

# **What firearms were commonly available to Lincoln Minute Men circa 1774-1775?**

**Herman Karl  
Quartermaster of Muskets  
February 2010  
Revised July 5, 2012  
Revised April 4, 2013  
Revised April 27, 2013**

**“The mixed-pattern muskets used by American Colonists to win our independence testify eloquently to the “can-do” spirit that made possible our ultimate victory—and our freedom.”  
(Neumann, 2001)**

This essay examines the firearms that would likely have been commonly available in eastern Massachusetts and Lincoln during the time before April 19, 1775. The essay is not an exhaustive study of all the firearms available at the time. It is meant as a resource to inform better the present day Lincoln Minute Men (LMM) of the types of firearms<sup>1</sup> most likely to have been carried by the LMM on April 19, 1775, and to help guide those considering the purchase of a firearm authentic to the period and likely to have been carried by militia and minute companies. A bibliography, which informed this essay, is provided for those wishing to learn more for themselves about the firearms of the period of the French and Indian War and Revolutionary War. For a concise account of the arms carried by patriots April 19, 1775 see Bohy and Troiani (2010) and page 4 reproduced from that article. For a fuller examination of the sources of arms available to Massachusetts militia and minutemen see Appendix A.

During the early years of the LMM most soldiers were equipped with replicas of the 1766 (an improved version of the 1763 model) Charleville and Second Model Short Land Service Musket (Brown Bess). Neither of these is as likely to have been available to the Lincoln Minute Men circa 1774 and 1775 as other types of weapons. Many soldiers have now (as of March 2013) purchased fowlers and muskets that based on recent research are known to have been likely carried by militia and minute units of the period.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Musket* is the term for a smoothbore, muzzle loading black powder firearm. Muskets are generally robust, heavy firearms used by the military; however, the term is also used for civilian arms. A *fowler* and *fusil de chasse* is lighter and more slender and than a musket. It is a civilian arm used for hunting. It is called a fowler, because it is used to hunt wild fowl that include ducks, geese, grouse, and turkey. It can also be used for small furred game, such as rabbits with shot, and larger game with ball. A *fusil* or *fusee* (*fuzee*) is a light musket. Light infantry might carry fusils; officers might be armed with fancy fusils.

## Why is the company so armed during its early years?

“When I first became a member of the Company, it was common wisdom that the original minute men carried all manner of guns on April 19th and afterward. But for practical reasons having to do with available supplies -- not historical accuracy -- we gravitated toward what the replica-makers could provide.”  
(Personal communication from Don Hafner to Herman Karl via email February 12, 2010)

The 1763 and 1766 Charlevilles are French arms. They were not put into service until after the French and Indian War (1754-1763 in North America). Therefore, they could not have been obtained as “trophies” during the F&I War and brought back to Lincoln. These weapons were not available in the colonies until 1777 when the French began supplying arms to the Continental Army and entered the war. The first official US musket, the 1795 Springfield, is patterned on the 1766 Charleville. Early French military flintlocks, such as 1717, 1728, 1746, and 1754 muskets, could have been brought to eastern Massachusetts as F&I War trophies; these would have been rare, however.

The Pedersoli and Dixie Gun Works Brown Bess muskets are patterned after the Second Model Short Land Service Musket officially introduced into service in 1769. This model Brown Bess was issued only to the regular army and did not replace the 1756 Brown Bess for several years. Thus, even though British regulars were stationed in Boston for years prior to April 19, 1775, the provincials would not have easily obtained these weapons because they were not common being issued to only a few new regiments. The 1756 Long Land Service musket continued in service after the introduction of the Short Land Service Musket and was the primary weapon of the British army in America in the early part of the war and, thus, it is highly unlikely that the Short Land Service Musket would have been available to and carried by militia and minute units at the start of hostilities.

First Model Long Land Service muskets (patterns, 1730, 1742, 1748, and 1756) could have been available. These were used during the F&I War and the older patterns (1730, 1742, and 1748) issued to provincial militia companies (see Bohy and Troiani, 2010). Massachusetts militia companies could have brought these muskets home to the eastern part of the state. Note that when new models, such as the 1756 pattern, were put into service they were never issued to provincial troops who were equipped from stocks of older models until those stocks were exhausted.

