

A group of men in 18th-century military uniforms are positioned in a wooded area. They are wearing tricorn hats and long coats. Several men are holding long-barreled rifles, with one man in the center aiming his rifle. The scene is set in a forest with trees and fallen leaves on the ground. A red flag is visible in the upper right corner.

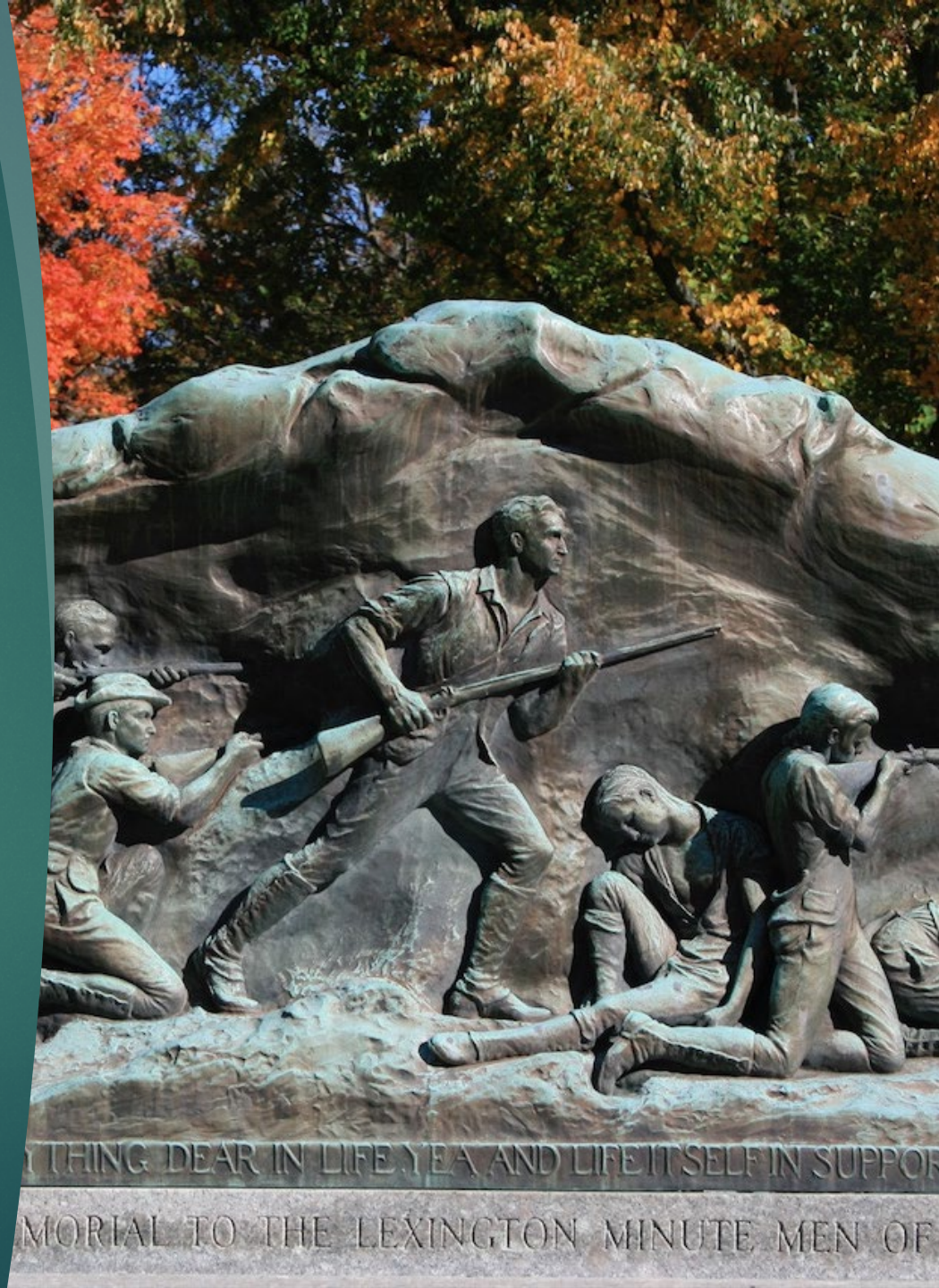
*“At Least Seventy Bullets Were Shot into the Front  
Part of the House”*

