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Line in the Wilderness:  
The Adaptation of European Military Theory to British North America,  
1690–1759

by

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ABSTRACT

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By

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Early British colonists in North America needed to mobilize military power. Initially, colonists used men with previous experience to train and lead small militias. When population growth demanded more trained leaders, colonists turned to books for military knowledge. Beginning in 1690, in Massachusetts, colonists printed a series of military training manuals. Colonial publishers struggled to adapt European military knowledge to American circumstances. Initially, they reprinted European works that suffered from excessive detail and poor organization. By the 1720s, colonial books were shorter and clearer but still not well adapted to the rugged American landscape. This failure to adapt continued until the 1740s, despite some improvement. During the French and Indian War, colonists finally published books that suited American conditions. The failure to adapt sooner was due to strategic advantages that allowed American colonists to win wars with inferior tactics and to colonists’ hostility to Indian warmaking techniques.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction

"Messieurs les Gardes Francaises, s'il vous plait tirez le premier."

Lieutenant Charles Hay of the British 1st Foot Guards reputedly issued the above request to a regiment of French guards just before the battle of Fontenoy in 1745. The French forces allegedly declined and invited the British to fire first instead. Whether these exchanges actually took place is less important than what they symbolize: the practice of a highly refined, even civilized type of warfare between self-identified gentlemen. While this attitude certainly did not reflect the reality of much of eighteenth-century warfare, it did reflect the eighteenth-century ideal of war correctly fought. This belief was fueled by another understanding of war gaining currency during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: that war, like most other human endeavors, was ripe for codification and regulation. As scientists and philosophers, energized by the example of newly discovered Newtonian physics, sought to master reality, to discover the rules that governed the world, the same Enlightenment spirit animated military theory in the eighteenth century. This rule-oriented thinking, combined with the material circumstances of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century war, created a particular vision of how war should be fought. And it was a crude outline of this theory of warfare that British colonists took with them to settle North America.

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1 Gentlemen of the French Guards, please fire first.
2 John Lynn, Battle, A History of Combat and Culture, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003), 114. Other accounts describe Hay as threatening to make the French swim the Scheldt river, near Fontenoy as they had previously been forced to retreat across the Main river following the earlier battle of Dettingen not far from Frankfurt. Hay was wounded in the subsequent battle.
3 Lynn, Battle, 115.
The British Empire began attempts at colonization in North America at the end of the sixteenth century. The first enduring colony was planted at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. The Puritan effort in Massachusetts followed shortly thereafter. This colonial expansion continued steadily into the eighteenth century with the establishment of Georgia as a colony in 1733. While opinions differ on exactly how quickly the colonial project resorted to military means, colonists undeniably concluded in short order that settling North America demanded the ability to employ military power. Colonists were determined to organize and collectively defend the lands they settled, as well as to engage in offensive operations to expand their territory, to attack Indians they believed imperiled their safety, and to confront Britain’s traditional European enemies in the New World. In the seventeenth century, colonists fought the First and Second Tidewater Wars (1622–1623 and 1644–1646), Bacon’s Rebellion (1675–1676) in Virginia, and King Phillip’s War in Massachusetts (1675–1676). Following these conflicts, British settlers fought the French Canadians and their native allies in a series of conflicts from King William’s War (1689–1697) to King George’s War (1739–1748). In none of these clashes did British Americans receive substantial support from the king’s forces. Not until the French and Indian War (1754–1763) did the crown dispatch large numbers of regulars to the New World to fight. Still, colonial expansion increased and settlers invaded ever-larger expanses of Indian lands, further provoking bloody conflict with native inhabitants.

Additionally, the wars that pitted France and Britain against each other in Europe almost

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7 Ibid., 104.
8 Ibid., 110.
invariably came to involve New England and New France. As any possibility of peaceful
coeexistence with native populations dissipated, and settler expansion came to mean
removal of Indians, the military character of British colonialism increased.

Until the British Army units arrived in the middle of the eighteenth century, to
fight the French and Indian War, the American colonies were responsible for their own
defense.9 Early Americans continued the English tradition of establishing a militia to
provide for the common defense.10 Organized from the citizens of individual
communities, militias faced a difficult task. Since militia members were principally
civilians who spent most of their time making their livelihoods, these men had limited
time to train for military operations. However, as the history of British American
colonies indicates, colonists needed means to marshal their resources to generate military
power. Crucial to any effectively constituted military organization is a doctrine or theory
of operation. Even the simplest tasks become complicated when the Clauswitzian
friction of war intervenes.11 Moreover, leaders of units must successfully coordinate a
variety of different temperaments and backgrounds to achieve a common purpose. While
not a guarantee of success, some type of template is essential to the process of both
training and employing armed force. Military leaders have long recognized the need to
codify military knowledge. Works attempting this codification can be as subtle and
complex as Clauswitz’s and Sun Tzu’s or as simple as manuals detailing the loading and
firing of individual weapons. However, as military problems grow more complex and
units larger, a common doctrine to control training and employment of force is more and

9 Ibid., 115.
10 James B. Whisker, The American Colonial Militia: Introduction to the American Colonial Militia v. 1
more vital. The changing nature of North American warfare, along with the expanding colonial population, demanded that British colonists learn increasingly sophisticated and complex military tactics and techniques to confront their French and Indian adversaries. This thesis examines the various military texts published in British North America from the 1690s until just prior to the American Revolution. These works illustrate how Americans attempted to prepare themselves for the rigors of war so often demanded by life in North America.

While not all immigrants to British North America during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries were of European descent, many were. As such, they came from a Western cultural heritage with an established canon of military literature. It was to this collection of works that British colonists turned for knowledge and guidance on military matters. Many historians term the period from 1500 to 1800 revolutionary both in terms of military technology and in terms of tactics. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the musket and mobile artillery supplant other weapons as dominant on the battlefield.\(^{12}\) These technical changes accompanied the strengthening of the nation-state in Europe and the beginnings of pre-professionalism in European armies. The Dutch were early innovators in codified and systematized military knowledge. John II of Nassau established a military academy, the *Kreigs und Ritterschule*, in 1617, to train future military leaders to a specific standard. Parallel efforts occurred across the continent, specifically in Germany and France.\(^{13}\) Of equal importance were the writing and publication of the first modern drill manuals, which allowed those who did not have


direct experience with modern techniques to learn and apply them. In Amsterdam, in 1607, Jacob de Gheyn published the first book to illustrate the modern manual of arms based on John of Nassau’s sketches. The wave of pre-professionalism quickly spread across Europe, as all nations sought to partake of its benefits. The Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648) provided a catalyst for the diffusion of military knowledge. While Britain did not participate in the Thirty Years’ War officially, many English and Scottish mercenaries did, thereby gaining exposure to and familiarity with new tactical methods. The English Civil War (1642–1654) gave Great Britain its initial first-hand experience with the structures and effects of new military methods. Oliver Cromwell’s ruthless building of the New Model Army advanced the spirit of pre-professionalism in British military practice, establishing a rank structure still in use today.

British colonists settled America in this atmosphere of military and technological upheaval. Settlers benefited mightily from the increased military power provided by the weapons and techniques of the military revolution. Yet most colonists were not trained soldiers and lacked military experience. Here, the different backgrounds of colonists in Virginia and Massachusetts are highlighted. While the average settler in Jamestown may not have had personal military experience, a core of individuals did who could provide leadership. Massachusetts immigrants, by contrast, were almost totally without military experience. Therefore, these settlers had to either hire those with sufficient training and experience to lead militia units or develop the knowledge themselves. At first, the

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14 Ibid., 33.
16 Townsend, The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern War, 32.
Puritan settlers of Massachusetts hired outside experts to train their militia. However, because these men were not Puritans, they were poorly received by the fervently religious colonists. After several unsuccessful attempts to draw on outside expertise, the Puritans decided to employ only their coreligionists to train the militia, regardless of military experience.\(^\text{18}\)

In both Virginia and Massachusetts, experienced military men found those charged with defending their colonies woefully deficient in military skill. John Smith described the men of the Virginia colony as “for the most part of such tender educations and experience in martial accidents” as to be of extremely limited military value.\(^\text{19}\) John Underhill, hired to train and equip the Massachusetts militia, stated that his trainees were “at best soldiers not accustomed to war” and that they were “unexpert in the use of their arms.”\(^\text{20}\) In spite of this lack of experience, however, settlers needed to form, train, and deploy military force. As the few who arrived with the necessary knowledge either died or departed the colonies, colonists were forced to undertake this responsibility on their own. British settlers did not have recourse to military academies or the institutional knowledge of permanently standing units. Colonists needed ways to acquire and sustain military knowledge and skill.

In order to meet these needs, British colonists began to publish military texts in the colonies. Most of these works were reprints, abridgements or adaptations of European works, to serve colonial purposes. The primary actors in the process were booksellers, men such as Nicholas Boone and Daniel Henchman in early eighteenth-

century Boston, and later Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia, as military printing spread south. The best evidence suggests that booksellers like Boone and Henchman actually decided how books should be abridged, and even adapted, for North American usage.

Yet, in many ways, the collection of military texts may obscure as much about actual colonial warfare as they illuminate. The circumstances of war in the colonies were markedly different from those of conflicts in Europe. Most historians characterize the seventeenth century after 1648 as well as the eighteenth century as a era of limited warfare in Europe. Sieges of fixed sites predominated over battles. Moreover, the aims pursued in European warfare were generally limited. States did not attempt to overrun their neighbors. Most wars were fought to adjust the balance of power, to modify borders or determine a dynastic succession. Furthermore, most European wars of the time were fought in the Low Countries, Spain, France, Northern Italy and Germany. Thus, when the British Army fought in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it most often fought in places of relatively dense population and easy movement. The physical geography tended to be flat and open, terrain that could easily accommodate the linear tactics of the day.

None of this was true in America. Often hating their Indian and French Catholic enemies, colonists fought to rid themselves completely of their opponents, with whom they wished to share nothing.\(^{21}\) The primary characteristics of European warfare during the period—few battles, numerous sieges, and limited aims pursued deliberately by means of long-service professional armies officered by aristocrats with the most indigent of society as common soldiers—did not characterize North American war. Instead,

British colonists primarily fought wars of raids, ambushes, and counter-raids. Participants were generally drawn from colonial militias, and they engaged to fight for one campaign season only. Officers and men lived in the same communities, and, while officers tended to be from wealthier backgrounds, the social and class distance between officers and enlisted soldiers was narrow. The physical environment was also drastically different. North Americans frequently fought on the edges of colonial settlement, in densely wooded and mountainous terrain for unlimited aims.

The challenge that military leaders, theorists, and importers of military knowledge faced in North America was to adapt the European military systems with which they were familiar to fit North America usage. One of the primary ways they addressed this challenge was by publishing European military books in the colonies. Once the colonies had grown sufficiently and knowledge based on experience no longer sufficed, military books were regularly printed in the colonies, particularly in New England. One bibliographer has estimated that military practice was the fourth most popular subject for books printed in the eighteenth century.²²

The military books published in North America during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries fell into three rough chronological periods, based primarily on the European books that served as sources and the wars that served as inspiration. The groups do overlap. The first set of books, appearing in the colonies between 1690 and 1718, were derived from works published in Britain in the seventeenth century. The next group, numerically the largest, derived from works that grew out of Britain’s experience in the War of Spanish Succession, in the first decade of the eighteenth century. Books

inspired by this conflict stayed in print, both in Britain and in North America, until the 1760s. The final period was chronologically the shortest, lasting from 1757 to 1759. Books printed during these years were the first to acknowledge actively the very different circumstances of North American warfare. Though authors still mobilized European theories of war, the most notable texts in this period were actually produced in North America. The French and Indian War inspired these books, and its influence was clearly visible.

While different in substantial ways, the military books published in New England from the 1690s to 1740 shared a few common characteristics. All were manuals that focused on training soldiers and, to a more limited extent, leaders in the rudiments of military operations. Each book was centered on the tactical skills needed for soldiers to perform as part of a company or battalion, as well as the commands needed for a company or battalion to function in battle. The central question of military manuals—and, by extension, military theory—in colonial America was how to apply a series of ideas and techniques developed for particular set of circumstances to an environment radically at odds with the world that gave rise to the original ideas. Put another way, this was the story of the transfer of knowledge from the place where it was created to a new locale. Carl von Clausewitz, perhaps the world’s most famous theorist of war, asserted that war has its own grammar, but not its own logic. 23 The military books printed in North America during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, then, attempted to transfer the grammar of northern European war to North America.