“At the beginning of hostilities, the royal forces had at least 5,200 muskets in storage, mostly in New York and Quebec (Bailey, Ref. 1, 2). They were primarily wooden ramrod Long Land 1730s and 1742s. Most active British regiments were equipped with the later 1756 version having the steel ramrod. *Through the war’s first two years, the Long Land remained the primary British arm in America* and earlier wooden ramrod patterns were normally given to Loyalist units or as replacements to Hessian Troops. *Some Short Land muskets arrived early with a few of the new regiments from Britain, and they became the British army’s principal arm after 1777 (emphasis added).*”

(Neumann, 2001, p. 9/12).

### **So, what would have been commonly available?**

"In the beginning, the only existing American military groups were individual militia systems of each colony. ...Yet, unlike the mother country's own militia regulations -- in which the authorities controlled the arms and stored them together in a secured central location between muster days -- each American had to provide his own arms and keep them at home. The gun specifications, in turn, were vague. Massachusetts, for example, required only "a good fire arm." *Because Britain had done little in past years to furnish her Colonists with military arms, the militia employed a wide assortment of smoothbore muskets, carbines, fusils, trade guns, light or heavy fowling pieces, and rifles -- of varied lineages and bore sizes (emphasis added).* ...When Washington arrived at Cambridge opposite Boston in July 1775, he found an estimated 15 percent of the troops without firearms and many others with arms not capable of military field service."

(Neumann, American-Made Muskets, p. 2)

“The immediate American needs had to be satisfied quickly by obtaining existing guns. The provincials proceeded to raid local arsenals, confiscate Loyalist guns, purchase civilian arms, seize British supplies, acquire cast-off or surplus firearms in Europe through independent agents and repair or cannibalize damaged pieces.

Efforts were also implemented to make use of the limited production capabilities within the Colonies. An estimated 2,500 to 3,000 gunsmiths were available, of which perhaps two-thirds favored the American cause (Moller I).”

(Neumann, American-Made Muskets, p. 3)

Various European-made and American-made muskets, fusils, and fowlers would have been commonly available in eastern Massachusetts and throughout the colonies. Many of the American-made muskets were assembled from a mixture of parts reused from other muskets, which could include English, French, German, Dutch components, and forgings by American gunsmiths.

Most militia and minuteman companies were equipped with such a hodge-podge of weapons. The illustrations provide a few examples. Three good source references for the weapons available to colonials are *Battle Weapons of the American Revolution* by George C. Neumann, *Muskets of the American Revolution and French and Indian Wars* by B. Ahearn, and "We Meant to be Free Always!": The Arms of April, 19, 1775 by J. Bohy and D. Troiani.

### **Which weapon for you?**

If you are choosing a new firearm for use with the Lincoln Minute Men, you should emulate what the majority of minutemen were most likely armed with ca. 1774-1775 (that is a mixture of muskets, fowlers, and fusils), keep in mind the documentation of Neumann and other noted arms historians. Unlike during the early years of the Lincoln

Minutemen Company, today they are many sources (Appendix B) of fowlers and muskets that replicate those likely carried by the original militia and minute units ca. 1774-1775. Keep in mind that the LMM disbanded almost immediately after the April 19, 1775 battle. What ever you choose, make sure it is a safe firearm and maintain it well and check to make sure that it is on the approved list of the Minute Man National Historical Park if you intend to use it in Park events.

## Examples of Militia and Minute Unit Arms

Illustrations from Bohy and Troiani, *American Rifleman*, July 2010

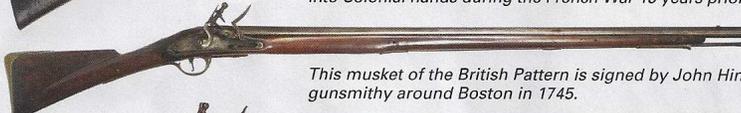
### *Patriot Arms*



A typical New England Militia Musket with an early British lock and brass, military furniture of the 1740-60 period, this particular gun was handed down within a family from Hingham, Mass.



