

THE MYTH OF THE CITIZEN-SOLDIER:
RHODE ISLAND PROVINCIAL SOLDIERS
IN THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
Art of War Scholars

by

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ABSTRACT

THE MYTH OF THE CITIZEN SOLDIER: RHODE ISLAND PROVINCIAL SOLDIERS DURING THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR, by Major Amoreena L. York, 148 pages.

This thesis explores the colonial origins of the citizen-soldier through the study of the colony of Rhode Island and the Providence Plantations during the French and Indian War. The common picture of the American citizen-soldier is that of the militiaman during the American Revolution; however, the most overlooked aspect to the citizen-soldier heritage is that of the provincial soldier during the French and Indian War. The Rhode Island militia served as the pool to draw provincial recruits for the campaigns from 1755 to 1760. There were three categories of militia involvement, the part-time militia focused on home front defense and civil disturbances, the full-time frontier militia raised for frontier defensive positions following the hostilities of King Phillip's War, and the full-time provincial militia recruited or impressed for military campaigns creating provincial regiments. The latter category comprising of volunteers and draftees was an integral element to the volunteer tradition. The men who served in the provincial armies would receive an education in arms not only in European warfare but irregular warfare as well. Their combined experiences would develop a strong sense of what contractual obligation meant and would cement their ideals of discipline and commitment.

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The French and Indian War was not won by a single colony, but a concerted effort amongst a population destined for greatness. While my thesis may not be destined for greatness itself, I would like to thank the following individuals for their continued support throughout this process. Primarily, I would like to thank my committee, Dr. Donald Connelly, Dr. Jonathan House, and Mr. Nils Erickson. Thank you for your hours of reading, direction, corrections, and guidance. Without it, I would be lost in the wilds of New England. Thank you to Dr. Dean A. Nowowiejski and the Art of War Scholars, a truly unique and above par program. A special nod to the scholars of the program who listened to the tales of the dark and stormy nights of the 18th century. Colonel Jim Johnson, thank you for your insight, recommendations, and for calling me a colonial historian. As an Army officer, the latter brings a smile to my face every time I think of it.

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ACRONYMS

RIHS	Rhode Island Historical Society
RISA	Rhode Island State Archives

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The commonly accepted image of the American citizen-soldier is closely tied to the colonial militia and the Revolutionary War. This citizen-soldier has been a widely studied and debated topic in academia. Researchers have dedicated intense effort to describing the intricacies of the virtuous citizen-soldier, who took up arms in defense of the community, colony, and the nation, only to return to civilian life at the conclusion of a contractual obligation. Colonial historian John Shy asserted, “The colonial militia, in particular, represents the happy uniqueness of America.” By contrast, in Europe during the eighteenth century monarchs relied increasingly on “the military superiority of the politically dangerous mercenary army.”¹

There is no doubt that the citizen-soldier is a large part of American history and stems largely from the colonial militia; however, the colonial militia was not the only contributor to this heritage and certainly was not the only conduit for a citizen-soldier. Perhaps the most overlooked aspect is that of the provincial soldier of the French and Indian War. A majority of these soldiers served on short-term expeditions and campaigns for limited objectives, while others served longer terms in garrison forts on the frontier. Within the field of colonial research, the most understudied and unique colony is Rhode Island. Lacking the need for a part-time militia to defend the colony or a full-time militia to garrison frontier forts, Rhode Island provided full-time provincial volunteers to fight during the French and Indian War. Rhode Island’s

¹ John Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 23.

experience in the French and Indian War illuminates the origins of the volunteer citizen-soldier tradition.

Fred Anderson proposed that the experiences of the men who fought in the French and Indian War had “transformed them from a mere group of contemporaries into a generation of men, whose common knowledge included a powerful set of lessons about themselves, about the British, and about war itself.”² Anderson’s research of Massachusetts provincial soldiers and society has paved the way for historians such as Steven C. Eames, Harold E. Selesky, and Matthew C. Ward to analyze false perceptions and place each colony’s provincial army and military decisions into context. Anderson and Eames asserted that the role of the provincial soldier during the French and Indian War cannot be diminished due to perceptions by British officers as the “Lowest Dregs of the People, both officers and men.”³ Within this field of research, Rhode Island has been neglected, yet it provides perhaps one of the most interesting and unique experiences.

Furthermore, the study of the citizen-soldier is often confined to one aspect of American history, and that concerns its origins in the revolutionary militia. In *For Liberty and the Republic: The American Citizen as Soldier, 1775-1861*, Ricardo A. Herrera suggested that from the American Revolution to 1861 the mixture of the regular army, state militias, and volunteers suited the American citizenry’s beliefs and

² Fred Anderson, *A People’s Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the French and Indian War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 25; Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years’ War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2000), 288.

³ As quoted in Stanley M. Pargellis, *Lord Loudoun in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933), 99.

ideals.⁴ The roots of the Continental volunteers lie in the provincial armies and developed from the early eighteenth century through the end of the French and Indian War. Furthermore, the American citizen, with beliefs rooted in classical, commonwealth, or American republicanism, “equated citizenship with soldiering, as well as a distrust of standing armies; hence the United States’ greater reliance on and preference for the militia and volunteers.”⁵ Provincial armies and the soldiers who fought in them during the French and Indian War are an overlooked aspect to the citizen-soldier heritage, but as Herrera highlighted regarding the volunteer, the provincial units were an integral piece of the mixture of forces and equally important as a military institution that activated for short durations of time. Therefore, chapter 2 explores past research over a broad scope in order to identify incorrect assessments made by past historians.

Why is the sole linkage of the citizen-soldier to the colonial militia flawed and why should research focus on provincial armies in the French and Indian War? It is important to note that colonies employed militias as a part-time home front defense force, to control civil disturbances, and for emergencies. For instance, the Rhode Island militia was activated once in 1757 in response to the fall of Fort William Henry. Therefore, the militia was not used for campaigns and did not depart from their homes and communities for extended periods.

⁴ Ricardo A. Herrera, *For Liberty and the Republic: The American Citizen as Soldier, 1775-1861* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 1.

⁵ Ibid.

As each colony encountered an existential crisis, in some cases on multiple fronts, the colonial government established armies or recruited volunteers to serve on campaigns or perform garrison duties, predominantly in frontier forts used as a defense against raids. Therefore, a complete understanding of all of the colonies independently and collectively provides insight into the citizen-soldier. The longest consecutive period in American history during which provincial armies were in use was during the French and Indian War, when they were also the most influential force. Steven C. Eames argued, “it was the provincial soldiers, separated from the inhabitants and the militia by virtue of their active service, who actually waged war for the colonies.”⁶

Therefore, it is incorrect to correlate the part-time militia with the citizen-soldier as the only source of the American heritage while largely ignoring the provincial armies’ contributions to the development of American ideology. While Eames’ research explored northern New England colonies there has been little research focused on Rhode Island. Rhode Island is unique in that it is even more isolated from frontier warfare and the existential crisis that many other colonies experienced. I will show that a majority of Rhode Island provincial soldiers were not composed of the “Lowest Dregs of the People” and that military decisions were driven by Rhode Island’s heritage of freedom of religion and independence of government.⁷ While provincial soldiers were not an exact cross section of Rhode

⁶ Steven C. Eames, *Rustic Warriors: Warfare and the Provincial Soldier on the New England Frontier, 1689-1748* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 34.

⁷ As quoted in Pargellis, *Lord Loudoun*, 99.

Island colonial society, the combined experiences of these men had great implications prior to and during the American Revolution.

To develop the above question I will explore how compulsory obligation in Rhode Island in the eighteenth century developed into volunteers, impressment, and drafts into the provincial armies during the timeframe of 1754 to 1760. This is important in order to provide context to the American ideal of a citizen-soldier and to establish the military ideology that developed from 1607 to 1754 as explained through Jamestown, Plymouth, King Phillip's War, and the Dominion of New England in chapter 3. The record is often incomplete due to a lack of documents, however, when comparing Rhode Island to Connecticut and Massachusetts a series of analogies can be made.

Early historians have wrongly assumed that draft or impressment measures, and not personal choice, forced a vast majority of men to serve in provincial armies. However, recent research has discovered that in some colonies young men overwhelmingly volunteered to gain an economic advantage, whether by the promise of land following garrison duty on the frontier or through financial incentives and pay. This had huge implications for Rhode Island. As the smallest colony, available land for expansion was limited forcing sons to seek other means to obtain wealth. Historians Fred Anderson and Harold E. Selesky have drawn similar conclusions for Massachusetts and Connecticut. Provincial soldiers were largely not impoverished.

British opinions of provincial methods and discipline have influenced scholarly research on the provincial armies' success rates as well. Chance and luck are also important factors that must be considered during wartime when evaluating

either the success or failure of a battle or campaign. While the colonies raised a large number of men in comparison to community numbers for campaigns, assemblies found that they relied on the British for resources and additional reinforcements, which heavily influenced success and failure rates. In addition to the reliance on British resources, when placed under the command of British officers and subjected to the harsh punishment of the British army, provincial soldiers tended to misbehave. Provincial soldiers regarded themselves as citizens first and soldiers second; therefore, when placed in roles secondary to British Regulars such as labor-intensive work the provincials resorted to desertion and misbehavior. The practice of enlisting in the military for a specified period in addition to the experiences of the British class-consciousness influenced many men who would later serve in militias and the Continental Army during the American Revolution.

Although provincial discipline both on and off the battlefield may not have been to the standards of European professional soldiers, the type of warfare that provincial armies fought on the frontier was a departure from the conflicts fought in Europe. Eames argued that there is a “lack of depth in historical research and by the nature of warfare itself.”⁸ John Grenier concluded that during the French and Indian War, the British lacked Indian allies and therefore turned increasingly to American Rangers to fight French units specializing in *petit-guerre*. By the end of the war, “American and Britons alike had acknowledged the first way of war as a legitimate

⁸ Eames, *Rustic Warriors*, 14.

endeavor.”⁹ These issues led to the misperception by British officers that provincial soldiers were inferior to British Regulars.

The spectrum of involvement of the citizen-soldier has typically been reserved to the part-time militia and the militia’s involvement in the Revolutionary War. There were three categories of militia involvement in Rhode Island: the part-time militia focused on home front defense and civil disturbances, the full-time militia raised for frontier defensive positions following the hostilities of King Phillip’s War, and the full-time militia recruited or impressed for military campaigns creating provincial regiments as shown in table 1. The latter category, composed of volunteers and draftees, is an integral element to the volunteer tradition. Not only can this volunteer tradition be traced from the provincial soldiers in the French and Indian War but it also sheds light on the new and modern ideal of the citizen-soldier, breaking the mythology of the citizen-soldier.

⁹ John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 14. Ambush tactics adopted from the Indians in the eighteenth century by colonial men and used during the French and Indian War sent the British Regulars scampering to Boston following Lexington and Concord.

Table 1. Spectrum of Militia Involvement

	Part-time Militia	Full-time Frontier	Full-time Provincial
Range	·home front defense	·frontier defense	·campaigns ·expeditions
Tactics	·civil disturbance ·frontier threats	·raiding ·skirmishing	·conventional
Training	·civilian at arms ·drill	·minimal ·mix of militia and provincial	·British training and integration
Warfare	·irregular ·conventional	·irregular	·European conventional ·irregular

Source: Created by author.

Throughout the French and Indian War, Rhode Island utilized a mixture of part-time, full-time frontier, and full-time provincial forces to meet the requests for forces from Britain and for the colony's own self-defense. Chapter 4 discusses the composition of the Rhode Island part-time militia in 1754. The train bands, or companies, provided the roster of men available to serve in the Rhode Island Regiment. The Rhode Island Regiment structure, raised as a full-time provincial unit, remained the same throughout the war. However, the Regiment size varied depending on assessments made by British officers usually at the conclusion of the campaign season. The British Commander of North American Forces would then send requests to raise provincial soldiers for the upcoming campaign season.¹⁰ Requests for full-time provincial forces came in a yearly predictable cycle as shown in table 2.

¹⁰ Generally, a campaign season would begin in early spring and last until late fall and in some instances into winter. Therefore, requests from the British Commander-In-Chief would arrive at the colonies in the August to October period. The Rhode Island General Assembly would then consider the request and vote to raise the force or demand a new number through a constituent. In many instances, the request to raise forces arrived after the General Assembly had paid and released the

Table 2. Provincial Campaign Cycle

Month		
OCT-DEC	FEB	FEB/MAR-JUN
Parliament issues forces requirements to the Governor and General Assembly based on the Commander of North American Forces assessment.	General Assembly meets and votes on force size and officers. Officers selected/commissions granted. Size of force voted on. Money allotted for bounties. Pay scale designated.	Recruiting: Officer on quarters on average of 90 days. Enlisted on quarters on average of 25 days.
JUN-JUL	JUN/JUL-NOV	NOV-DEC
Campaign season begins: Regiment marches to Albany then on to frontier destinations. Provincial replacement request from Commander of North American Forces and Parliament.	Fort Edward Fort William Henry Albany to Oswego Stanwix Frontenac Montreal	Campaign season ends: Regiment redeployed to Rhode Island via Albany. Regiment typically disbanded no later than 31 DEC.

Source: Created by author.

Depending on the previous season's perceived success, the Rhode Island Regiment fluctuated from five to thirteen companies with each company consisting of fifty to one hundred men. A colonel with his staff of a lieutenant colonel, a major, and an adjutant commanded the regiment. The General Assembly nominated each position, and in the event of a promotion or a declination to serve, an alternate individual was either selected from within the regiment or pulled from outside of the regiment. Often men would have the same last name as senior officers within the regiment. Certainly, as in other colonies, military service was a family affair.

At the company level, a captain was appointed to command with a first lieutenant, an ensign, and occasionally a second lieutenant. Three of the companies were field grade companies for the colonel, lieutenant colonel, and major. An adjutant

Regiment after returning from a campaign. It certainly seemed frustrating for British officers continually confronted with this issue, which led to lengthy enlistment times. However, Rhode Island could not afford to maintain the Regiment continuously throughout the war. This fact would plague British officials when planning campaign timelines.

was selected from the first lieutenants of the companies and served in both the adjutant capacity and at the company level. In addition to the officers, each company had a number of sergeants, corporals, and two drummers. Rhode Island's regimental structure mirrored that of the British Regular army structure and was the same as Massachusetts and Connecticut only on a much smaller scale. Rhode Island, due to its small size and maritime activity requiring men for privateers, only fielded one regiment each season as compared with Connecticut and Massachusetts that each raised approximately four regiments each season. Chapter 5 and 6 will discuss the Rhode Island Regiment's actions during the campaigns from 1755 to 1760.

It is important to note one element in Rhode Island prior to the French and Indian War, the concept of a freemen. The Freehold Act of 1723 placed land requirements on any individual wishing to become a freemen who would then be obligated to serve in an official capacity as well as vote at the town and in some instances at the colony level. The act required freemen to hold property in excess of 100 pounds, raised to 200 pounds in 1729. Historian Bruce MacGunnigle suggested that, "an influx of 'outsiders,' perhaps threatening the old balance of power, may have been an influence on its [Freehold Act] passage."¹¹ Young men who wished to become freemen with the right to vote would have to acquire enough property by inheritance or by purchasing land. With relatively few other options for a son not born as the main inheritor, service as a full-time provincial soldier offered adventure, excitement, and an economic option for independence.

¹¹ Bruce C. MacGunnigle, *Rhode Island Freemen, 1747-1755: A Census of Registered Voters* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1977), 5.

Finally, the Seven Years' War was a vast conflict spanning multiple continents with intricate and complex events. Therefore, this study will focus on Rhode Island's involvement in the French and Indian War on the North American continent and is limited to the campaigns the Regiment was involved in rather than a comprehensive study of all provincial armies during the war.¹² I will also not include Rhode Island's maritime actions during the war. Rhode Island's frontier not only included territory to the north and west on land, but it also included harbors and seas. Rhode Island did not only provide land forces, but also provided privateers that were an important asset to the British blockade of French naval fleets and merchant vessels.

During the Civil War, World War I, and World War II the military used both the volunteer and draft systems to fill the ranks for attritional style warfare. These soldiers were similar to the full-time provincial soldiers of the eighteenth century in that they volunteered for a contractual amount of time to return home to resume civilian lives. Continuing forward in history, conflicts such as Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom were executed with an all-volunteer professional force contracted for a set term. The citizen-soldier of the United States has never been singularly the militiaman, or the wartime volunteer, or solely the Regular, but a combination of part-time and full-time, short-term and long-term citizens serving their colony and their nation.

¹² See Appendix F Map of American Colonies, 1754, Appendix G Map of New York and Vicinity, 1759, and Appendix H Map of Saint Lawrence River and Vicinity, 1759 for maps of the North America theater of operations

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The significance, involvement, and efficiency of the *citizen-soldier* throughout American history has been a central theme of discussion since the nation's creation. Morris Janowitz, supporting the republican theory argument, advocated that the ideal of the citizen-soldier, which demonstrated and enhanced one's citizenship, must be preserved in an era when changes in warfare no longer require a large standing professional army.¹³ Conversely, Samuel P. Huntington, supporting the liberal theory argument, advocated a civil-military relationship in which civilians would dictate security policy, but the military, led by professional officers in exchange for loyalty to civilian authority, would be free to act accordingly.¹⁴ In both theories, the citizen-soldier is a central component to the mixture of regular, volunteer, and state militia institutions. Research on the citizen-soldier as a central component tends to focus on one major conflict or is constrained to a series of conflicts confined by time rather than studying the unique American education in arms from the founding of the first successful settlements to the French and Indian War. Historian Douglas Pike stated, "there is always something artificial about attempts to reduce the chaos of history by dividing and confining it, because in truth history is a single great river of events."¹⁵

¹³ Morris Janowitz, *The Reconstruction of Patriotism: Education for Civic Consciousness* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 14-18.

¹⁴ James Burk, "Theories of Democratic Civil-Military Relations," *Armed Forces and Society* 29, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 7-11.

¹⁵ Douglas Pike, "Conduct of the Vietnam War: Strategic Factors, 1965-1968," in *The Second Indochina War: Proceedings of a Symposium Held at Airlie, Virginia*, 7-9

The establishment of the first militias at Jamestown and Plymouth in the early eighteenth century contributed to an important ideological precedence that influenced provincial soldier's opinions during the French and Indian War. While there is a great deal of research on the development of military institutions in America, relatively few works address the development of the citizen-soldier and span the continuum necessary to provide context for a complete understanding of its origin. Perhaps the most overlooked military institution consists of the provincial armies of the French and Indian War.

As early as 1607, the American ideology of self-determination began to develop into a "distinctive, 'independent' character."¹⁶ Don Higginbotham's *The War of American Independence*, one of the few works that briefly described the development of the militia from colonial times to the revolution, agreed that people fought for political independence within an established military framework that had become a "living tradition."¹⁷ However, Higginbotham paid little attention to provincial forces. Modern historian J. Revell Carr expanded upon the ideas of Higginbotham, in that the revolution began in the minds of the people with the enactment of the first Navigation Acts long before 1775.¹⁸ His work *The Seeds of Discontent: The Deep Roots of the American*

November 1984, ed. John Schlight (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1986), 127.

¹⁶ J. Revell Carr, *Seeds of Discontent: The Deep Roots of the American Revolution* (New York: Walker Publishing Company, 2008), 11.

¹⁷ Don Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence: Military Attitudes, Policies, and Practice, 1763-1789* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971), 1.

¹⁸ Carr, *Seeds of Discontent*, 2.

Revolution, is an excellent account of social, economic, and political factors in colonial America that influenced the concept of the citizen-soldier. Carr's brilliant description of the siege on Louisbourg in 1745 by provincial forces, illustrated what he believed was American resolve and triumph of the provincial soldiers over the British professional soldier. Unfortunately, Carr quickly summarized provincial army actions during the French and Indian war before moving on to the American Revolution.

Henry C. Dethloff and Gerald E. Shenk provided a comprehensive collection of laws from as early as 1623 establishing the American military tradition. These documents provide an important historical explanation of the legal development of the citizen-soldier, and the obligation of a citizen to the community and to the settlement. This is significant because, as Dethloff and Shenk illustrated, America has been at war exercising the obligation of its citizens far more than it has been at peace.¹⁹ Most importantly, Dethloff and Shenk drew the conclusion that the soldiers of Afghanistan and Iraq, an all-volunteer force, were "citizens and soldiers" similar to the soldiers of the colonial militias and the new American Republic.²⁰ Dethloff and Shenk also introduced the term, "economic conscription" to describe soldiers who enlisted for economic incentives as opposed to serving solely for the feeling of obligation to the nation.²¹ This term describes many volunteers who sought out service in provincial armies to gain a small amount of wealth in order to establish themselves due to few other options.

¹⁹ Henry C. Dethloff and Gerald E. Shenk, eds., *Citizen and Soldier: A Sourcebook on Military Service and National Defense from Colonial America to Present* (New York: Rutledge, 2011), 2-5.

²⁰ Ibid., 171.

²¹ Ibid.

Published in 1976, John Shy's work *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence* has a candid introduction to his chapter titled "A New Look at the Colonial Militia." At the time of writing the article, he believed that conscripts and volunteer armies were not the early American tradition. The American militia, often wrongly ignored as unchanging, is of historical significance because it mirrored the society of the colonies and was vastly complex, interesting, and varied.²² However "vastly complex, interesting, and varied" the militia may have been, Shy ignored the fact that the militia was a home based institution as opposed to the full-time provincial regiments who served longer terms and ranged far from home. In contrast to Higginbotham's and Shy's claim that volunteers and conscripts were not the early American tradition, Steven C. Eames placed an emphasis on the provincial armies claiming that these armies had the greatest impact during the French and Indian War, in that they won it.

Long before the American Revolution, Bacon's rebellion and the Affairs of the Cliffs in 1676 were the first revolts in America against Britain's effort to impose control the colonies. These rebellions established two important facts. First was that England realized the power of armed citizens in America and as a result implemented controls through laws to regulate and control colonial military institutions. Secondly, citizens were committed to the rebellions by an obligation and commitment to the developing American ideology. Christopher J. Smith's study indicated that one factor leading to misbehavior was that provincial soldiers were "politically aware" of their rights as

²² John Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 22-23.

citizens in regards to their governments; “their acts of protest reflected their willingness to defend their rights from being trampled on by their fellow Americans.”²³ Similarly, Fred Anderson addressed the experiences of Massachusetts and Connecticut provincial soldiers with their English counterparts, where they encountered what Eames described as “unshakable bigotry of class,” that challenged their unique military identity of contractual and voluntary service.²⁴ Furthermore, colonial historian Thomas Agostini examined newspaper advertisements between 1755 and 1762 and identified one thousand six hundred and ninety-four deserters, of which nine hundred were provincials.²⁵ Agostini suggested that many provincials were dissatisfied with military life, and like Anderson and Smith, contractual failures, a direct contradiction to the American military ideology, contributed largely to desertion.

In *The Colonial Wars, 1689-1762*, Howard H. Peckham asserted that Europeans who fled Europe during the Thirty Years’ War and did not receive an “education in arms,” therefore a military tradition was not developed in the colonies.²⁶ However, close inspection of Captain John Smith’s journal referred to a number of men in the original Virginia settlement as soldiers and stated that men were armed and exercised following

²³ Christopher J. Smith, “American Rebels: Soldier Protest in the Early American Military, 1754-1815” (Ph.D. diss., University of Houston, 2007), 21.

²⁴ Steven C. Eames, *Rustic Warriors: Warfare and the Provincial Soldier on the New England Frontier, 1689-1748* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 9.

²⁵ Thomas Agostini, “Deserted His Majesty’s Service: Military Runaways, the British-American Press, and the Problem of Desertion during the Seven Years’ War,” *Journal of Social History* 40, no. 4 (Summer 2007): 976, accessed March, 24 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25096401>.

²⁶ Howard H. Peckham, *The Colonial Wars 1689-1762*, ed. Daniel J. Boorstin (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), 1.

hostile attacks by Indians. John Smith most likely used European style warfare from his own military experience but also integrated Indian skirmishing tactics as well.²⁷

Higginbotham acknowledged, “The colonials not infrequently added the Indians’ own tactics—ambush, hit-and-run, mobile detachments, and personal marksmanship.”²⁸

In addition to the integration of European and Indian tactics, modern historian Ricardo Herrera identified two military institutional models, which he argued were the progenitors of the colonial militias. The first model that was present in Rhode Island from an early date was the voluntary association model, a specialized military company of volunteers that mustered and trained regularly.²⁹ Examples of this in Rhode Island included the Newport Troop of Horse and the Artillery Company of Westerly and Charlestown, granted by a Rhode Island General Assembly charter in January 1754. The second model, which directly relates to recruitment of the provincial armies during the French and Indian war, is the enrolled militia model. The enrolled militia mode, organized by county, served as a “roster of men subject to service.”³⁰

With his military experience, John Smith organized and trained a militia when it was necessary and established an early military tradition. Historians Matthew S. Muehlbauer and David J. Ulbrich believed the act of establishing a compulsory militia

²⁷ John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England and The Summer Isles: Together With the True Travels, Adventures and Observations, and a Sea Grammar*, vol. 1 (New York: Forgotten Books, 2012), 154.

²⁸ Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence*, 3.