*The Voices of April 19, 1775*



# Introduction

- After the American Civil War and leading up to the Centennial, the myth of the “embattled farmer” took shape, portraying the soldiers of April 19, 1775, as independent fighters who single-handedly pursued and defeated British forces retreating to Boston.
- To downplay the Civil War’s violence, 19th- and early 20th-century historians softened the portrayal of Lexington and Concord, framing the conflict as a triumph of American heroism over English tyranny.
- The emphasis on American individualism overshadowed the collective efforts of entire communities to defend “English Liberties” and prepare for war with England.
- Similarly, key participants in the events of Lexington Concord, including loyalists, patriots of color and refugees were intentionally overlooked to maintain this simplistic approach.





# What We'll Discuss Today

- Massachusetts on the Eve of Lexington and Concord
- The Hours Before the Fight
- The Battle of Lexington
- The Civilian Evacuation
- The Battle of Concord
- Movements of War – Direct Engagement
- Movements of War – Militia and Minute Companies Closing In
- A Case of Friendly Fire
- The Role of Tory Pilots on April 19, 1775
- The Aftermath of Combat
- Questions?

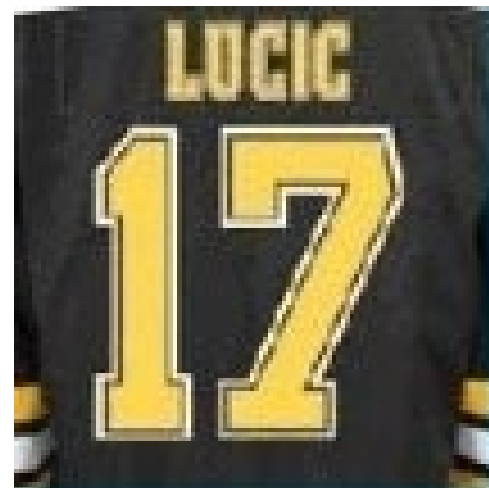




A wide-angle photograph of a beach at sunset. The sky is filled with large, dramatic clouds illuminated from below by the setting sun, creating a warm orange and yellow glow. The ocean has gentle waves rolling onto the shore. In the foreground, the wet sand of the beach is visible, with a heart shape drawn in it using dark pebbles or seaweed. A small, bright lens flare is visible in the lower center of the frame.

Inspirational Quote





You Know You're from  
Massachusetts When...

The guy driving in front of you is going  
70 mph and you're swearing at him for  
going too slow.