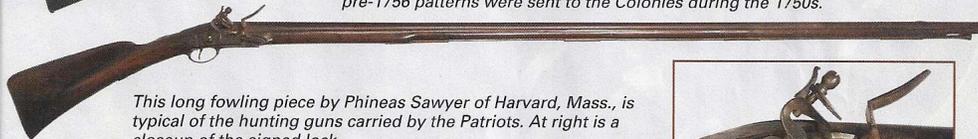
This French Pattern 1728 musket is an example of many such fine arms that fell into Colonial hands during the French War 15 years prior to the Revolution.



This musket of the British Pattern is signed by John Hinds, who established a gunsmithy around Boston in 1745.



A British Land Service Musket of the 1730/40 Pattern, dated 1741, exhibits the heavy raised carving that was eliminated on later models. Thousands of these pre-1756 patterns were sent to the Colonies during the 1750s.



This long fowling piece by Phineas Sawyer of Harvard, Mass., is typical of the hunting guns carried by the Patriots. At right is a closeup of the signed lock.



### *The Arms Of April 19, 1775*

The British were splendidly outfitted as always, and their arms were among the highest quality and most handsome of their day. The battalion companies and grenadiers of the regiments in Boston (plus detachments) all were armed with the .75-cal. Land Service Musket Pattern of 1756, with a 46"-long barrel and steel ramrod. Each gun was fitted with a socket bayonet with a 17" triangular blade.

The light infantry company of each foot regiment was equipped with the latest 42"-barreled Pattern 1769 Short Land Musket. Many regiments that arrived later on in 1775 and throughout war were entirely re-equipped with this shorter pattern, which supplanted the more awkward and heavier Long Lands.

The contingent of British Marines involved on April 19 were armed with the Marine-Militia Musket with 42" barrel and steel ramrod. In 1757, they were originally made with wooden ramrods, but after 1759 steel was adopted with the earlier production being converted to steel over time. Basically, these guns were an economy model of the Short Land Musket with more simplified brass mountings.

Royal Artillerymen had light carbines of .65 cal. with 36" barrels to defend their guns should the need arise. Sergeants in some regiments were outfitted with similar-style carbines as well. Officers in the grenadier and light infantry companies used light fusils, all excellent quality with some being lavishly ornamented and often silver-mounted.

The Colonial forces were well-armed also but with a conglomeration of leftover arms from the French Wars,

as well as locally produced hunting guns and muskets. Few rifles would have been present. An eyewitness who observed the Colonial forces a few weeks after the battle commented, "Here an old soldier carried a heavy Queen's arm, with which he had done service at the conquest of Canada twenty years previous, while by his side walked a stripling boy with a Spanish fusee not half its weight or calibre, which his grandfather may have taken at Havana, while not a few had old French pieces that dated back to the reduction of Louisburg."

Aside from inadequate training and discipline, the Colonists' major disadvantage was the lack of bayonets. Swords or clubbed muskets were little match against a soldier who knew how to use a bayonet. Whenever the British could quickly close to a hand-to-hand situation, the Patriots got the worst of it ... or were compelled to swiftly retreat. Although some companies of Colonials and individuals had bayonets, there were not nearly enough to make a difference.

British officers wrote of the retreat from Concord that "even the women had firelocks, one was seen to fire a blunderbuss between her father and husband from their windows." Further, "Numbers of them were mounted, and when they had fastened their horses at some little distance from the road, they crept down near enough to have a shot; as soon as the column had passed, they mounted again, and rode round til they got ahead of the Column ... many of them used long guns made for Duck-Shooting."

—JOEL BOHY & DON TROIANI

**Some examples of American muskets of the period**  
**Illustrations from Neumann, American-Made Muskets in the Revolutionary War**  
**(Note that No.1 is documented to have been carried on April 19, 1775)**