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Despite the great changes that gunpowder had brought to European warfare in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the infantry remained the cornerstone of any European fighting force. For colonists short of both the money for military spending and the time necessary to train, infantrymen were logistically less demanding and more versatile. In addition, the other arms of the seventeenth-century military were of limited utility in North America. Terrain and expense essentially eliminated the need for much artillery or cavalry and minimized the ability to construct complex fortifications. The artillery of the time was very costly and of use primarily in sieges or set piece battles against a massed enemy. Cavalry might seem of greater benefit for reconnaissance, but when most fighting occurred in wooded terrain that lacked sufficient open space for the charge, mounted units were of little use. The same applied to dedicated engineers. Infantrymen could relatively easily accomplish any light sapper work required. Digging trenches and building hasty fortifications was not technically complicated, and the complex engineering operations needed to conduct seventeenth-century sieges in the style of Vauban were simply not necessary in North America, where few fortifications then existed.

Colonists therefore typically read books focused, in large measure, on small unit tactics. Technical manuals on fortifications, logistics, and artillery did not appear in the colonies, nor did colonial booksellers print books concerned with higher-level questions, such as the art of war, prior to the Revolutionary period. Superficially, this focus on the duties of ordinary soldiers was entirely appropriate. Given that few American colonists were professional soldiers, settlers needed books that conveyed plain, simple, and easily mastered knowledge. Yet, in many ways, the books then in existence betrayed colonists.
Perhaps due to structuring and systematizing impulse of the Enlightenment, even the simplest military theory of the period was ornate and overly complicated. Moreover, once military theory moved beyond the most rudimentary level—how to use individual weapons—techniques turned elaborate, even in the most simplified texts. Moving from point to point became “marching” and, therefore, was subject to numerous rules and guidelines. Employing and controlling the firepower of a military unit—an imperative task if a unit was to fight successfully—became, in Europe, complicated to the point of near impossibility.

This profound dilemma confronted all publishers of European military books. They were forced to shorten and narrow books until these texts contained only the most basic required information. Printers and Booksellers were successful in this task to varying degrees. Simultaneously, however, another quandary faced these booksellers in their attempts to meet colonial requirements. They also needed to change more fundamental structures to accommodate North American circumstances. For example, it might be possible to simplify a book’s description of the technique for deploying the fire of a massed group of men arranged in three ranks, to make that technique easier to learn. Yet the adaptation would still be incomplete and unsatisfying if mass fighting in lines had little place in the environment where such a book was published. While, over time, many publishers tackled the first problem of adaptation—simplification—more or less successfully, solutions to the second issue—addressing the particular environment of North America—remained elusive.

The adaptations of European military books improved progressively over the course of the eighteenth century. However, for much of that period, adapted books were
poorly thought out and not useful to colonial Americans, save in conveying the most
basic types of individual training information. Only in the 1740s did books appear that
offered colonists a thoughtful, well-constructed template for military training beyond the
individual manual of arms. And, not until the middle of the French and Indian War did
books focus consciously on the circumstances and problems faced by British colonists
fighting in North America. However, even these adaptations did not escape entirely the
structures of European armies and warfare. Rather, they sought to adjust and modify
those structures enough so that both regular units and their militia counterparts could
fight more effectively.

The question then arises, if colonial military books did not adapt to provide the
means to win American wars, why did they not? To answer that question, it is necessary
to expand the focus beyond the simple question of tactics as described in infantry
manuals to the level of strategy and the military potential of the main participants in
North American warfare during the period. For most of the eighteenth century, British
colonists faced two potential enemies: Indian tribes of North America and French settlers
in Canada. And while residents of British North America might have suffered from
relative tactical weakness compared to Indians and Canadians in individual engagements,
the colonies—particularly New England, as that region was most frequently involved in
wars—possessed dramatic strategic advantages over their opponents that obviated much
of the need for tactical adaptation.

Before discussing the failures of adaptation, however, we must examine the
process. It will help us clarify that failure and its repercussions more completely. A
series of questions naturally arise. When and why did British colonists begin to publish
books on military theory and training? How successful were colonists in transforming European knowledge into forms usable by American audiences? In what ways did the process of refashioning European military knowledge change over time? Were there conditions larger than simple tactical effectiveness that had significant impacts on the evolution, or lack thereof, of American military theory? This thesis will attempt to examine all these questions and more.
Chapter 1: Reprinting
The Influence of the Seventeenth Century,
1690–1718

The early American history of books on war was essentially a history of New England and, more particularly, Massachusetts. Until nearly the middle of the eighteenth century, nearly all military books were printed in Boston. Between 1690 and 1718, five military texts were published in the British North American colonies. Four were printed in Boston, Massachusetts, while one was released in New London, Connecticut.¹ This fact parallels the general history of printing in North America. During the early colonial period, Massachusetts was the center of American printing. Why this was the case is a question more appropriate for cultural and economic historians. However, it is fair to assume that the residents of New England, and Massachusetts in particular, were more interested in reading and acquiring new knowledge than other colonists. The question still remains, why did an interest in military knowledge arise in Massachusetts at the end of the seventeenth century? Two reasons are likely: population growth and the perception of a greater threat.

While militia units had existed in Massachusetts since shortly after its founding, their training did not initially require the use of written manuals. During the period prior to King Phillip’s War in 1675, a set of circumstances existed that minimized the attention that colonial officials paid to military questions. Before King Phillip’s War, the Pequot

¹ James Scott, Duke of Monmouth, An Abridgment of the English Military Discipline Compiled by the Late Duke of Monmouth. Printed by Especial Command, for the Use of Their Majesties Forces. (Boston: Green, Samuel, 1690); Nicholas Boone, Military Discipline. The Compleat Souldier, or Expert Artillery-Man. (Boston: Nicholas Boone, 1701); Nicholas Boone, Military Discipline. The Compleat Souldier. (Boston: Bartholomew Green, 1706); Anon., The New Exercise of Firelocks and Bayonets Published by a Lover of the Art Military (New London: Green, T., 1717); Nicholas Boone, Military Discipline: The Newest Way and Method of Exercising Horse and Foot with Some Account of Field Officers, and a Description of the Arms of Horse and Foot (Boston: John Allen, 1718).
war in 1636–1637 was the last time that the New England colonies had fought a war against Indians. During that conflict, colonists applied the brutal logic of European warfare—which emphasized destroying the enemy, not simply displaying ritualistic superiority—to their struggle with the Pequots. The Pequots and the other Indian tribes of New England were unprepared for European willingness to kill, coming as they did from cultures that emphasized a more individualistic, limited, and ritualized type of war. As a result, colonists quickly subdued the Pequots.\textsuperscript{2} During the years before 1675, New England Indian tribes and British colonists also lived in ever closer proximity, with many Indians converting to Christianity.\textsuperscript{3} Puritans, confident in the "civilization" they were building, generally believed they could live in harmony with their Indian neighbors.\textsuperscript{4}

However, the events of 1675 and 1676 dramatically changed New England residents' view of their security, as well as their view of Indians. King Phillips War, which took place between 1675 and 1676, was the deadliest war in American history in terms of the percentage of the population killed.\textsuperscript{5} The Puritans' experiences at the hands of Indians, who were much more adept at fighting in a North American environment, undermined the confidence of New Englanders that they could successfully defend themselves using the methods that they had previously employed. King Phillip's War encouraged New England colonists to increase their tactical abilities, and colonists began to emulate some characteristics of Indian warfare. Colonists also began to adopt a


\textsuperscript{3} Richter, Facing East from Indian Country, 95–100.


strategy of exhaustion, defeating the Indians by destroying their crops, food and shelter. During King Phillip’s War, the pursuit of this strategy resulted in the creation of the first “ranger” unit in New England, a force composed of both colonists and Indians that employed Indian tactics against the tribes fighting the New England colonies. The experience of the war also fostered an outburst of books that attempted to both explain and chronicle the conflict.\(^6\) Clearly, the residents of New England were devoting much thought to warfare during this period. It is not surprising, then, that the first military book published in North America appeared shortly after the conclusion of this destructive clash.

Previously, militia units had generally relied on the knowledge of individuals with prior military experience.\(^7\) However, as the population increased and settlements expanded, militia units could no longer depend on the direct teaching of military skills. Moreover, given the events of the recent past, colonists were keen to create more substantial military power. Training by imported experts, as practiced by the original settlers of Massachusetts and Virginia, was no longer viable. Instead, if the governments of New England colonies were to mobilize, train, and deploy organized military forces, other means were necessary. The population of New England increased from 52,000 in 1670 to 92,000 in 1700.\(^8\) Bernard Bailyn calculated that the population of New England was doubling every twenty-seven years, forcing residents to expand their area of settlement, as well. Between 1660 and 1710, according to Bailyn, New Englanders

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\(^6\) Lepore, *The Name of War*, 50–51.
\(^7\) Leach, *Arms for Empire*, 11.
\(^8\) Taylor, *American Colonies*, 203.
established 209 new townships, an average of 4 per year. Given this rapid expansion in both population and territory, a means to codify and disseminate military knowledge more widely was required. A prefatory comment from Nicolas Boone’s 1701 *Military Discipline: The Compleat Soudlier or Expert Artillery-Man* is very illustrative. Boone described his purpose thusly:

I have set forth this small Treatise, principally aiming at the benefit of my Country, wherein I hope I shall not prove unserviceable: Books of this nature are much wanted, but much more the practice. The method of this Book will I hope be extremely pleasing; the bulk of other Books of this nature being so large, that they require much time to peruse, and money to purchase; of which two things, many persons desirous of Experience in Military Affairs, can spare neither. Though it be peace in our Land at this day, yet we ought to prepare in Peace for Times of War. Intervals of time may herein be spent by Youth, and by the help of this Book may become their own Tutors, and every private Shop become an Accademy of Arms.

The New England colonies had developed a need for military books.

The history of military books in North America began at the end of the seventeenth century, with the publication of a work entitled *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline* in Boston in 1690. As with many later military books published in the American colonies, *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline* was originally conceived for a European audience and only later adapted for publication in North America. More specifically, the colonial text titled *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline* was an all to comprehensive reprint of a British book of the same name. A pair of books titled *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline* 

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were printed in London between 1676 and 1682.\textsuperscript{11} Both of these books derived from what some historians believe was the first official service regulation written for the British Army, \textit{The English Military Discipline}, printed first in 1672.\textsuperscript{12} The authorship of the 1690 Boston edition of \textit{An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline} was attributed on the title page to James Scott, the Duke of Monmouth, an illegitimate son of Charles II of England.\textsuperscript{13} Monmouth served as de facto head of the British Army starting in the early 1670s and was named captain general of the army in 1678. During this period, he was credited with initiating a series of reforms in the army. It is unlikely that he himself authored any version of \textit{Abridgement of the English Military Discipline}, but as commander of the army, he no doubt directed those responsible for producing both British versions.

The colonial edition of Monmouth's work was produced by Samuel Green Jr. Green was a printer and publisher active in Boston from 1681 until his death in 1690 at the age of 42. Green came from a family of printers; his father and half-brothers also worked as publishers in Boston. Green was perhaps better known for his publication of religious texts. He printed fifteen titles by well-known Puritans Increase and Cotton Mather, including Increase Mather's \textit{Present State of the New English Affairs} (1689), the first work that resembled a newspaper in the colonies. During Green's tenure as a printer, only three presses were active in Massachusetts. It is therefore less surprising

\textsuperscript{11} Anon., \textit{An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline} (London: 1676, 1682).
that, despite Green’s lack of military experience, he was responsible for producing the first colonial military text.\textsuperscript{14}

The Duke of Monmouth’s *Abridgement of the English Military Discipline* was both the longest and the most comprehensive tactical manual published in North America prior to the American Revolution. However, like some of the books that followed it, the *Abridgement of the English Military Discipline* was poorly suited to the demands of the British colonists who turned to it for answers to military problems. The 1690 Boston version was a very close reprint of an original London version.\textsuperscript{15} In fact, while the title dubs the text “abridged,” Green’s abridgments were relative minor. All the major subjects included in London versions of the book are present in the Boston printing.\textsuperscript{16} As the official regulation of the British Army, the book would no doubt have seemed a most appropriate source of military knowledge from which the residents of Massachusetts and the rest of New England might have gained much useful knowledge. This was, unfortunately, not true. Samuel Green evidently had little understanding of the nature of war as it was then conducted in North America. The decisive engagement of King Phillip’s War was not a pitched battle between two armies in the open field. Rather, the colonial forces pursued their Indian adversaries into a swamp, where the colonists destroyed the Indians’ winter camp in what amounted to a large raid.\textsuperscript{17} Nor did Green have a clear understanding of the training requirements, in terms of time and resources, needed to produce individual soldiers of the type found in the British Army. Thus,


\textsuperscript{15} For purposes of comparison, I used a 1685 printing of *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline*.


instead of a dramatically narrowed book offering a few essentials useful to colonists, *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline* was comprehensive to the extent that, from a colonial perspective, its valuable information was submerged in a sea of extraneous detail.

