

THE STORY OF THE
Xith REGIMENT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS LINE
OF THE
CONTINENTAL ARMY

By
Philip D. Paulson

INTRODUCTION

This work is dedicated to the memory of the men and officers of the XIth Regiment of the Massachusetts Line of the Continental Army, 1776-1780. By their service to the Continental Cause they have written this work.

In late September, 1974 three people were discussing the possibility and the problems of organizing a Regiment of the Continental Line. Each of us were members of other 18th Century military organizations, namely Militia and Minnit or "Minuteman" Companies, and we felt the desire to portray another aspect of the Revolutionary War period, the Continental Army regular soldier.

Aside from the practical problems of recreating an authentic Continental Line unit, we faced the very real historical problem of which unit or Regiment to select as our model. In short, we were searching for an appropriate "ancestor unit." We found one of the best: the XIth Regiment of the Massachusetts Line of the Continental Army.

This work is essentially the story of the XIth Regiment. However, since no unit of the Revolutionary War served completely by itself, in a vacuum so to speak, it becomes necessary to relate much of the general history of the Revolutionary War in this work.

We trust that those who read this work will become educated not only to the history of the XIth Regiment but, in a larger sense, to the history of the Continental Army, particularly the Army of the North, the branch of the Continental Army in which the XIth Regiment served.

Very little primary, or original, documentation dealing with the XIth Regiment of the Massachusetts Line of the Continental Army is in existence today. The Orderly Book of the Regiment was siezed at the battle of Hubbardton, Vermont, along with the papers of Colonel Ebenezer Francis, commander of the Regiment. Correspondence with the successor units of the British Regiments which fought the XIth at Hubbardton has failed to produce the Orderly Book or the papers of Colonel Francis.

Much of the information used in this paper has been drawn from excerpts of the various regimental histories of the British Regiments engaged at Hubbardton; the Navy and Old Army Branch of the National Archives; the collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the State Library in the State House at Boston, the State Archives, and the Boston Public Library; the New York Public Library and the Old Colony Historical Society (Taunton, Ma.); and from secondary sources in the Taunton Public Library and the Phillips Memorial Library at Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island.

This work is by no means exhaustive in its content. There is, undoubtedly, much more to be written of the XIth Regiment's role in the Army of the North. Until this work, nothing has been written.

This is, thus far, the story of the XIth Regiment of the Massachusetts Line of the Continental Army.

Taunton, Massachusetts
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Philip D. Paulson

CHAPTER ONE
CONGRESS ADOPTS AN ARMY
Boston, Spring, 1775

After the initial shock of the engagements at Lexington and Concord, the roads of the Province of Massachusetts Bay were filled with a ragtag assortment of men and boys. They marched, sometimes to the shrill tone of fifes, sometimes just ambling along, towards Boston Town. The Massachusetts Army was on the move.

The more astute of the "Rebels" knew, all-too-well, that the Regulars were a force of superior fighting potential. The name-calling and the snow-ball throwing which had occurred prior to April 19, 1775 would be of no use now. The King's men were a threatening and deadly force. The Mob which had called "Lobsterbacks!" after the British street patrols; the Yankee merchants who had cheated the English privates in the alehouses of Boston; the valiant farmers and townsmen of Middlesex County who had tasted war on the morning of April 19th---- all these would be no match for the Regulars in a full-scale military operation. Massachusetts, and indeed the entire Country, could hope only for a speedy and bloodless redress of grievances with the Mother Country. The militia was not ready for war. It would never be ready.

Boston Town was a barracks town in Spring, 1775. Regulars, Grenadiers, Light Infantry, Marines, Sailors, and camp followers were everywhere. But the monotony of garrison duty had not sapped the discipline of the troops. Their performance in the field, on the morning of April 19th, was indicative of their high degree of training. Despite the murderous, and constant, sniping of the Minutemen, all along the "Battle Road" back to Boston, the Red Line did not falter or break:

The rebels...kept firing on us, but very lightly until we came to Menotomy (Arlington), a village with a number of houses in little groups extending about a half a mile. Out of these houses they kept a very heavy fire...the soldiers shewed (sic) great bravery in this place, forcing houses,...and killing great numbers of rebels

Diary of Ensign DeBerniere¹

Crossing over Charlestown Neck in the twilight of April 19, the weary troops of King George camped for the night at a place called Bunker Hill. The next morning they would be ferried back to Boston by the Royal Navy. Their losses were counted at 73 killed, 174 wounded, and 26 missing-in-action. They had marched approximately forty miles that April day, half the distance under constant attack.

Facing the King's troops were the "Minnit" companies of the various contingents of Middlesex County militia. The "Minnit" companies were drawn from each town's standing militia. In February, 1775 the outlawed Provincial Congress had directed each town in the Province to set aside at least one-quarter of its militia strength as a "Minnit" force, ready to march anywhere at a minute's notice. Obviously, the system worked extremely well: by the time the British reached Concord there were thousands of men waiting for them, and more were on the way. Messages carried by dispatch riders were carried far and wide throughout the day of April 19th. By the 21st of April most of the Minnit companies were on the road to Boston. Companies from as far away as the Berkshires and the tip of Cape Cod were mustered on a hundred town Commons and sent off to Boston.

As a fighting force, the Minutemen were very capable of guerilla-style warfare, "hit and run" sniping, etc. But as a standing army, capable of laying siege to a seaport town such as Boston, they were far from ideal. The whole philosophy of militia-type fighting forces was defensive rather than aggressive.

Back in Boston, the British were momentarily stunned but not disheartened. Strategically, they held the advantage. The American militia had little effective ordnance, a primitive supply system, no expertise whatsoever in laying a siege (nor the patience to do so), and most importantly, they were too democratic. Theoretically, an unpopular officer might be voted out of office by his command, or worse, his entire company might "desert" to the company of an officer they found more to their liking. The enthusiasm of quick victory would erode in the face of the hard task of keeping the Redcoats penned in Boston.

The militia system of the 1770's, although impressive on paper, was not capable of sustaining the demands of a long war, such as the

Revolution would prove to be.