**No. 1: An Early Assembled Fowler/Musket, c. 1740**

*This American long arm, which predates the War for Independence, illustrates the Colonists' early reliance upon reused mixed parts. Jacob Mun of Wrentham, Mass., would later carry it as a Minuteman at Lexington/Concord and while a soldier in the 13th Massachusetts Continental Regiment through the New York-Trenton-Princeton campaigns (1775-1777), as well as at the Battle of Rhode Island (1778). The American stock mounts a bulbous Dutch lock, a convex French S-shaped iron sideplate, a cut-down British brass buttplate, an English trade pattern escutcheon and a crude locally cast brass trigger guard secured by four nails. A French pinned fowler barrel is stocked to the muzzle, indicating the early lack of socket bayonets. Its iron ramrod is held by three thimbles, of which the bottom one is an old Queen Anne ribbed pattern, and the others simple rolled sheet brass.*

*Length:*  
67<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>"  
*Lock:*  
6<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" x 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"  
*Butt*  
Tang:  
2<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"  
*Furniture:*  
Brass/Iron  
*Barrel:*  
51<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" .71  
*cal.*  
*Trigger*  
*Guard:*  
8<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"  
*Sideplate:*  
4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>"  
*Weight:*  
7.8 lbs.



**No. 2: A Club Butt Country Fowler, c. 1715-1750**

*Although technically a hunting gun with the fore-end of its maple stock reaching to the muzzle of a European barrel, this family fowler, which omits all but the basic components, is typical of many of the existing arms carried into the field by the American forces early in the Revolution and by the militia throughout the war. Its stock is the popular civilian club butt form, but the non-essential buttplate, escutcheon, sideplate, raised carving and bottom ramrod pipe are not included. The Queen Anne period, three-screw flat lock design with its reinforced cock has an unbalanced profile which suggests possible*

*Length:*  
60"  
*Lock:*  
7" x 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>"  
*Furniture:*  
Brass/Iron  
*Barrel:*  
45" .70  
*cal.*  
*Trigger*

7.5 lbs



**No. 3: Early French Components, c. 1760-1780**

*A French Model 1717 musket furnished most of the elements remounted on this American cherry stock. It might have been an arm captured during the Colonial Wars with French Canada, or an early arm among the foreign aid shipments during our Revolution. Included is the distinctive M, 1717 lock with its vertical bridge, a typical French flat S-shaped sideplate, a double-pointed trigger guard, a long butt tang, and a 47" barrel. The double-strap upper barrel band from a French Model 1754 musket had a cone-shaped ramrod pipe brazed to the bottom by the Colonists who were probably influenced by similar Spanish and Dutch designs. The provincial restocker also provided a New England petal-type raised carving around the barrel tang.*

Length:  
63"  
Lock:  
6 $\frac{1}{2}$ "x1 $\frac{3}{8}$ "  
Butt  
Tang:  
43/4"  
Furniture:  
Iron  
Barrel:  
47", .70  
cal.  
Trigger  
Guard:  
12 $\frac{5}{8}$ "  
Sideplate:  
4 $\frac{3}{8}$ "  
Weight:  
9.2 lbs.



**No. 4: British Brown Bess Elements, c. 1775-1783**

*Major parts from a British Long Land 1756 Pattern musket, which was still the primary arm of their infantry early in the Revolution, were remounted by the rebels on a maple stock to create this firearm. In doing so, they reused the lock, trigger guard, sideplate, and buttplate, but omitted the original escutcheon, fourth rammer pipe and raised beavertail carving surrounding the barrel tang. The lock area of the stock, in turn, was made thicker by the Colonists, probably to strengthen that most vulnerable location from fractures. The convex side plate is also inset deeper than normal. An American hand-forged iron ramrod includes a thick button head, while the original 46" Brown Bess barrel has been shortened by  $\frac{3}{8}$ " reflecting the constant need to dress the muzzle walls as they became sharpened from prolonged rammer wear.*

Length:  
60 $\frac{5}{8}$ "  
Lock:  
7"x1 $\frac{1}{4}$ "  
Butt  
Tang:  
5 $\frac{3}{4}$ "  
Furniture:  
Brass  
Barrel:  
45 $\frac{3}{8}$ ",  
.77 cal.  
Trigger  
Guard:  
11"  
Sideplate:  
6 $\frac{1}{8}$ "  
Weight:  
10.3 lbs.