Before the Fight



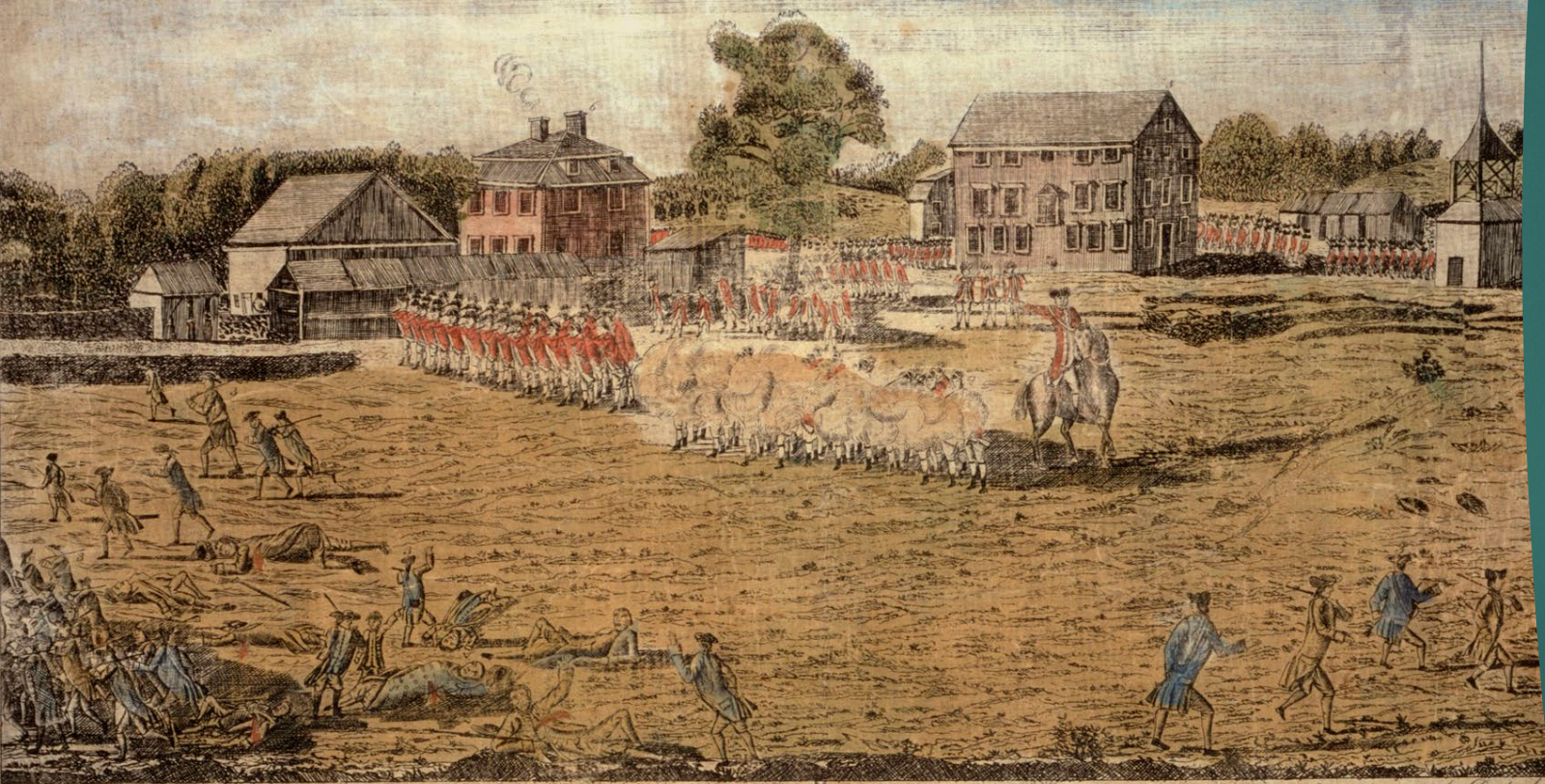
# The Lexington Common

“In the obedience to your Excellency's commands, I marched on the evening of the 18th inst. with the corps of grenadiers and light infantry for Concord, to execute your Excellency's orders with respect to destroying all ammunition, artillery, tents, &c, collected there. I think it proper to observe, that when I had got some miles on the march from Boston, I detached six light infantry companies to march with all expedition to seize the two bridges on different roads beyond Concord. On these companies' arrival at Lexington, I understand, from the report of Major Pitcairn, who was with them, and from many officers, that they found on a green close to the road a body of the country people drawn up in military order, with arms and accoutrement, and, as appeared after, loaded.” *Lieutenant Colonel Smith's report to General Gage, April 22, 1775*





*The Battle of Lexington, April 19<sup>th</sup> 1775. Plate 1.*



1. Major Pitman, at the head of the Regular Granadiers.
2. The Party, who first fired on the Provincials at Lexington.
3. Part of the Provincial Company of Lexington.

4. Regular Companies on the road to Concord.
5. The Meetinghouse at Lexington.
6. The Public Inn.

*A. Doolittle.*

# The Aftermath of Lexington and Concord





# Burying the Dead

“There was the eight men that was killed, seven of them my Father's parishioners, one from Woburn, all in Boxes made of four large boards nailed up and, after Pa had prayed, they were put into two horse carts and took into the graveyard where some of the neighbors had made a large trench, as near the woods as possible ... we waited to see them covered up with clods and then for fear the British should find them, my Father thought some of the men had best cut some pine or oak bows and spread them on their place of burial so that it looked like a heap of brush.” *Elizabeth Clarke to Lucy Allen, April 20, 1835.*