²⁹ Ricardo A. Herrera, *For Liberty and the Republic: The American Citizen as Soldier, 1775-1861* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 10.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

combined with the laws implemented by Sir Thomas West “militarized the small colony.”³¹ Peckham’s assessment falls into a category of mythology surrounding provincial armies claiming inferiority based on not adhering to the European way of war. While this was not a European “education in arms,” it certainly was the beginning of a unique American way of war based on European military institutional models.

Anderson and New England colonial historian Steven C. Eames contended that placing colonial warfare and the notion of an ideal soldier into the context of European warfare and the British interpretation of professional standards, discipline, and efficiency is flawed. Anderson exclaimed, “I will argue that the New England provincials of the French and Indian War subscribed to notions about military service and warfare that were wholly incompatible with the professional ideals and assumptions of their British regular armies.”³² Adding to the American way of war, John Grenier found that, “Early Americans used the tactics and techniques of *petite guerre* in shockingly violent campaigns to achieve their goals of conquest. In the frontier wars between 1607 and 1814, Americans forged two elements—unlimited war and irregular war—into their first way of war.”³³ While Anderson argued that this early tradition did not influence all Americans, colonials felt more at home with forest fighting than the British regulars. The initial military experiences of the first settlements and numerous conflicts to include the

³¹ Matthew S. Muehlbauer and David S. Ulbrich, *Ways of War: American Military History from the Colonial Era to the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Rutledge, 2014), 21.

³² Fred Anderson, *A People’s Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the French and Indian War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), viii.

³³ John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 10.

French and Indian War contributed to a distinct American warfare that developed over the course of 200 years and was certainly an “education in arms.”

Kyle F. Zelner’s research, *A Rabble in Arms: Massachusetts Towns and Militiamen during King Philip’s War* explored New England society and military recruitment for campaigns during King Phillip’s War. Zelner’s study surveyed three hundred and fifty-seven men pressed into service and found that this group was “not representative of the entire male population of the county.”³⁴ He concluded that men selected for service were not those who would be missed from the community if they should not return, but men who would be considered the “rabble” of the town.³⁵ James Martin Kirby and Mark Edward Lender assessed that “those who were expendable in society—the down and outers—were deemed to be the appropriate persons to be sent off to engage in full-scale combat at some distant point on the map.”³⁶

In contradiction to Zelner, Kirby, and Lender’s assertion, Muehlbauer and Ulbrich brought to light two important facts of the citizen-soldier during the imperial war period. First, the majority of men in the provincial armies were volunteers and secondly they mention that in the Northern colonies, militia commanders considered it their civic obligation to serve in the military albeit for a short duration.³⁷ It is possible that these

³⁴ Kyle F. Zelner, *A Rabble in Arms: Massachusetts Towns and Militiamen during King Philip’s War* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 12, 142.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 180.

³⁶ Steven C. Eames, “Rustic Warriors: Warfare and the provincial soldier on the northern frontier, 1689-1748” (PhD Diss.: University of New Hampshire, 1989), 314; James Kirby Martin and Mark Edward Lender, *A Respectable Army: The Military Origins of the Republic, 1763-1789* (Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 1982), 17.

³⁷ Muehlbauer and Ulbrich, *Ways of War*, 47-48.

volunteers, like the young men who volunteered to gain a small amount of wealth in order to establish their own lives, did it as “economic conscription.” Economic conscription was an important incentive for all of the New England colonies during the French and Indian War, but was equally important for every colonies recruiting methods some more successful than others.

Perhaps, the most illuminating research on provincial armies is Steven C. Eames’ work *Rustic Warriors: Warfare and the Provincial Soldier on the New England Frontier, 1689-1748*. He provided an extensive look into what he described as a “balanced view of the New England provincial soldier.”³⁸ Deconstructing the incorrect argument by historians that provincial soldiers were composed of the “poor disenfranchised and the dregs of colonial society,” Eames described the biases held by British officers against provincials. He even provided accounts that British officers made similar comments of their own subordinates as they did of the provincial soldiers, especially toward the British infantry soldiers. He concluded, “The British viewed the world with the unshakable bigotry of class, nationality and European military experience.”³⁹ Christopher C. Smith adds, “Provincial enlistees came to view British officers as insufferably haughty and arrogant, the troops they led little more than slaves, and His Majesty’s army as incapable of fighting in the North American wilderness.”⁴⁰ Eames further argued, “it was the

³⁸ Eames, *Rustic Warriors*, 17.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁰ Smith, “American Rebels,” 106.

provincial soldiers, separated from the inhabitants and the militia by virtue of their active service, who actually waged war for the colonies.”⁴¹

These biases in many instances led to the use of provincial forces for manual labor and garrison duty rather than as fighting forces, possibly contributing to misbehavior and desertion. Therefore, British accounts cannot be used as the sole source for the study of the provincial armies and the relationship to the ideal of the citizen-soldier for the reasons Eames and Smith highlight.

In *Breaking the Backcountry: The French and Indian War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765*, Matthew C. Ward argued that pressures placed on rural society were a result of the provincial armies’ inability to protect the backcountry due to a lack of training, professionalism, and discipline. While Ward acknowledged the extreme ethnocentricity of British officers’ statements regarding the provincial soldiers he believed that there is some truth to these perceptions.⁴² Christopher C. Smith singled out manual labor, garrison duty, and harsh treatment by British officers as a source of colonial resentment and as one of the reasons that many provincials refused to perform duty, staged mass strikes, and in some cases deserted en masse.⁴³

Smith provided an intriguing look into the concept of the “regular” soldier and the social strata they came from. He hypothesized that, if these soldiers mainly came from the lower strata of society and volunteered as a means of financial gain, then logically

⁴¹ Eames, *Rustic Warriors*, 34.

⁴² Matthew C. Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The French and Indian War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 2003), 91.

⁴³ Smith, “American Rebels,” 105-106.

their “acts of protest sought to defend their only means of attaining some form of material wealth.”⁴⁴ In addition, Smith argued that they demonstrated “political awareness,” specifically their rights and the protection of those rights as citizens with regard to their government.⁴⁵

Ward argued that the French and Indian War had an overlooked and unique impact on the Virginia and Pennsylvania societies and that the war was “a major turning point and would transform patterns that had existed for much of the previous century.”⁴⁶ Ward argued that the provincial forces of the backcountry in Virginia and Pennsylvania were not representative of society as a whole and differed from the provincial soldiers of New England. Virginia recruited convicts, deserters, and vagrants, while Pennsylvania recruited indentured servants for the length of three years.⁴⁷ Ward further argued that the French and Indian War “transformed the nature of colonial life” in that colonial assemblies suddenly found themselves responsible for raising and provisioning armies to combat Ohio raiders. “The war allowed the assemblies to develop methods of creating professional military forces with the minimum of social disruption and provided colonists . . . with important military experience.”⁴⁸

Harold E. Selesky's comprehensive study, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, asserted that colonial soldiers did not make particularly good soldiers and

⁴⁴ Ibid., 20.

⁴⁵ Smith, “American Rebels,” 21.

⁴⁶ Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry*, 8.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 114.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 3.

that Connecticut, similar to Virginia and Pennsylvania in their singular conditions, was unique in that it did not face a “fundamental threat to its security” which influenced how the colony raised forces and made military decisions.⁴⁹ The Connecticut militia was used as a home defense force largely because its members were engaged in subsistence agriculture and therefore could not be away from communities and farms for long periods. In order to preemptively strike and take “the fight to the enemy,” temporary units institutionally distinct from the militia were created. Interestingly, Selesky stated that the most important role of the part-time militia was to act as a register of men eligible for active service. Selesky identified the second military model revealed by Herrera and contended, “The most important military organization in colonial America were the ad hoc companies raised for specific short-term purposes.”⁵⁰

Fred Anderson’s, *Crucible of War: The French and Indian War and the Fate of Empires in British North America, 1754–1766*, provided a common notion found in most colonial military institutional research and that is the “intercultural contact” young Americans experienced when serving with their British counterparts. Anderson explained that the New England provincials held “inherited preconceptions: notions about everything from the character of relations between men—which they had assumed were contractual and fundamentally voluntary but that British officers regarded as being founded on status and coercion—to the nature of Englishness itself.”⁵¹ Anderson stated

⁴⁹ Harold E. Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), xi, xii.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, xi-x.

⁵¹ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The French and Indian War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 288.

that intercultural experience, similar to Selesky's argument, in Massachusetts and Connecticut created a generation of men who had been contemporaries and shaped their actions that affected society for years to follow.⁵²

Research and literature exploring the foundations and involvement of the citizen-soldier throughout American history vary widely in opinion and conclusions. Early militias, composed of all able-bodied men aged sixteen to sixty, were formed by compulsory obligation and developed into volunteer armies mainly for frontier defense in order to deter outside threats. In Jamestown following a tumultuous start, laws enacted by British Governor Sir Thomas West defined the obligations of a citizen to the settlement and contributed to the development of the citizen-soldier. This notion continued to develop in every conflict prior to the American Revolution. This long history of militias, regulars, and volunteers all contributed to the use of provincial armies during the French and Indian War.

The research conducted by Fred Anderson, Steven C. Eames, Harold E. Selesky, Matthew C. Ward, Matthew S. Muehlbauer, and David J. Ulbrich provide the most illuminating and direct research into the provincial soldier's involvement during this period and the cumulative effects of their involvement and experiences to the American Revolution. There is no doubt that an American military education and "living tradition" developed in the early seventeenth century in direct contradiction to the European way of war. The difference in warfare, combined with the British superior and elitist attitude, was the primary reason British officers viewed provincial soldiers as inferior to British regulars. The thoughts and statements by British officials are pervasive in a majority of

⁵² Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 288-289.

early research and have led to the improper conclusion that provincial armies failed. The “dregs of society” association was explored by Eames, Selesky, Muehlbauer and Ulbrich who concluded that while the young men who volunteered to serve in the provincial armies may not have been from the upper strata of society they were not the convicts and indentured servants Ward identified in Virginia and Pennsylvania. The provincial soldier provided much to the ideal of the citizen-soldier and provided more to the American Revolution than the previously held views.

CHAPTER 3

FOUNDATIONS

The establishment of Jamestown and Plymouth in 1607 and 1620, respectively, established important foundations of military ideology and to the development of the citizen-soldier. Although formed for fundamentally different ideals, each settlement recognized the need for self-defense and an organized militia, albeit a little late in Jamestown. The formation of the Jamestown and Plymouth militias established the responsibility of their inhabitants through compulsory obligation for defense of the settlement. Sixteen years after the founding of Plymouth, Roger Williams established the colony of Rhode Island that was distinctly different in ideology from any other colony of the time. The ideological difference is present in Rhode Island's military decisions over one hundred years later.

Although Rhode Island followed the association volunteer and enrolled militia models like other colonies, two events assisted in shaping Rhode Island's actions during the French and Indian War. The destruction of the mainland settlements during King Phillip's War (1675-1676) ensured that the Rhode Island General Assembly maintained the freedom to raise and employ men for defense, as they deemed appropriate while maintaining a strong sense of community with the New England colonies when an existential threat existed. The Dominion of New England (1686-1689) forced the leaders of Rhode Island to maneuver politically to maintain charter privileges and control of military forces to include the contractual agreement of military service length. In Rhode Island, freedom of religion and self-governance would establish important notions of military identity for provincial soldiers one hundred and thirty years later.

Jamestown is Established and Struggles

Established by the Virginia Company of London in 1607, the men of the Jamestown settlement faced a myriad of hazardous conditions in its founding years. Settled in a marshy area on the Chickahamania River in the powerful Powhatan Confederacy, the men faced disease and unfavorable agricultural conditions.⁵³ Contributing to the difficulties of the environment, the first priority of the one hundred and four men was to find material wealth, expecting to find conditions similar to the Spanish experience in the Caribbean and South America in not only resources but also the ability to use the local populace for manual labor.⁵⁴ Smith wrote in his journal, “The Presidents overweening jealousie would admit no exercise at armes, or fortification, but the boughs of trees cast together in the form of a halfe moone.”⁵⁵ Relations between the Jamestown settlers and the local Powhatan Indians was at first amicable, however, Chief Powhatan probed and tested the settlement’s defenses and both maneuvered to be the dominant power in the region.⁵⁶ It was not until an attack on Jamestown occurred resulting in the death of a settler that the president agreed to palisade the fort, exercise,

⁵³ John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England and The Summer Isles: Together With the True Travels, Adventures and Observations, and a Sea Grammar* (London: Forgotten Books, 2012), 95.

⁵⁴ J. Revell Carr, *Seeds of Discontent: The Deep Roots of the American Revolution, 1650-1750* (New York: Walker and Company, 2008), 6.

⁵⁵ Smith, *The Generall Historie*, 87-88.

⁵⁶ Matthew S. Muehlbauer and David S. Ulbrich, *Ways of War: American Military History from the Colonial Era to the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Rutledge, 2014), 21.

and arm the men. Under the leadership of Captain John Smith, a militia consisting of all able-bodied men was organized and trained.

Beginning in 1609, relations between the Powhatan Indians and the settlers began to deteriorate. By August 1609, John Grenier explained that mounting tension erupted into “full-fledged war” and what is commonly referred to as “feed fights,” tactics aimed at the destruction of food supplies and fields, began.⁵⁷ The first Anglo-Powhatan War began in 1609 and lasted until 1614. During the “starving time” from the winter of 1609 to the spring of 1610, of the original two hundred and twenty settlers only sixty remained.⁵⁸ In the spring of 1610, a resupply ship arrived with provisions, additional settlers, and Sir Thomas West. West “militarized the small colony” through militia law and ordered raiding parties against the local Indians.⁵⁹ Published in 1612 the Lawes, Divine, Morall and Martiale “assigned all male colonists to 50-man companies, each commanded by a veteran soldier, to receive military training.”⁶⁰ This work effectively established the first lawful compulsory obligation to the militia.

In 1622, Opechancanough brother to King Powhatan of the first Anglo-Powhatan war, attacked settlements along the James River killing almost thirty percent of the

⁵⁷ Muehlbauer and Ulbrich, *Ways of War*, 21; John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 22.

⁵⁸ Carr, *Seeds of Discontent*, 6.

⁵⁹ Muehlbauer and Ulbrich, *Ways of War*, 21.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

colony's population.⁶¹ In retaliation, the Virginia Council implemented "feed fight" tactics at the behest of John Martin, whose motive was to enslave the Indians and use their land for cultivation. He proposed, "200 soldiers to torch Indian fields and destroy fishing weirs . . . English shallops should patrol the waterways and kill Indians attempting to fish . . . the government should forbid all trade in corn between settlers and Indians, even those Indians friendly to settlers."⁶²

Meanwhile in Plymouth

During the Protestant Reformation, Puritans sought opportunities to practice religion freely away from the Anglican Church. Encouraged by Captain John Smith's accounts of North America, one hundred and four pilgrims set sail for the new world in 1620.⁶³ The colonists of Plymouth, vastly more prepared militarily than the colonists of Jamestown, implemented two measures that assisted in the success of the colony. Prior to departing England in 1620, the men of the expedition signed a document, now commonly referred to as the Mayflower Compact. The document bound the men to "combine our selves together into a civill body politick," in civil and military matters.⁶⁴ They

⁶¹ Muehlbauer and Ulbrich, *Ways of War*, 21; Griener, *First Way of War*, 23; Smith, *The Generall Historie*, 291. Muehlbauer and Ulbrich state three hundred settlers were killed while Smith's journal states three hundred and forty-seven.

⁶² Grenier, *First Way of War*, 24. It is interesting to note that the "feed fight" tactics implemented and used by early settlers are similar to the raiding tactics used by provincial forces during the French and Indian War and is common throughout the history of Americanized warfare.

⁶³ Carr, *Seeds of Discontent*, 7.

⁶⁴ William Bradford, *Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation, 1606-1646* (New York: Forgotten Books, 2012), 107.

contracted Myles Standish, who had military experience, to be the militia leader and brought with them “an assortment of gun, swords, and pieces of armor.”⁶⁵

Standish organized militia companies and constructed a defensive palisade around the entire settlement. Initial forays into the new wilderness by Standish and sixteen of his men met with little resistance from the local Indians. William Bradford wrote that the men spied five to six Indians traveling with a dog, however, when the Indians saw the men they sprinted into the woods. Standish and his men attempted to follow the Indians but were unsuccessful in locating them. However, the men located a number of newly harvested cornfields and returned to the ship to thankful pilgrims with corn.⁶⁶

The first hostile encounter with the Indians occurred on the night of 6 December. While exploring, the men spied ten to twelve Indians on the bank of a river near the location of a small crude fortification the men had built for the night. During the night, the men heard cries and noises that they assumed were wolves and fired their muskets in response. The noise ceased. However, the next morning while the men were preparing to embark for the day, the Indians attacked. Bradford gives the account, “all of the sudain, they heard a great and strange crie, which they knew to be the same voyces they heard in the night . . . one of their company being abroad came running in, and cried, ‘Men, Indeans, Indeans’; and withall, their arrows came flying amongst them.”⁶⁷

Jamestown and Plymouth began the necessary evolution of the obligation of citizens to the community first informally and then by law. Herrera argued that the

⁶⁵ Muehlbauer and Ulbrich, *Ways of War*, 25.

⁶⁶ Bradford, *Bradford's History*, 99-100.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 102.

British colonists had borrowed from Europe the models necessary to organize two distinct military institutions, institutions that were “a way of life, a necessity, and a demand in the New World.”⁶⁸ From these institutions the part-time militia, full-time frontier militia, and full-time provincial militia developed. Of these institutions, the full-time provincial soldier of Rhode Island embodied the obligation of a citizen to the colony through volunteering for short-term campaigns and returning to civilian life.

Rhode Island is Established

Therefore, the Alarum that we appoint shall be this. Three Musketts to be discharged distinctly, and a Herald appointed to goe speedily throw the Towne and crye Alarum, Alarum! Upon which, all are to repaire immediately to the place aforesayed.⁶⁹

Roger Williams founded Rhode Island in 1636. Williams, increasingly frustrated by the strict religious measures of the Puritan colonists moved with other “outcasts” across the Seekonk River. Although it would take years to establish the colony of Rhode Island, Williams contributed two important ideological precedents that would influence the colony for years following his death. The first was Williams’ relationship with the local Wampanoag chief Massasoit. Rather than take land or pursue sometimes-questionable purchase agreements from the Indians, Williams sought permission to inhabit the land. Secondly, Williams’ insistence on freedom of religion and rule by consensus and then by charter established a strong sense of independence. Both of these

⁶⁸ Ricardo A. Herrera, *For Liberty and the Republic: The American Citizen as Soldier, 1775-1861* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 11.

⁶⁹ John Russell Bartlett, ed. *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England, 1636 to 1663*, Vol. I (Providence: A. Crawford Greene and Brothers, State Printers, 1856), 68-69.

ideological precedents would influence military decision making through the continual insistence on freedom of self-governance and by the decision to seek peaceful resolution to Indian-Colonial conflicts.

The first documented town in Rhode Island to implement compulsory obligation by militia law was Newport on Aquidneck Island. “On the 12th of this 9th month [1638] there shall be a general day of Training for the Exercise of those who are able to beare Arms in the arte of military discipline, and all that are of sixteen years of age and upwards to fifty shall be warned thereunto.”⁷⁰ April 27, 1638, brought the first recorded mention of a train band. A general public meeting identified William Balston and Edward Hutchinson as sergeants, with Samuel Wilbore, Randall Houlden, and Henry Bull as corporals of the train band.⁷¹

Rhode Island historian Edward Field described this as the “simplest kind of military force” when men would gather for a day with their own weapons and gear to train, and then spend the rest of the day having a “general good time.”⁷² The following year, Portsmouth and Newport implemented the voting of militia officers by the militiamen. “The Traine Band shall have free libertie to select and chuse such persons . . . to be officers among them, to exercise and train them and then present them to the

⁷⁰ Edward Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” in *State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations at the End of the Century: A History*, ed. Edward Field (Boston: The Mason Publishing Company, 1902), 395.

⁷¹ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. I, 56, 153. However, in a footnote to the Records of Rhode Island, Bartlett states that laws implemented by the Court of Commissioners occurred as early as March, 1657.

⁷² Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” 395.

Magistrates for their approbation.”⁷³ Appointed as clerk, William Foster was responsible for inspecting militiamen’s weapons and reporting defects to the court. Additionally, in November of 1639, the court deemed that within ten days’ time deficient weapons would be reported to the town judge and that all men were to procure their own weapons no later than April of 1640.⁷⁴ Furthermore, no man would travel more than two miles from a village without a gun or sword nor attend public meetings without a weapon at the risk of receiving a five-shilling fine.⁷⁵

In late 1640, the General Court in session at Portsmouth, refined militia law in a “more elaborate manner.”⁷⁶ Several initiatives were implemented to include a mandate that all men appear on appointed training days by eight in the morning “at the second beating of the drum” with a musket or pike and “all its furniture.”⁷⁷ Furthermore, local militias were required to train eight times per year with two “General Musters,” one occurring in Newport and one at Portsmouth. In 1655, training days were reduced to four times per year, as compared to 1647 when designated training was to occur on the first Monday of the month, except January, February, May, and August.⁷⁸ If a man reported with a defective weapon, he was subject to a twelve pence fine. The law also established

⁷³ Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” 395.

⁷⁴ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. I, 97.

⁷⁵ Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” 395; Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. I, 104.

⁷⁶ Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” 396.

⁷⁷ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. I, 104; Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” 396.

⁷⁸ Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” 399.

exemptions for individuals unable to attend because of “necessary employment” or farmers to leave a man on the farm during muster. These individuals paid a fine per day, two shillings and six pence, to the company clerk.⁷⁹ Added later, each man was required to have four pounds of shot and two pounds of powder for a designated muster.⁸⁰

Field believed that the reason for the increase in militia readiness followed reports of Indians “skulking” around the Aquidneck Island and mainland towns. During one town meeting, the townsmen issued an order requiring all of the Indians residing in the towns to depart, with all of their belongings, “to the woods.”⁸¹ In contrast, the settlement of Warwick made no such advances in raising a militia or militia law, as the colonists believed that in the absence of a charter they had no lawful right to form a government and thus raise a militia.

Although there are a lack of records, Providence perhaps presents a similar case to Warwick. However, it is conceivable that Roger Williams’ close ties to the local Indian population may have negated the need for a militia against hostile Indians. Regardless of individual settlement efforts following the union of Newport, Portsmouth, Providence, and Warwick under the royal charter in 1654, the colony elected Thomas Harris as lieutenant of the train band. “Thus was organized the first military force in the Colony for its defense against foes from within and without its borders.”⁸²

⁷⁹ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. I, 105; Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” 396.

⁸⁰ Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” 397.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 398.

⁸² *Ibid.*

King Philip's War 1675-1676

I pray ye Towne in ye scene of ye Late bloody practices of ye natives to giue leaue to somany can agree with Wm field to bestow some charge vpon fortifying his house for a security to Women & children. Allso to guie me leaue & so many as shall agree to put up some Defense on ye hill between Mill & ye Highway for ye like Saftie of ye women & children in that part of town.⁸³

The first great turning point for Rhode Island militarily was King Phillip's War from 1675 to 1676. Although Rhode Island wished to remain neutral during this conflict, the Rhode Island General Assembly allowed Massachusetts and Connecticut to march their forces through Rhode Island territory. The lack of a coordinated defense plan and the targeted Indian tribes residing within Rhode Island's borders resulted in Indian raiders destroying nearly all of Rhode Island's mainland towns and villages. Essentially, Rhode Island was unable to avoid neutrality, as the colony became the epicenter of battle and a political boundary war.

Connecticut and Massachusetts contested the boundaries claimed by Rhode Island even after the colony's royal charter of 1644. "The royal commission sent in 1664 to examine and settle various controversies in New England generally upheld Rhode Island's views on boundaries and Indian affairs, but the neighboring colonies refused to

⁸³ Roger Williams, "Communication to Town Meeting Regarding Public Safety," Providence Town Papers, 01184, quoted in Field, "The Wars and the Militia," 404. Roger Williams' reaction to the destruction that occurred to the Rhode Island settlements destroyed in the summer of 1675. Field lists his resource as the Providence Town Papers, 01184. Edward Field was designated as one of the three members appointed by the Providence City Council in 1891 to relocate, reorganize, and publish the numerous city records. The project took over 15 years to complete and the results are now housed at the Providence City Hall Archives and the Rhode Island Historical Society in the collection "Providence Town Papers."

accept these rulings.”⁸⁴ Colonial Rhode Island historian Sydney V. James stated that the colonies then exacted their strategy of reduction against Rhode Island to invade the Narragansett lands and “reduce” the remaining Narragansett tribe during King Phillip’s War.⁸⁵

Similar events occurred in Newport, where land was parceled out based on social level within society. Those with a higher social standing were granted more land, those with a lower social standing were granted less land. This caused much debate and began a rush to claim the remaining land surrounding Rhode Island. Thus ensued years of struggle between the local Indian tribes, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. James stated that the stalemate of disagreement between the parties involved ended in June 1675 with King Phillip’s War.⁸⁶ King Phillip’s War began as a conflict between the Plymouth colony and the Wampanoag, but quickly spread to Rhode Island.

Although the colony had a royal charter with the right for self-government, the settlements still acted independently. Rhode Island officials pursued an end to the Plymouth and Wampanoag conflict through arbitration, however, Governor William Coddington aided Plymouth by providing vessels to assist in the capture of Metacomet,

⁸⁴ Sydney V. James, *Colonial Rhode Island: A History* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1975), 75; Colonists equated land with wealth and societal status. In an effort to maintain equality within the community, Williams parceled out equal amounts of land to the original founders with a tract of land set aside for newcomers. However, the original founders claimed more rights than the settlers arriving after them and eventually persuaded Williams to grant them more land.