## Bibliography

- Ahearn, B, 2005, *Muskets of the Revolution and the French & Indian Wars*, Andrew Mowbray Publishers, Lincoln, RI, 248 p.
- Bohy, J. and Troiani, D., 2010, "We meant to be free always": the guns of April 19, 1775, *American Rifleman*, July 2010, v. 158, n. 7, p. 48 ff.
- Darling, A.D., 1971, *Red Coat and Brown Bess*, Museum Restoration Service, Bloomfield, Canada, 63 p.
- Gale, R.R., 2007, *A Soldier Like Way: The Material Culture of the British Infantry 1751-1768*, Track of the Wolf, Elk River, Minnesota, 137 p.
- Grinslade, T., *Flintlock Fowlers: The First Guns Made in America*, 2005, Scurlock Publishing Company, Texarkana, Texas, 248 p.
- Mullins, J., 2008, *Of Sorts for the Provincials: American Weapons of the French and Indian War*, Track of the Wolf, Elk River, Minnesota, 185 p.
- Neumann, G.C., *American-Made Muskets in the Revolutionary War*, *American Rifleman*,  
<http://www.jaegerkorps.org/NRA/American%20Made%20Muskets%20in%20the%20Revolutionary%20War.htm>
- Neumann, G.C., 2001, *The Redcoat's Brown Bess*, *American Rifleman*,  
<http://www.11thpa.org/Bess.html>.
- Neumann, G.C., *The "Revolutionary" Charleville*, *American Rifleman*,  
<http://www.jaegerkorps.org/NRA/The%20Revolutionary%20Charleville.htm>
- Neumaan, G.C., 1998, *Battle Weapons of the American Revolution*, Scurlock Publishing Company, Texarkana, Texas, 393 p.
- Thayer, C.W., *U.S. Government Made Muskets of the Revolution, 1780-1783*, University of Pennsylvania.
- The Rifle Shoppe Catalog; this is a superb reference for historically correct firearms.

# Appendix A

## *“THE LEATHER SCANTY AND BAD LIKEWISE”: AN ANALYSIS OF BRITISH WEAPONS PROVIDED TO MASSACHUSETTS PROVINCIAL SOLDIERS AND MILITIA DURING THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR<sup>2</sup>*

By

*Alexander R. Cain*

It has been established by recent historical research that firelocks and equipment in the hands of Massachusetts militia and minute men on the eve of the American Revolution came from five primary sources. These sources included imported muskets sold by local merchants<sup>3</sup>; muskets and equipment captured from enemy troops (most notably the French and Spanish)<sup>4</sup>; locally produced weapons; stands of arms issued by the British government to Massachusetts provincial and militia soldiers during the French and Indian War; and finally, the *rare* procurement of a musket from a willing British soldier stationed in Boston. The purpose of this paper is to examine the fourth source of weapons and equipment available to Massachusetts troops: stands of arms issued by the British government to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in support of the military effort against France.

Historically, during the French wars Massachusetts Bay Colony encouraged its provincial soldiers to provide their own arms, rather than rely upon the government. For example, Governor Pownall declared in the Boston Gazette that “as most people in North America have arms of their own, which from their being accustomed to and being so much lighter than the Tower Arms, must be more agreeable and proper for them, General Amherst, as an encouragement for their coming provided with good muskets, engages to pay every one they shall so bring that may be spoiled or lost in actual service at the rate of twenty-five shillings sterling.”<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Barnard of Waltham, Massachusetts petitioned the Massachusetts colony to be reimbursed for the loss of a firearm by his son

---

<sup>2</sup> With credit to Jim Mullins’ work *Of Sorts for Provincials: American Weapons of the French and Indian War*. I relied heavily upon his work in preparing this paper.

<sup>3</sup> “To be sold by John Pim of Boston, Gunsmith, at the Sign of the Cross Guns, in Anne-Street near the Draw Bridge, at very Reasonable rates, sundry choice of Arms lately arrived from London, viz. Handy Muskets, Buccaneer-Guns, Fowling Pieces, Hunting Guns, Carbines, several sorts of Pistols, Brass and Iron, fashionable swords, &c.” (*Boston Newsletter*, July 11, 1720); “Newly imported, and sold by Samuel Miller, Gunsmith, at the Sign of the Cross Guns near the Draw-Bridge, Boston: Neat Fire Arms of all sorts, Pistols, Swords, Hangars, Cutlasses, Flasks for Horsemen, Firelocks, &c.” (*Boston Gazette*, May 11, 1742)