# The Civilian Evacuation of April 19, 1775





# The Origin of Flight - Lexington

- When Lexington's alarm bell began to toll between Midnight and 1AM, many residents realized that a hostile military force was marching directly towards them. With the possibility of the town being subjected to plunder and destruction, a panic set in. Many who lived along the Boston Road prepared to evacuate. Prior to fleeing their homes, some women helped their husbands, fathers and sons prepare for war.
- Anna Munroe, wife of Sergeant Munroe, started to bake bread for her husband. Later she confessed "I mixed my bread last night with tears coming, for I feared I should have no husband when the next mixing came."
- The Reverend William Gordon of Roxbury noted "the inhabitants had quitted their houses in the general area upon the road ... and thinking themselves well off in escaping with their lives."



# Continued Flight

- By midday, the Reverend Gordon would later write that the roads were clogged with “women and children weeping.”
- Lexington’s Rebekah Fiske later wrote of that day “[A] report of musketry was once more heard, and in broken and incessant volleys. It was a sound of death to us. All now was trepidation, fever, and rushing to arms; women and children bewildered and scouring across the fields. With much ado we succeeded in yoking our oxen and getting father on his bed into an ox-cart, and thus moving him off as carefully as we could to a neighbor’s house, at some distance from the highway ... The house we carried farther to, had been already vacated, and here I was left alone with him. The dreadful sound of approaching guns was still ringing in my ears. Bewildered and affrighted, I betook myself into the house-cellar there to await my fate.”







# Movements of War – Direct Engagement

*John Collins*



# The Retreat from Concord

- “As soon as the British had gained the main road, and passed a small bridge near that corner, they faced about suddenly, and fired a volley of musketry upon us. They overshot; and no one, to my knowledge, was injured by the fire. The fire was immediately returned by the Americans, and two British soldiers fell dead, at a little distance from each other, in the road, near the brook.” - *Account of Rev. Edmund Foster, Reading*
- “We proceeded to Concord by way of Lincoln meeting house... ascended the hill and pitched and refreshed ourselves a little.... we proceeded down the road and could see behind us the Regulars following. We came to Tanner Brook, at Lincoln Bridge, and concluded to scatter and make use of the trees and walls for to defend us and attack them. We pursued on flanking them... I had several good shots.” *Account of Major Loammi Baldwin, Woburn*





# The Retreat from Concord

- “We saw a wood at a distance which appeared to lie on or near the road where the enemy must pass. Many leaped over the walls and made for that wood. We arrived just in time to meet the enemy. There was on the opposite side of the road a young growth of wood, filled with Americans. The enemy were now completely between two fires, renewed and briskly kept up. They ordered out a flank guard on the left to dislodge the Americans from their posts behind the trees; but they only became better marks to be shot at.” *Account of Rev. Edmund Foster, Reading*
- “About the middle of the forenoon Captain Parker having collected part of his company, I being with them, determined to meet the regulars on their retreat from Concord. We met the regulars in the bounds of Lincoln. We fired on them and continued so to do until they met their reinforcement in Lexington.” *Account of Nathan Munroe, Lexington*



# The Retreat from Concord

“All the hills on each side of us were covered with rebels ... so that they kept the road always lined and a very hot fire on us without intermission. We at first kept our order, and returned their fire as hot as we received it; but when we arrived within a mile of Lexington, our ammunition began to fail, and the light companies were so fatigued with flanking they were scarce able to act; and a great number of wounded scarce able to get forward made a great confusion.”