The militia system had come to America from Old England with the Pilgrims. Each town, because of its precarious posture in the wilderness, had to maintain a sufficient supply of powder and shot, train its men, and maintain the force at all times. Traditionally all men, between the ages of 16 and 60, were to serve in the town militias. Certain few were exempted or prohibited from service: the President and faculty of Harvard College, ministers of the Church, Quakers, Mulattoes, and negro slaves.²

The first attempt at organizing the various town "Train Bands", as the militia was called, came during the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. In 1658 the Massachusetts Bay Council Of War was created, with the power to name field grade officers to superintend the various town militias.³ As towns grew in population, and as county boundary lines came into existence, the need once again arose for further organization. In 1740 a Brigade system was approved by the Council of War. The system functioned thusly: each county was entitled to a Brigadier General, chosen by the Council of War at Boston. The Brigadier for each county would then arrange his towns into Regiments. For example, in the County of Bristol, there were four Regiments, one each for Rehoboth (Ist Regt.), Dartmouth (IIInd Regt.), Taunton (IIIrd Regt.), and Attleborough (IVth Regt.)⁴

Within each Regiment there would be any number of Companies, each electing its own company officers. If a town had two or more companies within its district, it was entitled to a colonel.

When the alarm came in April, 1775 the Brigade system went into operation. First, came the Minnit Companies. After these had been mobilized and packed off to Boston, the Brigadier of the County went to work selecting units from the militia regiments to march to the scene of the action.

At no time was an entire County Brigade mobilized and dispatched. This would leave the county virtually defenseless. The Brigadier would assess his manpower, based upon the annual returns of his colonels, and dispatch a portion of each regiment to Boston. At no time was an entire Regiment sent. For example, only three of Taunton's companies were ordered up to Roxbury during the alarm.

The Brigade system of militia organization effectively put a large number of men into the field. But, it had one very important drawback: it could not keep them in the field beyond a specified period of time. Many of the companies had been dispatched to Boston with the assurance that they'd be back home within twelve days. Others were committed for one month. Some were committed for longer periods. The longest period of commitment was for six months. The key to this problem was economics: most of the men were farmers and couldn't be expected to leave their crops unattended for prolonged periods of time. Furthermore, the Provincial Congress did not have the funds to pay the men or to feed them for any great length of time.

By the end of June, 1775 there were 16,770 men and officers in the hills surrounding Boston. Not all were Massachusetts men. The other New England Provinces, sensing that a British break-out would portend no good for them in the long run, agreed to send their militia to Boston to assist the Massachusetts Army. Connecticut sent 2,333 men; New Hampshire sent 1,664; and, Rhode Island sent 1,085.

Major General of Militia Artemas Ward of Shrewsbury was the Commander-in-Chief of the Massachusetts Army and its neighbor Provinces' forces around Boston. He dispersed his men as best he could and asked the Congress to stabilize pay and supply tables for the "Army." The Provincial Congress voted to pay all men at Boston \$7.00 per month, and assumed the responsibility of taking care of the other Provinces' men, in the hope that these Provinces would quickly reimburse the Massachusetts treasury.⁶

The troops were strung out in a circular sweep around Massachusetts Bay and Boston Harbor. The Massachusetts Army, or rather the New England Army, as befitted its composition, commanded all of the high ground. In mid-June the British broke out and took away two of the hills: Breeds Hill and Bunker Hill.⁷ The Americans continued to hold some twenty-two high positions. But, they lacked the artillery to coerce the British into evacuation of the city. The war, for all intents and purposes, was a stalemate. Sitting in their redoubts and other fortifications, the Yankee army grew weary of war. Summer was here. It was time to go home to the fields. Desertion increased.

On June 14, 1775 an appeal from the Massachusetts "ambassador" to the Continental Congress was read in Philadelphia. Massachusetts Bay could no longer maintain the large body of men surrounding Boston. The Massachusetts delegation begged relief. Would Congress take into its charge the organization and maintaining of the Army? It was pointed out that the matter was not one of local importance. True, Boston was the only area in which a large British army force was esconced, but, should that force break out, the rest of the "Continent" would be lain waste. The matter of the army was truly a "Continental Cause."

The Congress acted on the appeal. The New England Army was officially adopted and its name was changed to the "Army of the Continent," or simply, the Continental Army. The following day, June 15th, Colonel of Militia George Washington was promoted to Major General and Commander-in-Chief. To assist him he was given four subordinate Major Generals and eight Brigadiers. Within the next week the Congress drew up an elaborate system of organization for the new Continental Army.⁸

The Congress authorized the immediate recruiting of ten companies of riflemen from the Middle Colonies of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. These were to accompany Washington, if ready, when he moved north to assume command.

The new Continental Army was impressive, on paper. Twenty-six infantry regiments, one artillery regiment, and one rifle regiment (the ten companies mentioned above) were to be recruited for one year's service.⁹

At full strength the new Army was to be made up of 20,000 men and officers. That figure was not achieved. The "General Return" of March, 1776 listed only 12,472 men, of whom only 9,158 were fit for duty--an effective strength of 73%.¹⁰

The new Army, of whom 8,481 men were from Massachusetts, remained primarily a New England Army in its composition. Not one of the original twenty-six infantry regiments was drawn from outside New England. In fact, 68% of the entire original Continental Army came from one Province: Massachusetts Bay¹¹.

The Congress was not ignorant of the composition of the new Continental Army. Realizing that New Englanders generally distrusted everybody, and that the other areas of the country detested the New Englanders, the Congress wisely decided that the general staff officers of the Continental Army would be acceptable to the Army only if the overwhelming majority of them were themselves New Englanders. Congress decreed that two-thirds of the major generals and Brigadiers would be New Englanders.¹²

When Washington assumed command of the Army at Cambridge in July, 1775 he wisely appointed Benjamin Lincoln of Hingham as one of his staff. The Massachusetts people knew and trusted Lincoln. Washington was to follow this policy as closely as possible throughout the war. He always strove to select competent people as his advisers and subordinates although he was equally as often plagued with a parade of incompetents, selected by members of the Continental Congress. In their zeal to capture as many European "generals, barons, counts, etc.", the overseas recruiting agents of the Congress, particularly Silas Deane in Paris, collected an odd assortment of ne'er-do-wells and shipped them back to Washington.

As 1776 drew to a close there was a mixed amount of minor victories and major defeats for the Continental Army. Montgomery's expedition to Montreal had ground to a halt. Arnold's daring expedition up the Kennebec to Canada had likewise collapsed. The British were still in Boston. Knox would soon remedy that with his cannon from Fort Ti.