<sup>4</sup> “We killed and took about the same number of the enemy. The lieutenant of the British company and myself, were foremost, and we advanced on and found their sleeping-place, and while running it up, the Lieutenant was shot through the vitals and he died soon thereafter. Thus I was all alone, the remainder of our party not having gained the summit; the enemy retreated, and i followed them to the other end of the hill. In my route on the hill, I picked up a good French gun and brought it home with me.” (*The Life of Captain David Perry, A Soldier of the French and Revolutionary Wars*). As militiamen from the village of Lynn marched off to war on April 19, 1775, an observer noted “[one man with] a long fowling piece, without a bayonet, a horn of powder, and a seal-skin pouch, filled with bullets and buckshot. . . Here an old soldier carried a heavy Queen’s arm with which he had done service at the conquest of Canada twenty years previous, while by his side walked a stripling boy with a Spanish fusee not half its weight or calibre, which his grandfather may have taken at the Havana, while not a few had old French pieces, that dated back to the reduction of Louisbourg.” (*History of Lynn*, p. 338)

<sup>5</sup> *Boston Gazette*, March 26, 1759.

who was killed “in a battle near Lake George”.<sup>6</sup> This effort was met with moderate success and unfortunately, a shortage still existed. As a result, Massachusetts was forced to petition Britain for military supplies.

Unfortunately for Massachusetts Bay Colony, the muskets and related equipment supplied by the British government was not the top of the line. Colonial governments traditionally received in times of crisis obsolete and older arms from Britain. By comparison, military regiments stationed at home or in Europe generally received newer, high-quality arms.

The arms shipped to Massachusetts were generally referred to as a “stand of arms”. Firearms were issued in complete sets or “stands”, meaning that all of the basic components and accouterments needed to use the firearm were included. These components included the firearm itself, a bayonet fitted to the gun, bayonet scabbard, sling, a belly box with a waist belt and leather frog. Unlike the better quality cartridge boxes issued to regular regiments, the belly boxes that came with the stands were simple wooden blocks with cartridge holes drilled in it. Two thin leather strips were nailed to the front of the box for a waist belt, which carried the frog, scabbard and bayonet.

It appears that the number of rounds a cartridge box could hold varied from box to box. In a letter of Henry Bouquet to Forbes, dated June 14, 1758, the author notes, “I have noticed a great inconvenience in the use of cartridge boxes for the provincial troops. They do not know how to make cartridges, or rather, they take too much time. In the woods, they seldom have time or places suitable to make them. These cartridge boxes hold only 9 charges, some twelve, which is not sufficient. I think that their powder horns and pouches would be more useful, keeping the cartridge box, however, to use in case of a sudden or night attack.”<sup>7</sup>

Artifacts recovered from the British man-of-war Invincible, wrecked in the Solent while sailing for the invasion of Louisbourg in 1758, also provide detailed information about cartridge boxes. Among the items recovered in 1979 was a nine-hole belly box with part of the leather flap still intact.<sup>8</sup> In the “General Orders of 1757 Issued by the Earl of Loudoun and Phineas Lyman in the Campaign Against the French”, the orders indicate effective “July 2d, 1757, at Fort Edward, that Each Man be provided with 24 Rounds of Powder & Ball.”

Bayonets recovered from fortifications located in Maine and manned by Massachusetts provincial troops suggest the bayonets issued consisted of flat bladed socket bayonets manufactured in England between 1700 and 1730. At other archeological sites in the Lake Champlain region, it appears provincial soldiers were also issued Dutch rectangular bladed bayonets manufactured in the 1720s.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> *Journals of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts*, Volume XXXIV, part 2, page 253.

<sup>7</sup> “The Papers of Henry Bouquet”, Vol. II, p. 88.

<sup>8</sup> The flap has a GR cipher and could have belonged to either a marine or one of the invasion force. For a detailed color picture, see Brian Lavery, “The Royal Navy’s First Invincible”, pp. ix, 70 (1988).

