set it at just under that of the British. General Washington's own estimates were far lower still. On 19 November, 1775, in a letter to the President of Congress, he stated that he had received returns of the number of men who had enlisted for the following year and the total was only nine hundred and sixty-six. (His letter of 28 November to Joseph Reed revealed an increase to about three thousand five hundred men.) He lamented the fact that there should be some other stimulus "...befides love for their Country, to make men fond of the Service". He offered the suggestion that they at least receive pay for October and November and an advance for December. His request resulted in the Congress resolving, on 01 December, to forward \$500,000 to the General so that he could pay those who reenlisted for 1776 their wages for October, November and December of that year along with an advance of one month's pay. One observer noted that many of the militiamen's viewpoint was that the period of enlistment was only as long as their shoes held out. Only a portion of the American troops were actually "enlisted" and obligated to stay at the camp. But, despite his lack of faith in them, through the final months of 1775, more and more militia companies arrived at the American camp. And as they arrived they were blended into the emerging Continental Line. General Washington reported to the Congress in a letter dated 04 December, that "*The Number inlifted in the laft Week are about 1300 Men...*"

Although the formidable task of molding the rabble into an efficient army was the greatest of George Washington's worries, it was, by no means, the only one. As he had noted in his letter of 04 August to the Congress, his guess was that the British were waiting until the winter in order to advance from their confinement in Boston. He directed his subordinates to give special attention to the fortifications close to the waters that separated the Boston peninsula from the mainland. It was his fear that the British would have an excellent bridge when the water froze over which would enable them to strike in any direction and at any point they wished without the tactical problems of transport.

The plan of action that General Washington finally chose to follow was to fortify the Dorchester Heights which lay to the south of Boston, and which would provide the perfect point from which to begin a general bombardment of the city. When the siege first began, it had been hoped that the destruction of the city and any coincident harm to the residents thereof should be avoided. The times were changing, though, and Washington could no longer afford to coddle the British for the sake of avoiding harm to the city and her residents. As the winter of 1775 approached, the decision was made to retrieve the cannon which had been captured at Fort Ticonderoga on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May. Instructions were given to Henry Knox on Thursday, 16 November to proceed to New York for the cannon along with any "motors, shells, lead and ammunition" he might be able to procure. Knox, who had been a bookseller in Boston prior to its takeover by the British, had helped to establish the fortifications at Roxbury. His engineering skills were recognized by General Washington, and by his recommendation persuaded the Congress to appoint Knox as Colonel in charge of the Continental Artillery.

Colonel Knox went first to New York City to examine the artillery stored there and to obtain supplies and men. Then, with a small contingent of men, he made his way across the New York landscape. Three hundred miles lay between Boston and Fort Ticonderoga. Fifty-nine tons of heavy artillery were assembled onto sleds to which oxen were hitched. Knox's plan had been to transport the cannon across the frozen surface of Lake George, which was thirty-three miles in length. The weather had been unseasonably warm and the lake was not frozen as solid as it should have been. The loads had to be rescued from time to time and the passage over the lake took a whole week. The journey through the Berkshires, with so many chasms and steep grades to maneuver across, was made all the more difficult because of the blizzards that assailed Knox and his men. Despite the distance and physical rigors, the cannon were delivered to General Washington on 24 January, 1776.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of January five transport ships had left Boston. They were headed for New York City according to reports given to General Washington. General Charles Lee had been sent with the Jersey Regiment to New York City by Washington on 08 January after he received intelligence that the British were planning to move there. It was believed that only four or five hundred of the redcoats had left Boston. General Washington, in a letter dated 30 January warning General Lee of the coming transports, informed him that a large number of Tories had left with the British troops. Of course, the Americans may have assumed that the redcoats were leaving as a result of their increased cannonading, but moreso it was the fact that the British were not getting the supplies they needed (and counted on) from England. General Howe sent a ship to the West Indies shortly after the new year had dawned to investigate the situation. Twenty-six vessels were found at anchor in the harbor of Antigua in various states of damage due to having been caught in a storm. It has



been estimated that by the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 1776 the British at Boston had enough meat to supply the troops for only three more weeks.