There was an Army. It wasn't much to look at, but it was still an army. It was a beginning. Several glaring flaws came to light in late 1775. Primarily, it was going to be a long, long war. The one year enlistment of the Continental Army would expire in the summer of 1776. Supplies and munitions were available but the bureaucracy involved in disseminating such was fantastically complicated. 1776 would be the year, many people felt, which would decide the entire issue. If the army stood (providing all of the problems were solved and there were no major reverses) there would be peace by late summer. Maybe.

1776 proved to be a year of catastrophe. Everything went wrong. A new organization of the Army was in order.

The first six months of 1776 brought bad news to the Continental Congress. The Expeditions to Canada had definitely failed. Gen. Montgomery was dead. General Arnold was severely wounded. The refugee army had fled down Lake Champlain to Ile aux Noire and beyond, bringing smallpox with it. The artillery had arrived from Ti and had been used to force the British from Boston in March. But, word had also been received that George III had declared the Provinces in open rebellion and had rejected the "Olive Branch Petition," a last-minute attempt to stop the fighting and secure a truce, and now an actual state of war was in existence. Britain would not waiver but would commit its forces and industry to a full scale conflict in America.

Worst of all the bad news was that by the end of the summer, here in America there would be no more Continental Army. Enlistments were expiring and few recruits were coming forward.

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NOTES

¹(Ensign) DeBerniere, "Diary", excerpted in Voices Of 1776, ed. Richard Wheeler (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1972), p. 29/30.

²Samuel H. Emery, History of Taunton, Massachusetts (Syracuse, N.Y.: D. Mason & Company, 1893), p. 448.

³Ibid., p. 350 .

⁴Ibid., p. 352 .

⁵Richard Frothingham, History of the Siege of Boston 4th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1873), p. 220.

⁶Ibid., p. 221.

⁷Ibid., pp. 224-227. The American forces surrounding Boston were encamped in twenty-four places prior to the loss of Breed's and Bunker Hills. The camps were located at North Battery, Copps Hill, West Boston, Beacon Hill, Ploughed Hill, Barrell(Cobble) Hill, Lechmere Point, Winter Hill, Prospect Hill, Butler's Hill, Hills nos. 1,2,3, College Green at Harvard, Brookline, Stony Brook, Roxbury, Dorchester Heights, Dorchester Town, Nook Hill, Sewell's Point, and Cambridge Town.

⁸Frederic Anderson Berg, Encyclopedia of Continental Army Units (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1972), pp. 72-74. The organizational system established by the Continental Congress

in June-July, 1775 included the following organizations: the Adjutant General Department, Clothier General Department, Commissary of Military Stores, Commissary of Musters, Hospital Department, Quartermaster General Department, Paymaster General Department, and the Provost Marshall Department.

⁹Ibid., The information for this note has been collected from throughout Berg's book. Specific unit designations and locations of origin can be found in the Appendix to this work. The 1st Regt. of the Continental Line was designated the "Pennsylvania Regiment," or William Thompson's Regt., but actually it was composed of the ten rifle companies drawn from Maryland and Virginia as well as from Pennsylvania.

¹⁰Frothingham, Appendix. "General Return Of The Army, March 2, 1776"

¹¹Berg. See Appendix for particular information.

¹²United States. Department of the Army. Bureau of the Chief of Military History. American Military History. Army Historical Series. Edited by Maurice Matloff (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1969), p. 47.

CHAPTER TWO THE NOVEMBER-STYLE ARMY

The XIth Regiment of the Massachusetts Line of the Continental Army was born in August, 1776. Its creation, by act of the Supreme Legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, was part of a broad, nation-wide military reorganization of the Continental Army. The new Continental Army was markedly different than its predecessor of the first year of the War. What had brought about this sweeping reorganization was the realization that the Revolution was going to be a very long struggle and that the Army, as organized in June, 1775, could not conclude the war before it was due to be discharged.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the enlistment of the Continental Army was for a one-year period. Even this short-term enlistment, unusual in the world of the 18th century, seemed too long to anyone in an agricultural country such as the United States. Farms simply could not be left unattended for so long a period. Furthermore, there was no real attraction in enlisting: the \$7.00 per month salary, even when paid to the men, was unrealistic. Supply and clothing rations were irregularly received. But, above all, the long, disheartening record of constant defeat and the monotony of a stalemate war were taking their toll.

The policy-making body for the Continental Service was the Continental Congress's Board of War. These men were the civilian directors of the war, the men to whom George Washington was responsible. After repeated letters from the Major General throughout the winter of 1775 and the Spring of 1776, the Board of War acted upon his recommendations and assumed the task of drastically reorganizing the Army.

What they ultimately created was a newer model Continental Army. Plans called for the implementation of the reorganization during the summer of 1776, with the finished product to be ready by November. Thus, the new Continental Army of 1776 came to be called the "November-Style Army."

With the exceptions of the 1st Continental Regiment (the Pennsylvania-Virginia-Maryland Riflemen), elements of the Corp of Continental Artillery, the Corp of Continental Dragoons, and most of the special services or administrative units of the Army of 1775, the composition of the original Continental Army had been almost totally New England in the infantry branch.

The November-Style Army would be markedly different. The Continental Congress called for each of the thirteen states to assess its manpower and to deliver into the Continental Service a quota of men, arranged in Regiments and Brigades, along state lines. Furthermore, the states were to employ a standard pay and ration system, assuring that all men in the Army of 1776 would fare relatively the same. Likewise, the states were to, among other things, see to the proper uniforming of their regiments. The Continental Board of War gave great latitude to the individual states in matters of uniforming the men they raised. In fact, the states took so much upon themselves in this regard that General Washington had to eventually issue a series of General Orders in regards to uniforms (some state regiments appeared in the field so similarly dressed as the English foe that battlefield confusion was often the case.)¹

The principal innovation of the November-Style Army was the institution of a three-year enlistment period. The era of the short-term enlistment was over. The short-term enlistment, as attractive as it may have been, worked no good for the conduct of the war. In fact, in December, 1775, the entire Connecticut section of the Continental Army had simply gone home, its six-month term of service expired.² The 10th, 17th, 19th, 20th, and 22nd Continental Regiments, all drawn from Connecticut, simply evaporated from the Continental Service at the close of 1775. The conduct of the war could not stand any further such set-backs. In one day, a total of 2,459 men and officers had marched out of their camps around Boston and headed home for Connecticut.³

In the summer of 1776 it was sincerely hoped that the new organization of the Army would greatly facilitate the swift conclusion of the War.