The book's origins as a British Army regulation help explain its relative lack of utility. The title page of the text indicated that the book was "printed by Especial Command for the Use of Their Majesties Forces."\(^{18}\) While the British Army of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was not a completely professional force, it was further developed than the forces of colonial Massachusetts. British forces were organized into formal companies, battalions, and regiments that served together on a day-to-day basis. These groups were led by commissioned officers and long service non-commissioned officers (NCOs) who might have lacked explicit professional training, but who certainly had a great deal of experience both in peace and war. J. A. Houlding, in his work *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715–1795*, questioned the assumption that the British Army of the era was uniformly trained and prepared for the rigors of active campaigning.\(^{19}\) Instead, Houlding found that British Army units were relatively poorly trained and infrequently exercised at the company level or higher, an imperative if battalions were to execute the complex maneuvers and firing sequences prescribed by the tactics of the day effectively. Even so British Army units were far better trained than their American militia counterparts. At some level, British units were together everyday. Daily, British soldiers stood in formation together, marched together, and likely handled their weapons together, if only in groups of thirty to fifty. They had


\(^{19}\) Houlding, *Fit For Service*, vii.
an idea of where to stand in relation to each other, who was responsible for giving
commands, and what those commands were. Since battlefield conditions and tactics of
the day demanded units that could execute complex, sequential firing plans and
synchronized foot maneuvers by battalion, the level of skill attained by a British Army
infantryman in the course of day-to-day peacetime operations looks quite inadequate.
Yet this level of both training and “military socialization” was greater than any routinely
achieved in North America. The best estimates of historians suggest that it took
anywhere from several weeks to a number of months of training to achieve moderate
proficiency at basic tasks among new recruits in a British Army regiment. Moreover,
this only held if the recruits were integrated into an existing, trained regiment. For
regiments with a preponderance of new and inexperienced recruits it generally took two
to three years to make the unit full trained for active service. Colonial militia units
trained for no more than a few days a year. The units of the Massachusetts militia were
not professionals, not even under-trained professionals, and a manual created with a
professional force in mind was not suited to the needs of a militia that trained together
extremely infrequently.

Nevertheless, the Samuel Green’s colonial reprint of Lord Monmouth’s work
attempted to provide a detailed and comprehensive description of the tasks and training
needed to prepare foot, and to a lesser extent mounted, troops for campaign. Within this
structure, Abridgement of the English Military Discipline made assumptions
inappropriate to North America. The book was written with a battalion as the basis for

21 Houlding, Fit for Service, 258.
22 Ibid., 294–96
all training. Nearly the first ten pages of the colonial version of *English Military Discipline* were devoted to the correct positioning of the various captains, lieutenants, subalterns, sergeants, corporals, and musicians that served as the cadre and command and control system of a late-seventeenth-century British Army battalion and its subordinate companies. In contrast, at the time of the *Abridgement*’s publication in Boston, the Massachusetts militia trained most frequently at the company level, with regiments coming together for training only once every three years, and lacked the multiplicity of trained leaders described and positioned by Lord Monmouth.  

Once Lord Monmouth had an infantry battalion properly arrayed on the parade ground for exercise, he described in minute detail the exact steps and command of contemporary drill. The first section of the book, as printed for the colonies, was devoted to the training of flintlock “musketiers” and pikemen, both of which were present in the British battalion Monmouth described. This instruction revealed another general flaw in the American version of *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline*: the inclusion of outdated and obsolete information. European armies were abandoning the pike in favor of the bayonet by the end of the seventeenth century; moreover, pikes were of little use in North America. Even so, Green’s version of *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline* covered this topic in detail.

The first step in forming a battalion was for the pikemen and flintlock musketeers to interchange positions as necessary, with pikemen moving to the center of the battalion and soldiers with firearms forming on each wing. Once musketeers and pikemen were in their relative positions and the full complement of officers, non-commissioned officers,

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and musicians were properly positioned around the formation to direct and observe the
exercise, Monmouth detailed the commands necessary to train late-seventeenth-century
soldiers to perform their duties. Of primary importance was the “manual exercise,” a
complicated step-by-step process in which soldiers first aim and fire their weapons and
then go through the intricate steps required to reload. The Duke of Monmouth’s manual
exercise included twenty-five separate steps, beginning with the command to “Guard
your Muskets” and concluding with the direction to “Order your Muskets.”

After Monmouth’s musketeers had completed their manual of arms, the pikemen
received similarly detailed but less complicated instructions. The presence of pikemen
reflects the incomplete adoption of firearms and the still nascent state of bayonet
technology. Green’s inclusion of pikemen also betrayed the imperfect adaptation of
European military thinking to North America. Pikemen were trained to operate as a mass
against other masses of soldiers. While this was clearly necessary in Europe, on open
battlefields where fewer physical obstacles tended to stand between opposing forces, it
was less crucial in North America. On a European battlefield, the pike would have
served both to defend musketeers against a cavalry charge and to prevent other pikemen
from breaking up a formation of musketeers who were unable to maintain a sufficient rate
of fire to defeat an infantry charge. Massachusetts colonists, whose most recent combat
experience had been in King Phillip’s War, were in little danger of facing either of these
two possibilities. Thus, there was little demand for pikemen in their militia units.

Following the manual of arms for flintlock musketeers and pikemen, Green incorporated Monmouth's description of the manual exercise for a matchlock and pike-equipped unit. Matchlocks were an early form of smoothbore musket that were becoming increasingly obsolete by at the time Green published *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline* in 1690. They were so named because of the smoldering rope, or "match," used to ignite the gunpowder. When the trigger was pulled on a matchlock weapon, the lock fell and lowered the burning match into the priming pan. This ignited the priming powder, which in turn ignited the gunpowder in the barrel, sending the ball down the barrel of the weapon. Clearly, the presence of what was, essentially, a perpetually burning fuse near gunpowder was not the best technology. In contrast, a flintlock weapon substituted a piece of flint for the burning match. When the trigger of a flintlock weapon was pulled, the hammer fell and a piece of flint struck a piece of steel, creating a spark that ignited the priming powder and caused the gunpowder in the barrel to explode. Dramatizing the importance of soldiers highly trained in the intricate handling of their weapons in unison, Monmouth devoted a great deal of discussion to the manual of arms. After listing the commands required for the manual exercise for flintlock, matchlock, and pike, Monmouth spent twenty-five pages of the book, all of which were reprinted in the colonial version, describing each individual movement in the manual exercise. He began with such fundamentals as "In Exercise of both Pike and Musket the Feet are to be at a moderate distance; for if they are too wide asunder, or too near together, it weakens." This seems self-evident, and most of the

commands in Monmouth are similarly direct and detailed. The series of commands
directing an infantryman to point his weapon at a target, “Present,” was described as
follows:

    Fall back with your Right foot, so that the left heel be against [that is forward of] the
    middle of it, raising the Butt-end of your musket to your shoulder; that is, between
    your breast and your right Shoulder, which locks it fast; but little of the But-end to
    appear above the shoulder, your right elbow not at all, or very little higher than your
    Piece, having your fingers ready to pull the trigger, you must bend your Left Knee,
    and keep the right very stiff, your Piece must be leveled breast high and no higher.\footnote{29}

Clearly, Monmouth thought that the manual of arms required meticulous attention. Nor
was this level of detail restricted to those armed with muskets. The command for
pikemen to “charge” their pikes, which Green also included in its entirety, was equally
specific:

    Fall back with your right Leg so that the Heel of your left Foot may be directly
    against the middle of your right Foot. Bring down your Pike extreme quick with a
    jerk, as if you were to strike one with it, and Charge Breast high, your left elbow
    under your Pike to support it, yielding your body forwards, and bending your left
    Knee that you may stand the firmer and with more ease, always observing to hold the
    Butt-end of you Pike in the Palm of your hand, and your left Toe pointing directly
    with the Spear of your Pike, your Feet at a convenient distance neither too far asunder
    nor too near that you may stand strong.

    Of all things you must look that your Feet are set right or else you can never
    handle your Arms as you ought. ‘Tis to be observed in charging your Pike to bring it
down at some distance from one anothers Breast so to prevent Clattering, and to close
it to your Breast after it is Charged.\footnote{30}

The above commands show the level of precision and discipline required to perform
seemingly solitary military maneuvers. However, these individual steps also had to be
coordinated across a much larger group, a more difficult and time-intensive training task.
The pike “charge” command emphasized that soldiers, when manipulating their weapons,

\footnote{29} Ibid., 25.
\footnote{30} Ibid., 35–36.
must always be vigilant of those doing the same around them. Implicitly, the same concerns extended to musketeers.

After this detailed description of the manual exercise for pikemen and musketeers, Green included Monmouth’s rendering of the “Exercise of Pike and Musket together.”31 The purpose of this section was to train both groups to use their weapons simultaneously. The exercise began when the musketeers received the command “Musketeers make ready.” On that command, the musketeers followed their manual of arms until they were ready to point and fire. At that moment, the pikemen joined the exercise and made their weapons ready for use. Once both pikemen and musketeers were ready to level and employ their weapons, both groups were commanded to “Charge.” On “charge,” musketeers and pikemen brought their weapons level to the ground, ready to fire or strike, respectively. This sequence was repeated as the formation was commanded to face right, left, and about, and to charge after each facing. The soldiers were again commanded, when they charged and pointed their weapons, to avoid interfering with those to their left and right. None of the commands was complicated or difficult; once each soldier knew the individual steps required of him, the challenge was to synchronize them, first as musketeers or pikemen, and then as a battalion. The challenge was magnified at the battalion level, because both groups were executing separate steps and, yet, these steps must be performed so both the musketeers and pikemen were ready to engage at the same moment.

The skills described in the various manual of arms sections were essential for any soldier, regular or militia member, if he was to function as any part of an effective

31 Ibid., 47.
military unit. While these individual skills were the building blocks for more complex collective tasks, they were neither easy nor quick to learn. In light of the relative complexity and variety of skills required, it is useful to remember that British Army recruits spent significant amounts of time learning these tasks. The information focused on individual skills was without a doubt the part of the book that would have proved most helpful to American colonists. Given that they were armed with flintlock muskets, it was imperative that each colonial soldier know how to operate that weapon. Yet, to gain that knowledge, the reader was also compelled to read elaborate instructions on employing pikes. This pattern of useful information surrounded by extraneous or obsolete material persisted throughout Green’s printing of the book.

As previously indicated, one of the first tasks any soldier had to master before being able to function effectively on the battlefield was the use of his individual weapon. The colonial reprint of An Abridgment of the English Military Discipline devoted considerable attention to that question. Yet, while the text detailing the movements was clear to a point, the methods described were intricate and complex. The explanations offered were such that someone trying to teach others these movements would need to study the descriptions closely beforehand, especially if new to the task. Simplicity was particularly important if training time was limited and an already trained cadre was not available. Both these conditions applied to colonial militia units. Perhaps another disadvantage was the inability and unwillingness of colonists to resort to the more extreme corporal punishment methods of discipline practiced by British regular forces or

32 Ibid., 1-51.
33 Houlding, Fit for Service, 258.
to employ the death penalty freely.\textsuperscript{34} While this moral compunction may speak highly of the colonists' values, it likely diminished the effectiveness of their military forces. An Abridgment of the English Military Discipline was perhaps the best alternative available to meet the needs of Massachusetts colonists when Samuel Green printed it. However, as colonists became more familiar with military training and sought books to facilitate it, they looked for more simple solutions.