⁸⁵ James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 75.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 93.

the son of Massasoit and chief of the Wampanoag and referred to as Philip by colonists.⁸⁷ Williams, assigned as an emissary to the Narragansett, assisted in securing a promise that they would not provide shelter to the fleeing Wampanoag. However, when rumors of Narragansett Indians harboring Wampanoags spread the mainland Rhode Islanders fled to Aquidneck Island for safety and the government agreed to neutrality.⁸⁸

In July 1675, Massachusetts militia Captain Benjamin Church and his men surrounded Philip in a swamp near Pocasset. Church attempted to starve the Indians out of the swamp fort and sent a large portion of the Boston militiamen home. Philip and his men took advantage of the reduction of numbers of men and a low tide to slip away in the middle of the night. He then fled to reach the Nipmuck's territory, which required a river crossing of the Blackstone River through the outlying territories of Providence over the Nipmuck trail to Quahaug near Brookfield, Massachusetts. During the pursuit Church's men united with a group of Providence men, led by Captain Andrew Edmonds, who had been alerted to the Indians movements near their settlement. The following morning, contact with the Indians began, lasting until nine o'clock in the morning on August 1.⁸⁹ Field reported that following the battle, Captain Edmonds received the rights to operate a ferry and that the men injured during the battle received grants of land for their service.⁹⁰

Following reports of Indian raiding in Rhode Island on October 14, 1675, a Providence town meeting was called and issued an order that six men would patrol the

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 94.

⁸⁹ Field, "The Wars and the Militia," 402-403.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 403.

area surrounding the town daily and that every man would participate in “this means of public safety” or pay a fine of five shillings per day.⁹¹ However, only five months later in March Field stated that Providence was nearly deserted.⁹² On March 27, 1676, the Narragansett leader Chief Canonchet and his forces advanced on the town.

Roger Williams and twenty-seven men remained in a fortified house where Williams attempted to come to a peaceful agreement. Rhode Island historian William G. McLoughlin reported that Canonchet declared he would not harm Williams as he considered Williams a good man, however, the Indian force burned a majority of Providence.⁹³ “Our settlements on the main suffered very much, both Pettaquamscut and at Warwick, and at Providence: where the Indians brunt all the ungarrisoned and deserted houses.”⁹⁴ The winter campaign of 1675 composed of approximately eleven hundred men from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Plymouth combined with the abandonment of Rhode Island settlements led to the burning and destruction of Smith’s Trading post, Warwick, and Providence by Indian raids.⁹⁵

It was not until August 12, 1676, that Church and his men with the assistance of two Rhode Island men, Major Peleg Sanford and Roger Goulding, surrounded Philip on

⁹¹ Ibid., 404.

⁹² Ibid., 413.

⁹³ William G. McLoughlin, *Rhode Island: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1978), 43-44.

⁹⁴ Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” 413. McLoughlin reported that before the outbreak of hostilities Rhode Island had passed a law in 1674 prohibiting the enslavement of Indians, however, following the war the settlers were not willing to abide by the law. McLoughlin, *Rhode Island*, 44.

⁹⁵ James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 97.

Mount Hope where one of Church's Indian allies killed him.⁹⁶ This conflict led to the dissolution of the Wampanoag nation, as well as the decline of the Narragansett tribe. Rhode Island asserted its neutrality throughout the conflict, but provided naval transport to Massachusetts and Connecticut in their endeavor to exterminate the Wampanoag and Narragansett tribes and benefitted from the ensuing land sales by the remaining Indians.

There is evidence that Rhode Island men also joined pursuits and expeditions independently against the Indians. Captain Andrew Edmonds in 1675 and a number of Providence men during the Great Swamp Fight in the winter of 1675 participated in the war and were subsequently rewarded by the colony.⁹⁷ Rhode Island's neutrality allowed its male population to act independently of the Rhode Island government. This is the opposite of Massachusetts, which relied on the impressment of men who were the "rabble" or undesirables of the colony.⁹⁸ James asserted, "Rhode Island managed to spend little on the war either in blood or money compared with her neighbors, yet stood a chance of reaping great reward."⁹⁹ Not only did the destruction of King Phillip's War in Rhode Island ensure that the colony's self-defense was a priority in later conflicts, but the greatest reward came from the decision by the Rhode Island Governor not to utilize a colonial force raised by impressment as in Massachusetts. But through the desire of the

⁹⁶ Ibid., 98.

⁹⁷ McLoughlin, *Rhode Island*, 43. McLoughlin also notes that several Rhode Island colonists joined the Puritan forces against the Indians.

⁹⁸ Kyle F. Zelner, *A Rabble in Arms: Massachusetts Towns and Militiamen during King Phillip's War* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 12, 142.

⁹⁹ James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 99.

individual to defend the settlement and thus the colony which set an important ideological precedent regarding volunteerism.

The Dominion in Rhode Island 1686-1689

As land became available within Rhode Island's boundaries following King Philip's War, Providence, Pawtuxet, and Warwick "atomistically" battled over territorial boundaries and eventually sent their grievances to the king.¹⁰⁰ However, King James II and Parliament increasingly focused on Massachusetts. London suspected Boston, the economic center of the Massachusetts Bay area, of avoiding English trade laws at an estimated 100,000 pounds per year.¹⁰¹ Fearing the eclipse of London and Bristol as the economic centers of the British Empire, King James II expanded a singular vice-regal administration to include all of the territory from Maryland to Canada.¹⁰² Sydney V.

¹⁰⁰ Sydney V. James, *The Colonial Metamorphosis of Rhode Island* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2000), 114. For more information on the boundary disputes of Providence, Pawtuxet, and Warwick see Sydney V. James, "Disintegration of the Communal Ideal in the Original Towns," in *The Colonial Metamorphosis of Rhode Island*. James further noted that between 1660 and 1686, prior to the implementation of the Dominion, Rhode Islanders "pursued their own ends atomistically . . . or, like the pioneers of Newport commerce, had been able to survive with a weak institutional structure."

¹⁰¹ James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 106-107. James reported that Parliament feared that Boston was developing into an economic rival of London and Bristol. Edward Randolph conducted an investigation from 1676 to 1683, in which he alleged that Massachusetts was "behaving autonomously and failing to enforce trade laws." His report led to the suit against the Massachusetts charter, which overshadowed territorial disputes and led to the establishment of the Dominion.

¹⁰² James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 107; John Romeyn Brodhead, "The Government of Sir Edmund Andros over New England in 1688 and 1689," *The Historical Magazine*, vol. I second series, no. I (January 1867): 3. Pennsylvania was not included in the Dominion; Brodhead stated that William Penn the proprietor of the territory was "too useful an instrument for the King to offend."

James accurately described Rhode Island's opinion of the Dominion, "from Rhode Island's point of view a greater Massachusetts."¹⁰³

Thus in early 1686 the Dominion of New England was established. Parliament revoked all of the colonial charters and consolidated power to one royal governor located in Boston, who maintained control over all of the colonial military institutions.¹⁰⁴ James best summarized Rhode Island's struggles with its neighboring colonies during King Phillip's War to the battle for self-governance during the Dominion: "Once the chief source of danger to independent self-government shifted from neighboring colonies in the seventeenth century to British imperial authority in the eighteenth, Rhode Island was well versed in the tactics it needed."¹⁰⁵

The Rhode Island General Assembly created penalties for failure to adhere to trade laws and a naval office to enforce English trade laws. Although the Dominion would take effect regardless of Rhode Island's actions, the General Assembly attempted to keep colonial law at the lowest level by giving its jurisdiction to the towns. This meant that when the King revoked the charter, Rhode Island would only lose a few privileges as opposed to many if it had maintained all of the charter privileges at the General Assembly level. When it became clear that the Dominion was inevitable, the Assembly "churlishly" repealed the liquor excise and the prohibition on selling firearms to

¹⁰³ James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 101.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 107

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

Indians.¹⁰⁶ However, the General Assembly had successfully maintained many of its charter privileges.

The Dominion established a General Quarter Sessions and Inferior Court of Common Pleas headed by Francis Brinley with ten justices and a council in Boston under the jurisdiction and governorship of Sir Edmond Andros. This effectively reduced the town governments to county administrations.¹⁰⁷ Not only did the Dominion reduce the power of the individual colonial governments, it consolidated and regulated the colonial militias to “better meet the challenges and attacks from Native Americans and the French in Canada.”¹⁰⁸

On 1 November 1688, by decree of the Dominion Council a part-time militia was to be raised for an expedition from the whole of the Dominion against Indian aggression in the frontier of Maine. Each man was required to maintain weapons such as a flintlock musket, a hatchet, and provide his own clothing, which presented a “motley rabble.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 107.

¹⁰⁷ Walter Clarke, the Governor of Rhode Island at the time of the implementation of the Dominion, refused to deliver the charter to the Boston council. As a Quaker and forced to act on military matters “rather than take charge of war measures” Clarke resigned his governorship. James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 107-110. Rhode Island’s seal would not share the same fate as New York. The provincial seal of New York was delivered to the Dominion government and “defaced and broken in council” per the king’s orders. Brodhead, “The Government of Sir Edmund Andros” xviii.

¹⁰⁸ J. Revell Carr, *Seeds of Discontent: The Deep Roots of the American Revolution* (New York: Walker Publishing Company, 2008), 23.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 24.

Although the offer to command was extended to multiple colonial officers, everyone “absolutely refused service.”¹¹⁰

In the fall of 1688, Andros recruited an army of colonials for a winter campaign against hostile Indians on the Maine frontier.¹¹¹ Undeterred by the reluctance of colonial officers to accept the command position, the council encouraged Andros to lead the campaign himself. Thus, in the winter of 1688, Andros led approximately eight hundred colonial militiamen into the wilderness of Maine.¹¹² Brodhead disclosed that many of the militiamen died of fatigue and exposure chasing the Indians in the wilderness. The situation did not improve when Andros negotiated with the Indians. Colonials believed that Andros was determined to “bring low” the entire Dominion.¹¹³ Brodhead also noted that in Andros’ absence, Boston took advantage of an economic opportunity and demonstrated seditious behavior against the administration when it sent ammunition and provisions to the Indians and their French allies in Canada and Nova Scotia.¹¹⁴ The death of the colonial militiamen was only one event that added to the colonial hatred of Andros.

¹¹⁰ Brodhead, “The Government of Sir Edmund Andros,” 6.

¹¹¹ Carr, *Seeds of Discontent*, 24.

¹¹² Brodhead stated that a return made by Andros indicated that Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, Plymouth, Rhode Island and Connecticut provided upwards of 13,529 men. Unfortunately, as a result of the consolidation of administration to the Dominion and one council Rhode Island has few records during this time period and there seems to be no record indicating how many Rhode Island men participated in the expedition.

¹¹³ Brodhead, “The Government of Sir Edmund Andros,” 6.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Fortunately, in November of 1688, William III, Prince of Orange, landed at Devonshire, England with a large Dutch army to claim the English throne. Following his accession to the throne, in January 1689 King William wrote a circular to the colonial governors, “directing that all persons ‘not being Papists,’ holding any offices in the Plantations, should continue to execute them as formerly; and that ‘all orders and directions lately made or given by any legal authority, shall be obeyed and performed by all persons,’ until further commands should come from England.”¹¹⁵

Sydney James reported that Andros’ authority was fragile at best during the rule of the Dominion. “New Englanders objected to paying taxes unless their representatives had voted for them, and they had taken care to leave no standing laws that he might perpetuate.”¹¹⁶ When Massachusetts began to resist Dominion laws by not paying taxes, Rhode Island followed. In April of 1689, a band of armed citizens from Boston overthrew the Dominion and imprisoned Andros.¹¹⁷ When the opportunity to escape presented itself, Andros fled to Newport a few months later. Demonstrating Rhode Island’s commitment to individual rule, they imprisoned Andros for five months until the Massachusetts authorities reclaimed him.¹¹⁸

Rhode Island sprang into action following the Dominion’s collapse. Five days after the April 18, 1689, rebellion, the men who had held office prior to the Dominion

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 9.

¹¹⁶ James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 109.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

called a meeting of freemen to vote to restore the independent government.¹¹⁹ On May 1, 1689, in Newport the freemen gathered and approved an “ingenious declaration.”¹²⁰ James explained, “the privileges of Rhode Island had been confirmed by the king after the Assembly’s decision not to resist absorption in the Dominion of New England, and therefore it was right to resume government under the charter after the Dominion collapsed.”¹²¹

Military Chaos Following the Collapse of the Dominion

Following the demise of the Dominion, Rhode Island struggled to reestablish its independent government. Many freemen feared prosecution for attending any independent government functions if the Dominion returned. James reported that attendance to assembly meetings quickly dropped off and it became difficult to find anyone willing to fill government positions. Rhode Island “Royalists” or “Newport Tories” wished for a return to a Dominion type of government with more control from England or absorption by another colony.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Carr, *Seeds of Discontent*, 28; James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 109.

¹²⁰ James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 109.

¹²¹ James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 109-110. Governor Walter Clarke was reinstated as the Governor to Rhode Island; however, he resigned opposed to executing war plans against his Quaker traditions. The Secretary, John Coggeshall, was designated interim governor in Clarke’s place until Henry Bull was elected.

¹²² James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 111; Sydney V. James, *The Colonial Metamorphosis in Rhode Island: A Study of Institutions in Change*, ed. Sheila L. Skemp and Bruce C. Daniels (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2000), 116.

The resulting bicameral government and internal strife exasperated military efforts when the French attacked Block Island and Newport in July 1689.¹²³ Although the Block Island residents were successful in thwarting the French attack by outfitting two sloops with weapons and ammunition and the invaders quickly retreated when discovered, the Block Island residents feared another attack and demanded aid.¹²⁴ Militia leaders divided between Royalists and those desiring a return to an independent government made militia response, preparation, and organization nearly impossible.

Additionally, Rhode Island refused to contribute forty-eight men to New York for New York's frontier defense during Queen Ann's War. In an attempt to force Rhode Island to provide the requested men, the New York governor wrote complaints to the Board of Trade in London. James reported that the Board of Trade largely ignored Rhode Island's insistence that it could not provide the men due to the need for Rhode Island's own defense. The board stated that the colony in fact was disobeying the trade laws and was "providing hospitality to pirates."¹²⁵ This placed a tremendous amount of imperial pressure on Rhode Island. Additionally, as a stipulation to reaffirm the colonial charter

¹²³ James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 111; James, *The Colonial Metamorphosis*, 118. In *The Colonial Metamorphosis* in Rhode Island James described the bicameral government implemented following the Dominion as a House of Magistrates and the House of Deputies.

¹²⁴ James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 112.

¹²⁵ James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 115. The Board of Trade identified Rhode Island's "improper dealings" with privateers as a source of contention. James explained the linkage of pirates to privateers. Privateers held commissions by the government to capture enemy ships or conduct coastal raids on short missions whereas pirates held no such legal document and "roamed long and far." Privateers, however, sometimes acted as pirates once over the horizon, as described by James. "Several captains embarking on legal ventures persuaded their men, or were persuaded by them, to turn pirate."

Rhode Island was ordered to send the forty-eight men to New York.¹²⁶ This had an important implication for the Rhode Island General Assembly in the years to follow. The Assembly now had the authority to assert control over its militias, to organize local defenses on the frontier, and to create costal fortifications.¹²⁷ In 1702, the Assembly voted to build a fortification to guard Newport Harbor, raised men to serve as scouts in the full-time garrison militia in the frontier territory, implemented impressment procedures when volunteers were scant, and created two councils of war, one for land and one for sea.¹²⁸ Under this system, the colony would provide one-seventh of its male population to campaigns during the imperial wars of the eighteenth century.¹²⁹

The Dominion effectively reduced Rhode Island's government to a county administration combined with the loss of military control. Although modern historian Sydney James described Rhode Island's interactions with Sir Edmund Andros and the Dominion Council as amicable, the colony never ceased to maneuver to maintain its charter privileges. The collapse of the Dominion, the ensuing loss of governmental control, and internal rivalry between charter advocates and Royalists threatened to drastically alter Rhode Island's inherent right to self-government. Even though the charter advocates prevailed, the colony would experience issues with the election of officers by militiamen or by the appointment by the Assembly, which resulted in

¹²⁶ James, *The Colonial Metamorphosis*, 118.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 132.

relatively autonomous train bands, this military system was in place in 1754 on the eve of the French and Indian War.

CHAPTER 4

RHODE ISLAND TRAIN BANDS 1754

In 1754, Rhode Island was composed of twenty-five townships with train bands organized under the four county regiments of Providence, Newport, Kings, and Kent County.¹³⁰ Colonial historian Rene Chartrand estimated that at this time the total number of men serving in the train bands was approximately 2,600 men.¹³¹ Granted by individual colonial charters, Rhode Island also had a number of independent companies of artillery, infantry, and cavalry. As in other colonies, Rhode Island developed the train band from two European models. The first, was the London voluntary association model in which units “mustered regularly and demonstrated an impressive degree of military knowledge and training” specifically for the purpose for local defense.¹³² The second model was the “enrolled militia.” This model, based on a county system of organization (see figure 1), was a militia “roster of men subject to service.”¹³³ Although the map, created in 1797, shows towns created later such as Johnston, the county lines are relatively similar to those of 1754. Rhode Island had independent companies that mustered and trained regularly, the ordinary part-time militia, and the full-time garrison militia at outposts such

¹³⁰ Smith, *Civil and Military Lists*, 164-170

¹³¹ Rene Chartrand, *Colonial American Troops 1610-1774*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2003), 22.

¹³² Ricardo A. Herrera, *For Liberty and the Republic: The American Citizen as Soldier, 1775-1861* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 10.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

as Block Island, and the full-time provincial militia pulled from the militia, which acted as the roll of men available for service.

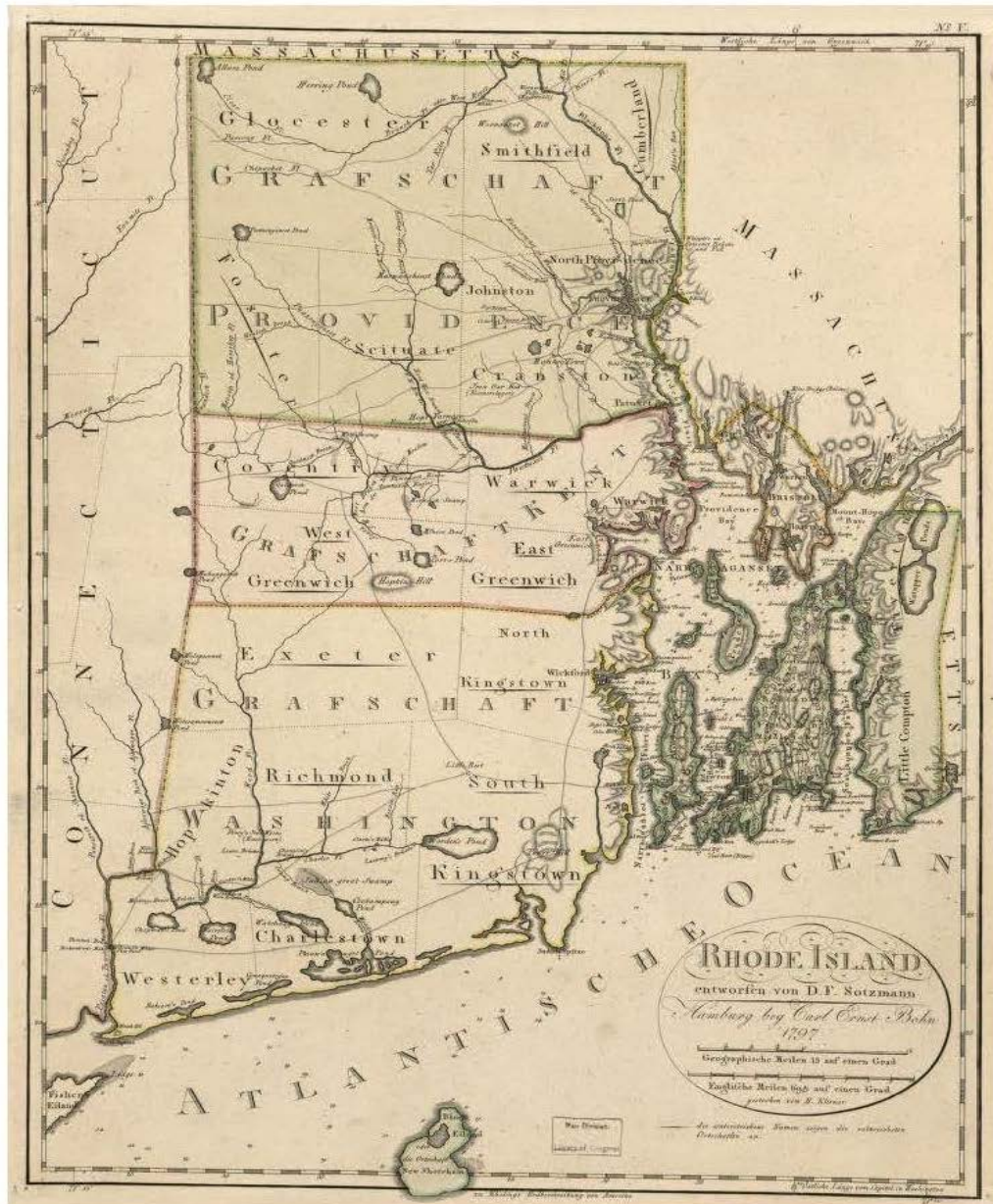


Figure 1. Rhode Island Counties

Source: D. F. Sotzmann, Carl Ernst Bohn, and Heinrich Kliewer, *Rhode Island* (Hamburg: bey Carl Ernst Bohn, 1797), accessed April 5, 2016, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2011589271>.

In early 1755, the General Assembly designated five individuals to serve as the land Committee of War. In attendance were the governor, the deputy governor, the town assistants, and the local militia colonel, lieutenant colonels, majors, and captains. In addition to the integration of the part-time militia officers in the planning for campaigns, when the Committee met in Newport the captain of the company designated to garrison Fort George was also included. The Committee effectively integrated the part-time militia and the full-time provincial experience. As the war dragged on, full-time provincial soldiers returned home, where their wartime knowledge would fill the part-time militia and influence the decisions of the Committee.

The Newport County Regiment was commanded by Colonel Samuel Lyndon, Lieutenant Colonel John Burrington, and Major Wing Spencer and consisted of four companies. Additionally, each of the following towns were composed of one train band, Portsmouth, New Shoreham, Jamestown, Middletown, Little Compton, and Bristol. The town of Tiverton consisted of two train bands. The Newport County Regiment also included an independent company, the Newport Troop of Horse commanded by Captain Samuel Bayley and later Captain Benjamin Sherburne.¹³⁴

The Providence County Regiment commanded by Colonel Christopher Harris, Lieutenant Colonel Resolved Waterman and Major Samuel Currie, consisted of four Providence companies, including the independent Providence Troop of Horse

¹³⁴ Benjamin Sherburne would later serve as an Ensign in Colonel Sherburne's Sixteenth Additional Continental Regiment from 14 January 1777 until 31 December 1780 during which he was promoted to Second lieutenant. He was transferred to the 1st Rhode Island Regiment on 1 January, 1781, where he served until the war ended. F. B. Heitman, *Officers of the Continental Army During the War of the Revolution, April, 1775 to December, 1783* (Baltimore: Nichols, Killam and Maffitt, 1893), 47, 364.

commanded by Captain John Hoyle. Additionally, the Regiment included three Smithfield companies, two Gloucester companies, two Cumberland companies, four Scituate companies, one Warren company, and three Cranston companies.

The Kings County Regiment, commanded by Colonel William Pendleton, Lieutenant Colonel Ephraim Gardner, and Major Joshua Clark, consisted of four train bands of the town of Westerly, three companies of South Kingston, one of Charlestown, two companies of Exeter, three companies of North Kingston, and one company of Richmond. Kings County also included within its regiment an independent company the Artillery Company of Westerly and Charlestown, granted by charter in January 1754. In early 1755, Captain Henry Babcock, First Lieutenant John Campbell, and Second Lieutenant Ichabod Babcock Jr. commanded this artillery company. The Kent County Regiment was commanded by Colonel Stephen Low, Lieutenant Colonel Samuel Soule, and Major Henry Rice and consisted of three Warwick train bands, two East Greenwich train bands, two West Greenwich train bands, and two Coventry train bands.

A letter to Governor Hopkins dated 8 February 1755 provides illumination into the workings of the independent companies. Henry Babcock, acknowledging the governor's approval, agreed to four training days per year. "[A]nd as you was pleased to advise us of agreeing on the 4 days in which to exercise; pursuant to you directions we have agreed, the days are—last Monday in March, First Monday in May; after the general election. First Monday in September. Last Monday in October. We wait only for our charter and commissions—as we have raised a company and like to have near a hundred

if nothing should impede it more than imagined.”¹³⁵ It is important to note that Henry Babcock began in the part-time militia in the independent Artillery Company of Westerly and Charlestown. In 1755, he served as a full-time provincial in the Rhode Island Regiment during the Crown Point expedition as the third company commander and was present during the Battle of Lake George. He later served as the Rhode Island Regimental Commander in 1758 and 1759.