The burden of recruiting men for the new Army fell upon the thirteen states. The states were required to engage the services of a "Recruiting Speculator" or a "Continental Muster Master". This man, usually a major-general of the state militia, would, in turn, appoint someone from each county in the state as a county muster master. In turn, each town, if large enough, had its own local muster master.⁴

The job was phenomenal in that large quantities of men were requested by the Continental Congress. The plan was to have an Army of some 58,968 men and officers ready for service by the close of 1776.⁵ This figure was never reached. As a matter of record, Secretary of War Henry Knox estimated in the early 1790's that the total of men serving the Continental Cause at the end of 1776 was only 46,891, including militia, navy, privateers, marines, and regular infantry.⁶

To make the task easier increased incentives were added to entice the potential recruit of 1776. Congress voted to double the enlistment bounty from \$10 to \$20, hard money (payable at the end of one's service) or payable in Continental Paper upon enlistment. The basic monthly pay remained at \$7.00. In lieu of uniforms, the states were required to supply hunting frocks to the enlistees.⁷

The states supplied the uniform or the frock, but nothing else in the way of clothing. It fell upon the men to supply their own items of dress. If a man did supply his own clothing, he was granted \$20.00 stipend. Some states, like Massachusetts, allowed the enlistees to draw up to \$20.00 worth of clothing per annum, in the form of "...two pair stockings, two pair of shoes, one hat or capp, two shirts, two pair overalls, or one pair knee breeches, and one woollen waistcoat," Blankets were not included in the clothing bounty. It is assumed that the men had to furnish their own.⁸

To an agricultural nation land was of paramount importance. Thus, men enlisting for three years were to be granted upon discharge 100 acres of land and \$80.00, hard money, mustering-out pay.⁹

With minor changes in the Corps of Dragoons and the Corps of Artillery, the administrative offices and units established in June, 1775 were going to remain the same throughout the War. The main purpose of the November-Style Plan was the reorganization of the infantry units of the Continental Army.

By November, 1776 there were to be a total of 81 infantry Regiments ready for the field. The Regiments, raised along state lines, would be grouped into Brigades, once again by state, and assigned to the three divisions of the Army: the Army of the North, the Main Army or the Army of the Commander-in-Chief, and the Army of the South.

The chief fighting unit was to be the regiment, or as it was alternately termed, the battalion. These would each be given a unit designation number and a state designation term. Thus, for example, there would be no more "Xith Regiment of the Continental Line". There might be, after November, 1776, several regiments designated as the "Xith,". Therefore, Regiments became officially known as the "Xith Regiment of the Massachusetts Line of the Continental Army," for example. More often as not, the Regiment was simply identified by the name of its colonel? for example, "Francis' Regiment," or "Glover's Regiment".

The November-Style Regiment was to be composed of 728 men and officers, arranged in a staff and at least 8 companies.¹⁰ The arrangement was as follows:

| <u>Staff</u> | <u>Per Company</u> |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Colonel | Captain |
| Lieutenant Colonel | 2 Lieutenants |
| Major | 1 Ensign |
| Adjutant | 4 Serjeants |
| Chaplain | 4 Corporals |
| Quartermaster | 76 Privates |
| Quartermaster's Serjeant | 1 fifer |
| Paymaster | 1 drummer |
| Serjeant Major | |
| Surjeon (Surgeon) | |
| Surjeon's Mate | |

The November-Style Plan remained in operation until May 27, 1778 when it was altered to allow for the addition of Light Infantry.

Under the November-Style plan of 1776, Massachusetts was to furnish ten infantry regiments to the Continental Service. One of these regiments was given the unit designation number "XI". Thus, in the summer of 1776 the XIth Regiment of the Massachusetts Line of the Continental Army was born.

Ebenezer Francis of Beverly, Massachusetts was the first Colonel of the XIth. He had served in the Essex Brigade of the Massachusetts Bay Provincial Militia and had marched with Col. Mansfield's Regiment to the siege of Boston in the Spring of '75. At Boston he was commissioned a Major. When the Continental Congress adopted the New England Army in June of that year, Francis enlisted in one of the Regiments and was granted a Continental commission as Major.

On Sunday, July 28, 1776 the Supreme Legislature of Massachusetts (as the Provincial Congress was now calling itself) commissioned Ebenezer Francis a Colonel of the Massachusetts Line of the Continental Army and instructed him to raise a regiment.¹¹ He was authorized to recruit his quota of men from the areas of Massachusetts and Maine that the Muster Master should direct.

Actually, Francis needed only to recruit a regimental staff. There were nine other newly-authorized regiments in need of men as well. The county muster masters would raise the men and simply dispatch them to Francis and the other colonels. Francis established his headquarters at Dorchester Heights.

Colonel Francis recruited much of his staff from his neighborhood of Essex county. The average age of his initial staff was thirty-five. Francis, himself, was thirty-two when he received his colonelcy.¹²

Throughout early August the muster masters did their work and by the end of the month the first companies were coming into the camp at Dorchester Heights. Some of Francis' staff, however, did not arrive until mid-September. In all, fifty-seven Maine and Massachusetts towns supplied men and officers to the XIth Regiment.¹³

The first company to report to camp arrived from Norfolk County under Captain John Gay. The company marched in on Friday, August 2nd.

The Cumberland County company, captained by Richard Mabury of Windham, Maine, arrived on Tuesday, August 6th. The next day, the 7th of August, two companies reported to Dorchester Heights: Captain Joshua Wilbore's Bristol County company and Captain John Peabody's Essex County Company. On Thursday, August 8th a mixed company of men, raised in Norfolk, Plymouth, and Suffolk Counties, came in under Captain Stephen Penniman. Friday the 9th of August saw another Maine company, drawn from York County, arrive under Captain Samuel Leighton. On Monday, August 12th, the last two of the original eight companies reported for duty: Captain Isaac Hodge's Bristol County Company and Captain Robert Dodge's Essex County Company. Finally, on Wednesday, November 27, 1776 the last of Francis' staff was commissioned: Surgeon Joseph Whipple of Manchester. The Regiment was now complete.¹⁴

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the states were to supply uniforms or at least hunting frocks to the men they recruited. Most of the states failed to do so. Massachusetts was no exception. The uniform coat was, at least on paper, to be dark brown in color or blue Indigo, if available. The Continental Congress had approved those colors on November 4, 1775.¹⁵ The original XIth Regiment never was issued either the brown coat nor the approved substitute, the long frock.