At the end of the section on training pikemen and musketeers together, Green included an interesting note from Monmouth on how best to train soldiers. Monmouth declared that:

The easiest and readiest way to teach Soldiers the use of their Arms, that they may do it exactly to the Drum, is to give every File-leader the word of Command in writing of that part of the Exercise, viz. The posture of the Pike and Musket only, That every File-Leader may instruct his File so as to do it exactly to the Drum.\textsuperscript{35}

While this seems reasonable and not particularly noteworthy, it had two significant implications. First, literate NCOs and junior officers were required to supervise each file if they were to make any use of a written list of commands. Moreover, those serving as file-leaders not only had be able to read but also should know the exercise they were teaching before instructing it. Monmouth's aside reinforced the importance of a trained and educated cadre.\textsuperscript{36} Moreover, it highlights the failure of the Green reprint. New

\textsuperscript{34} Fred Anderson, A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 125.

\textsuperscript{35} Scott, An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline, 51.

\textsuperscript{36} By the American Revolution, British Army NCOs were expected to be literate due to the clerical functions involved with their duties. See Sylvia Frey, The British Soldier in America: A Social History of Military Life in the Revolutionary Period (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 69.
Englanders faced severe disadvantages in training for war, however; literacy was high in the colonies. A better, more useable manual had the potential to greatly aid training.

Green’s reprint next moved on to Monmouth’s “Exercise of the Granadiers.” During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, each infantry battalion customarily had one company of grenadiers. Grenadiers were the elite shock troops of the battalion. An early eighteenth-century dictionary of military terms described grenadiers as:

Soldiers arm’d with a good Sword, a Hatchet, a Fire-lock slung, and a pouch full of Hand Granadoes. Every Battalion of Foot, of late Years, has generally a company of Granadeers belonging to it, or else four or five Granadeers belong to each Company of the Battalion, and upon occasion form a Company of themselves. There are Horse and Foot Granadeers, and they have often been found very serviceable.

The dictionary further reported that there were also mounted “Horse Grenadiers,” who followed the same exercise as other grenadiers. The inclusion of detailed information on grenadiers is another example of the failure of Green to modify An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline for North America.

The core of the exercise for grenadiers described by Monmouth differed little from the instructions he previously prescribed for firelock-equipped musketeers. Both followed the same manual of arms for employing their firelocks. There were some significant differences in equipment. Monmouth’s grenadiers were armed with a plug bayonet that he called a “dagger,” as well as a hatchet. Yet plug bayonets were already obsolete in 1690. Just as An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline was printed in North America, European armies were replacing plug bayonets with socket ones that did

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38 Anon. *A Military and Sea Dictionary explaining all difficult terms in martial discipline, fortification, and gunnery, and all terms of navigation to which is added, the new exercise of firelocks and bayonets*, 18th ed. (London: J. Morphew, 1711), GOR–GRA page (this work does not include page numbers).
not block the muzzle of the weapon. Monmouth’s musketeers lacked any edged weapons and had to depend on the pikemen for close-in defense. The inclusion of a hatchet also suggests that Monmouth envisioned grenadiers acting as sappers, ready to breach any hastily constructed obstacles they might encounter. However, the fundamental difference between grenadiers and other musket-equipped soldiers was that the grenadiers were trained to use handheld explosives, or grenades, and to lead assaults. The manual exercise that Monmouth prescribed for grenadiers reaffirmed their offensive purpose. While Monmouth’s musketeers were trained to fire while advancing, their role in the close fight would perforce be a limited one. Given the slow rate of fire for even the most advanced muskets of the day, once the distance between enemy forces closed sufficiently, edged weapons, rather than firearms, were decisive, and Monmouth did not mention any edged weapon as part of the musketeers’ kit. The grenadier manual of arms in An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline was an attempt to work around these tactical and technological hurdles. Grenadiers were trained to load and fire their muskets in the same manner as musketeers, but, once they had fired, they inserted plug bayonets in the muzzle of their weapons and advanced to throw grenades. Grenadiers threw by rank, with each subsequent rank advancing in front of the rank that had just thrown, ready to deliver their grenades. Once all ranks had thrown their grenades, they were to be prepared to “fall on,” or assault with their hatchets drawn.39

The procedures for the grenadier are an excellent example of tactics and techniques that, while well suited to northern Europe, were much less appropriate to the conditions generally faced in North America. Trained and equipped to fire a musket,

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39 Scott, _An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline_, 51–60.
throw a grenade, and then assault with bayonet and hatchet, the grenadier was best prepared for fighting in and around fortifications or in a town at close quarters, where a salvo of grenades might tell. The average soldier would throw a grenade between twenty-five and forty yards. Thus, if a company of grenadiers had advanced close enough to throw their grenades, they could easily close the distance to any opponent quickly; moreover, the shock effect of grenades exploding would give them marked advantage. Additionally, grenadiers had a numerical superiority in edged weapons. These weapons would offer additional benefits in siege operations. Armed with grenades, bayonets, and hatchets, grenadiers would have been particularly effective when combined with sappers. Their hatchets would have aided in breaching minor obstacles, while at close range and in the confined spaces of trenches, grenades should have proved effective. However, grenades were much less useful in wooded terrain and against dispersed opponents. Throwing grenades in a forest could be a dangerous proposition; there was a good chance, if the thrower was not careful, that the grenade would hit a tree and land closer to friendly forces then to the enemy. Furthermore, if the enemy was dispersed, a volley of grenades was less likely to do significant damage. The inclusion of instructions for training grenadiers in an American manual at the end of the seventeenth century was a prime example of the thoughtless reprinting of European ideas in North American texts. Grenadiers were specialists, requiring extra training and equipment. Massachusetts colonists in the late seventeenth century had little need for such specialized knowledge, particularly when the resulting tactics were not effective in the colonial environment.
A look at a later book, Humphrey Bland’s 1727 *Treatise on Military Discipline*, supports this view of the general unsuitability of the tactical function of grenadiers to North America. Bland’s text included a grenadier manual of arms that differed little from the one included in Monmouth’s *Abridgement of the English Military Discipline*. However, in a later chapter titled “Duty of the Troops at a Siege,” Bland described the proper way to conduct an assault. He mandated multiple echelons of grenadiers for the assault. In Bland’s description, once a breach was opened in a fortification, a sergeant and twelve to sixteen grenadiers would conduct the initial penetration. A lieutenant and thirty to forty grenadiers followed, reinforced by an eighty- to one-hundred-man company of grenadiers. Finally, a major with a detachment of two hundred grenadiers was behind the company, with all remaining grenadiers in the besieging force prepared to support the assault. Bland based his book on his experiences fighting in Flanders in the first years of the eighteenth century, not long after the American publication of *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline* in Boston. Assaults on fortified positions of the type Bland described were rare in North America, and troops specially trained in their execution much less necessary.

Following the section on grenadiers, Green’s reprint returned to the question of matchlock muskets, presenting the individual manual exercise for musketeers armed with matchlock weapons. The Boston printer further betrayed his ignorance of the state of military technology in North America by including this information on matchlock weapons. By 1646, Plymouth colony required that towns maintain flintlock weapons for their defense, and most historians agree that flintlock weapons were standard by King

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40 Humphrey Bland, *A Treatise on Military Discipline: in which is laid down and explained the duty of the officer and soldier, thro’ the several branches of the service* (London: Printed for S. Buckley, 1727), 256–77.
Phillip’s War in 1675. Moreover, the experience of King Phillip’s War caused Plymouth colony officials to ban matchlock muskets. While the matchlock section was brief and similar in many ways to the flintlock drill, it was completely unnecessary and further evidence of the utter lack of adaptation of An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline.  

Green’s colonial version of Monmouth’s English Military Discipline included other specialized training for troops unlikely to be of much use in colonial America. Green incorporated a brief section on “the Exercise of Horse,” wherein Monmouth stated that “The Exercise of Horse consisting of fewer words of Command than that of Foot is more generally known; and there is little alteration to be made from former Practice.” Monmouth’s few specifics for cavalry training included instructions that troopers have their pistols and carbines loaded. Additionally, cavalry troops and squadrons must practice marching, wheeling as a unit, and turning about to both the right and the left. Monmouth also gave one piece of tactical advice, suggesting that “when a Squadron of Horse is to Charge another, it is better they should do it with their Swords in their Hands, then either with Pistols or Carabines.”

Green included Monmouth’s directions for the exercise of mounted grenadiers. The mounted grenadier exercise was generally consistent with that specified for regular grenadiers. The main difference was that mounted grenadiers were trained to dismount, secure, and move beyond their horses prior to employing their grenades. Mounted grenadiers were also trained to perform the mounted maneuvers required of cavalry units

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41 Scott, An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline, 60–70.
42 Ibid., 124.
43 Ibid., 126.
and to master the use of their pistols, muskets, and swords on horseback.\textsuperscript{44} Monmouth’s mounted grenadiers were the most specialized and (theoretically) highly trained soldiers of the period. To succeed, they had to master the use of four weapons, including grenades. Furthermore, they were expected to march like infantrymen and ride like cavalry troopers. Yet, apart from all the weaponry and training required, it is hard to imagine where the commander of a seventeenth-century Massachusetts militia unit would employ the full range of mounted grenadier capabilities—assuming for an instant that a collection of such soldiers was available.

Following descriptions of cavalry training, Green’s edition moved on to Monmouth’s marching drill. This section described how to control and maneuver infantry battalions or regiments.\textsuperscript{45} Monmouth introduced the topic under the heading “For drawing up a Battalion, and placing the Officers for parade to Receive the King or any Prince of the Blood, or General.”\textsuperscript{46} While effective drill at the battalion level was essential for European armies of the period, it is unlikely that the Massachusetts militia

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 126–36.
\textsuperscript{45} Proper unit designations and sizes are a challenge for any history of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Part of the military revolution was the development and acceptance of the regimental system. The oldest regiments in service in the British Army dated from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The modern reader will likely assume that a regiment is a unit consisting of two or more battalions. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that was not universally the case. According to the 1759 edition of The Gentleman’s Compleat Military Dictionary, “a battalion is a Body of Foot, generally 700 exclusive of Officers and Serjeants, armed with Firelocks, Swords & Bayonets, divided into thirteen Companies, one of which is Grenadiers. The first Regiment of English Guards has four Battalions; the second Regiment, that of Scots Guards, and the Royal Scots, have two Battalions; the rest have but one Battalion each.” The reader should also be aware that guard regiments rarely left Great Britain. Many units of the day were called regiments but generally consisted of one battalion. For all explanations of tactical movements in this work, readers should understand battalions and regiments to be the same size, and, if required to explain maneuver above the battalion level, I will designate those units as brigades. Anon., The Gentleman’s Compleat Military Dictionary Containing the Military Art, Explaining the Terms and Phrases Used in the Field and Garrison. With a Plan of Fortification. (Boston: Green & Russell, 1759), BAT–BAT page.