Although there is limited population data for 1754, a census conducted in 1755 listed the number of individuals living in each major town. The census consisted of the following categories: men, men able to bear arms, enlisted soldiers, women, boys, girls, arms data to include small arms, pistols, powder, and swords, and Black men, women, boys, and girls. The 1755 census indicated that Rhode Island consisted of 35,939 white individuals and 4,697 Black “chiefly Negroes.”¹³⁶ The census stated that in 1730, approximately 15,302 white persons and 2,633 black persons inhabited the colony, while in 1748, 29,755 white inhabitants and 4,873 black inhabitants resided in the colony.¹³⁷ Reported in 1755, the total number of men in the colony was 9,177, of which 2,997 were

¹³⁵ Henry Babcock to Governor Stephen Hopkins, “Officers of the Artillery of Westerly and Charlestown,” February 8, 1755, 4-47, pp. 2, Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, RI.

¹³⁶ “Account of the people in the colony of Rhode Island, whites and blacks, together with the quantity of arms and ammunition, in the hands of private persons,” December 4, 1755, G1157 Broadside 1755 No. 2, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RI (hereafter cited as RIHS 1755 census). Although it states “chiefly Negroes” I believe it can be assumed that some of these individuals were Indian slaves.

¹³⁷ RIHS 1755 census; Bruce C. MacGunnigle in *Rhode Island Freeman, 1747—1755: A Census of Registered Voters* indicated that Bartlett’s colonial records for the 1748 census had 28,439 whites, 3,077 negroes, 1,257 Indians for a total of 32,773 inhabitants.

reported as “able to bear arms”, and 5,265 individuals were listed as “enlisted soldiers.”¹³⁸

Table 3 shows the breakdown of men, men able to bear arms, and enlisted soldiers by town. Although there is no explanation for each category and census taking during the colonial period was difficult due to distances officials were required to travel, this data alludes to the state of Rhode Island militarily. For example the town of Newport, the largest city in Rhode Island, had at the time of the census 1,696 men residing in the town. Of these 1,696 men, 534 were able to bear arms but did not serve in the militia or on privateers. Of the 1,696 men, 969 men enlisted, meaning they may have served either in the militia or on privateers. Rhode Island often included men in the privateering capacity towards the overall requested number of men for a campaign during the French and Indian War. Arnold stated that approximately 1,500 men were engaged manning privateers shortly after the census was taken.¹³⁹ An assumption that one hundred and ninety-three men residing in the town of Newport were not eligible to serve in the militia due to advanced age, possible injury limiting mobility, or other reasons can be implied.

In 1755, after hostilities had begun and Rhode Island was called on to provide forces an incredible fifty-seven percent of the white male population of Rhode Island was enlisted.¹⁴⁰ This meant that in 1754 approximately three of every five male inhabitants

¹³⁸ RIHS1755 census.

¹³⁹ Samuel G. Greene, *History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations: From the Settlement of the State, 1636, to the Adoption of the Federal Constitution, 1790*, vol II (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1874), 197.

¹⁴⁰ For a discussion on the well-documented officer corps of the Rhode Island Regiment see Appendix B, Rhode Island Officer Corps.

were enlisted in the militia, two out of six men were eligible for service, and an extremely low 9 percent were not fit to serve.

Table 3. Percentage of men enrolled in the militia in 1754 by county

Regiment	Men	Men able to bear arms	Enlisted Soldier
Newport County			
Newport	1696	534 (31%)	969 (57%)
Portsmouth	243	88 (36%)	120 (49%)
New Shoreham	83	17 (20%)	66 (79%)
Jamestown	86	20 (23%)	58 (69%)
Middletown	153	55 (35%)	82 (53%)
Tiverton	277	109 (39%)	159 (57%)
Little Compton	244	110 (45%)	134 (55%)
Bristol	210	98 (46%)	97 (46%)
Providence County			
Providence	747	275 (36%)	406 (56%)
Smithfield	448	139 (31%)	263 (58%)
Glocester	332	75 (22%)	257 (77%)
Cumberland	230	55 (23%)	156 (67%)
Scituate	392	77 (19%)	273 (69%)
Warren	193	81 (41%)	112 (58%)
Cranston	375	130 (34%)	103 (27%)
Kings County			
Westerly	523	128 (24%)	361 (69%)
South Kingston	366	132 (36%)	186 (50%)
Charlestown	171	71 (41%)	90 (52%)

Regiment	Men	Men able to bear arms	Enlisted Soldier
Exter	347	122 (35%)	178 (51%)
North Kingston	544	135 (24%)	244 (44%)
Richmond	199	57 (28%)	123 (61%)
Kent County			
Warwick	426	189 (44%)	199 (46%)
East Greenwich	319	140 (43%)	165 (51%)
West Greenwich	275	78 (28%)	174 (63%)
Coventry	298	82 (27%)	190 (63%)
Total	9,177	2,997 (32%)	5,265 (57%)

Source: Created by author from “Account of the people in the colony of Rhode Island, whites and blacks, together with the quantity of arms and ammunition, in the hands of private persons,” December 4, 1755, G1157 Broadside 1755 No. 2, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RI.

This census would be used as the basis for estimating the population of male inhabitants in Rhode Island during the French and Indian War. In 1758, Mr. Samuel Ward went as a constituent to attend a Hartford, Connecticut, meeting on 24 February with the Earl of Loudoun to discuss the raising of forces for the 1759 campaign season. Fortunately, for the colonies, William Pitt would drastically change the relationship between Parliament and the colonies and replaced Loudoun with Major General James Abercromby.¹⁴¹ In his report to the Rhode Island General Assembly, Samuel Ward referenced the 1755 census.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ See chapter 6.

¹⁴² Ward stated that 8,262 men were able to bear arms. This number was men able to bear arms combined with the number of enlisted men. In reality, this number would

[W]ith regard to its fortifications and military stores, the number of inhabitants, the state of the treasury and funds for supplying the same, beg leave to represent to Your Lordship, that there is only one fortification in the colony, called Fort George; very conveniently situated for the defense of the town and harbor of Newport, which is the metropolis of the colony. But, as there are in the fort, only twenty-six carriage guns fit for service, and a few other military stores, it is to be feared the town might be entirely destroyed by a very small force, and the colony thereby disabled from raising any more men for the common cause; and of what fatal consequence it might be to His Majesty's interest to have the enemy in possession of so fine a harbor and island, situated in the midst of New England, we leave Your Lordship to judge.

By an account of the number of men in the colony, taken the 24th of December, 1755, it appears, My Lord, there were then in the colony eight thousand two hundred and sixty-two men, able to bear arms; but as we have since lost many men by the war, and near fifteen hundred men are out on privateers, we imagine there is not near that number now left in the colony.¹⁴³

In 1754, Rhode Island had a military institution and men available to fill both the part-time frontier and full-time provincial requirements. A number of the regimental officers served first as part-time militia commanders or as commanders of the voluntary association militia companies, such as the Artillery Company of Westerly and Charlestown and the Troop of Horse in Newport. These men would then serve as commanders in the Rhode Island Regiment as part of the colonial Provincial Army. The Committee of War further enhanced the integration of the part-time militia, full-time frontier, and full-time provincial by integrating members of each into campaign planning. The combination of forces and the sustained British requirement for troops during the

have been lower if the number of men killed in the land campaigns and the number of men killed in privateering was taken into account. Ward further argued that Rhode Island was obligated to raise far less than Massachusetts and Connecticut due to population size. Unfortunately, there is no explanation of the terms or calculations of the census.

¹⁴³ Samuel Ward, "Report of the Rhode Island Commissioners, appointed to meet Lord Loudoun, at the congress, at Hartford," March 1758, quoted in Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 124-125

war led to a yearly, almost predictable cycle of mobilization, deployment, operations, return home, and (in most instances) demobilization. Thus, when hostilities finally began on the North American continent in 1754, Rhode Island was prepared to go to war.

CHAPTER 5

1754-1756

Hostilities in North America began following Virginia militia commander George Washington's incident on 28 May 1754. Washington's patrol with Indian allies led by Tanaghrisson attacked a French patrol sent to deliver terms to the British Americans to vacate the Ohio River Valley. Subsequently, Ensign Joseph Coulon de Villers de Jumonville was killed by Tanaghrisson, beginning the French and Indian War.¹⁴⁴

Rhode Island historian Sydney V. James described Rhode Island's initial preparation and reaction to the spreading hostilities on the frontier as minimal.¹⁴⁵ Although the scars from King Phillip's War and the destruction of most of the mainland settlements remained in the memories of Rhode Islanders, the frontiers of Virginia and the Ohio Valley seemed far removed from Rhode Island's borders. However, in June 1754, Stephen Hopkins and Martin Howard went to Albany to attend a meeting of commissioners to discuss the common defense of the colonies.¹⁴⁶

The conference, seemingly doomed from the start, was rife with political factions and colonies acting as individuals to gain trade and land advantages or achieve business

¹⁴⁴ Fred Anderson. *Crucible of War: the Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 6.

¹⁴⁵ Sydney V. James, *Colonial Rhode Island: A History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), 282.

¹⁴⁶ James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 282; James Russell Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, in New England* (Providence: Knowles, Anthony and Company, 1861), 386.

interests.¹⁴⁷ The conference purposed a committee to create a “Plan of Union” for the approval of Parliament and paid for at the expense of the colonies.¹⁴⁸ The plan was to accomplish two goals. The first was to colonize the interior of North America managed by a president general and a grand council. In addition to colonization, the president and council were to plan joint colonial military actions for the overall defense of the colonies, such as raising forces, planning and executing land and sea campaigns, and positioning inland and sea fortifications.

Hopkins, who joined the Plan of Union committee, presented the proposal to the Rhode Island General Assembly who, fiercely protective of the colony’s charter rights and with “typical disorganization,” rejected the measure on the grounds that it was an infringement of the charter.¹⁴⁹ “The General Assembly, however, feared infringement on the charter and instructed the colony’s agent to lobby for postponement of action by Parliament until a full presentation could be made defending Rhode Island’s privileges.”¹⁵⁰

Rhode Island was not the only colony to reject the Plan of Union. The predominantly Quaker Pennsylvania Assembly rejected the mainly military plan. In Virginia, Governor Dinwiddie did not even present the plan to the House of Burgesses. North and South Carolina, Maryland, New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut also

¹⁴⁷ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 83.

¹⁴⁸ James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 282

¹⁴⁹ James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 283; Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 84

¹⁵⁰ James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 283

rejected the plan.¹⁵¹ After the failed acceptance and approval of the Plan of Union following the Albany Conference, Parliament began preparations for offensive operations in North America under the command of British leadership. It was not until February 1755 that General William Braddock, appointed as the command in chief of the North American forces, arrived in Virginia and the British plan against the French unfolded.

Regardless of delays and the frustrations of colonial inaction with the Plan of Union, Rhode Island began preparations. In August 1754, the Rhode Island Assembly voted to levy twenty five thousand pounds in taxes, and an additional five thousand pounds to repair the fortifications of Fort George located on modern day Goat Island in the Narragansett Bay.¹⁵² In addition to taxation, Rhode Island responded to Whitehall's orders to raise a New England army of two thousand men for a campaign under New York Governor William Shirley and William Pepperell and authorized to raise and enlist one hundred men under the command of Captain Robert Sterry and Ensign Joshua Bill for "His Majesty's Service."¹⁵³ Each soldier received a bounty of £18, old tenor, provided

¹⁵¹ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 84

¹⁵² Edward Field, "The Wars and the Militia," in *State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations at the End of the Century: A History*, ed. Edward Field (Boston: The Mason Publishing Company, 1902), 427; Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, 393; Samuel G. Arnold, *History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*, vol. II (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1859), 189. For information regarding Rhode Island's economic (fiscal) system struggles during the Imperial War see Sydney V. James, "Into the Vortex of Imperial Wars," in *Colonial Rhode Island: A History*. Bartlett's transcription states that the Assembly failed to apportion the taxes to the towns of the colony and failed to raise the required amount. In October 1754, the Assembly voted and enacted to raise a tax of £35,000 with £10,000 appointed for the restoration of Fort George. Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 398-99

¹⁵³ Field, "The Wars and the Militia," 427; Arnold, *History of the State*, 189; Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 393, 407. Bartlett's transcription states the Rhode Island Assembly also authorized Hopkins to make a gift in a sum not to exceed

by Rhode Island with the stipulation that once enlisted the men would receive the King's pay.¹⁵⁴ Demands for additional forces, however, continued to come. In February 1755, Governor Shirley demanded three thousand men be raised to fill the provincial regiments.¹⁵⁵

Braddock envisioned an attack on Nova Scotia and a three-pronged attack against the French in the Ohio Valley. He would lead the 44th and 48th Foot through the wilderness of Pennsylvania to attack Fort Duquesne.¹⁵⁶ Shirley, commissioned as a Major General and appointed as second-in-command of all British forces in America, was to command the reactivated 50th and 51st Regiments that would march to attack and seize the French fort near Niagara. Meanwhile, Colonel William Johnson was to command an expedition of Mohawk warriors and Provincial soldiers to Lake Champlain to seize Fort St. Frédéric at Crown Point.¹⁵⁷

1755: The Crown Point Expedition and the Battle of Lake George

The campaigns against Nova Scotia and Crown Point were executed primarily with provincial soldiers at the expense of the colonies; therefore, it would be difficult to

£100 to the Six Nations; Hopkins reported that he gave the Indians £40, which he deemed sufficient. The 100 men raised for this original request would be appealed in March 1755. Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. V, 423.

¹⁵⁴ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. V, 405.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 412.

¹⁵⁶ For a detailed account of the planning and political aspects of the Newcastle-Cumberland, campaign in Whitehall see Fred Anderson's *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*, 66-73.

¹⁵⁷ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 87-88.

recruit enough men to fill the 44th and 48th Foot, as well as the 50th and 51st Regiments.¹⁵⁸ It seems that there was little resistance in Rhode Island to raising forces in support of the campaigns. In fact, Rhode Island was described as enthusiastic in its preparations for war. Historian Edward Field exhorted, “The calls for men and money to carry on the war now came one after another with never ceasing regularity; the already overtaxed and war-scarred colonists responded nobly and generously; the same spirit and enthusiasm and patriotism inspired them to aid, fight for and protect the mother country.”¹⁵⁹

In response to Britain's calls to raise forces for the reduction of the French, the General Assembly resolved to raise four infantry companies of one hundred men each under the command of Colonel Christopher Harris for the Crown Point expedition.¹⁶⁰ The Assembly offered “common” men who enlisted a £20 bounty for those with a suitable weapon and £15 for those without, with wages of £16 per month.¹⁶¹ In addition to the bounty, the Assembly enacted the exemption of any officer and soldier of arrest, imprisonment, to execution for enlisting and for one year following the term of enlistment as long as the overall fines brought against them did not exceed £200. It also stated that any man enlisting would not be impressed for military service for one year

¹⁵⁸ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 88.

¹⁵⁹ Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” 428.

¹⁶⁰ Joseph Jencks Smith, *Civil and Military List of Rhode Island, 1647-1800* (Providence: Preston and Bounds Company, 1900), 176; Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. V, 418.

¹⁶¹ See Appendix A, Money in Rhode Island for a brief explanation of paper money. Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. V, 419-420.

following their obligation.¹⁶² Any man wounded on the expedition would receive a payment of £50 per year from the Treasury for the remainder of his life.¹⁶³ With generous incentives from the initial call for volunteers to the regiment's departure, the regiment was filled. The Provincial Army proved their effectiveness against French forces during the Battle of Lake George on September 8, 1755 and a contingent under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Edward Cole of the Rhode Island Regiment would save the Provincial Army from annihilation.

Table 4. 1755 Wages and Bounties

1755 - Wages and Bounties			
Rank	Wage	Bounty	Additional
Colonel	150 pounds, old tenor		one blanket or 8 pounds, old tenor if provided by soldier
Lieutenant Colonel	not listed		
Major	not listed		
Captain	50 pounds, old tenor		
Lieutenant	36 pounds, old tenor		
Ensign	28 pounds, old tenor		
Sergeant	20 pounds, old tenor	20 pounds, old tenor w/firearm 15 pounds, old tenor w/o firearm	
Drummer	20 pounds, old tenor	15 pounds, old tenor	
Private	16 pounds, old tenor	20 pounds, old tenor w/firearm 15 pounds, old tenor w/o firearm	

Source: Created by author from John Russell Bartlett, *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England, 1741 to 1756*, vol. V (Providence: Knowles, Anthony and Co., State Printers, 1860), 419-420.

¹⁶² Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. V, 419-420. The record further states that the colonel would receive £150, captains £50, lieutenants £36, ensigns £28 per month while sergeants and drummers would receive £20 per month and a good blanket or £8 in lieu of providing their own. The sums increased in May 1755, to £100 for captains, £60 for lieutenants, £50 for ensigns, and £18 for corporals. Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. V, 430).

¹⁶³ Ibid., 423.

Demonstrating the regiment's continued civil control, Governor Hopkins addressed a letter to the officers of the Rhode Island Regiment in June 1755, to be "diligently attended to and strictly observed."¹⁶⁴ In this letter, Governor Hopkins directed Colonel Christopher Harris to embark at the first opportunity of favorable weather for Albany, the gathering place for the Crown Point Expedition, utilizing the vessels provided by the colony. He further issued six instructions; the second was that during this voyage Colonel Harris' first priority be to care for the troops so that they would arrive at Albany "full of spirit and vigor." The third instruction was to care for all equipment including stores, ammunitions, arms, accouterments, and tents. Colonel Harris would be held accountable for any loss of this equipment. The fourth requirement was to ensure the troops were adequately supplied and the fifth requirement was to provide reports. The final requirement was that the Rhode Island Regiment would follow and obey any orders issued by the constituents of the colony. With the signatures of Colonel Harris, Edward Cole, and Henry Babcock, the regiment was ready to depart.

On June 23, Baron de Dieskau arrived at Québec with the new governor-general of New France, the marquis de Vaudreuil. Interpreting the British movements as an attack on Fort Niagara, he assembled a force of four thousand French Regulars, Canadians, and Indians to reinforce Niagara.¹⁶⁵ However, Vaudreuil received "exaggerated reports" on the size of Johnson's provincial forces and was concerned with

¹⁶⁴ Governor Stephen Hopkins to Colonel Christopher Harris, "Stephen Hopkins - Instructions to the Officers," June 13, 1755, Military Papers Correspondence-Accounts and Muster Rolls, Vol. 2, 1730-1765, pg. 11, Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, RI.

¹⁶⁵ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 116.

the ability of the crumbling Fort Saint Frédéric defenses, Dieskau; the French governor therefore sent approximately three thousand men, French Regulars, Canadians, and Indians were diverted to Crown Point.

At the beginning of August an advance party under the command of Major-General Phineas Lyman established Fort Lyman, later renamed Fort Edward, at the head of Lake George. By 8 August, the Rhode Island Regiment arrived at Green-Bush near Albany and began preparations. At approximately the same time, General Johnson and the Provincial forces, artillery, and stores, minus Rhode Island and New York, departed Albany. Johnson left a garrison at Fort Edward and continued north to the upper end of Lake George. By late August or early September, the Rhode Island Regiment arrived at the camp. During preparations at the fort, Johnson received reports that Dieskau had a force of approximately six thousand men intended to fortify Fort St. Frédéric and establish a fort at the passage between Lake St. Sacrament and Lake Champlain.¹⁶⁶ Following a council of war, Johnson decided to advance down the track leading from Fort Edward to this location. On August 28, he arrived with fifteen hundred men.

Sometime between mid-August and 20 August, Colonel Harris departed the Rhode Island Regiment to attend to matters at home and left Lieutenant Colonel Edward Cole in charge of the regiment.¹⁶⁷ In a letter dated 20 August, Johnson released Colonel

¹⁶⁶ Anderson stated that the English referred to this strategic location as Ticonderoga while the French called the Fort Carillon. Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 118.

¹⁶⁷ Smith, *Civil and Military List*, 178. Smith annotated that Captain Edward Cole of the 1st Company was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel of the Regiment in June.

Harris and said that he had confidence in Cole as a “very active & capable officer.”¹⁶⁸ A log dated August 24, 1755, tallied the condition of the Rhode Island Regiment. It accounted for two hundred and nineteen effective officers and soldiers, thirty-eight drafted in for the train, twenty-three sick, four discharged, and thirty-two deserted, for a total of three hundred and twenty-seven as evidenced in table 5.¹⁶⁹ Although Cole’s math does not add up, it can be inferred that the only company that remained close to its originally appointed strength was Lieutenant Colonel Cole’s company. Enlisting reinforcements may have been an additional factor to Colonel Harris’s return to Rhode Island. If the regiment was close to full capacity at four hundred men the data would indicated that the regiment experienced a loss rate of approximately 20 percent.

Table 5. Return of the Rhode Island Regiment August 24, 1755

	Effective	Train	Sick	Discharged	Deserted	Total
Lt. Col. Cole	53	14	9	1	20	97
Capt. Angell	61	14	3		6	84
Capt. Babcock	76	8	6	1	3	94
Capt. Francis	34	2	5	1	3	45

Source: Created by author from Edward Cole, “Return of Rhode Island men at Great Carrying Place Camp, Aug. 24, 1755,” August 24, 1755, Military Papers Correspondence-Accounts and Muster Rolls, Vol. 2, 1730-1765, pg. 13, Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, RI.

¹⁶⁸ William Johnson to Governor Stephen Hopkins, “Letter from the Camp at the Great Carrying Place,” August 20, 1755, L-1, Harris, Col., vol. 4:60, p. 2, Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, RI.

¹⁶⁹ Edward Cole, “Return of Rhode Island men at Great Carrying Place Camp, Aug. 24, 1755,” August 24, 1755, Military Papers Correspondence-Accounts and Muster Rolls, Vol. 2, 1730-1765, pg. 13, Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, RI.

During this time frame, alerted to General Braddock's defeat and concerned that French reinforcements would be sent to Lake Champlain, the General Assembly voted to raise three additional companies of fifty men each to reinforce Colonel Harris' regiment. Chapin noted that many of the Regiment's original soldiers had deserted when confronted with the realities of warfare on the frontier. "Disgusted by the hardships of the march overland and little realizing the scope and importance of the conflict had deserted."¹⁷⁰ These very deserters rejoined the additional companies under the command of Captain John Whiting and ordered to Albany and thence to rejoin their companies.¹⁷¹ However, perhaps unaware of the high desertion rate some members of the Assembly disagreed stating, "we are of opinion, that the four hundred men, formerly voted, are this colony's full quota; and we are unwilling to load our constituents with a burthen that we think exceeds their ability."¹⁷²

To encourage men to join and quickly fill the new quota, the Assembly raised the bounty for volunteers to £25, old tenor.¹⁷³ The bounty increased again on September 8,

¹⁷⁰ Howard M. Chapin, *A List of Rhode Island Soldiers and Sailors in the Old French and Indian War, 1755-1762* (Providence: Rhode Island Historic Society, 1918), 5.

¹⁷¹ Chapin, *A List of Rhode Island Soldiers*, 5; Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. V, 448. Further enactments declared that deserters would be arrested and any person found aiding a deserter would be fined £60. This law was not only enforced in Rhode Island but also the surrounding colonies agreed to similar terms imprisoning or returning deserters who had fled to the surrounding colonies. Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. V, 453.

¹⁷² Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. V, 438, 440. Seven members signed the dissent of 11 August 1755. The Assembly went ahead regardless of the dissent and raised one hundred and fifty men in three companies to join the troops on the Crown Point expedition.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 441.

1755, when the Assembly received a request from Johnson to provide more forces. The Assembly voted to raise two hundred men and raised the bounty to £40, old tenor, twice the amount of the original bounty.¹⁷⁴ If the colony failed to enlist the required number of men, the Assembly authorized impressment of men from the train bands of the Newport, Providence, Kings, and Kent counties. Officers who were unwilling to follow the impressment order would be fined upwards of £500.¹⁷⁵ With the arrival of the reinforcements by late August, the Rhode Island Regiment totaled five hundred and fifty men.¹⁷⁶

Meanwhile, Dieskau planned an attack on Fort Edward utilizing irregular forces. By September 4, he had selected fifteen hundred men, composed of two hundred regular grenadiers, six hundred Canadian militiamen, and seven hundred Mohawk and Abenaki, for the assault.¹⁷⁷ Unbeknownst to Johnson, Dieskau and his irregular forces began movement down Lake Champlain and “paddled quietly southward to the end of South Bay, cached their canoes, and struck off through the woods toward Fort Edward.”¹⁷⁸ By

¹⁷⁴ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. V, 450.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 451.

¹⁷⁶ Samuel G. Arnold, *History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations: From the Settlement of the State, 1636, to the Adoption of the Federal Constitution, 1790*, vol. II (New York: D. Appleton and Company: 1874), 193. Two of the companies under the command of Captain Amos Hammond and Captain William Bradford marched to Albany in August. Captain John Whiting was delayed (possibly due to rounding up deserters) and departed in early September to join the regiment.

¹⁷⁷ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 118. Interestingly, Anderson states that Dieskau's use of irregular forces was a “highly unconventional move for a European regular officer to make” and that Dieskau called upon his experience with the de Saxe against the British Army in Flanders.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

September 7, Dieskau was approximately three miles to the south of Fort Edward positioned along the portage road. Dieskau faced an issue when his Iroquois allies refused to attack the fort because they would not attack the English on English soil, but would attack the fort at Lake Sacrament.¹⁷⁹ When Mohawk scouts reported French forces near Fort Edward, Johnson sent a force of one thousand provincials under the command of Colonel Ephraim Williams with two hundred Mohawk warriors under the command of Chief Hendrick to intercept the force.¹⁸⁰ On the morning of 8 September at approximately nine o'clock, Williams, Hendrick, and their force departed from Fort Edward along the portage road directly into the French ambush.