Descriptions of early XIth uniforms seem to indicate that the men, as late as early 1778, were wearing whatever they had in the way of clothing: old militia unit jackets, frocks, coats from units of the 1775 Continental Army, and more likely than not, anything they brought from home.

The following descriptions illustrate the diversity of apparel worn in the XIth's camp at Dorchester Heights. The men from the two Essex County companies sported "...light coat(s) with green facings, green waistcoats, and green breeches." Others wore "white jackets faced with blue and blue waistcoats and leather breeches." George White (company affiliation unknown) wore a "short blue coat with a white leather hat". The height of sartorial splendor, doubtless, was a recruit named Daniel Wheelwright, who appeared in camp wearing "...a tow frock and mooseskin breeches."¹⁶

The standardized Continental Army uniform of blue coat, gray or white waistcoat, white duck overalls and black military tricorne did not appear until the latter-half of the Revolutionary War. In October, 1779 Washington issued a General Order in regards to the new uniform: all new regimental coats must be blue in color and faced with the particular color facings assigned by him to the various states or regions. The facing colors, after October, 1779, were to be white (Massachusetts and New England), Buff (New York and the Jerseys), Red (Pennsylvania and the other Middle colonies (rather, the middle states), and yellow for the Southern states.¹⁷ The coat material could be either dark or medium-blue in color. This standardized uniform code was made possible by the generous financial aid of France and the Netherlands. The uniform worn by the modern, reactivated XIth Regiment reflects the regulations laid down by the Commander-in-Chief via his October, 1779 General Order.

At first, the XIth Regiment of the Massachusetts Line of the Continental Army was assigned to garrison duty around Boston. It was felt that the various state troops would be best utilized in their own territories. The British were pressing down on New York in the late summer of 1776 and it was thought that the New York regiments, augmented by the Jersey units of the Continental Line, would be able to restrain them. But, that was not to be.

New York fell to the English after a mammoth invasion. The Continental Line waivered, cracked, and fled. Washington and the Main Army were on the run in the autumn of 1776. Worse, the English might well utilize the traditional invasion route to the North from Canada. The year 1776 closed on a dismal note. The Continental Army was losing the War.

In mid-December, 1776 Massachusetts received word from the Board of War that her Line must join the Northern Army at Ticonderoga. The word spread throughout the Massachusetts Brigades. Training, as rudimentary as it was, was increased. Supplies were cached. The troops were prepared for an expedition.

By New Year's Day, 1777 Ebenczer Francis had received the news: the XIth Regiment was to go to war.

NOTES

¹Charles M. Lefferts, Uniforms Of The American, British French, And German Armies In The War Of The American Revolution. (New York: J.J. Little and Ives, Co., 1926) p. 135. Lefferts book, which has been reissued in paperback in 1974, cites the descriptions of several Delaware militia units as being so alike to the uniforms of the Grenadiers that confusion inevitably erupted on the battlefield when these units engaged the enemy.

²Frothingham, p. 87. See notes, chapter one for facts of publication.

³Ibid. Appendix.

⁴Richard Mros, Taunton: The Revolutionary Years (Taunton, Ma.; Taunton Historical Commission, 1974), p. 45.

⁵Berg, Encyclopedia Of Continental Army Units. pp. 77-79.

⁶Ibid., Appendix.

⁷Lefferts, p. 139.

⁸Donald Barr Chidsey, Valley Forge (New York: Crown Publishers, 1959), p. 125. Chidsey and other works consulted give the general impression that the Commissary of Stores of the Continental Army did not provide blankets on the assumption that the thirteen states would do so. Apparently, as late as 1780 Massachusetts was still awaiting a decision in this matter from the Board of War.

⁹Ibid., p. 126.

¹⁰Berg, p. 78.

¹¹Maine, Maine Historical And Genealogical Recorder, Vol. IV (Augusta, Me.; State Printing Office, 1914), p.365.

¹²Ibid., p. 365.

¹³Massachusetts. Secretary of the Commonwealth. Massachusetts Soldiers And Sailors Of The Revolutionary War, 17 vols. (Boston: Wright and Potter Printing Company, 1908). This total was derived by searching the 17 volumes and checking the names of the original roster of officers of the XIth Regiment against the volumes. Under the listings of the company captains were listed the towns from which the men of the companies were drawn.

¹⁴Ibid The dates of arrival of the various companies, as well as the ~~dates~~ of the commissioning of the regimental staff, has been arrived at by the same process as described in note no. 13. By checking the date against the calendar for the year 1776 one is able to ascertain the day of the week on which the event transpired. A complete listing of the original eight companies of the XIth Regiment of the Massachusetts Line of the Continental Army, as well as the officers of the regiment, and the towns from which the regiment drew its membership will be found in the Appendix of this work.

¹⁵Lefferts, p. 141.

¹⁶Ibid. Lefferts utilizes quotations drawn from various Philadelphia and New York newspapers of the Revolutionary period. In the section of his work dealing with the November-Style Army's collection of uniform styles, Lefferts cites the various regiments by Colonels' names and offers one or more excerpts from the newspapers of the period.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 156..

CHAPTER THREE
FROM BOSTON TO TICONDEROGA
JANUARY TO JULY, 1777

The fall of New York and the adjacent hinterland to the British in the autumn of 1776 was a disastrous blow to the Continental Cause. The only population center of any size between Canada and Long Island Sound was Albany. Between Canada and the Sound stretched a waterway system that had been used for centuries by the Indians, and in the last century by the French, as the traditional invasion route to the Atlantic seaboard.

Invading armies, be they native American or French, had departed from the Valley of the St. Lawrence down the St. Francis River into far northern New York and New England. The invaders could advance down Lake Champlain to Lake George and from there directly down the Hudson River to the Sound, and beyond.