<sup>9</sup> On June 5, 1759, Captain Benjamin Reed of the Lexington Training Band submitted the following information: “The following names are a full and Just account of those to whom I the Subscriber delivered Bayonets in the company under my command in Lexington, Benjamin Reed, Captain, June 5, 1759... [49 militia men listed]” *Massachusetts Muster Rolls*, Volume 97, Page 216. Since stands of arms were delivered to provincial regiments instead of militia companies, it is likely that these bayonets were locally produced instead of being part of a stand of arms. On the other hand, in 1758 there was a shortage in Massachusetts of stands of arms due to delivery errors by both England and Massachusetts. As a result,

Massachusetts soldiers also received powder horns, powder flasks, knapsacks and bullet pouches. An inventory of equipment provided by the government to Massachusetts troops participating in the 1755 Crown Point expedition suggests the following equipment was distributed “1200 cartouch boxes . . . 1500 powder flasks . . . 1300 powder horns . . . 1500 worms & 1500 wires . . . 1500 knapsacks and bullet pouches.”<sup>10</sup>

Naturally, one must ask what type of musket was issued as part of the stand of arms. In the fall of 1755, then Governor Shirley described the 2000 stands of arms he received to include “Land muskets of the King’s pattern with double bridle locks, old pattern nosebands and wood rammers.”<sup>11</sup> In the spring of 1756, 10,000 stands of arms were shipped to the colonies, including Massachusetts. The shipment consisted entirely of “Land service muskets of the King’s pattern with brass furniture, double bridle locks, wood rammers with bayonets & scabbards and tann’d leather slings.”<sup>12</sup> The descriptions of these muskets, particularly with the emphasis on “double bridle locks”, suggest the muskets issued to Massachusetts provincial troops was the 1742 King’s Pattern (often and erroneously referred to as the 1<sup>st</sup> Model Brown Bess).

The 1742 King’s Pattern was the successor to the 1730 pattern and represented the majority of muskets shipped from England to Massachusetts during the French and Indian War. The 1742 musket’s overall length was 61 11/16 inches, its barrel length was 45 1/2 inches and its caliber was .77. This firelock featured a double bridled firelock, a wood ramrod, a brass nose band to slow wear on the fore end of the stock and a redesigned oval trigger lock. All furniture was brass.

However, the 1742 pattern was not the only type of musket delivered to Massachusetts. Because the British government could not always keep up with demand and wartime shortages, the colonies also received Dutch muskets produced between 1706 and 1730. Dutch muskets were generally 61 3/8 inches in length; its barrel was 45 7/8 inches and had a caliber of .78. Its furniture was composed of iron or brass, the ramrods were made of wood and the lock plate was rounded (as opposed to flat). As described above, the accompanying bayonets were short-shanked rectangular blades.<sup>13</sup>

Unfortunately, these muskets were in less than ideal condition when they arrived in Boston. In July 16, 1756, Colonel John Winslow and Lieutenant Colonel George Scott both complained that the arms they received “are in very bad condition.”<sup>14</sup> That same year, Virginia’s Lieutenant Governor Robert Dinwiddie complained about a shipment of arms that was received and slated to be shared amongst the American colonies, including Massachusetts. According to Dinwiddie, the stands of arms were “in a very rusty condition, and it w’d appear they had been under water for months.”<sup>15</sup> The previous year,

---

local blacksmiths were recruited to produce bayonets. As a result, it is *possible, but unlikely*, that the bayonets issued in 1759 to the Training Band were intended to make up for the shortfalls of the 1758 stands of arms.

<sup>10</sup> *List of articles provided and providing by the Committee of War in Massachusetts for the Crown Point Expedition*. June 7, 1755.

<sup>11</sup> Shirley to Robinson, September 28, 1755; October 13, 1755.

<sup>12</sup> Shirley to Sharpe, April 24, 1756.

<sup>13</sup> It is possible Massachusetts received shipments of the 1730 King’s Pattern, although more research is necessary.

<sup>14</sup> *Provincial Papers of New Hampshire*, page 396.