New Englanders refer to what occurred next as the “Bloody Morning Scout.” Williams, in a rush to reinforce Fort Edward, did not deploy flanking parties or scouts. When the party reached an area in the road transiting the bottom of a ravine on the Rocky Brook approximately four miles to the south of the lake, the French ambushed them shortly after ten o'clock.¹⁸¹ According to the *Account of the Battle of Lake George*, the complete destruction of the column was averted when the French allied Seneca fired their muskets in the air as a warning to their Mohawk brethren. Chief Hendrick and thirty of his warriors were killed in the initial volley of fire. Colonel Williams and fifty of his men died shortly after the initial attack trying to assault up an embankment.

¹⁷⁹ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 118; Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New York, *Account of the Battle of Lake George: September 8th, 1755* (New York, April 1897), 6.

¹⁸⁰ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 118; Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New York, *Account of the Battle of Lake George: September 8th, 1755*, 7.

¹⁸¹ Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New York, *Account of the Battle of Lake George: September 8th, 1755*, 8.

Now under the command of Lieutenant Colonel John Whiting of Massachusetts, the remaining force of Mohawks and some provincials quickly began to fight a retreat to the rear of the column, while the remaining provincials “ran for their lives.”¹⁸² Alerted to the attack by gunfire, Johnson dispatched Lieutenant Colonel Cole and three hundred Rhode Island provincials to support and protect the retreat of the beleaguered force.¹⁸³ Cole’s force “arrived in time to rescue the remnant of Williams’ force and to hold the French in check temporarily, thus giving Johnson time to strengthen the defenses of the camp.”¹⁸⁴ Captain Samuel Angell’s letter dated, September 9, 1755, provides details of the battle.

In an hour after they [Col. Williams’ party] had marched we heard the attack begin, which by the fire seemed excessive smart which caused a detachment of 300 men more to reinforce the party, who marched directly, of which I was one. At 2 miles, we found our friends retreating, the enemy having the advantage of the ground. We made a slow and safe retreat to the front of our camp where we had some artillery planted and there made a brave stand. Where 1600 Regular Troops hastily marched up near the front of our camp and 600 Indians on their flank. Imagining the camp was theirs and that we had no more men but what they had seen. Within 80 yards, they made a stand and give us the first fire, at which the engagement ensued and held four hours successively without intermission. At which time they fled and carried off the chief of their dead and baggage and hid them, where we cannot as yet find them. Only about 200 and 24 prisoners, who gave a account of great slaughter made amongst their people.

¹⁸² Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 119. Anderson claims that the provincial forces were “unencumbered” by the strict discipline that had been the doom of Gen. Braddock’s forces on the Monongahela, that their action was a rational one, and would ultimately save the day.

¹⁸³ Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New York, *Account of the Battle of Lake George: September 8th, 1755* (New York, April 1897), 9; Milton W. Hamilton, *Battle Report: General William Johnson’s Letter to the Governors, Lake George, September 9-10, 1755*, ID # 113680, call number E140 H219 B964 (Worcester: Published by the Society, 1964), 22.

¹⁸⁴ Chapin, *A List of Rhode Island Soldiers*, 4.

At 9 o'clock our friends arrived here with their wounded brethren, which was 4 and prisoners 4. As for the loss on our side it is not fully known as are not yet fully settled. But the loss in our small regiment is 20 which is over proportion to the whole. In my company there is 5 missing, Sovelhead, Busford, James Ducker, Fuller, Thomas Felix, all I expect are killed.¹⁸⁵

Cole and the Rhode Island provincials allowed large portions of Williams' force to return to the camp, which quickly organized for the pending assault. Dieskau, holding short of the clearing to the front of the fort, arranged his grenadiers, the Languedoc and La Reine Regiments into a six-man front and dispersed the Canadian militiamen and Indians to the left and right flanks. Johnson then ordered cannon to reinforce the front under the command of Captain Eyre.

While the Canadian militia and Indians fired mostly ineffective fire at the fort from flank positions, Dieskau's grenadiers "marched along the road in very regular order, directly upon our Center; they made a small halt about 150 yards from our breast works, when the Regular Troops (whom we judged to be such by their bright and fix't Bayonets) made the Grand and Center Attack."¹⁸⁶ The French attack was successfully halted by the British indirect fire and at approximately four o'clock, the British provincial and Indian forces counter attacked. The provincials and Indians leapt the breastwork and pursued the French, Canadian, and Indian forces taking prisoners, Baron Dieskau included (a map drawn by Baron Dieskau and captured on his person during the counter attack is included in Appendix B, Fort Edward to Crown Point Map). Later in the evening, a party of two hundred and fifty men of the New Hampshire and New York Regiments under the

¹⁸⁵ Samuel Angell to unknown, September 9, 1755, Samuel Angell Papers, MSS 9001-A, Box 9, Angell, Samuel, Item 2, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RI.

¹⁸⁶ Hamilton, *Battle Report*, 22.

command of Captain William Maginness intercepted and killed the remaining Canadian and Indian force, dumping their bodies into what is known as the “Bloody Pond.”¹⁸⁷

Figure 2, Battle of Lake George, depicts the morning scout to the left of the map and the provincial army camp on the edge of the lake on the right. The Rhode Island Regiment is identified by the number 33 and is located at the southern end of the encampment.

¹⁸⁷ Hamilton, *Battle Report*, 23; Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New York, *Account of the Battle of Lake George: September 8th, 1755*, 10; Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 121. General Johnson’s letter to the governors, a recount of the battle, stated that this force was attacked when transiting the site of the morning battle. Anderson and the *Account of the Battle of Lake George* both claim that the Indians had returned to the location to claim war trophies, such as scalps, and Maginness’ force found them while they were refreshing themselves next to Rocky Brook and “fell upon them furiously.” Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New York, *Account of the Battle of Lake George: September 8th, 1755*, 10.



Figure 2. Battle of Lake George

Source: Smithsonian American Art Museum, "A Prospective Plan of the Battle Fought near Lake George on the 8th of September 1755." Map depicting the Rhode Island Regiment's location during the battle of Lake George. The regiment is identified as number 33 located in the lower right. Interestingly, the original creator of the map William Blodget served as the secretary to the Army of Observation in 1775.

Meanwhile, while the Rhode Island Regiment fought in the battle of Lake George the Rhode Island Assembly met on 8 September and voted to raise an additional two hundred men.¹⁸⁸ This action was in response to more demands from British leadership for provincial forces to serve across the vast North American theater of operations. With the addition of two hundred men, the regiment swelled to seven hundred and fifty men.¹⁸⁹

Some controversy surrounded the ensuing reports of the battle published in various colonial newspapers. In his first letter, Johnson avoided identifying the regiments by name that acted in the battle and instead made general claims. His aid-de-camp, Captain Wraxall, then added a postscript identifying only General Lyman, second in command, and his officers. Lyman's account of the battle, published in the Connecticut Gazette and the New York Gazette, emphasized the Connecticut and Massachusetts troops' part in the battle. Cole, angered that his men were not mentioned as the initial recovery element or for their action in the breast works, countered with a letter "which challenged not only this version of the part played by the Connecticut troops, but that by Lyman himself."¹⁹⁰ Cole accused Lyman of spending a majority of the battle behind a tree and that Johnson, after sustaining a wound in his leg at approximately two o'clock had indeed returned to the battle, refuting Lyman's claim that Johnson had retreated to his tent early due to his wound.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ Arnold, *History of the State*, 196.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 197.

¹⁹⁰ Hamilton, *Battle Report*, 29.

¹⁹¹ Fintan O'Toole, *White Savage: William Johnson and the Invention of America* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005), 149. O'Toole asserted that Colonel Cole had it on good authority that Johnson returned to the fight being that the surgeon who

It seems that this controversy only ignited colonial and provincial rivalry within the camp. Fatigue from three days of near continuous battle followed by one hundred percent stand-to for fear of a French counter attack, approaching winter weather, misbehavior and a general lack of interest by the provincial forces led Johnson and his officers to conclude that an attack on Crown Point would be impossible. Johnson decided to build a fort at the passage of Lake George and Lake Champlain and named the fort, Fort William Henry. He left Captain Whiting and seventy-two Rhode Islanders to garrison the fort and disbanded the remaining provincial expedition force.¹⁹² Of the Rhode Island soldiers who returned home, selected for the next campaign season were one hundred of the best men and thirteen officers. The remainder of the regiment was discharged on or prior to 31 December 1755.¹⁹³

Following the complete defeat of Braddock on the Monongahela and Shirley's abortive attempt at Oswego, provincial forces won the first great victory of the French and Indian War. Four of the Rhode Island companies, under Cole, Angell, Babcock, and Francis, took part in the September 8 battle. Rhode Island suffered a 6 percent casualty rate with twenty-six casualties, twenty enlisted soldiers killed, six wounded, and one

attended him was the Rhode Island regimental surgeon. In fact, Doctor Hunter is mentioned by name and trade as the carrier of letters between Rhode Island military leaders and the Governor in the State Archive letters.

¹⁹² Chapin, *A List of Rhode Island Soldiers*, 5; Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. V, 470. In *White Savage: William Johnson and the Invention of America*, O'Toole recounts an incident between Massachusetts Provincials and a New York provincial soldier. It appears that the "Yorker" was served a mug of beer, after which he promptly ran off without paying. A large fight ensued between the two regiments with "Clubs and naked Cutlashes." It was not until Johnson arrived at the site of the incident that the clash was quelled, however, hard feelings remained. O'Toole, *White Savage*, 151.

¹⁹³ Chapin, *A List of Rhode Island Soldiers*, 468, 470.

missing.¹⁹⁴ Comparatively, Connecticut suffered a 9 percent casualty rate with sixty-five casualties, forty-five killed, twenty wounded, and five missing.¹⁹⁵ Massachusetts suffered an astounding 18 percent casualty rate with one hundred and sixty-five killed, wounded, and missing.¹⁹⁶ Although the provincials successfully thwarted a major French attack, Williams' failure to deploy scouts indicates a general lack of tactical discipline that was prevalent throughout the Provincial Army. Rhode Island's lower casualty rate may be a result of Cole's leadership and tactical ability. This certainly is indicated by the lower desertion rate in his company compared to Angell, Babcock, and Francis.¹⁹⁷

Rhode Island recruited and raised approximately seven hundred and fifty men for the 1755 Crown Point expedition, approximately 57 percent of the colonies men served in some capacity.¹⁹⁸ Of the seven hundred and fifty men, twenty were killed in action, six were wounded, and one went missing.¹⁹⁹ Rhode Island demonstrated a commitment to

¹⁹⁴ Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New York, *Account of the Battle of Lake George: September 8th, 1755*, 14.

¹⁹⁵ Harold E. Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 104.

¹⁹⁶ Selesky, *War and Society*, 104.

¹⁹⁷ It is also possible that Cole's company would have been the first company to receive replacements due to his leadership position in the regiment, however, it is not a far stretch to say that the men who served under Cole formed a bond that can only be forged in war.

¹⁹⁸ "Account of the people in the colony of Rhode Island, whites and blacks, together with the quantity of arms and ammunition, in the hands of private persons," December 4, 1755, G1157 Broadside 1755 No. 2, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RI.

¹⁹⁹ Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New York, *Account of the Battle of Lake George: September 8th, 1755*, 14.

removing the French from the frontiers regardless of their proximity to it and the Rhode Island provincial regiment proved themselves as a reliable force in battle.

1756: Rhode Island Fights British Military Rule and Desertion

Following the failed campaigns of Shirley and Braddock and the limited success of Johnson's expedition in 1755, Parliament adopted Braddock's original strategy and reorganized the British leadership in North America. Johnson, as an acknowledgment to his expedition's success and known favorable relationship with the Indians, was given a commission as the Indian superintendent of the Northern Colonies. John Campbell, the fourth Earl of Loudoun, replaced Shirley as the Commander of North American Forces with Major General James Abercromby as Loudoun's second-in-command.

Shirley understood and personally experienced the nuances of working with provincial forces and colonial assemblies during the 1756 campaign; therefore, he altered Braddock's original plan to accommodate colonial motivations. First, he understood the hazard of the Royal Proclamation of 1754, which placed Provincial officers, regardless of experience and years in service, subordinate and junior to any British officer. The second issue was the proclamation of December 1754, which stated all provincial forces placed under the command of British officials would be subject to the same laws and regulations of the British forces. Thus, Shirley planned the 1756 campaign so that no provincial forces would serve under British forces, which the colonies eagerly accepted.²⁰⁰ While Parliament deliberated, Shirley planned, and Loudoun arrived in America the French had already begun preparations for Canada. Louis-Joseph, marquis de Montcalm-Gozon de

²⁰⁰ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 139-141.

Saint-Véran replaced Dieskau and arrived in early 1756 with several hundred troops.²⁰¹ Meanwhile, Rhode Island once again prepared for war.

In February of that year, the Assembly voted to raise five hundred men, not including officers, for the Rhode Island Regiment.²⁰² The “Proposal for an Attempt to be made against Crown Point & Ticonderoga this Winter” listed the campaign details. “It is propos’d that 1150 Men, to consist of 950 Provincial Troops & 200 Regulars pick’d for the Service, with half the Company of Artillery & Engineers & a proper Train, should make an attempt upon the French Works at Ticonderoga, & if found practicable to proceed from thence to Crown Point, & make an Attempt upon that; the Troops to rendezvous at Albany the first week in February.”²⁰³ The Rhode Island Regiment consisted of five hundred men organized into ten companies commanded by Colonel Christopher Harris, Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Champlain, Jr., and Major Samuel Angell.²⁰⁴ Once again, the Assembly voted to use bounties and incentives to entice enlistment. The Assembly offered a bounty of £25, old tenor, and one good blanket to any volunteers to enlist and for every soldier he enlisted any commissioned officer would receive three shillings, lawful tenor.²⁰⁵

²⁰¹ Ibid., 135.

²⁰² Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” 430; Bartlett, *The Records of the Colony*, vol. V, 480.

²⁰³ “Proposal for Plan of Attack,” February 13, 1755, Military Papers Correspondence-Accounts and Muster Rolls, Vol. 2, 1730-1765, pg. 3, Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, RI. Corrected date states January 12, 1756; Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. V, 479-480.

²⁰⁴ Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” 430; Chapin, *A List of Rhode Island*, 19.

²⁰⁵ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. V, 480, 483.

Table 6. 1756 Wages and Bounties

1756 - Wages and Bounties			
Rank	Wage	Bounty	Additional
Colonel	150 pounds, old tenor	25 pounds, old tenor	one good blanket
Lieutenant Colonel	not listed		
Major	not listed		
Captain	50 pounds, old tenor		
First Lieutenant	36 pounds, old tenor for company lieutenants 90 Crown Point bills of credit for lieutenants assigned to a field grade company		
Second Lieutenant	60 Crown Point bills of credit for lieutenants assigned to a field grade company		
Ensign	28 pounds, old tenor		
Sergeant	20 pounds, old tenor		
Drummer	20 pounds, old tenor		
Private	16 pounds, old tenor		

Source: Created by author from John Russell Bartlett, *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England, 1741 to 1756*, vol. V (Providence: Knowles, Anthony and Co., State Printers, 1860), 480, 483.

Abercromby held reservations regarding an all-provincial force for the expedition against Crown Point and consulted with his officers and the appointed Provincial commander General John Winslow of sending some British Regular forces to Lake George. Henry Babcock, serving in an official capacity, wrote to the Rhode Island Committee of War regarding Abercromby's proposition, which neither provincial nor colonial leadership received well.

He [Winslow] accordingly when he arrived at Fort Edward, called a council of the Field Officers and laid it before them—they after reading the question above a committee to (?) an answer to General Abercrombie his question of which Shepperd to be one—Col Field was sent down with the answer to General Abercrombie—My Lord Loudon arrived before Col Field got there, and Lord received the answer and rote to General Winslow devising him to come to Albany and confer with him, General Winslow, who was at William Henry, did

not come, but wrote an answer to his Lordships letter, which I was ordered to bring to my Lord Loudon—who seemed to be somewhat surprised that General Winslow did not think proper to confer with him—His Lordship told me, with whom twas a good while alone with his private chamber, that had not wrote whome since his arrival and that he had delayed writing in hopes that these nights be happy accommodation—betwixt the Regulars and the Provincials, he further told me, he had desired General Winslow to come down to Albany, be that he did not at all doubt but that in half an hour, he would accommodate affairs to his and all his officers satisfaction.²⁰⁶

A compromise was made between the aristocratically rule bound and unrelenting Loudoun and Winslow and his provincial officers. Each officer was required to sign a declaration of submission to the king's authority for provincial autonomy during the 1756 Crown Point expedition.²⁰⁷ Yet, Loudoun did not understand or comprehend why the provincial army would dissolve if given orders by British Regulars.

While Babcock wrote to the Committee of War on regular and provincial integration, Major Samuel Angell was increasingly frustrated with the lack of organized accountability of the dispersed Rhode Island soldiers. "The camp is in general healthy and the worst distemper that our people of our regiment has is the spirit of desertion."²⁰⁸ Angell recommended that each of the captains be responsible to make a list of names of the soldiers in their company. He recorded twenty-five deserters since the regiment's last return. Assuming that the regiment was close to the General Assembly's mandated amount of five hundred men and thirty men, including officers, had minimal desertions

²⁰⁶ Henry Babcock to the Committee of War, August 7, 1756, 4/121, 2, Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, RI.

²⁰⁷ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 146.

²⁰⁸ Samuel Angell to unknown, June 29, 1756, Military Papers Correspondence-Accounts and Muster Rolls, Vol. 2, 1730-1765, pg. 41, Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, RI.

on the march to Albany, and departed Rhode Island for Albany in June, the desertion rate for the regiment was 10 percent over approximately thirty days in 1756. Three separate returns dated June 12, June 26, and July 26, 1756 present the number of desertions and illness in forty-two days and is shown in table 7.

Table 7. 1756 Rhode Island Regiment Location and Number of Soldiers

	Fort William Henry			Fort Edward			Saratoga			Still Water		
	Captain	Subaltern	Non-Commissioned Officer and Private	Captain	Subaltern	Non-Commissioned Officer and Private	Captain	Subaltern	Non-Commissioned Officer and Private	Captain	Subaltern	Non-Commissioned Officer and Private
June 12	1	1	43			3					1	24
June 26	2	1	54					1	21	1	3	55
July 26		1	34	7	10	221		1	24			
	"On Command"			Fit for Duty at Half Moon & Albany			Sick & Invalids			Battoaing & extra service		
	Captain	Subaltern	Non-Commissioned Officer and Private	Captain	Subaltern	Non-Commissioned Officer and Private	Captain	Subaltern	Non-Commissioned Officer and Private	Captain	Subaltern	Non-Commissioned Officer and Private
June 12			47	6	14	288		1	11		1	33
June 26			19	7	8	192		1	48		1	48
July 26	1		28			4	1	2	39		1	42
Total												
	Captain	Subaltern	Non-Commissioned Officer and Private									
June 12	7	18	449									
June 26	10	15	437									
July 26	9	15	392									

Source: Created by author from "A Return of the Provincial Forces of the Several Colonies Raised for the Reduction of Crown Point and Where on Duty," June 12, 1756, June 26, 1765, and July 26, 1756, Military Papers Correspondence-Accounts and Muster Rolls, Vol. 2, 1730-1765, pg. 38, 39, 43, Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, RI.

Table 7 provides insight into the nature of the use of provincial soldiers by British leaders during the French and Indian War. Two duties remained relatively the same during the forty-two day span: garrison duty at Fort William Henry and Saratoga and bateaux and extra duty service. The remainder of the Rhode Island Regiment's deployment can be tracked by location, beginning at Albany at the start of the campaign season to Fort Edward later in the season. This alludes to two facts, first British leaders or colonial leaders under imperial pressure and guidance preferred to use the provincial forces for garrison type duties. Secondly, the colonies persistent lateness in raising and deploying provincial forces to Albany resulted in late campaign starts thus contributing to campaigns of limited extent. This is especially true of the 1756 campaign season.

With over one hundred desertions from early June to July 26 in the Rhode Island Regiment, the General Assembly voted to raise an additional one hundred men and six officers to join the Rhode Island Regiment.²⁰⁹ Similar yet surprising data also exists for Massachusetts and Connecticut. Fred Anderson's research suggests that the Massachusetts Regiment began the campaign season with three thousand and twenty-five men.²¹⁰ The June 12 return indicates that the Massachusetts Regiment's overall strength was two thousand one hundred and eleven men, indicating a 30 percent desertion rate over approximately thirty days. Harold Selesky noted that Connecticut raised two thousand three hundred and thirty-nine men.²¹¹ Selesky further indicated one hundred and

²⁰⁹ Bartlett, *The Records of the Colony*, vol. V, 500.

²¹⁰ Fred Anderson, *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 226.

²¹¹ Selesky, *War and Society*, 168.

eighty-nine deaths in 1756, at 8 percent the second highest amount for the war. It can be assumed some of these deaths occurred during the early campaign due to illness.²¹²

Therefore, the Connecticut Regiment had a desertion rate slightly higher than Massachusetts at approximately 34 percent. Illness was another strong contributing factor to the decision to desert.

Table 8. Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, and New Hampshire Number of Soldiers, 1756

	Mass.	Conn.	N.Y.	N.H.
June 12	2,111	1,536	983	not listed
June 26	2,299	2,235	1,297	389
July 26	2,483	2,272	1,196	445

Source: Created by author from “A Return of the Provincial Forces of the Several Colonies Raised for the Reduction of Crown Point and Where on Duty,” June 12, 1756, June 26, 1765, and July 26, 1756, Military Papers Correspondence-Accounts and Muster Rolls, Vol. 2, 1730-1765, pg. 38, 39, 43, Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, RI.

The data suggests that the volunteer tradition and commitment to the defense of the colony may have been slightly higher in Rhode Island leading to lower desertion rates than Massachusetts and Connecticut. Selesky’s probate inventory of the soldiers who died during the 1756 campaign indicates that a majority of the enlisted men were “near the economic bottom in Connecticut.”²¹³ Similarly, Anderson indicated that

²¹² Selesky, *War and Society*, 190; the June 12, 1756 return listed thirty-nine Connecticut men as “Sick and Invalid.” This number increased to sixty-six in June 26 and two hundred and seventy-nine by July 26.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 177-178.

approximately 20 percent of privates in the Massachusetts Regiment were farmers and 35 percent were laborers.²¹⁴ Although these men may have been nearly destitute in Connecticut and Massachusetts society, the hard march overland to the Hudson Valley combined with a generally unrewarding campaign season may have been a reason to abandon their contractual obligation for more fruitful endeavors. Rhode Island's low desertion rate at the beginning of the 1756 campaign indicate an adherence to contractual obligation through volunteerism even with arduous conditions, illness, and no action.

1756 was generally an unfruitful campaign season for the British. The French took Fort Oswego and among those involved in the battle and taken prisoner were several Newport shipwrights.²¹⁵ In response to this news, the Assembly authorized an additional company of sixty men in September to be under the command of Lord Loudoun and raised a regiment of four hundred and fifty men in October under the command of the Rhode Island governor, Colonel Stephen Hopkins.²¹⁶ Before the newly formed regiment left Rhode Island, a small pox epidemic broke out among the troops stationed in Albany. This combined with the lateness of the campaign season led to the decision to abandon the campaign and disband the regiment.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ Anderson, *A People's Army*, 237.

²¹⁵ Chapin, *A List of Rhode Island*, 8.

²¹⁶ Field, "The Wars and the Militia," 431; Chapin states 60 men and officers were raised, 7; Smith, *Civil and Military Lists*, 189 also states 60 men under the command of Captain Joseph Windsor

²¹⁷ Field, "The Wars and the Militia," 431.

1757: Lord Loudoun Takes Control and Fort William Henry Falls

Loudoun, doubting the efficiency of the provincial forces yet understanding the need for them until British Regulars arrived from Britain, implemented a standardized system to enlist colonial forces. Under Loudoun's direction, Rhode Island would raise a company of over four hundred men, whose company commanders would serve under one commander. Loudoun had hoped that this would solve the Royal Proclamation of 1754 issue, by having only one field officer per province answer to a British counterpart.

In February 1757, the Assembly responded by raising a four hundred and fifty man regiment commanded by Colonel Samuel Angell, who was a company commander at the Battle of Lake George in 1755.²¹⁸ The Assembly offered any able-bodied man who volunteered a bounty of £30, old tenor, one good blanket on enlistment, with an additional wage of £25 per month.²¹⁹ In order to raise the forces Loudoun requested, the Assembly authorized Lieutenant Colonel John Andrews, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Wickham, Colonel's Benoni Waterman and William Pendleton, and Major Thomas Greene as muster masters to accept or reject unfit individuals and to ensure that all soldiers were clothed according to the Assembly's directives.²²⁰ Having made what

²¹⁸ Field, "The Wars and the Militia," 431, Chapin, *A List of Rhode Island*, 8.

²¹⁹ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 23. The record further stated that the surgeon appointed for the five companies would receive £180, old tenor, per month, each captain, £140, each first lieutenant, £100, each second lieutenant £90, and each ensign £80 per month. As a further incentive, each noncommissioned officer would receive forty shillings for every effective man he enlisted.