During the Anglo-French contest for control of North America in the latter part of the seventeenth- and the first half of the eighteenth centuries, military experts on both sides concurred that a network of fortifications along this route could effectively check any invasion, whether it came up from English America or down from French America. The French began the construction of such a network.

The French had constructed a series of minor bases, and two more significant bases: Forts Ticonderoga and Crown Point, both along the shores of Lake Champlain. Ticonderoga (or Fort Carillon, as the French had named it), was the pivotal post--the "Gibraltar of America." It was a stone fortification at the extreme southwestern end of Lake Champlain. Its guns commanded the narrow passage at this part of the waterway and could, if properly maintained, stop all movement north and south. During its history, Ticonderoga had been attacked, lost, and regained six times--a record not matched by any fort anywhere else in the world.

When the Treaty of Paris (1763) ended the great contest for control of North America, Great Britain had allowed Ticonderoga, and its sister fortifications, to fall into a sad state of disrepair. There was no need, it was felt, to expend money or men during peacetime.

In May, 1775 Fort Ticonderoga again fell to a conquering "army." Col. Benedict Arnold of Connecticut and Ethan Allen, the uncrowned, self-proclaimed overlord of the Hampshire Grants (Vermont), led an expedition against the undermanned fort. Allen wanted the fort because possession of it by Vermont men would insure that any New York designs upon Vermont would be checked. Both New Hampshire and New York claimed ownership of Vermont. At the time, New York posed the greater threat. Whoever controlled the Champlain Valley controlled the fate of Vermont. Allen wanted to make certain that New York would not. Arnold wanted the fort so as to remove British presence from the invasion route. He had great foresight, which unfortunately, many of his contemporaries failed to appreciate.

During the early hours of May 10, 1775 Allen and his Green Mountain Boys, accompanied by Arnold and his tiny Connecticut volunteers force, crossed Champlain and "invested" or captured Fort Ticonderoga.

The undermanned garrison force, actually a mere handful of sleepy soldiers, fired not a shot. Allen ceremoniously awakened the commandant with the phrase "Come out, you damned old rat." In his "official" communique of the happenings of that raid, Allen spruced up his language. He reported to the Congress that he had seized the garrison "in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress." Actually, neither God nor Congress had authorized Allen to use their names.

The Continental Army eventually assumed control of the place during the summer of 1775. By year's end Henry Knox, the book-vendor artillery genius of the Continental Army was on his way there to remove the fort's guns and trek them back over the Berkshires to Boston.

A token garrison was employed at the fort. But, after Autumn, 1776 the Army of the North was converging on it. It, and other fortifications needed repair and increased manpower. Spring would bring a British invasion, either up from New York or down from Canada. Perhaps from both directions.

Into this theater of operations came, among others, the XIth Regiment of the Massachusetts Line of the Continental Army.

The Brigades of the Massachusetts Line were collecting their baggage and supplies during the first weeks of January, 1777. The march to the Hudson Valley and to Ticonderoga would be an arduous one indeed. It would be almost totally uphill, in frigid weather, and over ice-hardened roads. The men could march faster than the ox-drawn supply wagons. Food and tents would be needed for each night's encampment. Tools and firewood must be gathered at the campsites. The regimental surgeons would need their salves and balms for cold feet and wind-burned faces. It was indeed a Herculean task to take an army to war.

Brigadier John Paterson studied his regimental returns during those days before the march.¹ He had three regiments, none of them up to authorized strength, to squire to New York. In his brigade were the Xth Regiment of Col. Thomas Marshall, the XIth Regiment of Colonel Ebenezer Francis, and the XIIth Regiment of Col. Samuel Brewer. The fourth regiment of his brigade, the XIVth of Col. Gamaliel Bradford was not yet ready to leave Boston. In fact, Bradford had just been commissioned and had not even had time to gather a staff.²

In the camp of the XIth Regiment, Col. Francis was attending to last minute details. He had a new Adjutant to get used to. Moses Greenleaf had been commissioned Adjutant to replace the original adjutant, Henry Herrick. Greenleaf was from Newburyport and was a first Lieutenant of Capt. John Peabody's company. Herrick returned home to Beverly before the end of December. It seemed that his original enlistment had been in the old 1775 Continental Army. When the XIth was formed he transferred into it but was bound and determined to serve only his designated one-year's term.³ It is fortunate for modern historians that Greenleaf was appointed Adjutant: his personal diary of the period remains in existence today, if only in part.

In all probability Judith Francis and her children came down to Dorchester Heights that month to visit her husband, the colonel. A colonel of an undermanned regiment, under orders to move out before mid-month, would surely not have taken a furlough at this crucial juncture.

The camp of the XIth Regiment at Dorchester Heights must have been a frantic scene on the departure morning. The Regiment was drawn into line, by companies. Serjeants and corporals finished last minute inspections before the final, formal inspection by the officers. The teamsters sat astride their baggage wagons, doubtless cold in the morning air and wishing to be about the day's business. The fifers must have been rubbing their fingers and wondering how they were going to play in this sort of temperature. Drummers had finished tightening the skins of their instruments and awaited the signal to roll off. In accordance with the plan of the November-Style reorganization, there was provision for eight fifers and eight drummers to each regiment. Perhaps, for the day, they would march at the head of the Regiment, as a Band of Field Musick. This was more exciting than the humdrum job of fifeing and drumming an individual company through its "evolutions" or daily drill.

Inspection was finished. Officers' "respects" and "compliments" had been given and returned. It was time to march. The drummers slammed their sticks into a roll. Fifes were poised, ready to whistle out the agreed-upon tune, doubtless something stirring and martial.

The long, irregularly dressed lines moved out behind the Colonel. Some of the soldiers were seeing the last of Dorchester Heights. It is not recorded what tune was played that day as the XIth Regiment left its camp at the Heights. But it may be assumed that whatever it was, it was played with fervor and enthusiasm.

Following the Regiment came the baggage train. After that came the "regiment" of camp-followers, the wives, children, and "friends" of the soldiers.⁴

The Regiment swung down the road from the Heights into Dorchester Town and along the lines of the other elements of Paterson's Brigade. When the Brigade was assembled as ordered, the body of men, supplies, and animals headed out of the locale and towards the old Albany-Boston Post Road, the most direct route to the western regions.