\textsuperscript{46} Scott, An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline 70.
would have received any of the august individuals listed by Monmouth and incorporated by Green in his colonial edition.\textsuperscript{47}

Monmouth began by describing the proper positioning of officers, as well as how and when to salute when receiving a dignitary.\textsuperscript{48} Though these details were not of utmost importance, this section of Monmouth’s work also discussed both marching and the correct distance between ranks and files in a company or battalion formation. Regardless of training time and skill level, any military unit would, perforce, have had to master these skills, if its leaders were to employ contemporary European military tactics and techniques. Monmouth stated that the first requirement, if a battalion was to march effectively, was to ensure proper spacing. Ranks and files were separated by various distances, depending on the task at hand. Monmouth specified three distances between ranks: “Order,” “Close order,” and “Open order.” At “Order,” ranks were three feet apart. For “Close Order,” soldiers stood one and a half feet distant, and, when at “Open Order,” ranks were separated by six feet. In rare circumstances, Monmouth directed that ranks move to double distance, or twelve feet apart. The spacing between files was also variable but was generally at close order, for files six inches apart. Monmouth specified this distance between files when a unit was to fire.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 70.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 1–51.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 84, 96.
Fig. 1: ranks consisted of a line of men standing next to each other in formation, while files referred to those in line one behind the other

Along with the proper spacing of ranks and files, Green printed Monmouth’s instructions on how soldiers should turn left, right, and about in both directions. These movements were generally included in the various manual exercise sequences that Monmouth laid out for soldiers depending on their personal weapon. In addition to these elements of individual drill, Monmouth offered instruction on marching and how to turn, or “wheel,” a unit. Interspersed within his discussion of other movements, Monmouth detailed various types of “doubling,” a procedure by which units either increased or narrowed the front they occupied, generally in transitioning from movement formations to fighting ones. Given the tactics of the day, it was imperative that units be proficient at these maneuvers. Yet, despite the importance of mastering these functions, Green’s printing made it difficult to quickly and clearly understand how to execute and train these tasks. The reader was forced to peruse extended sections to locate basic techniques. Some of these rudimentary drill maneuvers, in all likelihood, were useful to colonial Americans. Yet the American edition of An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline buried the useful information in a great deal of extraneous detail—detail that would have mystified most American readers.
Green’s incorporation of Monmouth’s directions on how best to pass a large unit through a defile is a perfect example. Monmouth explained that, when passing through a narrow, restricted opening, it was best to do so by rank, not file. Therefore, when the soldiers reached the other side, they could quickly reform a rank and, thus, be ready to confront the enemy should he present himself.\textsuperscript{50} This was undoubtedly good advice, and defiles were certainly a legitimate tactical problem, but, given the limited time and resources available to train Massachusetts militia units, few colonial officers would have seen the advantage of practicing this technique.

One of the further complications of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century infantry tactics was that administrative units, such as regiments and companies, did not always operate as such tactically. A resulting challenge in training an infantry battalion for combat was that its subordinate units, companies, were often merged into “divisions” for marching and fighting. The twelve to sixteen companies of the battalion would form generally into three divisions, or occasionally six subdivisions. This might have made sense tactically, as it was much easier for a commander to visualize and control the movements of three to six sub-elements than twelve to sixteen. However, shifting from an administrative organization to a tactical one demanded training and coordination. It is somewhat surprising that these complex tactics persisted so long in the British Army. Green’s edition of Monmouth spoke of organizing an infantry battalion into three or more divisions, and the practice continued to appear in manuals published up to and during the American Revolution.\textsuperscript{51} As Houlding made clear in \textit{Fit for Service}, the British Army was rarely able to train at a level higher than the company. Yet, from the 1690s until at least

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 90.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 77. and United States Inspector General’s (USIG)Office, \textit{Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops}, (Hartford, CN: Hudson and Goodwin, 1782), 37.
the 1780s, the British Army advocated tactics that demanded forming and, therefore, training multi-company units within an infantry battalion. As Houlding noted, this did not make for an army that was prepared to fight continental battles without additional training.\footnote{Houlding, \textit{Fit For Service}, 282–283.} Since American militia units were effectively limited to adopting and adapting British Army tactics, they faced a similar challenge with less time and fewer resources.

As his manual was intended to be a comprehensive text on the training of and, to some extent, the tactical use of soldiers, Monmouth included instruction on how an infantry battalion should employ its fire. He described the techniques for firing to the front, to the rear, and to either flank, as well as while retreating and advancing. In addition to these techniques, Monmouth also provided detailed instructions on firing down a street when facing oncoming cavalry, firing man-by-man down a rank of soldiers as a demonstration, and how to form and fire from a square.\footnote{Scott, \textit{An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline}, 104–12.} Strangely, Green reprinted all of these instructions in his colonial edition. The more basic of these techniques were essential, the next logical step in training an infantry unit once the basics of the manual of arms and marching drill were mastered. However, other techniques were clearly better suited to different landscapes and more highly trained units. The British Army fighting in Flanders or southern Germany had to be prepared to face charging cavalry and, therefore, must be adept at blocking a charge with pikes while musketeers destroyed the enemy by fire. The Massachusetts militia faced no such circumstances. And, while a square would prove an effective deterrent to both infantry and cavalry in open terrain, in
broken wooded country, the same formation would be difficult to form and provide an inviting target to anyone fighting from cover.\textsuperscript{54}

The latter sections of \textit{An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline} further illustrate Green’s effort at comprehensiveness. Monmouth provided extensive instructions on the training of dragoons, mounted soldiers who generally dismounted to fight, all of which Green reprinted. Like mounted grenadiers, dragoons had to learn both mounted and dismounted skills. Dragoons were likely more useful than mounted grenadiers in the American context. As mounted troops, they offered greater mobility than regular infantry; and, armed with muskets and trained to fight dismounted, they could perform the same tasks as musketeers. In fact, the British Army employed two such regiments in the colonies during the American Revolution.\textsuperscript{55} Yet the problem of overspecialization again arose. Like all other mounted soldiers, dragoons required additional equipment and training, a challenge in colonial circumstances.

Once he had reprinted Monmouth’s regulations for training most of the components of an army, Green incorporated Monmouth’s detailed instructions on the comportment of such an army in the field. Here again, the Duke’s European background was evident. Monmouth provided a plan for encamping a large army. He specified that an advance party should conduct a reconnaissance of the proposed site, which was then divided by the quartermaster general, with locations reserved for the brigades of the

\textsuperscript{54} As an aside, on several occasions, Monmouth directs that units soldiers “be accustomed to fire at Marks” (p. 136) implying that marksmanship training should be included in any comprehensive training program. While a minor note, it is interesting, given the inaccuracy of eighteenth-century weapons and the oft-expressed assumption that such inaccuracy meant that soldiers were trained to point but not to attempt to aim their weapons.

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{A List of the General and Staff Officers and the Officers in the several Regiments serving in North America, Under the Command of His Excellency General Sir William Howe, K.B.} (New York: Macdonald & Cameron, 1777), 6–7.
army. The adjutants of the brigades then split their sectors into regimental areas. At the same time, space was allocated to the artillery park and for both logistical and medical trains. Monmouth also recommended that infantry units be positioned in the center of the encampment, while mounted units should be located on the flanks. At the battalion or regiment level, Monmouth suggested the proper spacing between the huts for the soldiers and the space required for rows of huts. He noted that greater space was required for a mounted squadron than an infantry battalion, owing to the need to accommodate horses. Monmouth did not restrict his advice to administratively positioning units; he incorporated tactical advice as well. He suggested that the camp have a river or some other major terrain feature between it and the suspected enemy location. He further advised that a detachment conduct a reconnaissance of the surrounding terrain and the distance to the enemy.\textsuperscript{56}

Green also included Monmouth’s limited advice focused on the conduct of battles. Monmouth stated at the beginning of his section titled “Orders for Battel” that “there can be no certain rules for any Order of Battel, which depends chiefly upon the circumstances of place.” However, he did offer brief instruction on how to employ or lead a single battalion.\textsuperscript{57} Monmouth’s foremost piece of advice was that the spacing between soldiers remain relatively constant. As previously noted, this was roughly three feet between ranks and six inches between files. Additionally, Monmouth considered the spacing between battalions crucial. He exhorted:

You must command them to March very slowly, to observe the Right in marching, and to preserve the Intervals, which are always to be fifty or sixty paces at least, and (if the Ground will afford it) more; that fifty or sixty of a Battalion may pass through

\textsuperscript{56} Scott, \textit{An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline}, 142–48.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 148–49.
them with ease, nothing having ever proved prejudicial in Battel, than the having intervals too strait.\textsuperscript{58}

He went on to discuss the correct posting of officers around the formation. Both the colonel and the lieutenant colonel, as well as multiple captains, were stationed at the head of the pikes. The pikemen were located in the center, with divisions of musketeers on both flanks led by captains. Monmouth vigorously emphasized that, when advancing, the unit must move slowly and deliberately, allowing the soldiers to maintain their linear formation. He further underscored that the divisions must stay even with each other and resist the temptation for the muskets on the flanks to advance ahead of the pikemen, thereby “form[ing] a half Moon, so that the pikes in the middle being extremely pressed upon, the Battalion falls into confusion.”\textsuperscript{59} Finally, Monmouth noted that “When an Army is drawn up for Battel, the usual distance between the Lines is three hundred paces.”

On the face of it, these instructions were not particularly noteworthy and extremely cursory. However, like much of the rest of An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline, they betrayed a set of assumptions suited to European conditions and of little use in North America. Except in rare circumstances, when fighting other European forces, British colonists did not fight pitched battles between opposing lines. Moreover, Monmouth envisioned a battlefield with considerable open space. In his mind, a battalion had room to array at least eight or ten companies in three divisions with ranks three deep. Moreover, he mandated fifty-to sixty-pace intervals to both the right and the left of the battalion, to accommodate other units. The pace of marching and the

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 149.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 149.
necessity of staying in line also demanded open terrain. The officers of the
Massachusetts militia were certainly interested in how best to use their formations to
fight. However, their circumstances were so different from that of northern Europe that
these battlefield instructions must have been only marginally useful. Absent multiple
battalion formations and open terrain, Green’s inclusion of Monmouth’s tactical advice
was not particularly appropriate.

Most of An Abridgment of the English Military Discipline focused on instructions
for training and field use. However, toward the end of the reprint, Green included several
of Monmouth’s sections on matters outside of the narrow arena of training and tactics.
Monmouth discussed at length the various roles and duties in a garrison, ranging from the
responsibilities of the governor and the officers assigned to assist him to the duties of
soldiers posted to guard the gates. While discussing garrison operations, Monmouth
alluded to the large variety of logistical functions generally present in an English
garrison, listing a commissary of artillery, ammunition magazine, and stores of staples
such as corn and flour. Included in this section was a description of the proper procedure
for mounting and changing guards around a garrison, with a list of the necessary
commands. Green also reprinted Monmouth’s “General Directions,” which included
directives that officers wear their full uniform when on duty and that officers be
responsible for the cleanliness and appearance of their soldiers, in addition to inspecting
soldiers weapons for functionality and upkeep. Commanders must ensure that pikemen
were trained as musketeers and musketeers as pikemen. Monmouth also detailed how to
determine who should command detachments and outposts by means date of commission

60 Ibid., 153–63.
or seniority of the officers' respective regiments. These were valuable bits of information for a regular army. However, *An Abridgement* did not present them in an easy, usable way, nor was much of this knowledge practical for colonial militias. These sections again reveal the absence of adaptation of Monmouth's text when Green reprinted it for colonial use.

The final few pages of the book reproduced by Green were dedicated to the topic of "Counsels of War, or Courts Martial." These pages offer another indication of both Monmouth's comprehensiveness and the limited utility that the Boston edition of his work had for American readers. In this section, Monmouth discussed military trials, as the modern reader understands courts martial, and military conferences to discuss tactical and strategic questions or problems related to the administration of a military garrison. For trials, Monmouth specified that the accused be made aware of the charges against him and offered the chance to present a defense. For both trials and more general discussions, Monmouth described how to arrive at a decision, with the most junior officer generally directed to give his opinion first. Monmouth further elaborated on the mechanics of courts martial, stating that decisions were made by the plurality of officers, that a minimum of seven officers was required, and that, if sufficient captains were lacking, junior officers were acceptable.\(^{61}\) Clearly, three pages was not sufficient space in which to provide a complete discussion of military justice, as well as a description of how to exploit the collective knowledge of a group of officers to make decisions. However, Monmouth offered a useful summary of some of the more salient points for regular units likely to face these problems. In the absence of a conflict, however, a

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\(^{61}\) Ibid., 165–67.
Massachusetts militia captain had his company for only four days a year, presenting scant opportunity to conduct courts martial.