²²⁰ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 24, 128; John Andrews to the Colony of Rhode Island, March and April 1757, Military Papers, Accounts-Muster Rolls, Vol. I, 1740-1763, pg. 95, Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, RI. Colonel Andrews submitted a voucher at the March 1758 gathering of the assembly for repayment of his muster duties in March and April of 1757. In total, he lists £100, old tenor, for expenses

Loudoun considered sufficient preparations for his own campaign and by his sheer force of will raised and sent the provincial forces to the forts of Lake George on time, Loudoun sailed with British Regulars to besiege Louisbourg and left General Daniel Webb in command of two regular regiments and five thousand five hundred provincial soldiers.²²¹

Table 9. 1757 Wages and Bounties

1757 - Wages and Bounties			
Rank	Wage	Bounty	Additional
Colonel	not listed	30 pounds, old tenor	one good blanket
Lieutenant Colonel	not listed		
Major	210 pounds, old tenor		
Captain	140 pounds, old tenor		
First Lieutenant	100 pounds, old tenor		
Second Lieutenant	90 pounds, old tenor		
Ensign	80 pounds, old tenor		
Sergeant	29 pounds, old tenor		
Drummer	not listed		
Private	25 pounds, old tenor		

Source: Created by author from John Russell Bartlett, *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England, 1757 to 1769*, vol. VI (Providence: Knowles, Anthony and Co., State Printers, 1860), 23. It is difficult to estimate the conversion rate of dollars to pounds due to inflation and other economic practices observed by the colony. See Appendix A, Paper Money in Rhode Island.

Loudoun could not have foreseen the disastrous defeat of Fort William Henry in August of 1757. During the winter months early in the year, François-Pierre Rigaud and fifteen hundred Canadian, French, and Indians conducted a raid against the fort. Although

to examine and muster one hundred and twenty soldiers, granting twenty-one warrants, and “procuring” ninety-four soldiers to be impressed from Providence County.

²²¹ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 185.

the attackers were armed only with scaling ladders and muskets, were successfully repealed. Rigaud's force burned all of the fort's outbuildings and bateaux, destroying the fort's essential supplies and the only means of resupply. Rigaud's raid combined with Captain Robert Rogers' unsuccessful scouting mission against Fort Ticonderoga, which resulted in the deaths of a quarter of the rangers and Rogers being wounded and removed to Albany in January. The raid and the deaths of the rangers resulted in the loss of critical intelligence reporting and weakened the fort.²²²

A majority of the Rhode Island provincials were safely garrisoned at Fort Edward under the command of General Webb, who refused to send reinforcements to the beleaguered Fort William Henry under the command of Lieutenant Colonel George Munro. However, Chapin stated that some Rhode Islanders were at Fort William Henry in August during the siege.²²³ Without reinforcements or resupply, it was inevitable that Munro would surrender the fort and the provincial breastworks located to the southeast on August 9 (see Appendix C, Fort William Henry Map for a detailed map of British positions). Although Munro and Montcalm agreed to honorable terms of surrender, to include allowing Munro to march with his twelve pounder and colors to Fort Edward, Montcalm's Indian allies disagreed with the terms.

The "massacre of Fort William Henry" began on the afternoon of the ninth. Montcalm's Indian allies came into the fort and began killing and scalping the wounded

²²² Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 185-186. Anderson further explains the French's efforts to align more Indian allies through the *pays d'en haut*. He states, "By the end of July nearly 2,000 Indians were assembled at Fort Carillon in aid of the army of 6,000 French regulars, *troops de la marine*, and Canadian militiamen that Montcalm was preparing to lead against Fort William Henry." Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 187.

²²³ Chapin, *A List of Rhode Island*, 8.

British and colonial men left behind to be cared for by the French under the terms of surrender. Colonel Samuel Angell transcribed the events that unfolded the following morning. “The morning following. Our men were to march with strong guard of regulars. To keep the savages from insulting them. When our people began to draw up for a march, the horrible scene of massacre then began, by the savages scaling our sick and wounded men; next, by their drawing out all the black men, scalping the Indians and keeping the negroes for slaves, All this did not satisfy them; but they went to stripping and scalping without distinction; which put our men to the flight, each man for himself.”²²⁴

Prior to Angell’s letter reaching Rhode Island, the Assembly heard of Fort William Henry’s impending assault and sprang into action on 10 August. Demonstrating the militia’s role as a source to fill the regiment, the Assembly ordered one-sixth part of the militia dispatched to Albany and all of the companies of horse and foot to rendezvous in each town on or before Monday, 15 August.²²⁵ In addition to the one-sixth part militia draft, Chapin identified thirty-four prominent members of Rhode Island society exempt from the draft who volunteered their services. The declaration stated, “we whose names are underwritten, thinking it our duty to do everything in our power for the fence of our Libertys, Families and Propertys are willing and agree to enter Voluntarily into the service of our Country, and go in a warlike manner against the Common enemy.” Field summarized that this was no idle threat, “every man whose name is attached to that paper

²²⁴ Sam Angell to Governor Greene (August, 1757), quoted in Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” 432.

²²⁵ Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” 433, Smith, *Civil and Military*, 198; Chapin, *A List of Rhode Island*, 10; Arnold, *History of Rhode Island*, 208. Arnold stated that a tax of four thousand pounds in “lawful money” was implemented to pay for the alarm. Arnold, *History of Rhode Island*, 209.

is inseparably linked with unselfish patriotism and true heroism.”²²⁶ A muster roll, dated August 18 1757, lists one hundred and fifty-two men of the Newport County Regiment to include one Indian and ten Negroes, and indicated twenty-one volunteers.²²⁷ The second regiment, regardless of heroic virtues, received news of Fort William Henry’s defeat in Connecticut and returned home.²²⁸ Additionally, seventy men from the Rhode Island Regiment were retained for a term of one year to serve as rangers directly under Loudoun’s command. The mission was to “secure the back settlements, and to annoy the enemy.”²²⁹ The selected men formed a corps of rangers at Saratoga. After clarification of confusion on Loudoun’s part Rhode Island provided one hundred men for this service.²³⁰

The 1757 campaign season held incessant demands for more provincial soldiers and the Assembly tried to entice enlistments with increasing bounties and incentives but ultimately resorted to impressment to meet quotas. The fall of Fort William Henry brought a short-lived increase in patriotism and a renewed vigor for the campaign against the French across all of the colonies. In all, 4,239 New England militiamen had arrived to

²²⁶ Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” 434-435.

²²⁷ “1757, Aug. 17. Muster roll of Newport County regiment except for Bristol and Tiverton,” Colonial Militia Collection, MS 673 sg 1, Rhode Island Historic Society, Providence, RI; Chapin, *A List of Rhode Island*, 10.

²²⁸ James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 285.

²²⁹ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 106.

²³⁰ Arnold, *History of Rhode Island*, 208; Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol VI, 108. Arnold does not write that the Rhode Island rangers were garrisoned at Saratoga; however, the Assembly records indicate that the men retained for service were garrisoned at Saratoga. There is also a discrepancy between Assembly records which indicate 90 and Arnold who stated 100.

Fort Edward by 12 August.²³¹ Rhode Island showed remarkable organization and resolve to dispatch one-sixth of its militia on the “alarm of August 1757 10 days expedition.” Although the force was recalled prior to reaching Fort Edward, this proved Rhode Island’s ability to execute a massive mobilization.

²³¹ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 201.

CHAPTER 6

1758-1760

1758: Pitt Takes Charge Siege of Louisbourg and Disaster at Fort Ticonderoga

Whereas, the King has been graciously pleased to inform the colony, by letters from one of his principal secretaries of state, bearing date 30th day of December last, that he is about to send a considerable reinforcement of land forces, with a powerful fleet, to make the most vigorous and extensive efforts to avert, by the blessing of God, on His Majesty's arms, the dangers impending on North America, and to carry the war into the enemy's country; expecting that the six northern provinces will raise twenty thousand men, to be joined to, and co-operate with his regular forces, for these great purposes.²³²

William Pitt energized the colonies' efforts against French ambitions in New France. Pitt's approach to the North American conflict "essentially inverted every policy Braddock and Loudoun had pursued."²³³ Pitt's plan focused on striking the French at their weakest point, New France, while utilizing British naval power to attack the French coast lines of Europe and at sea. Pitt placed Major General James Abercromby as commander in chief of North America with George Augustus, Viscount Howe, as Abercromby's second in command.²³⁴ Abercromby was to attack Fort Ticonderoga with a force of approximately twenty five thousand men, including all of the New England

²³² John Russell Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony and Providence Plantations in New England*, vol. VI (Providence: Knowles, Anthony and Company, 1861), 129.

²³³ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The French and Indian War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 213.

²³⁴ William Pitt named Major General James Abercromby as Loudon's successor, however, he allowed Lord Ligonier (Pitt's chief of staff) to select four men to lead the 1758 expedition. Ligonier selected Jeffery Amherst promoting him to the rank of Major General in America, James Wolfe, John Forbes, and George Augustus, Viscount Howe. Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 215, 233-234.

provincial forces.²³⁵ In command of fourteen thousand men to attack and seize Louisbourg, Pitt selected General Jeffery Amherst with General James Wolfe as Amherst's second-in-command.²³⁶ In order to accomplish this large-scale offensive campaign Britain required colonial manpower.

Pitt's strategy of encouragement consisted of two principal aspects relating to military matters. The first was that rather than maintain the previous policy that colonies would finance war efforts from their own funds, Pitt offered subsidies to assist with raising and maintaining the provincial armies. Secondly, like Shirley, Pitt understood the tense relationship between Regular British officers and provincial officers under the previous regimes rule. He therefore decreed that all provincial officers "as high as Colonel inclusive" would hold rank equal to their British Regular counterparts.²³⁷ His economic incentive was that arms, ammunitions and tents would be provided by the king while the colonies were responsible for clothing, recruiting, and pay.²³⁸ The colonies enthusiastically responded by agreeing to raise a provincial army of seven thousand men, of which Rhode Island voted to raise one thousand.²³⁹

²³⁵ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 235-236

²³⁶ Anderson listed Amherst's force at: "14 regular battalions, 5 companies of American Rangers, a company of carpenters, and a train of siege artillery," Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 235.

²³⁷ Secretary William Pitt to the Governor and Company of Rhode Island. Whitehall, December 30th, 1757, quoted in Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 113; Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 214.

²³⁸ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 214, 226.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 227; Prior to Loudoun's dismissal and return to England, he attempted to raise a provincial army for the 1758 campaign season, however, his wide spread dislike amongst the colonies was prevalent. Rhode Island objected on the ground of proportion

The Rhode Island Assembly, as enthusiastic as any of the New England colonies, resolved to raise a regiment of one thousand men and implemented “energetic measures” for recruitment.²⁴⁰ The Assembly supplemented the royal allowance of four pence sterling for the support of recruits to a weekly stipend of three pounds four shillings, told tenor, and resolved that no officer would receive a commission until he had filled his enlistment quota.²⁴¹ Recorded in “Crown Point” money, the pay for the regimental officers indicated an increase from the previous campaign season. The colonel was to receive \$45 per month, the lieutenant colonel \$38, the major \$32, each captain \$26, each captain lieutenant \$23, each lieutenant \$20, and each ensign \$15 per month.²⁴² The regimental drummers and sergeants were to receive \$8 and the corporals \$7 per month. “For the encouragement of men to enlist” the Assembly allotted \$18, or £100 old tenor,

to the number requested by Loudoun. A letter to Loudoun stated that following a census, Rhode Island had thirty-six thousand inhabitants, as compared to Massachusetts with two hundred and six thousand and Connecticut with one hundred and thirty-four thousand. According to the Rhode Island constituents, this would require Massachusetts to furnish two thousand and thirty-four men, Connecticut one thousand and five hundred and eighty-two men, and Rhode Island four hundred and twenty-five men. This letter, written by Rhode Island constituent Samuel Ward, is provided in Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 124-125.

²⁴⁰ Samuel Greene Arnold, *History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, 1636-1700*, vol. I. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1859), 211; Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 129-131.

²⁴¹ Arnold, *History of the State*, 211; Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 130. The Assembly records indicate that the captains were required to recruit twenty men, the lieutenants fifteen men, and the ensigns were required to enlist ten men prior to receiving a commission.

²⁴² Arnold, *History of the State*, 145; the colonel’s sum was increased during the May Assembly session to \$50 per month, and the field officers’ wages were also increased proportionately. In addition, any man providing his own blanket would receive £13, old tenor, and three-quarters of a dollar per month.

or £5 8s of the bills of credit, one good blanket, one knapsack, and billeting from time of enlistment until departure from the colony to any able bodied man who volunteered.²⁴³ In addition to the bounty, each man would be paid a monthly wage of \$5.50 or £30, old tenor, a large increase from the 1757 campaign.²⁴⁴

Table 10. 1758 Wages and Bounties

1758 - Wages and Bounties				
Rank	Wage	Raised to	Bounty	Additional
Colonel	\$45	\$50	*\$18 or 100 pounds, old tenor or 5 pounds 8 shillings bills of credit *Blanket *Knapsack	*Soldiers owning a blanket would receive 13 pounds, old tenor and 3/4 of a dollar per month *10 pounds, lawful money on return from successful campaign
Lieutenant Colonel	\$38	\$43		
Major	\$32	\$37		
Captain	\$23	\$28		
Lieutenants	\$20	\$25		
Ensign	\$15	\$20		
Sergeant	\$8			
Drummer	\$8			
Corporal	\$7			
Private	\$5.50 or 30 pounds, old tenor			

Source: Created by author from John Russell Bartlett, *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England, 1757 to 1769*, vol. VI (Providence: Knowles, Anthony and Co., State Printers, 1860), 130, 131. It is difficult to estimate the conversion rate of dollars to pounds due to inflation and other economic practices observed by the colony. See Appendix A, Paper Money in Rhode Island.

²⁴³ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 130, 132. The Assembly enacted a penalty against anyone who would “discourage any person from enlisting” with a fine of £50, old tenor, or thirty days confinement. By June 11 1758 the Rhode Island Regiment was short one hundred and fifty men, “The Assembly took vigorous measures to supply the deficiency, and sent forward the men to join the other troops at Albany.” Arnold, *History of the State*, 219.

²⁴⁴ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 130, 131. The Assembly enacted the conversion rate of \$1 for 5 pounds 10 shillings old tenor.

The regiment was organized in a similar manner to the 1757 campaign with a colonel appointed to command, a lieutenant colonel, and a major. Each of the ten companies, increased to thirteen in May 1758, would have a captain, two lieutenants, and one ensign.²⁴⁵ The regiment was to be commanded by Colonel Henry Babcock, Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Wall, and Major John Whiting.²⁴⁶ Arnold stated that most of the company captains were retained in service from the previous campaign season and were promoted once and in some cases advanced two grades.²⁴⁷ At this point, the Rhode Island Regiment had a vast amount of experience amongst its officer corps. The Assembly ordered the Regiment to be prepared to march no later than 25 March to arrive at Albany by 10 April at General Abercromby's request.²⁴⁸ After some delays, a majority of the regiment had embarked for Albany in June.

The disastrous attack on Ticonderoga occurred on July 8, 1758. The Rhode Island Regiment, with Colonel Babcock at its helm, took part in the battle. In a letter dated July 10, 1758, Colonel Babcock told of the ordeal to Governor Hopkins. On the morning of July 5, fifteen thousand men with thirty days of provisions departed the wreck of Fort William Henry and proceeded northward on Lake George in bateaux. The party landed on the morning of the sixth approximately four miles from Fort Carillon and met little

²⁴⁵ The first companies of the regiment were designated to be under the command of the three field officers and had two lieutenants and one ensign each. Bartlett, 130; Arnold, *History of the State*, 217-218.

²⁴⁶ Joseph Jencks Smith, *Civil and Military List of Rhode Island, 1647-1800* (Providence: Preston and Bounds Company, 1900), 203. Henry Babcock was just 19 years old when he began service in the Rhode Island Regiment.

²⁴⁷ Arnold, *History of the State*, 218.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

resistance. However, Lord Howe, second-in-command of the expedition was killed during skirmishes in the woods. Anderson stated that Howe's death not only damaged the regular and provincial forces' morale, but also so negatively impacted Abercromby he acted more slowly than his usual labored decision-making. In fact, Abercromby was commonly called "Granny" for his slowness.²⁴⁹ His delays would give the French a marked advantage in the battle.

During Abercromby's inaction, the French commander Montcalm who only had three thousand two hundred and fifty-six men began construction on defensive fieldworks made of felled trees.²⁵⁰ Anderson describes the formidable "abatis," "above shallow entrenchments rose a log breastwork topped with sandbags . . . extending perhaps a hundred yards down slope in front lay a tangle of felled trees with branches sharpened and interlaced to ensnare advancing infantrymen and make easy targets for grapeshot and musket fire."²⁵¹ On the morning of "the fatal 8th," Abercromby ordered three lines of men composed of bateaux men, light-armed infantry, and rangers followed by the regular forces to assault the breastwork.²⁵² Babcock explained that the first line was approximately two hundred meters from the French entrenchment and stretched from Lake George to Lake Champlain (see figure 3, Plan du Fort Carillon. This French map

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 241.

²⁵⁰ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 241; Arnold, *History of the State*, 214.

²⁵¹ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 242.

²⁵² Colonel Babcock's account of the battle to Governor Hopkins declared "the fatal 8th." Henry Babcock to Governor Stephen Hopkins, July 10 1758, 5/114, Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, RI.

depicts the British positions in red and the French positions in yellow).²⁵³ Abercromby's order of attack was to have the regulars advance through the first line by avenues of approach and form another line. Therefore, the order of battle would proceed, the men ordered to "march with shouldered firelocks, till they should get on top of the trenches."²⁵⁴

As a reserve, the Rhode Island Regiment remained three hundred yards to the rear of the formation and observed the ensuing slaughter. Babcock recounted that the assault force made it to the breastwork; "they even went up to the breastworks but were knocked down so fast that it was very difficult for those behind to get over the dead and wounded."²⁵⁵ Approximately one hour into the battle, Colonel Babcock and the Rhode Island Regiment were ordered forward. The regiment came within forty yards of the breastworks when Colonel Babcock, rising from cover to emplace his troops, was shot in the knee.²⁵⁶ He then ordered two men to carry him off the battlefield, deeming himself no longer fit to direct his forces. Abercromby, safely ensconced in his headquarters a mile away from the battle, ordered assault after assault on the French fortifications to no avail.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Colonel Henry Babcock to Governor Stephen Hopkins, July 10 1758, 5/114, Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, RI.

²⁵⁶ Babcock reported to Governor Hopkins that he had been shot in the left knee; in addition to his injury, Captain John Whiting, Lieutenants Russell and Smith were injured. A list of wounded and dead resides in the State Archives separate from Babcock's letter to Governor Hopkins. It lists three sergeants, one corporal, and fourteen privates killed and besides himself, one captain, two lieutenants, three sergeants, three corporals, one drummer, and forty-one privates wounded during the battle. State Archives, Return of the Killed and Wounded in the Rhode Island Regiment.



Figure 3. Plan du Fort Carillon

Source: Therbu, L, and Heinrich Hugo Coentgen. [Attaques des retranchemens sic devant le Fort Carillon en Amérique: par les anglais commandés par le général Abercrombie contre les français aux ordres du Marquis de Montcalm le 8 juillet 1758]. [Frankfurt Main, Germany?: s.n., ?, 1758] Map. Library of Congress, accessed April 5, 2016, <https://www.loc.gov/item/91683242>.

By evening, with a French counterattack looming, Abercromby ordered a retreat to the bateaux. “The same evening to my great surprise the whole army were ordered to return to the batteaux to the great mortification of Chief of the Officers, and the next evening we arrived here.”²⁵⁷ Babcock described the defeat of the largest British army in North America accurately, “never did an army gain more advantage in so little time whilst the late Lord Howe was alive, but soon after that we became a confused rabble.”²⁵⁸ The battle lasted four hours with over two thousand men killed and wounded.²⁵⁹

Although the British and provincial forces faced defeat at Fort Ticonderoga, the attacks against Louisbourg and Fort Frontenac were successful.²⁶⁰ Major Daniel Wall and three hundred and twelve Rhode Island provincials were on the secret campaign under the command of Colonel Bradstreet in August 1758 to destroy Fort Frontenac.²⁶¹ Wall’s letter to Governor Hopkins stated that the force arrived approximately a mile from the fort on the 25th and were under small arms fire throughout the night. By eight o’clock the following morning, the artillery had been brought on shore and by ten, the cannon were firing upon the fort.

²⁵⁷ Colonel Henry Babcock to Governor Stephen Hopkins, July 10 1758, 5/114, Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, RI.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Arnold, *History of the state*, 214.

²⁶⁰ For an excellent account of the battle for Louisbourg, see *The Capture of Louisbourg, 1758* by Hugh Boscawen.

²⁶¹ Chapin, *A List of Rhode Island*, 13; Arnold, *History of the State*, 215; Major Daniel Wall to Governor Stephen Hopkins, quoted in Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 166.

As soon as it was dusk, we approached up to the breast-work of the enemy, erected at the time that Oswego was garrisoned, through which we cut embrasures; and at day-break began to throw shells, which continued very warm till seven o'clock, the enemy firing very smart, both with their cannon and small arms, when we perceived them endeavoring to escape with the vessels. We immediately brought two twelve pounders to play on them, which shattered them very much, and all the crew on board took to their boats, and made off, and suffered the vessels to drive on shore. Then the garrison sent out to surrender, and were suffered to take what things they could carry off in batteaux, and to go to Swecorchche.²⁶²

The Rhode Island Regiment did not participate in the winter campaigns; however, the Assembly discharged the senior officers and kept all of the able men in pay. Rhode Island's involvement in the 1758 campaign season was widely varied as Rhode Islanders took part in every expedition from the siege of Louisbourg to the disaster at Fort Ticonderoga and the successful attack on Fort Frontenac. Babcock's charge against the impenetrable French fortifications at Ticonderoga demonstrated order and discipline comparable to the Regulars who died in the face of withering fire and Abercromby's insistence on European siege warfare. The provincial soldiers also witnessed and experienced the discipline of the regular soldiers, who by trade as professionals were subject to harsh punishment, as opposed to the relatively light punishment in the provincial army under provincial officers. Not only had Rhode Island's military confidence increased, but also the men and officers of the Rhode Island Regiment held onto their beliefs in contractual obligation.

²⁶² Major Daniel Wall to Governor Stephen Hopkins, quoted in Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 166.

1759: Amherst Meticulously Fortifies and Québec Falls

1759 would prove to be a pivotal year for the colonies and Britain. In September 1758, Pitt relieved Abercromby of his duties and placed Jeffrey Amherst in his stead.²⁶³ Pitt's campaign plan focused on two objectives. The first, to be commanded by the newly promoted Major General Wolfe, would attack to seize Québec from the stronghold of Louisbourg. Amherst was to attack into the heart of Canada by way of Lake George and Champlain or by way of Lake Ontario. Thus, on December 9 Pitt wrote to the governors of the colonies requesting them to raise a force of twenty thousand men.²⁶⁴

In February, Rhode Island received orders to raise a regiment for the reduction of Crown Point and resolved to augment the men retained in service over the winter to form a force of one thousand men in thirteen companies once again under the command of Henry Babcock.²⁶⁵ The colony decided to keep all bounties and pay the same as the 1758 campaign season; however, Chapin reported that the quota for one thousand men was not easily reached.²⁶⁶ Therefore, in May the Assembly offered a bonus of two months' advance pay as an incentive for enlistment.²⁶⁷ In June 1759, the Assembly issued an act

²⁶³ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 307.

²⁶⁴ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 310; Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 178-180.

²⁶⁵ Arnold, *History of the State*, 219; Chapin, *A List of Rhode Island*, 14, 21; Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 185, 191.

²⁶⁶ Chapin, *A List of Rhode Island*, 14.

²⁶⁷ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 181, 207. The amount was £111, old tenor, or £6 1s 2d, lawful money. A bounty for seamen was also issued during the May, 1759 session. An amount of forty shillings sterling was offered to men enlisting under an Admiral Durell at Halifax. 208. The Assembly did note that any men raised for this purpose would be included in the request for one thousand men.

to raise and enlist an additional one hundred and fifteen men by July to join the regiment at Albany.²⁶⁸ The bounty increased to £14, lawful money almost twice as much as the previous bounty. It seems the colony also had to deal with Rhode Islanders, perhaps disagreeing with the war, from inhibiting men from enlisting. In February, the Assembly enacted a law forbidding tavern keepers, inn holders, and sellers of strong drink from aiding, assisting, and attempting to draw men out from service with an enormous fine of £500 per offense and the revocation of the establishment's license.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ Bartlett, *The Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 213, 216; Henry Babcock to Governor Hopkins, July 12, 1759, 6/19, pp. 2, Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, RI. Apparently, Colonel Babcock had problems preventing soldiers from deserting the regiment during offensive actions at Lake George and Ticonderoga. A letter dated 12 July, 1759 to Governor Hopkins stated, "I have enclosed for your perusal, as well as a return of the regiment, You will see this does not correspond with that; there being two companies that give me more trouble than all the regiment besides . . . By this return, you will see we want two hundred eighty-one men."

²⁶⁹ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 186.