None of Paterson's Brigade was up to authorized strength. The XIth Regiment was no exception. Col. Francis had under his command that day only 450 men⁵.

No written record has come available to indicate exactly which route to then western regions was taken by Paterson's Brigade and the XIth Regiment. However, Colonel Ichabod Allen's VIIth Regiment of the Massachusetts Line also made the journey to Ticonderoga about two weeks after the XIth departed Dorchester Heights. A Captain Rufus Lincoln of the VIIth kept a diary of his military career and in that diary he cites the route taken by the C VIIth Regiment.⁶ It may be assumed that the Massachusetts Brigades going west had been supplied with a particular route. There was an obvious need to see to it that no body of men became "lost" out in the frontier regions. Thus, in all probability, the route of the VIIth Massachusetts and the XIth Regiment were the same insofar as they were both going to the same place, Fort Ticonderoga.

The route ran westward to Wooster or Worster (Worcester), probably along the modern Route #9, via Framingham. From Worcester it ran in a generally northwestern direction through the towns of Lester (Leicester), Spencer, Brockfield, Westown (Weston), Ware, Belcher, Amherst, Hadley, and into Northampton. At Northampton the Brigade had to cross the Connecticut River. It must have been quite a struggle to force the oxen into the cold fording places. Worse, if the river was frozen when the army crossed, the danger of breaking through the ice must have been foremost in everyone's minds, particularly the Quartermasters. How were they to replace broken axles, wheels, and lost cargoes?

From Northampton the Brigade wound northwest through Williamsburg, Chesterfield (getting around Chesterfield Gorge was also a problem of no small significance), and Wetherntown (Worthington).

The trek now began the ascent into the Hoosic Plateau region of the Berkshires. Partridgefield (Peru) presented a particularly difficult problem. The hamlet of Partridgefield had the dubious

distinction of being the highest settled spot in Massachusetts--over 2,000 feet above sea-level. In 1948 Partridgefield (Peru) had a population of 152. There may have been even less people there in January, 1777.

From Partridgefield the Brigade crossed through Gageborough, New Providence, and on into the hamlet of East Hoosick, now Adams, Massachusetts.

Approximately 3,500 feet above sea-level the Brigade marched along the Hoosic River, skirting the lower eastern slope of Mt. Greylock and on into Williamstown.

Faterson's Brigade was glad to arrive at Williamstown. It had been designated a supply depot and staging-area for the Army of the North. Perhaps, there were wooden huts there for the men to sleep in. There was, fortunately, a good-sized tavern. At least the officers, if not the enlisted men, could purchase a decent meal, hot flip, and best of all, obtain a few hours respite from the fatigues of the march.

The Brigade possibly stayed a couple of days at Williamstown. But the march began again. Up the Taconic Trail into the Hampshire Grants or Vermont. The Brigade passed through Pownswell (Pownal) and on to Bennington. At Bennington, Faterson brought his columns to a halt. The troops would be quartered here for some time.⁷

The XIth Regiment was camped at Bennington during the latter days of January and throughout the month of February.⁸ During this time, additional enlistees from Maine joined the companies of Capts. Leighton and Mabury. It is reported that during this bivouac in Bennington several men died.⁹

During the last days of February the march was renewed. The Brigade passed along the modern Route #7 through the Vermont towns of Schaffborough (Shaftsbury), Allintown (Arlington), Sunderland, Manchester, Dorset, Rhuport (Rupert), Pollet (Pawlet), and on into New York at Grandwell (Grandville). In New York, the Brigade marched into Skenesborough (Whitehall). Skenesborough was a strategic link along the waterway from Canada. It was situated at the junction of Wood Creek and Lake Champlain's southern extremity. Wood Creek ran from Skenesborough down into Lake George. The XIth Regiment would return to Skenesborough later in 1777, in July to be exact. This second visit would be under different circumstances. Then, Skenesborough would be a charred collection of sheds, courtesy of General John Burgoyne.

Skirting the tip of Champlain, Patterson's Brigade moved up the western shore of the lake and soon the fortifications at Ti would be in view. The XIth had marched, under winter conditions, about 312 miles.¹⁰

In March, 1777 the fortifications of Fort Ticcnderoga were in a pathetic state of disrepair. The addition of Paterson's Brigade, and of General Wayne's Pennsylvanians, would greatly be needed to restore the place to some semblance of a military installation. The former tenants, the English, were loathe to spend money refurbishing the mess left by the French when they exploded the main ammunition bunker during the French-Indian War. For fourteen years the principal fort in the northern frontier had been allowed to decay.

But, economics was not the only reason why the place had fallen upon bad times. There was a power struggle going on in the Army of

the North. Major General Horatio Gates ("Granny" Gates, as the New Yorkers called him) was the head of this branch of the Continental Army. After the failure of General Montgomery's expedition against Montreal in 1775 and the almost-defeat of the Army in the retreat from that expedition in the springtime of 1776, Gates was called to account for "mismanagement." Gates was a good general, more or less. His one paramount fault was that, unlike his subordinate, Benedict Arnold, Gates was slow to act and overly-cautious. He'd plan, and plan, and then discard his plans in favor of newer ones. Congress, eager for quick victories (although notoriously slow themselves in doing everything), sacked Gates in favor of General Philip Schuyler. Schuyler was also a good general. But, his fault was that he was a New Yorker. The New Englanders viewed him as a tyrant and an opportunist. So, throughout 1776 lobbies for both Gates and Schuyler were actively attempting to outbid each other for Congressional favor.

With this kind of bickering among the top brass, the attempts to ready the northern frontier for the Spring of 1777 had fallen far behind schedule. In March, 1777 the command of Fort Ticonderoga was temporarily in the hands of General Anthony ("Mad Anthony") Wayne. He had the unenviable job of practically rebuilding the fortifications in Ticonderoga proper and of constructing another fort across the lake at Mount Independence. To further complicate matters, Wayne was to construct an "obstruction" between the two fortifications: a gigantic log "boom". This boom was to be designed strong enough to prevent any vessels from crashing through it, thus cutting off use of the lake as an avenue of invasion. The boom of logs was to be joined together by heavy, forged links of chain. Running alongside the boom was to be a pontoon bridge, allowing inter-fort contact.