Monmouth’s *English Military Discipline* was an attempt to distill and transfer the lessons of the military revolution of gunpowder and discipline from experience into communicable knowledge. Like many books, Green’s edition of *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline* was aimed at teaching the reader practical skills. Yet, the skills Monmouth sought to convey were suited to a particular time and place. All those who sought to edit/ reprint formal military manuals for the British colonists in North America confronted a similar problem, that is, how to adapt tactics and training intended for professionals in Europe to amateurs in North America. Given that Green’s reprint of Monmouth was the first military manual published in Boston, it is not surprising that it was mainly reprinted for a North American audience. The exhaustive nature of the American edition of the Duke of Monmouth’s *English Military Discipline* suggests that American printers and audiences were uncertain as to what exactly they needed in a military manual for the conditions of North America. Vital knowledge, such as the rudiments of drill and marching, were spread throughout the work, while points of considerably less utility for North Americans, such as how to receive dignitaries, were given prominent placement. Perhaps betraying an ambition that later proved unattainable, Green’s edition also included training outlines for a variety of very specialized troops, troops whose areas of expertise did not conform easily to the conditions present in Massachusetts at the time of the text’s publication. So, despite a myriad of practical instructions—manual of arms, basic drill commands, and simple means for the controlling the fire of units—Green’s reprint of Monmouth would not have
been of tremendous help to colonists. In contrast to books published shortly after An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline, Monmouth’s work had only one North American printing. Yet for all its faults, Green’s reproduction of Monmouth’s book was both inevitable and necessary. Samuel Green did not understand Massachusetts residents exact needs in a manual for military training in 1690. He knew some kind of informational source was required, and Monmouth presented the best possible option.

Whether British colonists in North America acknowledged it at the time or not, they were pursuing two primary goals in drawing upon military texts. First, they needed to reduce the complexity of European drill and tactical procedures into terms simple enough that the resulting template could quickly and easily be taught to part-time soldiers. Second, less obvious, and less successfully accomplished over time, they needed to develop, out of European modes of fighting, a tactical system more adapted to the particular geographic, cultural, and social circumstances of North America. Samuel Green’s printing of the Duke of Monmouth’s work failed to address successfully either of these two concerns, but it began the process.

Following Green’s publication of Monmouth’s Abridgement, Nicholas Boone of Boston published a book titled Military Discipline, the Compleat Souldier, or the Expert Artillery-Man. Boone was a prominent bookseller in Boston at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The first edition of Boone’s text appeared eleven years after Monmouth’s work, in 1701. Shortly after the end of King William’s War in 1697 and just before the outbreak of Queen Anne’s War in 1702. Subsequent editions were released in 1706 and 1718, with the last edition bearing the slightly different title Military

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Discipline: The Newest Way and Method of Exercising Horse and Foot." In his books, Boone undertook essentially the same project as Green: he attempted to provide a written manual that would allow for the rational and systematic training of soldiers. However, his text was in far more compact and useful form than his Boston predecessor's was.

Boone drew inspiration from two texts published in the middle of the seventeenth century. Military Discipline was loosely derived from Richard Elton's The Compleat Body of the Art Military, first printed in London in 1650, with subsequent editions printed in 1659 and 1668, and William Barriffe's Militarie Discipline or the Young Artilleryman, first published in London 1635 and reprinted until 1661. In looking to Barriffe and Elton for inspiration, Boone chose works that, when he wrote, were no longer current. Both books were prominent mid-seventeenth century texts but had lost favor in England after the early 1670s, likely due to the publication of official service regulations.

However, both Barriffe and Elton began their military careers in England as participants in militia units, and each maintained a close association with militia officials throughout their lives. It was likely this aspect of Barriffe's and Elton's books that attracted Boone. In their works, Barriffe and Elton included basic knowledge that Monmouth's An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline, and Green's reprint of it, omitted.

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63 Nicholas Boone, Military Discipline, The Compleat Souldier or Expert Artillery-Man (Boston: Nicholas Boone, 1701); Nicholas Boone, Military Discipline, The Compleat Souldier or Expert Artillery-Man (Boston: Nicholas Boone, 1706); and Nicholas Boone, Military Discipline: the Newest Way and Method of Exercising Horse and Foot (Boston: John Allen, 1718).


65 Roberts, "Richard Elton."
In the preface of the 1701 edition of *Military Discipline*, Boone acknowledged both Elton and Barriffe as sources, and, throughout his text, Boone borrowed specific sentences from Elton particularly. Yet, in the end, though derivative, Boone’s books were new texts and not simply reprints of other works. However, at least for the first two versions of *Military Discipline*, study, not experience, was the basis for Boone’s knowledge. Boone’s only military experience occurred in 1707, when he was commissioned a bombardier in the Massachusetts militia and participated in an expedition against Port Royal, Nova Scotia, during Queen Anne’s War.66 Both Elton and Barriffe wrote long books, 192 pages and 257 pages respectively. In contrast Boone first edition was 68 pages with the second slightly longer at 85. Elton and Barriffe also produced detailed texts that aimed to explain virtually the whole of contemporary infantry training. Both included a dizzying array of ways in which foot units could march, countermarch, double, and fire. By their very nature, both *The Compleat Body of the Art Military* and *Militarie Discipline* were meant for reading and study, not quick reference. Boone’s intent was exactly the opposite.

Boone made his goal explicit in an introduction to the reader in the 1701 edition of his work, explaining that the purpose of *Military Discipline* was to allow “youth . . . to become their own tutors, and every private Shop become an Accademy of Arms.”67 To achieve this purpose, Boone declared that the primary task for soldiers was to master their individual arms:

The first Rudiments of Education wherewithal a young Souldier ought to be conversant in, is first to learn the right use of his Arms, that which nothing can make a man more compleat, nor fit him to bear the name of a Souldier; neither can a man

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whatever attain the least part of the Art Military (which concernth Foot Souldiers) without the Handling and Managing of his arms.\textsuperscript{68}

To justify his emphasis on individual skill and training, Boone, in typical eighteenth-century fashion, looked to the ancients to support his position, quoting Vegetius’s injunction that:

\begin{quote}
It is not the length of life or number of Years that teacheth the Art of War, but continual discipline, and Exercise of Arms: Let a Souldier Serve never so many years, so long as he is Unexercised, he shall still be a raw Souldier.\textsuperscript{69}
\end{quote}

In his first edition, Boone also declared his book necessary because colonists must prepare for war in times of peace.\textsuperscript{70} In the 1706 edition, however, more immediate, particularly American concerns intruded, and Boone offered the “eminent danger [that] threatens this and Neighboring Provinces, both by French and Indian Enemies” as proof of the need for and utility of his text.\textsuperscript{71} These varied rationales betrayed the tensions at work in American adaptations of European military thinking and tactics. The knowledge being transferred to the American colonies was European thinking, and the need for such knowledge was initially justified by reference to the authority of the ancients. Yet Boone recognized different colonial circumstances at once. The work was not written “for the use of their Majesties forces,” but instead to allow private citizens who, implicitly, might undertake militia service to study and master combat on their own, in the privacy of their places of business.\textsuperscript{72} Moreover, the enemies to be confronted were primarily Indians.

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 5.
\textsuperscript{71} Nicholas Boone, \textit{Military Discipline}, (1706), iii.
\textsuperscript{72} Scott, \textit{An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline}, i.
unique to North America, and the environment of such a conflict would likely diverge greatly from that of Great Britain or northern Europe.

The opening of *Military Discipline* offers additional evidence of the profoundly different conditions that North Americans faced and with which Boone grappled in ways that Samuel Green’s reprint of Monmouth did not. In contrast to Green’s work, which began with an infantry battalion fully formed on the parade field waiting to be exercised by fully trained and literate cadre of officers and NCOs, Boone’s first specific training direction was how a soldier should stand. He opened the 1701 edition of *Military Discipline* with a chapter titled “Posture.” Boone’s work, particularly in its first and third editions, was a spare and concise text that taught basic skills. It lacked some of the elaborate battalion-level maneuvers and the discussion of topics unrelated to training included in Green’s reprint of Monmouth. The book’s focus was clear and simple: to provide the minimum instruction necessary for the untrained to acquire the rudimentary skills needed to function as an infantryman. While Boone did include, in the second and third editions of *Military Discipline*, brief descriptions of mounted exercises, these were clearly not his primary concern.

This goal of simplicity and ease of use extended beyond the topics Boone analyzed. The structure in three editions of his book was much clearer than Green’s rendering of Monmouth. Boone presented short, specific chapter titles that allowed his reader to quickly and easily refer to particular spots in the book. The 1701 edition positioned the list of chapter subjects at the end of the descriptions of the exercise and drill, while the subsequent editions located the chapter listings at the beginning, as traditional tables of contents. Chapters were generally consistent across all three editions.
The 1701 edition contained an introduction followed by chapters on “Posture,” “the Exercise of the Musket,” “the Exercise of the Granadiers,” “the Souldiers place of Dignity,” “the Drum,” “the Several Distances,” “Facings,” “Entire Doublings to the Front,” “Divisional Doublings,” “Entire doublings to the Front by Wheeling,” “A divisional doubling to the Front by Wheeling,” “Files Ranking, or Files Filing,” “Countermarches,” “Wheelings,” “Firings,” “The Several duties belonging to a Foot Company,” “Military Watches,” and “The ordering of a private Company on a Funeral Occasion.” The 1706 edition contained essentially the same information but simplified some of the chapter titles. This edition condensed the multiple headings dealing with marching into two chapters, “the general Words of Command for the Evolutions” and “The exercise of a Private Company, viz. in their Distances, Facings, Doublings Countermarches and Wheelings.” Additionally, Boone added chapters on “The exercise of a Troop of Horse,” “Directions for Salutes,” and, most surprisingly, “The Duke of Monmouth’s Exercise of the Musket.” While the 1718 edition covered similar material, Boone renamed his chapters. He listed them as “the exercise of the firelock,” “the exercise of the Horse,” “Exercise of the Foot,” “Firings,” “Exercise of a Battalion,” “the Ordering of a Company on a Funeral Occasion,” “Field Officers,” “Arms of Foot,” and “Arms of Horse.” Moreover, the portion of each book focused on military training questions was roughly half that of Green’s version of Abridgement, 85 pages versus 167. These mundane details help confirm Boone’s characteristic simplification of both ideas and presentation from more extended European works that were targeted at regular

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73 Boone, Military Discipline (1701), 67–68.
74 Boone, Military Discipline (1706), i.
75 Boone, Military Discipline (1718), i.
soldiers and that sought to deal with military training and operations in a comprehensive way.

While the majority of military manuals published in North America during the colonial period were published privately, the creation and projection of armed force was naturally the concern of government. The militia officers and soldiers most likely to read and use these books served in units that were established by their respective colonial governments. Boone’s *Military Discipline* provided concrete evidence of this symbiotic relationship. After he described the exercises necessary to train soldiers, in the first and second editions, Boone included summaries of Massachusetts militia acts. In effect, *Military Discipline* attempted to provide within one book both the technical and tactical knowledge required to serve as a soldier in Massachusetts and the legal requirements of that service. Additionally, *Military Discipline* demonstrated the colonists’ understanding of the technical progress made since the publication of *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline*; Boone’s book offered flintlock musket training only. In contrast, neither Elton nor Barriffe discussed flintlock weapons, an omission emblematic of the modifications that Boone made to his book. The manual of arms with which Elton and Barriffe began their books dealt with matchlock muskets, and pikes were an integral part of all their formations. Moreover, significant changes had also taken place from the 1690 reprint of Monmouth’s text. Monmouth’s pike and musket combination included by Green did not appear anywhere in Boone’s *Military Discipline*.

In all versions of *Military Discipline*, Boone clearly sought to write in ways that were easier for common soldiers to understand and use. He wrote explicitly in 1701 that

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his work is “intended only as a Pocket book for young soildiers.” Beginning with the basics of “posture,” Boone moved quickly to a discussion of musket exercise. As with all eighteenth-century manuals of arms, Boone’s was a detailed and complex set of instructions. Among the three editions, the musket manual of arms varied from twenty-seven to thirty-nine steps. The sequence of actions in all three was materially the same, but the first two editions included several additional commands that were eliminated in the 1718 version of the book, thus allowing a significant decrease in the length.