Table 11. 1759 Wages and Bounties

1759 - Wages and Bounties			
Rank	Wage	Bounty	Additional
Colonel	\$50	*The Assembly records do not state a bounty however do indicate that it was raised to 14 pounds, old tenor during the July enlistment of 115 additional men *Blanket *Knapsack	* 10 pounds, lawful money if Canada is reduced
Lieutenant Colonel	\$43		
Major	\$37		
Captain	\$28		
Lieutenant	\$25		
Ensign	\$20		
Sergeant	\$8		
Drummer	\$8		
Corporal	\$7		
Private	\$5.50 or 30 pounds, old tenor		

Source: Created by author from John Russell Bartlett, *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England, 1757 to 1769*, vol. VI (Providence: Knowles, Anthony and Co., State Printers, 1860), 213, 216. It is difficult to estimate the conversion rate of dollars to pounds due to inflation and other economic practices observed by the colony. See Appendix A, Paper Money in Rhode Island.

Comparatively, Connecticut filled only 86 percent of its required quota with four thousand one and eighty-three out of the requested five thousand men.²⁷⁰ This is the second lowest percentage of enlistments for a campaign season in Connecticut. Selesky further noted that the Upper House of the Connecticut Assembly wanted to reduce the number of regiments to three as opposed to the previous year's four, to reduce costs.²⁷¹

The Rhode Island Regiment was ordered to meet at Albany by April 10 and sometime between June and July, the regiment proceeded to Lake George. Field notes that a return written by Babcock on 10 July 1759 indicated six hundred and eighty-nine

²⁷⁰ Harold E. Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 168.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

officers and soldiers.²⁷² If the regiment was near full quota as Field charged and received all of the intended one hundred and fifteen reinforcements then the regiment had an astounding 38 percent loss due to desertion, possible deaths, discharges, or other factors. Anderson explained that in addition to the usual late arrival of the provincial forces to Albany, Amherst's cautious planning and preference for security to speed resulted in the expedition's late departure for Ticonderoga.²⁷³ It was not until July 21 that the force of ten thousand men rowed northward.

Amherst's force landed at daylight in an outlet near the sawmill that had been Abercromby's command post the year prior. After successfully taking the sawmill, Amherst ordered the artillery forward and began a barrage against the newly reconstructed abatis. Although the French commander Bourtoulamaque's forces outnumbered Amherst's, Governor Vaudreuil ordered Bourtoulamaque to retreat to the Isle-aux-Noix and defend to the last man rather than risk losing the entire French force.²⁷⁴ Amherst reported to Governor Hopkins that after preparing to siege Ticonderoga, the French blew up a portion of the fort and escaped.²⁷⁵ With a lack of information on the

²⁷² Field, "The Wars and the Militia," 439.

²⁷³ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 341.

²⁷⁴ Francis Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe: France and England in North America. Part Seventh*, vol. II (London: MacMillan and Company, 1899), 249.

²⁷⁵ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 217; Parkman writes that after an initial volley of fire from the fort which resulted in the death of a Colonel Townshend and a few soldiers, three deserters entered the British camp and reported that Hebecourt (the rear guard for Bourtoulamaque's main force) had rigged "to blow Ticonderoga to atoms." Apparently, Amherst offered a hundred guineas to the deserters to point out the explosives but no one took up his offer. At 11 o'clock one bastion of the fort exploded, leaving the remained of the fort relatively unharmed. Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe*, 249.

Québec expedition, Amherst decided to rebuild the partially destroyed Ticonderoga, construct a fort at Crown Point, and build roads connecting Ticonderoga, Crown Point, and Fort Number 4 in the Connecticut Valley.²⁷⁶

Meanwhile, Wolfe launched on a daring move to position his forces on the Plains of Abraham outside of the besieged Québec. Killed during the battle, Wolfe and Montcalm ensured their place in combat fame. The city eventually fell to the British. Finally in October, Amherst received word of Québec's fall and ordered his provincial forces to attack the Isle-aux-Noix, the location of the French retreat. Plagued by bad weather and unable to move down the lake by bateaux, Amherst called off the expedition on 19 October. Within two weeks, Amherst dismissed the provincial forces and placed the regulars into winter garrison.²⁷⁷ On November 12, the Rhode Island Regiment marched for home.

Although Amherst led a relatively unsuccessful expedition against the French on Lake Champlain and Lake George, the successful attack on Québec led by General Wolfe was enough to turn the tide of the war in favor of the British in North America. All across the theater of operations, however, as provincial soldiers neared the end of their contracts they became disgruntled when they were not released from service. The backbreaking work of carving roads through dense wilderness and building massive forts took its toll on the Rhode Island Regiment and would contribute to desertions and low enlistments

²⁷⁶ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 343. Anderson noted that Amherst held a general dislike of Wolfe and assumed that the Québec expedition would fail under his campaign, probably contributing to his general attitude of defensive measures and preparations of the forts.

²⁷⁷ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 370.

during the 1760 campaign. Amherst urged the colonies to maintain their armies during the winter months to expedite the raising of a new army for the 1760 campaign season, however, Rhode Island, deciding to discharge the troops following their return, had already disbanded the regiment.²⁷⁸

1760: Montréal Surrenders

Pitt's instructions to Amherst in the winter of 1759 were simple; he was to use the regular and provincial forces as he saw fit to conquer the final North American French bastion, Montréal.²⁷⁹ To complete the defeat of the French and drive them from the continent Amherst planned a three-pronged attack into Canada. He would lead twelve thousand men from Albany to Oswego and then down the St. Lawrence, while Brigadier General William Haviland took three thousand five hundred regulars and provincials from Crown Point to Montréal, and Brigadier General James Murray would lead three thousand seven hundred and fifty men assembled from Louisbourg and Québec down the St. Lawrence by ship.²⁸⁰

In February 1760, the Assembly voted to raise a regiment of one thousand men under the command of Colonel Christopher Harris, Lieutenant Colonel John Whiting, and

²⁷⁸ Arnold, *History of the State*, 222. It may have been very frustrating for Amherst sending letters to the colonial governors. At the October 1759 session it was resolved that the regiment would be disbanded if the Assembly or the Governor did not receive word indicating otherwise from Amherst. It was not until after December 13 that Governor Hopkins received a letter from Amherst with the request to maintain the Rhode Island regiment in pay during the winter. Hopkins wrote, "Accordingly, after waiting till the 10th of December, they were then all discharged by proclamation." Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 232-233.

²⁷⁹ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 384.

²⁸⁰ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 388; Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe*, 377.

Major Thomas Burket.²⁸¹ Rhode Island once again implemented bounties to entice volunteers and encourage the officers to fill their quotas. The captains of the regiment were required to raise twenty men, the first lieutenants, fifteen, the second lieutenants, twelve, and the ensigns, eight.²⁸² However, the Assembly stated, “if any officer shall make it appear to the Governor and Council, that he hath diligently and honestly done his duty in endeavoring to raise his complement of men, he shall receive his commission, although he may have failed therein.”²⁸³ As a bounty the colony offered the much reduced sum of £9 to each able bodied man volunteering to enlist.²⁸⁴

Amherst urged the Rhode Island Regiment to march no later than 10 April, so that offensive actions deep into the frontier could begin early in the season and not later than 1 May. Contrary to Amherst’s wishes, by 8 May none of the provincial forces had arrived at Albany. “I arrived here on the 8th instant, and none of the provincial forces being yet arrived . . . I cannot defer renewing to you, my most pressing instance, that if upon the receipt hereof, all the troops of your province are not in motion, and on their way hither, (for I will no doubt but most of them are,) that you will immediately, without loss of time, cause them to begin their march, and to proceed hither without delay.”²⁸⁵

²⁸¹ Arnold, *History of the State*, 223; Chapin, *A List of Rhode Island*, 21; Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 241.

²⁸² Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 240. It appears that the only reduction in quotas of men was for the ensigns, who in 1758 were required to raise ten men as compared to eight in 1760.

²⁸³ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 240.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, The reduced bounty may have been a result of the treasury nearing destitution due to the lack of funds.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 253.

In fact, Chapin reported that during the movement of the regiment to Albany many men deserted “fearing the hardships of a campaign against so distant a place as Montréal.”²⁸⁶ Desertion was so prevalent that in October the Assembly implemented two acts. The first act required men who deserted to refund bounty money and pay received from the colony. The second act specified that any man who left the regiment following its arrival to Albany would not receive wages until proof of furlough or certificate from the commanding officer could be produced.²⁸⁷ The low bounty, distance of Montréal, and third campaign season with the largest mobilization of men in Rhode Island suggests that the colony was nearing exhaustion in both manpower and finances. Connecticut may have experienced similar strains. Connecticut’s bounty was £8, 19 shillings and filled three thousand two hundred and twenty nine of its five thousand man quota, the lowest percentage of men raised from 1755—1762 with 65 percent.²⁸⁸ While Massachusetts’s bounty, the highest of the three colonies, was £12.²⁸⁹ Although the data for Massachusetts was unavailable for analysis, it can be assumed that the Massachusetts Regiment experienced similar issues in filling its required quota.

After the surrender of Montréal on 8 September 1760, many colonial troops, Rhode Islanders included, “demobilized” themselves and returned home.²⁹⁰ Assembly records indicate that a majority of the men who deserted following Montréal’s surrender

²⁸⁶ Chapin, *A List of Rhode Island*, 14.

²⁸⁷ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 259.

²⁸⁸ Selesky, *War and Society*, 168.

²⁸⁹ Anderson, *A People’s Army*, 224.

²⁹⁰ Chapin, *A List of Rhode Island*, 14.

were under age and some very poor.²⁹¹ This provides insight into the state of Rhode Island's pool of recruits in the final year of the war. This is the first instance that the Assembly records indicate recruits being less than fifteen years of age and that recruitment of men with "families necessitous" into the regiment occurred. Furthermore, with the declining number of men able to bear arms within the colony Rhode Island may have been forced to select men from these sources to fill their quota. The soldiers who deserted and returned home saw no benefit or further need to stay in the remote Canadian wilderness so far from their homes in Rhode Island.

1761-1763: Frontier, Havana, and the Treaty of Paris

Even though operations in North America concluded in 1760 with the capitulation of Canada, Rhode Island attempted to fill its quota of men to go on the expedition to Havana, Cuba, and for a full-time frontier garrison in the newly expanded territory. In March 1761 and February 1762, the General Assembly voted to raise a force of six hundred and sixty-six men for service from the time of enlistment to no later than November of that year.²⁹² Included in the six hundred and sixty-six-man quota, sixty-four would remain at Fort Stanwix during the winter until 1 July 1762.²⁹³ Fred Anderson claimed that, "both in 1761-62 and in 1762-63, more than 1,000 New Englanders wintered, without compulsion or mutiny, in garrisons from Halifax to Oswego."²⁹⁴

²⁹¹ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony*, vol. VI, 260.

²⁹² Ibid., 273, 440.

²⁹³ Ibid., 288.

²⁹⁴ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 519.

There are two reasons that desertion and general misbehavior may have been absent from garrison duty in 1761 and 1762. The first was that perhaps the soldiers, who clearly considered themselves citizens and not merely subjects, felt compelled to volunteer to secure the new gains achieved with the defeat of France as an obligation to their king. Secondly, the British Regular forces were fighting in regions such as India, the West Indies, Ireland, and other locations far removed from North America. Therefore, the provincial soldiers were directly under the command of their elected colonial officers. While the garrison duty had minimal issues over the winter, it proved difficult to enlist the number of men requested for the 1761 campaign season. Table 12 shows the numbers of soldiers requested and the actual number raised. Rhode Island was only able to fill 59 percent of the requested number. This is not surprising; given the amount of men required for privateering and the small population of the colony, it reached financial and manpower exhaustion well before 1761.

Table 12. 1761 Requested vs. Raised Soldier Deficiency

	No. Requested	No. Raised	Winter Garrison
Rhode Island	666	395 (59%)	64
New Hampshire	534	438 (82%)	51
Massachusetts	3,220	2,637 (82%)	591
Connecticut	2,300	2,000 (87%)	323
New York	1,787	1,547 (87%)	173
New Jersey	600	554 (92%)	64

Source: Created by author from Samuel G. Arnold, *History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations: From the Settlement of the State, 1636, to the Adoption of the Federal Constitution, 1790*, vol. II (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1874), 230.

On January 4, 1762, Britain declared war against Spain. In April 1762, Amherst requested 207 men from Rhode Island for the expedition to Cuba.²⁹⁵ In June, the Assembly appointed Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Hargill, in his seventh year as a provincial officer, as the commander of the expedition detachment.²⁹⁶ The Rhode Island detachment along with the remainder of the colonial provincial forces under the overall command of General Lyman arrived in mid-June. The siege itself was a brutal period under a scorching sun and a “sickly climate.”²⁹⁷ The siege concluded in July and was successful; however, when the detachment returned by the end of November it had suffered over a 50 percent casualty rate during the siege and on the return voyage.²⁹⁸ Among the casualties were Lieutenant Asa Bowdish in his fourth year of service, Lieutenant Thomas Rose in his fifth year of service, three sergeants, five corporals, two drummers, and one hundred privates.²⁹⁹ Havana was the last large scale campaign Rhode

²⁹⁵ Arnold, *History of the State*, 235.

²⁹⁶ “A Muster Role of the First Detachment of Capt. Thomas Fry’s and Lieutenant Asa Bowdish’s Company in 1762,” lists Captain Thomas Fry, Lieutenant Thomas Rose, Lieutenant Andrew Boyd, Ensign Daniel Coggsall with eighty-two soldiers of the first company; Lieutenant Asa Bowdish and forty-two soldiers of the second company; and Ensign Beriah Hopkins with twelve soldiers of the third company. It further indicates six of the one hundred and thirty-six men, a 4% desertion rate. “A Muster Role of the First Detachment of Capt. Thomas Fry’s and Lieutenant Asa Bowdish’s Company in 1762,” Military Papers Correspondence-Accounts and Muster Rolls, Vol. 2, 1730-1765, pg. 84, Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, RI.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 237.

²⁹⁸ Arnold, *History of the State*, 241.

²⁹⁹ Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” 440; Sydney V. James stated that approximately half of the Rhode Islanders serving in Havana campaign died due to fever and in battle, Sydney V. James, *Colonial Rhode Island: A History* (New York: Charles

Island served in before the Revolutionary War. On February 10, 1763, Britain, France, and Spain signed the Treaty of Paris, officially ending the French and Indian War.³⁰⁰

Scribner's Sons, 1975), 281; For more on Rhode Island in Havana see Bruce C. MacGunnigle, *Red Coats and Yellow Fever: Rhode Island Troops at the Siege of Havana, 1762* (Providence: The Society, 1992).

³⁰⁰ For an excellent summarization of the Treaty of Paris in the greater context of the Seven Years' War see, Fred Anderson, "Peace: September 1762—April 1763" in *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754—1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 503-506 and Francis Parkman, "Chapter XXXI. 1758-1763. The Peace of Paris," *Montcalm and Wolfe: France and England in North America. Part Seventh*, vol. II (London: MacMillan and Company, 1899), 397-422.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

1760 marked the end of major land campaigns on the North American continent for Rhode Island.³⁰¹ Rhode Island had a unique experience during the French and Indian War. The colony's geographical location allowed for minimal use of the part-time militia, which served as a pool of available men to fill the regiments each year, and a full-time frontier force. During King Phillip's War men had acted independently of the Assembly's assertion to remain neutral. These men volunteered to assist the Massachusetts and Connecticut militias operating in Rhode Island for the sole reason to protect and defend their settlements. The volunteer tradition then expanded during the French and Indian War to imperial defense on the frontiers. Lacking the need for a part-time militia and a robust full-time frontier militia for colony and frontier defense, Rhode Island provided full-time provincial soldiers whose combined experiences contributed to the origins of the Continental soldier volunteer tradition of the Revolutionary War.

As early as 1638, Roger Williams and other leaders recognized the need for a militia. The train band, which Field identified as "the simplest kind of military force," evolved into an institution that mirrored the independent government that developed early

³⁰¹ Internal political strife ensued in Rhode Island beginning in 1757 and would be called the Ward-Hopkins controversy and continued to the Revolutionary War. See "The Ward-Hopkins Controversy" in James, *Colonial Rhode Island: A History*, 294-313, for the details surrounding the controversy within Rhode Island's institutional framework and the mounting frustration with imperial policies.

in Rhode Island.³⁰² Some features of the militia period from 1638 to the collapse of the Dominion of New England endured while others changed drastically. One example of militia self-governance that endured was the ability for militias to elect their officers rather than those officers being designated by the General Assembly or by Parliamentary selection of a central government as occurred during the Dominion of New England. Bounties were a measure that appeared during the French and Indian War to entice men to enlist. All of the colonies relied on bounties first before resorting to impressments.

As King Phillip's War loomed, the colony implemented numerous measures to ensure the part-time militia would be ready to defend the colony. These measures, such as fines for absenteeism during drill or failure to maintain a functioning weapon, were no doubt emplaced due to the colony's limited means of manpower and weapons. Ultimately, Rhode Island relied on the compulsory obligation of every able-bodied man with his equipment to defend the colony from threats within and out. This was especially true during King Phillip's War. Despite this requirement, Rhode Island was unable to protect the mainland settlements against raiding Indian parties, which resulted in a majority of the settlements being destroyed. Compulsory obligation in the part-time militia on the mainland failed regardless of the Assembly's actions, therefore, Rhode Island would always consider home front defense in calculations during the French and Indian War.

Full-time frontier requirements occurred again during the rule of the Dominion of New England in 1686. Parliament and Sir Edmond Andros failed to realize that self-

³⁰² Edward Field, "The Wars and the Militia," in *State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations at the End of the Century: A History*, vol. 1, ed. Edward Field (Boston: The Mason Publishing Company, 1902), 395.

governance had developed into an essential element of colonial being. Resistance to central command of a mass Dominion militia was demonstrated when Rhode Island colonial officers refused to serve. The disastrous winter campaign of 1688, in which Rhode Island militiamen participated, was a final straw for all of the colonies. When William of Orange ascended to the throne of England in 1689, Rhode Island sprang into action to reestablish its colonial charter and General Assembly.

Internal political strife between Royalists and self-government supporters following the collapse of the Dominion in late 1689 led to difficulties in the utilization of the part-time militia. However, when the stipulation to provide forty-eight men to New York for frontier defense in return for the reaffirmation of the charter presented itself, the General Assembly readily agreed. This act was the first time the General Assembly exerted control over all of the Rhode Island militias. With this militia authority, the General Assembly voted to build and garrison Fort George, raised men to serve as scouts for full-time frontier defense, implemented impressment procedures, and created the Committee of War for land and sea operations.³⁰³ The rule of the Dominion was certainly a trying time for all of the colonies. While Rhode Island would struggle with internal rivalries, the foundation for control of the militia by the General Assembly with the authority to raise and impress men was laid.

When hostilities ignited on the North American continent in 1754, Rhode Island's part-time militia was prepared. The colony's remarkable fifty-seven percent of men able to bear arms served as the roster to fill the full-time provincial Rhode Island Regiment.

³⁰³ Sydney V. James, *The Colonial Metamorphosis in Rhode Island: A Study of Institutions in Change*, ed. Sheila L. Skemp and Bruce C. Daniels (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2000), 118.

Other colonies faced difficulties in recruiting volunteers for the 1755 campaign against Crown Point and Nova Scotia; however, there is no indication in the General Assembly records that Rhode Island met major resistance when drumming up volunteers. Edward Field explained that at the onset of war men felt compelled to serve and protect the “mother country” with spirit, patriotism, and enthusiasm.³⁰⁴ Certainly, the Assembly passed acts to discourage Rhode Islanders from hindering young men’s enlistments in the regiment, but this was not pervasive. This implies that regardless of Rhode Island’s geographical distance from the disputed frontier territory the colony’s self-governance did not mean the colony acted in isolation or indifferently to the large questions of imperial defense.

In the first year of full campaign operations in 1755, it was the provincial army that thwarted a French attack at the Battle of Lake George, while the British Regular forces suffered defeat at the Monongahela. In fact, Lieutenant Colonel Edward Cole’s actions were pivotal in rescuing a large portion of men from an ambush and the regiment fought and maintained its position on the southern flanks of the army during the Battle of Lake George. The regiment also fought in two pivotal battles in the 1758 campaign season. Colonel Henry Babcock led the Rhode Island Regiment as a reserve during the attack on Fort Ticonderoga while Major Daniel Wall led a small contingent against the successful attack on Fort Frontenac. Again, in 1760, the Rhode Island Regiment was present and involved in the capitulation of Montréal.

In addition to the experience of major battles, Rhode Islanders resented the backbreaking work of building roads and forts in the frontier. The soldiers saw

³⁰⁴ Field, “The Wars and the Militia,” 428.

themselves as British citizens and as equals to the British Regular forces and more willing to serve as soldiers than as manual laborers. Through misbehavior, refusals to work, and threats of desertion, the Rhode Island provincial soldiers demonstrated their commitment to contractual service and assertion that colonials were citizens and not subjects.

The British opinion of provincial forces was low. Abercromby called the provincial army of 1756 “riff raff” and the “Lowest Dregs of the People, both officers and men” when comparing it to the professional British regulars.³⁰⁵ Certainly, the British officers failed on numerous occasions to understand the contractual obligation that colonials had come to value so much. Loudon, Abercromby, and Amherst failed to understand why provincial soldiers were prone to desert at the end of their contractual obligation or tended towards misbehavior when the terms of the contract were not filled. The British instead reverted to their superior opinions of British society in general. However, William Pitt and William Shirley as the rare exceptions understood colonial motivations and planned accordingly. While provincial success or failure was not a direct result of Pitt’s and Shirley’s initiatives, the colonial assemblies and provincial officers acted more favorably under their efforts.

Ricardo Herrera identified the continual point of contention between British Regular officer’s opinions of provincial soldiers and their propensity to desert. “Most acts of mutiny and the refusal of some soldiers to obey orders were due not so much to cowardice or to total indiscipline as to a belief in the ‘centrality of contract in popular

³⁰⁵ As quoted in Stanley M. Pargellis, *Lord Loudon in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933), 99.

understandings of the legitimate exercise of authority.’’³⁰⁶ There are numerous instances of Rhode Island provincial soldiers returning to the colony when they perceived that the campaign task had been accomplished, as is the case in 1760 following the surrender of Montréal. Provincials also returned following the failure of a campaign, such as the 1756 campaign season when Rhode Island had a 10 percent desertion rate when the regiment saw no battles and high illness rates. The Rhode Island provincials held contractual obligation in the highest regard. This right to “self-governance,” combined with military service, “converged and reinforced one another, thus making it plain the interdependence of republican citizenship and one of its most fundamental components, military service.”³⁰⁷

Although there is not conclusive data for Rhode Island due to the lack of comprehensive muster rosters, it can be assumed that a portion of the young men who enlisted came from the agriculture field identified in Massachusetts in 1756 by Fred Anderson. Therefore, desertion rates may not only be a direct correlation between provincial soldier use and treatment but also may be related to the planting season. Opposite to agricultural seasons encouraging desertion for better prospects, young men born as the second, third, fourth, and so on son may have been drawn to service in order to gain economic independence. Each is equally interesting and provides for further research.

³⁰⁶ Ricardo A. Herrera, *For Liberty and the Republic: The American Citizen as Soldier, 1775-1861* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 91.

³⁰⁷ Herrera, *For Liberty*, 111.

The involvement of provincial armies during the French and Indian War deserves further study to understand fully the volunteer tradition that has developed since the early seventeenth century. Today as large-scale combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq end and the United States is providing military forces to numerous areas across the globe while reducing its military budget; the All-Volunteer Force's effectiveness is being called into question. Debates surrounding the abolishment of the draft and the costs of continuing an all-volunteer force are prevalent in the news. Although the reduction of forces following major combat operations is a repetitive cycle, it seems there is a direct correlation between the amount of enthusiasm and patriotism individuals exhibit by volunteering with the length of the conflict and the relative success of a campaign as observed of the colonial period.

In order to complete the colonial record, further study of the enlisted men of the Rhode Island Regiment should be conducted and compared to that of Connecticut and Massachusetts. The officer corps is fairly well documented in the General Assembly records; however, the enlisted men are located on numerous and incomplete muster rolls located in numerous archives in Rhode Island. The data that does exist can be documented and through some genealogical research ages, perhaps occupations, freeman status, number of men who served more than one term, and residence, whether a citizen of Rhode Island, transient, or resident of Connecticut or Massachusetts. This data would strengthen the argument that the majority of provincial soldiers of the French and Indian War across New England were not poor, sundry, or dregs.

A second and unique area of further study is the relationship of freemen, town officials, and military positions in Rhode Island. As a small colony with limited potential

for expansion, sons aspiring to be contributing members to the community would have to achieve the status of freeman. In order to do so, as required by law, the son would have to acquire or purchase a certain amount of land. Unless the son was the first-born and expected an inheritance, any young man needed some means to gain economic independence by purchasing land. Individuals could not become town officials unless they were voted in as freemen, they could not vote on important community matters until they were freemen, they could not become freemen unless they possessed the required amount of land, and could not acquire land without money.³⁰⁸ Two options available in Rhode Island to gain economic independence readily available during the French and Indian War were as a provincial soldier and as a sailor on a privateer.

Rhode Island effectively employed the part-time militia, a full-time frontier force, and a full-time provincial force from 1755 to 1760. The soldiers of Desert Storm, Iraq, and Afghanistan are similar to the soldiers of the Rhode Island Regiment who volunteered for various reasons but firmly held onto their beliefs of contractual obligation. The citizen-soldier ideal is not the militiaman of the Revolutionary War but a mix of part-time and full-time forces and especially that of the provincial soldier in the French and Indian War.