Throughout the month of March the men of the XIth Regiment helped to rebuild the main fortifications in Ticonderoga proper. As soon as the woods were clear of snow, lumbering parties went into them and cut timber for the newer fort, Mt. Independence, across the lake. Some men were put to work on the log boom. Still more men from the Massachusetts and Pennsylvania Lines were employed in rebuilding the old "abbatis", the zig-zag wall of pointed logs on which Amhercrombie's English troops had impaled themselves during their attack on the French-held fort twenty years before.

The art of fortification had been brought to its zenith in Europe by the French engineer, Vauban. His philosophy was to build a structure so complex that no one could break in. He'd review the plans of each finished product of his skill; try to figure out a way to break in, or at least weaken the product; and then, incorporate the technique in his next fort. Ticonderoga was a Vauban-style fort.

It consisted of a stone "keep" or main section, complete with barracks. Around this were constructed, still of stone, triangular "redans" or minor outer fortifications. Around this was dug a moat (dry moat) and a series of wooden palisades, with firing platforms was erected. A large, earthen fortification, called a "redoubt" was added to cap off the works. Long, sharpened stakes protruded from the redoubts at about a forty-five degree angle. The presence of this stakes prevented any enemy from scaling the actual sides of the redoubt. If an assault force actually reached the redoubt, it would be hung up on the stakes, exposing itself to the firing of the troops inside. Finally, a series of "sally ports;" or entry passages, scattered along the inside of the dry moat, gave egress to any troops wishing to come out of the fortification via a relatively-unexposed position.

Throughout April and May, and on into early June, the work on the outer fortifications progressed. The works across the lake at Mount Independence were advancing, as well. Mount Independence was the dominant headland on the eastern shore of Champlain. It was actually a small peninsula jutting out into the lake. Ticonderoga was only a few hundred yards away on the other side. The Lake was narrowest here. An ideal spot to build an "obstruction," such as the men were working on. The fortifications on the Mount, itself, were not so grandiose as at Ti.

The main works were a log fort, square in arrangement. At each angle of the fort, and outside the walls, were built redoubts of earth. Barracks were built to the north of the main fortification. These were, necessarily, outside the walls of the fort. 12

Building a redoubt was no easy job. Large numbers of men labored at grading the surface of the ground. Four deep trenches were dug. The dirt and stones from the trenches were poured into woven baskets, called "gabions." These formed the foundations of the redoubt walls. Gabions were arranged in parallel lines, about six-twelve feet apart. Between the gabions were placed large bundles of sticks or saplings, called "fascines." More earth and stone was piled atop these and the walls of the redoubt rose up. Finally, the entire structure was covered with sod. Eventually, the roots of the sod would intertwine, locking the "dirt wall" into place. The structure was remarkable bomb-proof. Artillery projectiles would land against it and become absorbed. The "soft shock" of impact would not shatter the works (except under heavy, constant bombardment), and the men stationed inside would be as safe as soldiers can be in an artillery barrage.

So camp life at Ticonderoga and Mt. Independence was very hard. But, the men were occupied. The petty squabbles that arose between "Yorckers" and "Yankees" were dealt with by the officers. The supply problem was not really resolved, and never would be, even as late as 1780.

Down in Pennsylvania, the Congress had experienced an about-face and General Horatio Gates had lost his bid for reinstatement as Commander-in-Chief, Army of the North. General Schuyler was retained in place of Gates.

Anthony Wayne received orders to report to the Main Army in New Jersey. Ticonderoga was about to receive a new commandant.

General Arthur St. Clair arrived at Fort Ticonderoga on June 14, 1777. He assumes command of 3,000 men: 2,000 Continental Regulars and 1,000 militiamen. He also inherits a strange associate. Congress had listened to its European Recruiting Agent, Silas Deane, and had given a job (and a commission) to one Brigadier General leComte Roche de Fermoy. Not knowing really what to do with Monsieur le Comte, Congress dispatched him up to Ticonderoga. He was to be given the command of the fortifications at Mt. Independence.¹³

Before the end of June, Ticonderoga was to have another influx of visitors: Gentleman Johnny Burgoyne was on his way down from Canada.

NOTES

¹John Paterson was named Brigadier General of four Regiments of the Massachusetts Line in the autumn of 1776. His name in this work has been spelled with one "t". Many modern sources spell the name with two "t"'s, but an examination of documents signed by him indicate that he, himself, used only one "t" in spelling his name.

2 Berg, Encyclopedia of Continental Army Units, Appendix.

3 An examination of Herrick's entry in Massachusetts Soldiers And Sailors Of The Revolutionary War reveals that Herrick had originally enlisted in January, 1776 into another regiment. He came into service under the 1775 plan and thus, was required to spend only one year in the Army.

4 It is not known specifically whether or not there were camp followers travelling with the Regiment to Ticonderoga. However, as a large number of women and children were evacuated from the Fort in July, 1777, it is obvious that they had to come from one of these regiments stationed at the fort. Owing to the common 18th century practice of allowing such to travel with the troops, it has been assumed that camp followers, in all possibility, might have made the journey with the XIth.

5 (Col.) R. Ernest Dupuy, The Battle Of Hubbardton: A Critical Analysis. (Montpelier, Vt.: Historical Sites Commission, 1960), p. 52.

6 Rufus Lincoln, The Papers Of Captain Rufus Lincoln Of Wareham, Massachusetts. Compiled and edited by James Minor Lincoln (Wareham, Ma.: Privately Printed, 1904), p. 51. Diaries One and Two of the papers provide insight into the operations of the Massachusetts Line, in particular the VIIth Regiment, in the Lake Champlain area.

7 Massachusetts Soldiers And Sailors, (etc.). An investigation of the original officers roster of the XIth, when checked against the appropriate volumes of this work, reveals that the Regiment did stop in Bennington.

8 & 9 Ibid. same procedure as described in note above reveals this information.

10 Lincoln. p. 57.

11 Howard H. Peckham, The Colonial Wars, 1689-1762. The Chicago History Of American Civilization Series (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 167-169.

12 Description derived from a diorama of the fortifications on display at the Hubbardton (Vt.) Battlefield State Park.

13 Fred J. Cook, Dawn Over Saratoga (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday And Company, Inc., 1973), pp. 53-54.