<sup>15</sup> Dinwiddie to Lord Loudon.

on September 28, 1755, Governor Shirley and Major General William Pepperrell both received correspondence highlighting the inadequacies of weapons and equipment sent to Massachusetts provincials. “The locks being wore out and the hammers so soft, that notwithstanding repeated repairs they are most unfit for service, particularly Sir William Pepperrell’s Regiment being old Dutch arms. The holes of the pouches and boxes are so small that they cannot receive the Cartridge, nor is there substance of the wood, to widen them sufficiently. The leather scanty and bad likewise.”<sup>16</sup>

In the eyes of the British government, the stands of arms provided to Massachusetts soldiers were property of His Majesty and were expected to be returned to officials at the end of each campaign. Yet despite the existing deficiencies, Massachusetts soldiers often refused to return these stands of arms. In 1757, the British Comptroller Furnis complained “out of the 2,000 [stands of arms] issued to the Province of the Massachusetts Bay, he has just yet received 300 only.”<sup>17</sup> Two years later, Governor Pownall complained “I had caused about three thousand stand of arms to be delivered to the men, raised the last year for His Majesty’s service, under General Abercromby; I have an account of one hundred and fifteen only, as yet returned.”<sup>18</sup>

Assuming the numbers are accurate, at least 4585 British and Dutch muskets, belly boxes and bayonets remained in the hands of the Massachusetts provincials by 1759. As to how many of these retained muskets and equipment were used at the outset of the American Revolution more research needs to be conducted. However, it is highly plausible that many of these muskets, especially the 1742 King’s Pattern, were utilized by Massachusetts militia and minute companies on April 19, 1775 and during the subsequent Siege of Boston.

---

<sup>16</sup> Public Records Office (PRO) CO, 5/46.

<sup>17</sup> *Furnis Letterbook*, March 7, 1757.

<sup>18</sup> Address of Governor Pownall to the Massachusetts House of Representatives, January 6, 1759.

## **Appendix B**

### **Some Sources for Appropriate Muskets and Fowlers**

These are a few sources for high quality muskets and fowlers that are appropriate for a minuteman company ca. 1774-1775. If you choose to purchase a kit, you may want to contact George Morrison, New England Rifleworks, to arrange instruction at [theflintlockman@yahoo.com](mailto:theflintlockman@yahoo.com), phone 978-660-3907. Kits take 20-40 hours to assemble. Also, check out the advertisements in Muzzleloader and Muzzle Blasts magazines.

#### **Tennessee Valley Muzzleloader**

<http://www.avsia.com/tvm/>

Fowler: assembled \$1100; call for kit price

Tulle (Fusil de Chasse): assembled \$1100; call for kit price

#### **Sitting Fox Custom Muzzleloaders**

<http://www.sittingfoxmuzzleloaders.com/intro.html>

K15 French Fusil Fin 'Type C': assembled \$1199; kit \$699

K16 French Fusil de Chasse 'French D': assembled \$1199; kit \$639

K17 French Tulle Fusil de Chasse: assembled \$1049; kit \$549

K5 Buck & Ball Fowler: assembled \$1049; kit \$549

K1 Appalachian Barn Gun: assembled \$899; kit \$489

K10 American Colonial Fowler: assembled \$1099; kit \$549 (good choice)

K41 Pennsylvania Dutch Barn Gun: kit \$549

K51 Colonial Fusil Fin: kit \$769

K52 Fusil Fin: kit \$749

#### **Chambers Flintlocks**

<http://www.flintlocks.com/>

Pennsylvania Fowler: kit \$880

New England Colonial Fowler/Musket: kit \$885

English Fowler/Officers Fusil: \$880

#### **Track of the Wolf**

<http://www.trackofthewolf.com/>

Besides the kits listed below this site offers custom made firearms and some commercial firearms and muzzleloader supplies. Check the website frequently

English Fowling Gun: kit \$727

English Fowling Gun: kit \$776

French Fusil de Chasse, 42" barrel: kit \$790

French Fusil de Chasse, 44" barrel: kit \$743

French Type 'C' Trade Gun: kit \$773

French Type 'D' Trade Gun: kit \$766

#### **Contemporary Longrifle Association**

<http://www.longrifle.ws/>

This is an excellent source for custom made fowlers and rifles and accoutrements by skilled artisans. Check the website frequently.