– *Account of Ensign Henry De Bernier*

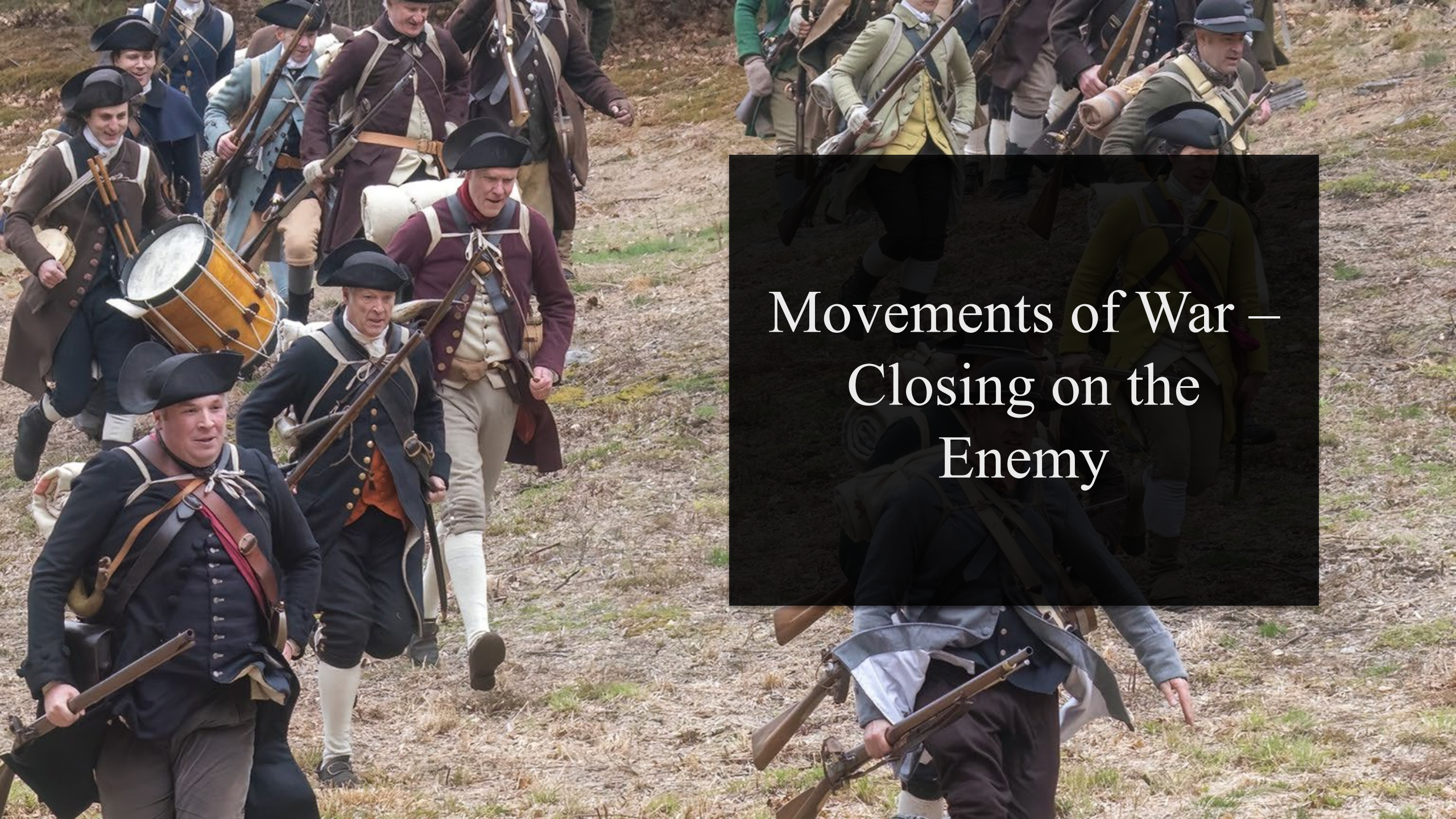




- Lieutenant John Barker of the 4th Regiment of Foot described how no quarter was given to the enemy during the Menotomy fight. “We were now obliged to force almost every house in the road, for the Rebels had taken possession of them and galled us exceedingly, but they suffer'd for their temerity for all that were found in the houses were put to death.”
- According to Lord Hugh Earl Percy “As soon as they saw us begin to retire, they pressed very much upon our rear-guard, which for that reason I relieved every now & then. In this manner we retired for 15 miles under an incessant fire all round us.”
- Lieutenant Frederick MacKenzie also made note of where the provincial attacks were coming from. “Before the Column had advanced a mile on the road, we were fired at from all quarters, but particularly from the houses on the roadside, and the Adjacent Stone walls.”