³⁰⁸ Bruce C. MacGunnigle, *Rhode Island Freeman, 1747-1755: A Census of Registered Voters* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1977).

APPENDIX A

PAPER MONEY IN RHODE ISLAND

Paper money was an issue across all of the colonies during the French and Indian War, not just Rhode Island. Rhode Island historian William G. McLoughlin pointed out that Rhode Island held an advantage over its rival colonies with paper money between 1710 and 1750. Rhode Island's "burgeoning market economy had a serious flaw: it lacked a convenient medium of exchange. It lacked fluid capital and specie, or coinage. One solution that gave a decided advantage to Rhode Island over its rivals in Boston, New London, and Hartford, was paper money."³⁰⁹ McLoughlin further explained that the colony used credit "to guarantee the paper money that landowners received as a loan or mortgage upon their property."³¹⁰ Gradually the money depreciated because of its recirculation within Rhode Island's economic system instead of being retired from the system. Throughout this study, the term "old tenor" refers to the system described by McLoughlin. However, in 1755 a new tenor was issued by the treasury called "Crown Point" money, which was tied to the "millstone of old tenor."³¹¹ The wealthy members of the colony were "frightened" by this new tenor, so in 1756 a fiscal policy was implemented to raise taxes and issue "lawful money" bills tied directly to money

³⁰⁹ William G. McLoughlin, *Rhode Island: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton Company, 1978), 58.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 59.

³¹¹ Sydney V. James, *Colonial Rhode Island: A History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), 291.

specie.³¹² The term “new tenor” refers to the lawful money that was worth a great deal more than old tenor.

³¹² James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 291.

APPENDIX B

RHODE ISLAND OFFICER CORPS

In addition to the men that served in the militia as sergeants, corporals, privates, and drummers, the officers were equally important and well documented. Connecticut colonial historian Harold E. Selesky revealed the inner workings of officer selection in colonial New England. “The selection process generally began in the Lower House, where the deputies (most of whom were themselves militia officers) drew up lists of nominees by county in 1755—57 and by militia regiments thereafter.”³¹³ The Rhode Island General Assembly followed the same pattern as the Connecticut Assembly, each recognizing the importance of those whom they selected as those persons would be responsible for enlisting volunteers.

Selesky stated that the field officers and captains were the oldest amongst the regiment, wiser in years and therefore more mature.³¹⁴ Although the men selected were not from the more prominent civilian positions, the tables titled “Militia Officers by Expedition Year” and “Officer Sources, Promotions, and Veteran Status 1755-1762” show by year, the number of officers who held a commission or entered into service as civil servants versus those who entered with no experience prior to being appointed. In 1755, 13 men (39%) held a militia commission or served in some official civilian capacity such as justice of the peace or sheriff. This number remained relatively steady until 1760 when veterans were volunteering at a higher percentage than incoming officers

³¹³ Harold E. Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 195.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 196.

did. Except 1755, the beginning of the war and 1758, when the regiment expanded to nine companies from five during the previous year, the number of veterans exceeded the number of new members in the regiment.

Militia Officers by Expedition Year

Year	Number of Officers with Militia/Civil Commissions	Percent of New Officers	Percentage of Total Officers
1755	13	20 (61%)	39% of 33
1756	5	12 (67%)	21% of 28
1757	3	7 (33%)	14% of 21
1758	5	20 (54%)	8% of 37
1759	6	20	12% of 52
1760	None	7 (18%)	0% of 40
1761	None	7 (4%)	0% of 28
1762	None	10 (36%)	0% of 28
Total	32		10% of 268

Source: Created by author.

Officer Sources, Promotions, and Veteran Status 1755-1762

Year	Newly Appointed	Promoted	Militia or Civil Commissions	Veteran	Total
1755	20 (62%)	n/a	13(29%)	3 (9%)	33
1756	12 (43%)	5 (18%)	5 (18%)	13 (46%)	28
1757	7 (33%)	3 (14%)	3 (14%)	11 (52%)	21
1758	20 (54%)	8 (22%)	5 (14%)	13 (35%)	37
1759	20 (38%)	14 (27%)	6 (12%)	25 (48%)	52
1760	7 (18%)	9 (23%)	None	33 (83%)	40
1761	7 (25%)	11 (39%)	None	21 (75%)	28
1762	10 (36%)	10 (36%)	None	18 (64%)	28
*Some officers were veterans of the previous campaign season and held militia commissions, they are counted twice.					

Source: Created by author.

The data suggests that while the appointment of officers was a political and social endeavor, the General Assembly encouraged veterans to serve for multiple campaigns. For example, in 1755 thirteen (39%) of the appointed officers held a militia commission prior to appointment by the General Assembly while twenty men (60%) held no commission or civil office prior to their appointment. Comparatively, in 1756, five men (21%) held a militia or civil commission but thirteen veterans (46%) of the officers returned for a second campaign season. Less than half of the Rhode Island Regimental officers served for only one campaign season, while the remainder served for two or more. The table titled “Number of Years Served, 1755-1762” illustrates the percentages of years served. Giles Russel served the longest of the officers with a total of nine years’ service.

Number of Years Served, 1755-1762

Year Began	Years Served									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1755	16	8	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	34
1756	4	6		1		1				12
1757	4		4		1					9
1758	9	3	3	4	1					20
1759	10	7	4	5						20
1760	4	1	2							7
1761	3	4								7
1762	10									10
Totals	60 (48%)	29 (23%)	14 (11%)	12 (10%)	5 (4%)	2 (2%)	1 (>1%)	1 (>1%)	1 (>1%)	125

Source: Created by author.

Regardless of years served, the experiences of the men who served in the Rhode Island Regiment would lend considerable military experience to the militias of the

colony, cement the volunteer tradition for the greater good, and the citizen-soldier ideology.

APPENDIX C

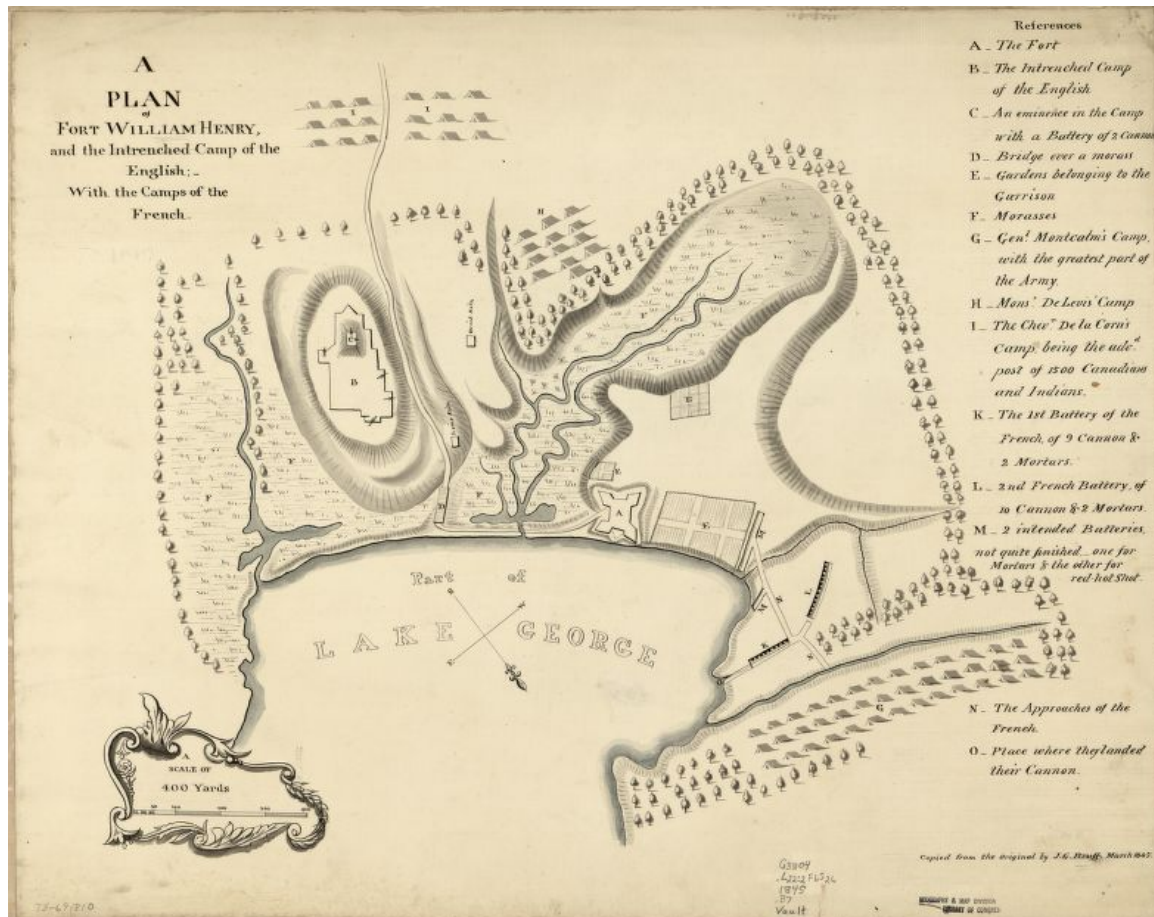
FORT EDWARD TO CROWN POINT MAP, 1755



Source: Dieskau, Jean Hermant, Baron De. [Fort Edward to Crown Point]. [?, 1755] Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, accessed May 1, 2016, <https://www.loc.gov/item/73691807>.

APPENDIX D

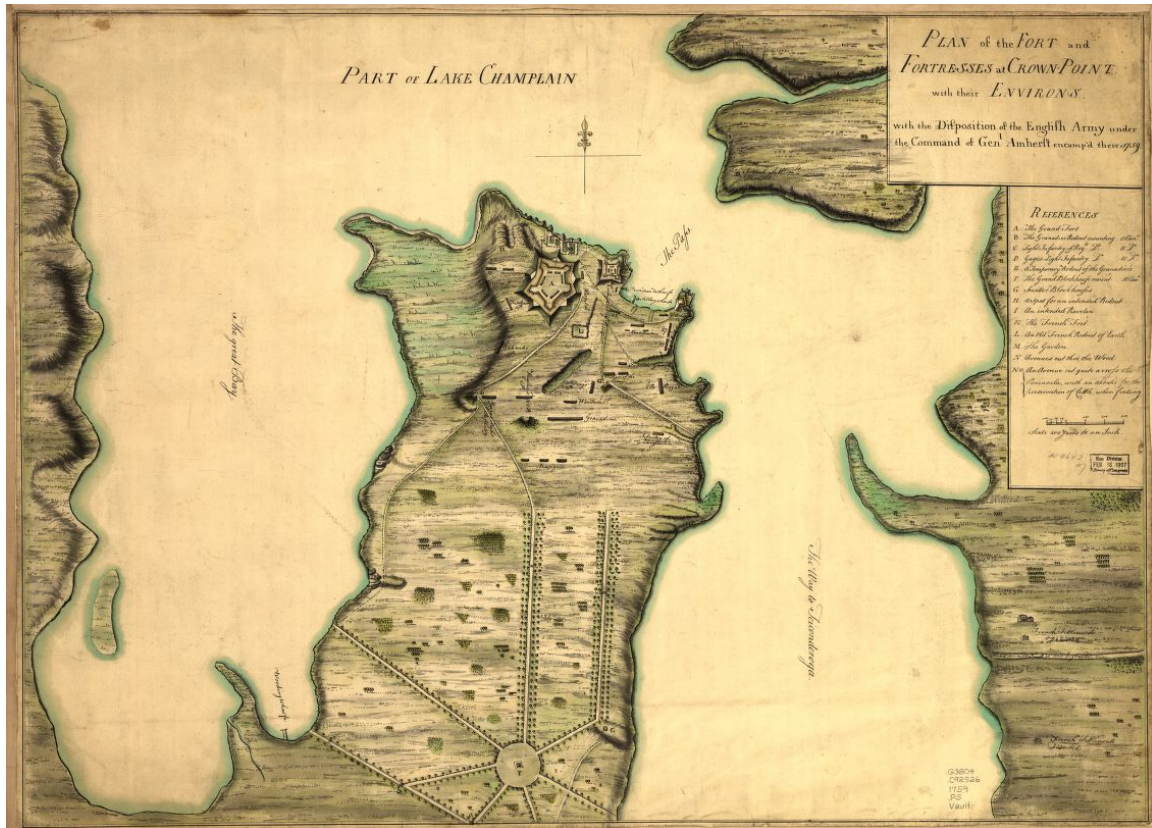
FORT WILLIAM HENRY MAP, 1845



Source: Bruff, Joesph Goldsborough. *A plan of Fort William Henry, and the intrenched camp of the English;-with the camps of the French.* [1845] Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, accessed May 1, 2016, <https://www.loc.gov/item/73691810>.

APPENDIX E

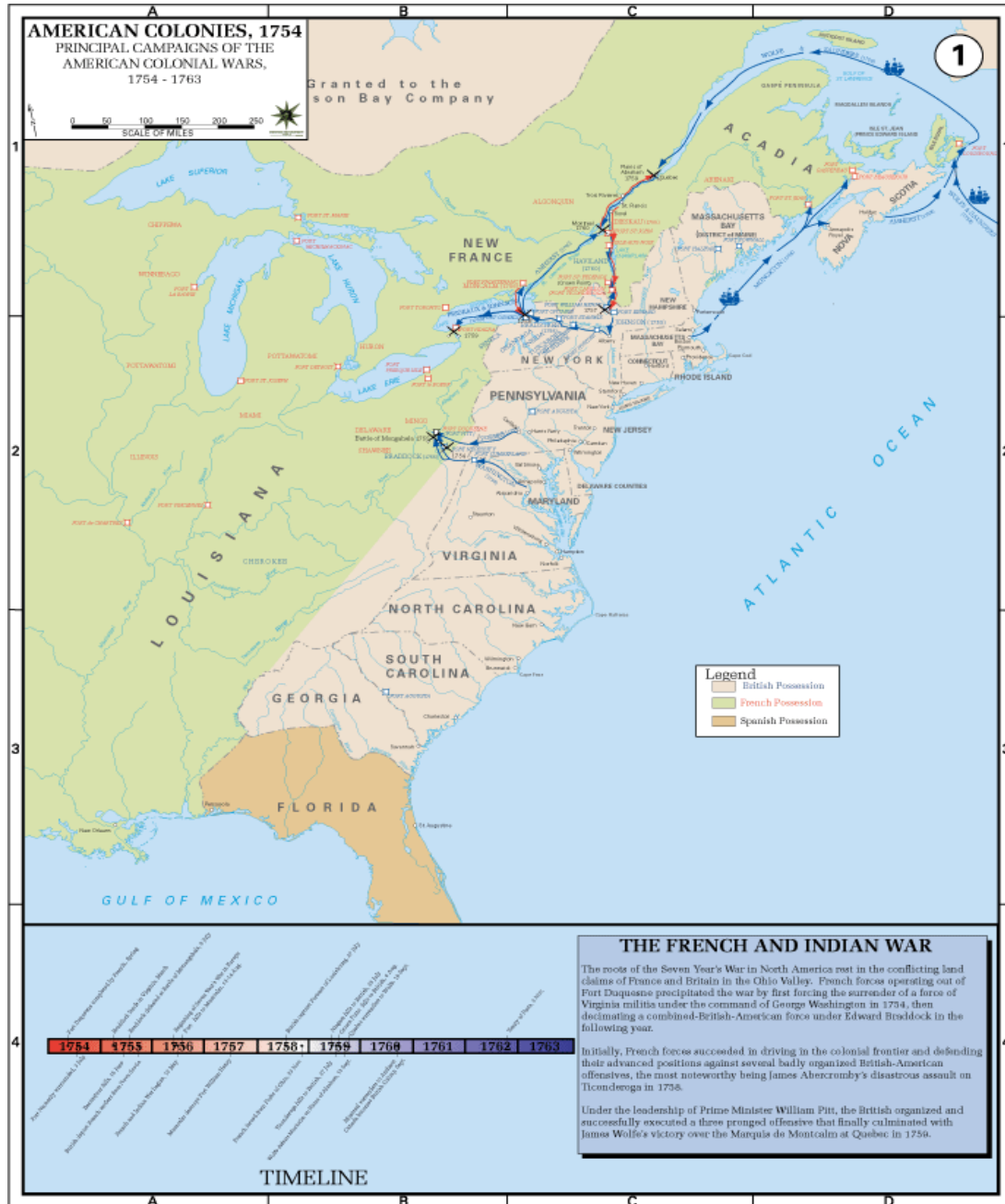
CROWN POINT MAP, 1759



Source: *Plan of the for and fortress at Crown Point with their envrions. With the disposition of the English Army under the command of Genl. Amherst encamp'd there 1759.* [?, 1759] Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, accessed May 1, 2016, <https://www.loc.gov/item/gm71002321>.

APPENDIX F

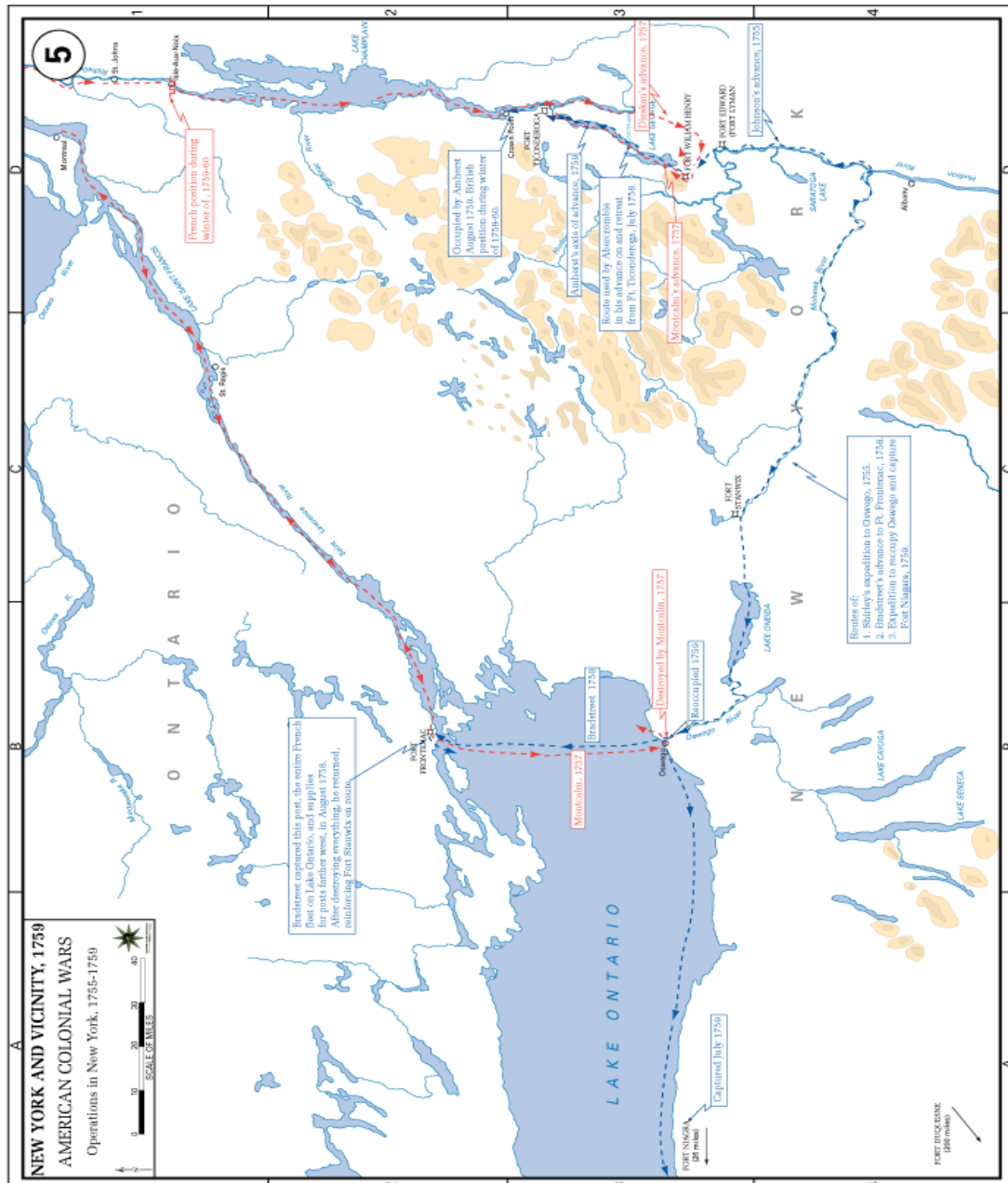
MAP OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES, 1754



Source: United States Military Academy Department of History, *American Colonies, 1754: Principal Campaigns of the American Colonial Wars, 1754-1763*, accessed May 6, 2016, <http://www.westpoint.edu/history/SitePages/American%20Colonial%20Wars.aspx>.

APPENDIX G

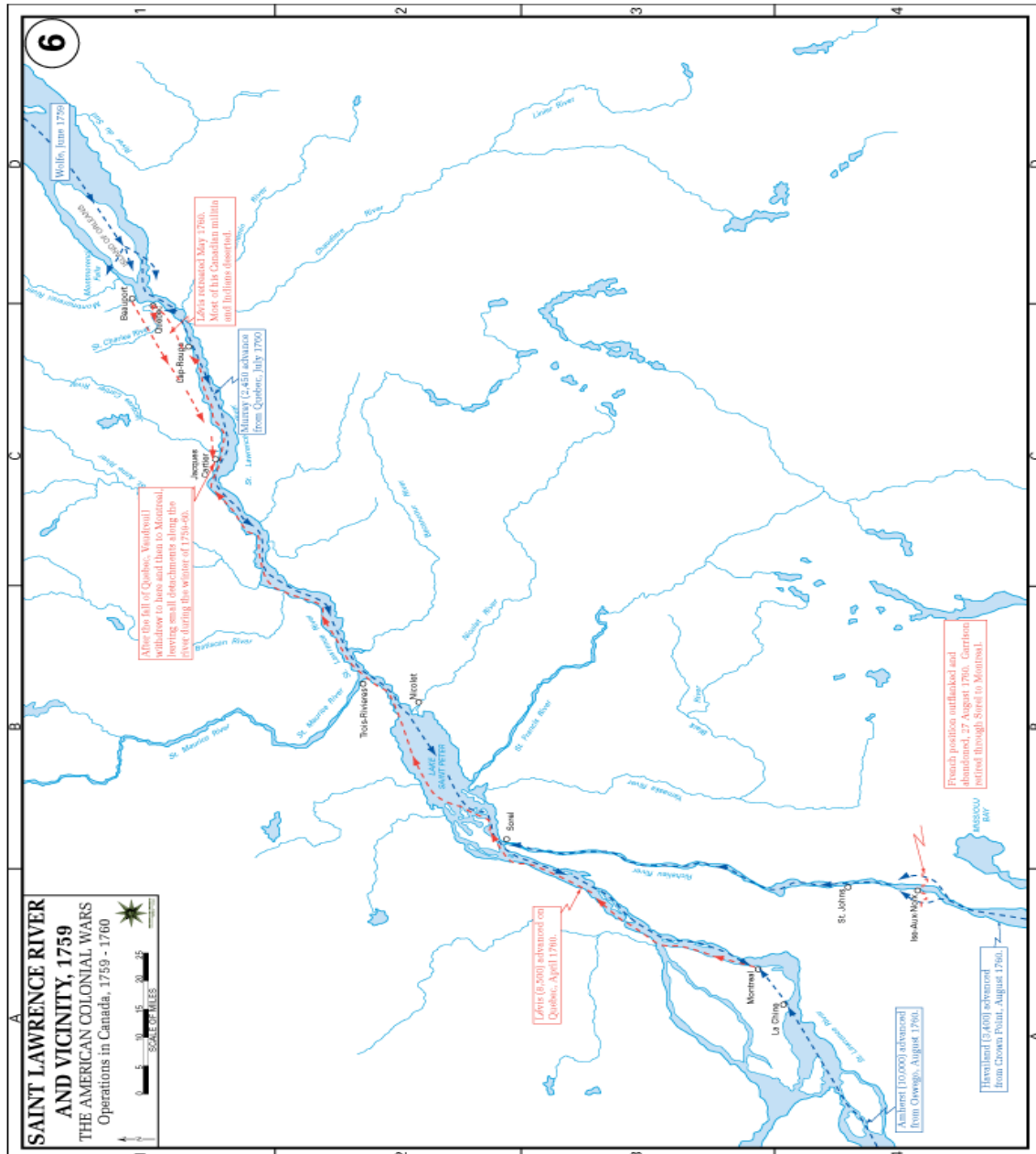
MAP OF NEW YORK AND VICINITY, 1759



Source: United States Military Academy Department of History, *New York and Vicinity, 1759: American Colonial Wars. Operations in New York, 1755-1759*, accessed May 6, 2016, <http://www.westpoint.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/American%20Colonial%20War/05NewYorkOperations.gif>.

APPENDIX H

MAP OF THE SAINT LAWRENCE RIVER AND VICINITY, 1759



Source: *Saint Lawrence River and Vicinity, 1759: The American Colonial Wars. Operations in Canada, 1759-1760*, in the United States Military Academy Department of History, accessed May 6, 2016, <http://www.westpoint.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/American%20Colonial%20War/06CanadaOperations.gif>.

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