Regardless, the goal was the same: to allow an individual soldier to load and fire his musket quickly and effectively and then take the necessary steps needed to repeat the process. Boone also generally avoided the discussion of elite soldiers and specialized training featured so prominently in Green’s edition of Monmouth. The 1701 Military Discipline contained an exercise for grenadiers, which Boone prefaced by saying that “a great part of the Exercise of the Granadiers is the same with that of the musketiers.” He then described a grenadier exercise noteworthy for two reasons. First, similar to Monmouth’s, Boone’s grenadiers employed a plug bayonet that Boone also called a dagger, and, second, nowhere in the exercise did Boone mention the use of grenades. This omission is startling and suggestive of the eventual transformation of specialized troops from grenadiers into light infantry by the French and Indian War. Boone included mounted drill in both the 1706 and 1718 versions of Military Discipline, but these sections were clearly secondary to his discussions of infantry training. Further, the military laws then in force reveal that Massachusetts authorized a limited number of

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78 Boone, Military Discipline (1701), 27.
80 Boone, Military Discipline (1701), 17.
cavalry troops. Given the central role of cavalry in European armies of the day, it is not surprising that both the legislators of Massachusetts and Nicholas Boone believed mounted troops to be essential. However, grenadiers and mounted grenadiers were much easier to forgo.

Once Boone explained the manual of arms, he proceeded to the fundamentals of marching drill required for soldiers to execute the linear tactics of the period. Boone began his discussion of drill at the most rudimentary level. In the 1701 Military Discipline, in the chapter titled “The Souldiers place of dignity,” Boone continued his habit of invoking high authority to justify mundane actions. He averred that all soldiers are “inquisitive after Honour” and, therefore, that Greek and Roman generals sought to reward the brave and give those so designated “precedence of place and command over the others, that they might lead and direct them as occasion shall require . . . .” After claiming such high purpose and authority, Boone explained that files were generally four men deep, though some composed of six men then existed in towns in the province. Boone further specified that, in a file, men stand one behind the other, while a rank was a row of men aligned from left to right. Boone was exact in delineating which positions in the file were most honorable—the first soldier was in the position of honor because he was the leader and the one who faced the enemy first, while the last position was next in precedence because that soldier was at the rear and, thus, unprotected. The man third from the front was next in precedence, while the man behind the file leader was last. However, Boone hastened to say that, when the two rear ranks were moved into line alongside the front ranks, the man in what had been the least desirable position then had

81 Ibid., 71–75.
82 Ibid., 21.
83 Ibid., 21.
the honor of defending the rear of the formation. Once the most basic arrangements of western infantry drill were explained, Boone asserted the responsibilities that these soldiers possessed for one another: “So by this Geometrical Proportion, the whole body is equivalent in skill & worth, and as it were (and indeed ought to be) seconds the one to the other, so long as life endureth.”84 These rhetorical flourishes, modeled on passages in Barriffe, were unique to the first edition of Military Discipline; both the 1706 edition and the 1718 edition began with the soldiers formed into companies and battalions.85 Still, the 1701 version was striking for Boone’s inclusion of an explanation of files and ranks.

In his first edition, Boone then moved on to a discussion of the proper intervals between files and ranks, depending on circumstances. Like Green’s edition of Monmouth, Boone specified distance for “Close Order,” “Order,” “Open Order,” and “Double Distance.” At “Close Order,” both files and ranks were one and a half feet distant. At “Order,” the separation increased to three feet, while “Open Order” was six feet, and double distance was twice “Open Order.”86 These specifications were listed in both the 1701 and the 1706 editions of Military Discipline. By the 1718 edition, however, Boone no longer included such explicit instructions. All three versions of Military Discipline contained detailed descriptions of the most basic types of knowledge. Boone also remarked on the various types of drum commands used in eighteenth-century tactics. He listed the six primary commands for field use as: a Call, a Troop, a March, a Preparative, a Battell, and a Retreat, and a Tato and a Revally to direct watches or the life of a garrison.87 In addition to directions on posture, definitions of files and ranks, and

84 Ibid., 22.
85 Barriffe, Militarie Discipline, 6–7
86 Boone, Military Discipline (1701), 26.
87 Ibid., 23–25; and Boone, Military Discipline (1706), 83–85.
lists of drum commands, in the first two versions of the book Boone defined a facing movement and specified what occurred when soldiers faced from one direction to another: “Facing is a particular turning of the Aspect from one part to another, whereby the Front proper becomes the Front accidental; and a Front accidental may be reduced to his proper Front.”\(^{88}\) Boone borrowed this sentence verbatim from Barriffe.\(^{89}\)

Many of Boone’s instructions may seem, to the modern reader, barely intelligible or needlessly simple. Nonetheless, all these details further confirm Boone’s conviction that even the smallest particulars had to be explained. Many of these detailed instructions were derived from sections of Barriffe and Elton. Contrastingly, Green’s printing of Monmouth’s service regulation omitted more basic details of this type. The need for simple information probably explains Boone’s reliance on older, theoretically outdated sources. The inclusion of these instructions also suggests that both readers and militia units of the period were ignorant of many of the basics of military training and that the more technically advanced books published in Europe needed significant simplification for the American market.

Boone focused on simple, directive pieces of knowledge. Detailed delineations of basic movements were provided not only for facings and linear alignments, but also for doubling files and ranks, essential to shift formations and to thin and extend a line for firing. All three books were structured for ease of use on the parade field. In both the 1701 and 1706 editions, the chapters devoted to company level drill were laid out in bullet-point format; the command was listed first, followed by the actions required to execute that command and, finally, the command needed to return the unit to its original

\(^{88}\) Ibid., 28; and Boone, *Military Discipline* (1706), 50.
configuration. By the topics he covered, Boone revealed the skills he believed trained foot companies must possess. Once soldiers mastered "the right use of [their] Arms" individually, they must learn collectively to face right, left, and about, as well as to march, double, wheel, and countermarch.\(^90\) Both divisions and companies must accomplish these maneuvers. Boone’s soldiers had to learn to countermarch in order to maintain, gain, and give ground. The task list was an extended one, and, despite his best efforts to simplify the presentation of information from that found in Monmouth, Elton, and Barriffe, Boone was unable to change the complex, highly structured nature of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century infantry tactics. The maneuvers described would still have taken an extended period for any group to learn. Moreover, they remained less than perfectly adapted for North American conditions; the distance between ranks and files for most maneuvers was "Order," or three feet apart, and, for countermarches, "Open Order," or six feet of separation between the lines.\(^91\) While this may not seem limiting initially, the need for open space is clear when maneuvers involved companies of roughly fifty at a minimum.

In the 1706 and 1718 editions of *Military Discipline*, Boone added further complexity. Both of these manuals contained an extended battalion-level exercise with multiple steps. Both exercises involved the same basic maneuvers carefully laid out by Boone for separate infantry companies. However, increasing the scale magnified the difficulty. In his 1718 edition, Boone added not only a battalion-level drill exercise, but also a short discussion of controlled firing by infantry units of various sizes. He stated that firings “are by Rank, more or less, sometimes by the Whole company, or Battalions

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\(^91\) Ibid., 42; and Boone, *Military Discipline* (1706), 60.
in Flank; sometimes by front and Rear, and oftentimes by Divisions or Platoons." No doubt these were all true statements, and a commander certainly did not have complete mastery of his unit unless he could employ the destructive power he commanded at the time, place, quantity, and manner he desired. That being said, Boone, in the space of a sentence, added another series of tasks for soldiers and, more particularly, officers to master. As he expanded on the topic of firings, Boone indicated that they were generally conducted in three ranks, with the first kneeling, the second stooping, and the third standing. He explained that platoon fire—most often the starting point—could be directed to the front, to the rear, or to any flank. Nor were these three orientations the only ones available. He listed the "hollow square" and the "cross battle" as other possibilities, and he encouraged officers not to restrict themselves to those described, but to employ their "ingenuity" to find other patterns. Boone’s directions on firings were short and simple, even if the executions were not. The techniques he referenced, and many more, were included in both Elton’s and Barriffe’s works. Both authors offered multiple ways to fire to the front, the flanks, and the rear, as well as complex firing formations such as squares, crosses, and star-shaped formations. Familiar with these ideas, Boone included allusions but few specifics on battalion level firing techniques, another example of his effort to reduce the volume of necessary knowledge to a level that colonists could possibly master.

The markedly different assumptions of Green and Boone were perhaps best encapsulated in Boone’s chapters on “the several Duties belonging to a Foot company”

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92 Boone, Military Discipline (1718), 32.
93 Ibid., 33.
94 Ibid., 33.
95 Barriffe, Militarie Discipline, 79–130; and Elton, The Compleat Body of the Art Military, 82–133.
and “the various Beats of the Drum.” In the first of these chapters, Boone gave detailed and extended descriptions of the various duties of all the different positions in a foot company. He described the duties of the company captain, lieutenant, ensign, sergeants, corporals, clerks, drummers, and private soldiers. Both Barriffe and Elton included this type of duty description in their books; Green’s edition of *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline* did not. In his 1718 edition, Boone expanded on this theme. He not only listed the various duty positions and responsibilities of an infantry regiment, from the colonel to the drummers, but also included a catalog of the weapons used by infantry and mounted units of the day. He offered definitions for everything from a firelock musket and a cavalry pistol to a cartridge box and specified the regimental colors carried by ensigns.  

This listing of duties and sometimes equipment was not exclusive to Boone’s *Military Discipline* or to the early eighteenth century. Baron von Steuben would include similar duty descriptions in his instructions for the Continental Army.

Beginning with a private soldier, Boone detailed the duty of each member of a company. Privates were enjoined to not be “slothful and idle,” to learn from their superior officers, to maintain high standards of hygiene, and to learn the words of command they were to follow. When at exercise, they were to be silent and listen attentively, as well as to be prepared always to execute any commands they received. In summary, Boone directed that “a Private Soldier ought to avoid all Quarreling, Mutinies, Swearing, Cursing or Lying; also avoiding Drunkenness, and all manner of Gaming: He ought to be Loving and Courteous to all his Fellow-Soldiers.”

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97 USIG Office, *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops*, 74–89.
Several striking observations can be drawn from these instructions and duty descriptions. First, whether or not it was common for private soldiers to read military manuals, Boone’s contained instructions for them, suggesting at least the possibility that privates would read these works. In contrast, nowhere in Green’s edition of Monmouth was there any direction aimed at anyone below the non-commissioned ranks. While not a new point—Anderson’s *A People Army* makes the case convincingly for the French and Indian War period—the social distance implicit in Boone’s instructions was much reduced from that assumed in the British Army. Both the moral propriety and relatively flat social hierarchy characteristic of Massachusetts were visible here. British Army officers would have assumed that most soldiers below the non-commissioned ranks could not read and, additionally, that, as common soldiers, they lacked the concepts of honor dear to the officer corps. The literacy rates from the British Army compared to New England provide a marked contrast. Best estimates suggest that 35 percent of British soldiers could read during the American Revolution, while 60 percent of male residents of New England were literate in 1660.\(^9^9\) Thus, it would have been pointless and absurd to tell British privates not to lie or get drunk, because drinking, cursing, gambling, and lying were innate in the lower classes, reformation was impossible, and the lash had to stand in place of morality. In contrast, Boone directed colonial privates to behave well for behavior’s sake, without reference to any potential consequence for failing to do so. Furthermore, the fact that these types of instructions were deemed useful at all further betrays the lack of training and skill with which most Americans approached their military duties, particularly in the era following initial colonization. The population had

grown to the extent that immigrants with military skill no longer sufficed, and leaders had to been drawn from the population at large.

Boone ends his 1701 edition with one of the stranger inclusions in any military manual: a poem entitled “On the Art Military and Compleat Souldier.” While not noteworthy as literature, the poem offered interesting observations on how Massachusetts residents of the era saw themselves and the importance of military training. Boone wrote:

Ordained so, that all the parts are deck’t
With men of Equalworth, and like respect
And to Enbody them; the joyning Files
Flank wise (effecting Ranks) the Band compiles.

Later in his verse, describing the importance of military training, Boone claimed the authority of scripture, saying:

Sure, in most Holy-Writ, we find this Art’s
Laid-down before us, in the Whole & Parts
Thereof: It’s Taught & Learnt, & Practiced
By Gods’ own People, and it may be said
The Postures of the Armes in those times held
(Of Bow & Arrow; Buckler Lance; Spear, Shield)100

As atypical as poetry may be for a military training manual, these verses revealed a American worldview already significantly different from that of native Britons, proclaiming as they did the “equalworth” in the ranks and invoking the Bible as an example of the importance of military drill.