## East Lexington, The Menotomy District and Cambridge





# Movements of War — Closing on the Enemy



# Provincial Forces Closing In ...

- Andover minute man Thomas Boynton expressed frustration as his unit shifted course twice to reach the regulars. “ In Tewksbury news came that the Regulars had fired on our men in Lexington, and had killed 8. In Bilricke news came that the enemy were killing and slaying our men in Concord. Bedford we had the news that the enemy had killed 2 of our men and had retreated back; we shifted our course and persued after them as fast as possible, but all in vain; the enemy had the start 3 or 4 miles.”
- Andover’s Lieutenant Benjamin Farnum, also recalled, “April 19, 1775. This day, the Mittel men of Colonel Frye's regiment were Alarmed with the Nuse of the Troops marching from Boston to Concord, at which Nuse they marched very quick from Andover, and marched within about 5 miles of Concord, then meeting with the Nuse of their retreat for Boston again with which Nuse we turned our corse in order to catch them. We retreated that Day to Notme [Menotomy] but we could not come up with them.”



# Account of the Rev. Samuel West

“The news reached us about nine o’clock A.M. The east company in Needham met at my house as part of the Military stores were deposited with me, they there supplied themselves, and by ten o’clock all marched for the place of action with as much spirit and resolution as the most zealous friends of the cause could have wished for. We could easily trace the march of troops from the smoke which arose over them, and could hear from my house the report of the cannon and the Platoons fired by the British.”