The 5<sup>th</sup> of March, 1775 marked the fifth anniversary of the Boston Massacre, and it would prove to be a day that the British would remember. Beginning on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, the American artillery began a bombardment of the British lines from positions at Cobble Hill, Leechmore Point and Lam's Dam. Their fire was not so much intended to cause injury and destruction as to simply draw attention away from the southeast. There, the Americans began constructing a fortification of fascines held in place by wooden "chandeliers". Bundles of hay would be placed on the fascines and then the whole thing covered with earth. Rather than being dug into the ground, the fortification would be an earthworks built on top of the ground. The fascines and chandeliers could be constructed in the encampment and then, with the hay bundles, hauled up onto Dorchester Heights and assembled there.

The American artillery kept up a constant fire through the night of 04 March; it was answered here and there by the British artillery. General Howe apparently paid little attention to the rebel cannonading, but he did pay attention when a sentry reported to him the following morning with the news that a fully manned fortification was on the summit of Dorchester Heights. At first it appeared that General Howe would assail the new American fortification. Major John Trumbull, with General Joseph Spencer's Connecticut regiment recorded in his diary:

*"...we saw the embarkation of troops from the various wharves, on board of ships, which hauled off in fucefsion, and anchored in a line in our front, a little before funfet, prepared to land the troops in the morning."*

The assault, intended for 06 March never came about due to a storm which arose on the evening of the 5<sup>th</sup>. A fierce gale blew the British ships into disarray and forced them to return to the safer wharves of Boston. The slight delay only provided the American Patriots with additional time to strengthen the new defenses and also to extend a line closer onto Boston Neck.

General Howe did not stage any offensives subsequent to the failed 05 March one. Instead, the British began preparations for a complete withdrawal from the Massachusetts~Bay colony. Over the next two weeks they loaded their ordinance, livestock and horses, supplies and troops into seventy-eight ships. Even seventy-eight ships of an average of 250 tons burthen could not take all that needed to be removed from Boston. At least one hundred pieces of ordinance had to be left behind, along with trucks and waggons and eighty horses. According to returns made at Halifax, 924 of the Tories who had sought the protection of the British army had a sudden choice to make ~ whether to leave the place they called home or stay behind and face the Patriots they had forsaken. Very few chose to remain behind. The British fleet sailed out of Boston Harbor on 14 March, 1776 and made its way to Halifax in Nova Scotia.

General Washington sent a letter to Jonathan Trumbull, Governor of the Province of New York on the day the British fleet departed. In that letter he noted that the ultimate destination of the redcoats was either Halifax or New York City, but that the latter was the most probable. In view of its importance to the colonies, General Washington suggested that Trumbull call in at least two thousand local militia to guard the city until his rifle regiments could make their way to that place. The regiments commanded by Stark, Patterson, Webb, Greateon and Bond, along with two companies of artillery were directed to leave for New York City under the general command of Brigadier General Heath.

Rumors had circulated that General Howe had prepared a scheme to communicate the small pox to the Continental Army by spreading the infection throughout the city of Boston. A General Order was issued to warn the troops entering the city to be very cautious and not to commit any looting. On 17 March, John Sullivan led his troops into the empty redoubts at Charlestown, and the following day General Washington entered Boston and there, without fanfare, held a service of thanksgiving.

*This chronological history of the Revolutionary War will be continued in a future newsletter.*

### **3<sup>rd</sup> QUARTERLY MEETING OF THE BLAIR COUNTY CHAPTER**

The Third Quarterly Meeting of the Blair County Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution will be held on Saturday, July 6, 1996. The meeting will be held at the Kings Family Restaurant, beginning at 12:00 noon. Please plan to attend.