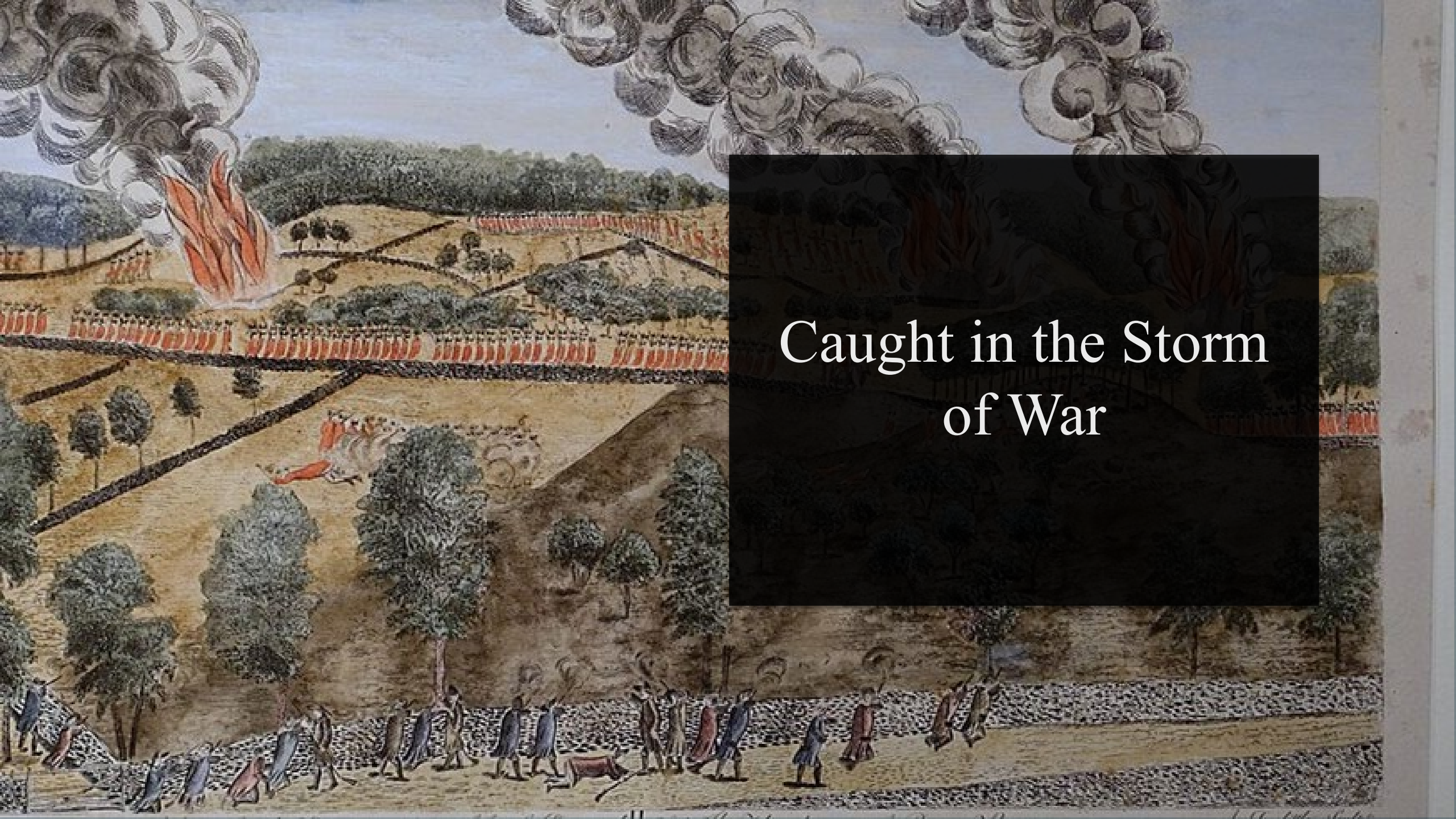




# Friendly Fire

“Hamilton & I with Captain Holmes & the Major’s Company were on the flanks driving them out of some underwood the Genadiers of the 47<sup>th</sup> Regt. Mistaking us for Yankies were absolutely on present & fire at us when Ben Fishnocked up their pieces & told them they were firing on their own men, such a scene of Confusion never was & I saw several men killed by our own people firing on them from eagerness.” *Unidentified Officer from the 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot, April 22, 1775*



A historical illustration, possibly a woodcut or engraving, depicting a battle scene. In the upper left, a large fire with bright orange flames and thick, billowing grey smoke rises from a hillside. Below the fire, a long line of soldiers in red uniforms is positioned across the middle ground. In the foreground, a group of soldiers in blue and red uniforms are walking along a path. The landscape is hilly with scattered trees. A dark, semi-transparent rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title text.

# Caught in the Storm of War



# The Account of Hannah Bradish, May 11, 1775

- Hannah Bradish was bedridden on April 19, 1775, having given birth to a child eight days earlier. Her husband, Ebenezer Bradish Jr., was a tavern keeper and part-time attorney and was with fighting the enemy on April 19, 1775. As the regulars entered Menotomy, Hannah was asleep in bed with her infant. The noise of the fighting woke her up and she quickly gathered her children and fled to the family kitchen located at the back of the house.
- According to her statement “that about five o'clock on Wednesday last, afternoon, being in her bed-chamber, with her infant child, about eight days old, she was surprised by the firing of the king's troops and our people, on their return from Concord. She being weak and unable to go out of her house, in order to secure herself and family, they all retired into the kitchen, in the back part of the house. She soon found the house surrounded with the king's troops; that upon observation made, at least seventy bullets were shot into the front part of the house; several bullets lodged in the kitchen where she was, and one passed through an easy chair she had just gone from. The door of the front part of the house was broken open; she did not see any soldiers in the house, but supposed, by the noise, they were in the front.”



# The Horrors of Combat







## Account of James Stevens of Andover

“We went to the metinghous & there we come to the distraction of the Reegerlers thay cild eight of our men & shot a Canon Ball throug the metin hous. we went a long through Lecintown & we saw severel reegerlers ded on the rod & som of our men & three or fore houses was Burnt & som hoses & hogs was cild thay plainered in every hous thay could git in to thay stove in windows & broke in tops of desks we met the men a coming back very fast we went through Notemy & got into Cambridg we stopt about eight acloke for thay say that the reegerlers was got to Chalstown on to Bunkers hil & intrenstion we stopt about two miles back from the college.”



“Dreadful were the vestiges of war on the road. I saw several dead bodies, principally British, on & near the road.

They were all naked, having been stripped, principally, by their own soldiers. They lay on their faces.

Several were killed who stopped to plunder & were suddenly surprised by our people pressing upon their rear.... The houses on the road of the march of the British, were all perforated with balls, & the windows broken. Horses, cattle & swine lay dead around. Such were the dreadful trophies of war, for about 20 miles!”

*Source: Diary of Reverend David McClure, April 20, 1775*