100 Boone, Military Discipline (1701), 65–66. Italics are in the original text.
At the end of the first and second editions of *Military Discipline*, Boone appended the applicable military laws of the Massachusetts assembly. These laws made strict demands on the population. All men ages sixteen to sixty were liable for military service. Additionally, soldiers were required to maintain their own military equipment. Infantrymen must own a musket, a sword or cutlass, one pound of powder, twenty bullets, a cartridge box, and other necessary provisions. For mounted troopers a horse “of five pounds value and not less then fourteen hands” and accompanying tackle was mandated, as well as a carbine, two pistols, a cutlass, and other accoutrements. The official penalties for failing to own these items were not light. Foot soldiers were liable for six shillings if lacking in arms and two shillings if missing other equipment. A trooper owed twelve shillings if his horse was inadequate and three shillings for other defects. Nor were these one-time payments; the fines repeated every four weeks for infantrymen and every six weeks for mounted soldiers, until the deficiencies were remedied. In addition to the equipment required, soldiers were obligated to drill four times a year with their company or troop and once every three years as a regiment, also on pain of fine if they failed to comply. The general court further enjoined officers as to their training tasks, stating that:

Every Captain or Chief Officer of any Company or Troop in any Regiment, shall be obliged on penalty of Five Pounds, to draw forth his Company or Troop, or cause them to be drawn for four days Annually, and no more, to Exercise them in Motions, the use of Arms, and Shooting at Marks, or other Military Exercise, which every person liable to Train, having been duly warned, and not appearing and attending the same shall for each days neglect pay a fine of Five Shillings.

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The intent of the militia acts was clear. The Massachusetts general court sought to ensure an armed and trained citizenry. Two groups were exempt from these legislative demands: the most prominent members of society and the most marginalized. Members of the legislative council, students and faculty at Harvard, ministers and elders of churches, and doctors were exempted from military duty, while Indians and blacks were excluded.

Boone drew on European models for inspiration in *Military Discipline*. At the same time, and in contrast to Green’s reprint of Monmouth’s *Abridgement*, Boone sought not simply to shorten his work but to adapt it to North American realities. The first and most pressing of these realities was the lack of time available for Americans to train. As the Massachusetts militia act made explicit, commanders had to train their troops, but they had only four days a year to accomplish the task, and regiments mustered only once every three years. Taking this limitation into account, as Boone clearly did, the level of complexity must be greatly reduced. Boone attempted this simplification. He shortened his manual of exercise. The drill and marching exercises he presented were formatted in a clear, simple fashion to facilitate comprehension and allow use of the books on the parade ground. Additionally, Boone acknowledged that his readers’ military knowledge was likely limited. He explained very basic concepts in detail. He did not assume that either officers or enlisted soldiers would be familiar with drum calls and their meanings. Nor, even more fundamentally, did he assume that anyone in a unit was fully acquainted with their duties. He spelled out the responsibilities of each position, from a commander of a regiment to a private in the ranks. Yet, even as Boone attempted to present knowledge into a useful format, he continued to include information and techniques that
were, on the whole, inappropriate for North America. The complex firing plans he
described were difficult to learn, challenging to execute, and of little use against foes who
generally declined to mass. Furthermore, though the complex marching included by
Boone was entertaining to watch on an open, flat parade ground, it was much more
difficult and much less useful in wooded terrain. The basic steps required for a soldier to
load and fire his weapon were universally applicable and no doubt highly valuable to
colonists. However, once soldiers had command of their individual arms, then the
colonial American and European ways of war diverged. Boone did not address this
divergence.

At roughly the same time that Samuel Green published the Duke of Monmouth’s
*An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline* in Boston, King William of England
declared war on France. This conflict, known in the colonies as King William’s War,
spread from Europe to North America. The residents of New England, in an attempt to
defeat French Canada completely, mounted expeditions against Port Royal, Acadia, in
present day Nova Scotia, and against Quebec on the Saint Lawrence river. Both efforts
failed. After their failure, the conflict settled into a pattern of raids and ambushes against
exposed communities.\(^{103}\) Though King William’s War had ended by the time Nicholas
Boone published his initial work on military discipline, it is reasonable to assume that
one of his goals was to better prepare the residents of New England for future conflict
similar to the one they had just experienced. If this was the case, his work was not a
complete success. The war that British North Americans had just fought and the conflicts
to come did not conform to the patterns imagined in European military texts or their

\(^{103}\) Leach, *Arms for Empire*, 80–111.
American derivatives. The wars that New Englanders experienced when Boone’s works were in active circulation continued in the pattern that prevailed in King William’s War. In moments of ambition, British colonists sometimes mounted long-range expeditions to attack French or Spanish possessions in the New World. Frequently, these endeavors failed. Yet the incessant raiding and ambushing back and forth, derisively termed “skulking” by many colonists, continued.\textsuperscript{104}

In American conflicts, there was an essential imbalance between the French and Indians on one side and British colonists with some Indian allies on the other. Tactically, Indians armed with flintlock muskets were vastly superior to similarly armed residents of British North America. Simply put, Indians could raid almost any town on the colonial frontier relatively successfully. Moreover, Indians conceived of war in this way. As one Indian leader told an English captive, “the art of war consists in ambushing and surprising our enemies and in preventing them from ambushing and surprising us.” Despite their best efforts, British North Americans could do little to defeat such efforts.\textsuperscript{105} Only the Indians’ inability to breach and destroy fortified positions attenuated the effect of such raids. Yet, at the same time that Indians tribes triumphed tactically, they were highly vulnerable strategically. Riven by tribal identities, Indians were much less cohesive than British colonists. Moreover, the economies and villages of Indian tribes were more vulnerable to attack than New England colonists were. While colonial settlements on the frontier were at risk to raiding Indians, the New England economy was strong enough and the population was sufficiently numerous that colonists had reserves

\textsuperscript{105} Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, \textit{Captors and Captives: The 1704 French and Indian Raid on Deerfield} (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 102.
Indians lacked. They had more secure access to technology and greater economic power. British colonists also had a marked advantage in terms of population. For example, the estimated population of the Iroquois nation in the mid-1660s was about ten thousand, a number that may have declined to less than nine thousand by 1670.\textsuperscript{106} In contrast, the colonial population in New England was between ninety thousand and one hundred thousand by the end of the seventeenth century, and it was increasing at a rate of 2.6 to 2.7 percent a year.\textsuperscript{107} Indian alliances with New France did not offer much aid in this regard. French Canada suffered from similar strategic handicaps. In 1675, during King Phillip’s War, New France had an estimated ten thousand residents. By the early eighteenth century, that number had grown to fifteen thousand, which still left the French at a marked disadvantage.\textsuperscript{108} In the seventeenth century and beyond, this created a military situation in which Indians, sometimes with French allies and support, raided frontier settlements, while British counterattacking expeditions, frequently unable to find the war parties that had attacked them, instead destroyed Indian villages.\textsuperscript{109} Strategically, this policy of attrition proved very successful for the residents of New England, but it little resembled war as European military theory conceived of it.

\textsuperscript{107} Bailyn, \textit{The Peopling of British North America}, 19, 93.
\textsuperscript{108} Leach, \textit{Arms for Empire}, 54, 129.
\textsuperscript{109} Guy Chet, \textit{Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast} (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 64.
Chapter 2: Editing

The Influence of the War of Spanish Succession, 1717–1759

The American editions of Monmouth and Boone, all published in Boston between 1690 and 1718, were largely derived from seventeenth-century English sources. Samuel Green’s edition of Monmouth, as previously noted, was a slightly shorter version of books published in London in 1676 and 1682, which were intended for use as service regulations for the British Army. In adapting those works to North America, Green simply shortened the book but gave little consideration to how it could be made useful to colonial readers. Boone’s Military Discipline was also inspired by seventeenth-century sources. Boone looked to the works of Colonels Richard Elton and William Barriffe, both of whom he cited in the introduction to his 1701 version and in the body of his 1706 edition as sources of inspiration.¹ Boone was more aware of the state of American military knowledge and training and, more particularly, envisioned the Massachusetts militia when he wrote. For these reasons, he simplified his work and formatted the text to accommodate audiences less inclined to read 167 pages or more to harvest useful information. Even so, Boone’s adaptation was limited.

The American editions of Monmouth and Boone were also tied to seventeenth-century British technology. Green’s edition of Monmouth provided a manual of exercise for matchlock musketry. The matchlock was virtually obsolete by 1700, and the flintlock

¹ Boone, Military Discipline (1701), 6; and Boone, Military Discipline (1706), 50. In the 1706 edition, Boone referred to Elton and Barriffe as authorities if the reader was interested in a more detailed description of spacing between ranks and files as it related to particular tactical questions. In many ways, this was the pattern that many of the military books geared to tactical problems followed: attempting to distill the minimum knowledge necessary for colonial use, while using the full European text as an implied reference for questions that required more detailed explanation.
musket was the primary weapon carried by New Englanders in King Phillip’s War in 1675–1676.\(^2\) By the time of Boone’s 1701 edition, he had abandoned any reference to matchlock weapons and focused entirely on flintlock training. However, Boone betrayed his technological moment with several references to “dagger” plug bayonets, an early version of the bayonet that, like the matchlock, was obsolete by the end of the seventeenth century.

At roughly the same time that Boone published the third edition of his *Military Discipline*, an unknown author published the first American military text printed outside of Massachusetts. This individual, listed on the title page of his work as “a lover of the Art MILITARY,” authored a work entitled *The New Exercise of Firelocks and Bayonets: with Instructions how to Perform every motion by Body, Foot and Hand; Together with the Number of Operations in Performing the several Words of Command*.\(^3\) While chronologically this work correlated to Boone—it was published in 1717, within a year of the final edition of Boone’s *Military Discipline*—it was dissimilar in other ways. *The New Exercise of Firelocks and Bayonets* was the first military book published in North America derived from eighteenth-century English sources. Published in New London, Connecticut, this text was nearly an exact reprint of an English work titled *The Duke of Marlborough’s New Exercise of Firelocks and Bayonets: Appointed by His Grace to be used By All the British Forces, and the Militia*, which was published in London in 1708 and in Edinburgh in 1709.\(^4\) The 1708 book was a British Army service regulation


\(^3\) Lover of the Art Military, *The New Exercise of Firelocks and Bayonets* (New London, Conn.: T. Green, 1717); and Anon., *The Duke of Marlborough’s New Exercise of Firelocks and Bayonets: Appointed by His Grace to be used By All the British Forces, and the Militia* (London: J. Read, 1708).

intended to supersede the work that had replaced the 1682 *Abridgement of the English Military Discipline*—the *Abridgement* that was related to the American book of the same name. Like *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline, The New Exercise of Firelocks* in Connecticut was an attempt to apply British Army service regulations to North American colonists. Yet the circumstances of European warfare during the Duke of Marlborough’s tenure at the head of the British Army in the early eighteenth century were markedly different from those that existed in North America.

Marlborough, one of the most noted commanders of late-seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Europe, had a well-deserved reputation as a fighter in an era when most generals, reluctant to risk their sovereigns’ expensive armies, gave battle rarely and preferred siege warfare. Marlborough, in contrast, frequently sought battle, making his reputation by winning battlefield victories at Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Maplaquet, among others. Marlborough gained success through his uncommon aggressiveness, his exceptional strategic foresight, and his ability to combine infantry, cavalry, and artillery on the battlefield more effectively than his opponents.\(^5\) Tactically, Marlborough’s determination to destroy his enemy on the battlefield led him to advocate a platoon fire system of Swedish and Dutch origin that allowed British units of the day to “lay down a most formidable and destructive fire.”\(^6\) Platoon fire, a system not described in *The Duke of Marlborough’s New Exercise of Firelocks and Bayonets*, consisted of dividing a battalion or regimental line into different firing orders by platoon. Generally, the unit was broken into three firing orders. The platoons in each order were spread along the battalion line to distribute fire evenly and to hold other fire in reserve along the

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\(^6\) Houlding, *Fit For Service*, 174.
entire line. Firing groups discharged their weapons sequentially on command. These tactics, combined with Marlborough’s military genius, brought multiple victories. Yet, in spite of his desire to face the enemy in the open field, Marlborough engaged in more sieges than battles over the span of his extended military career. And even as Marlborough and his fellow Europeans were laying siege to each other’s fortresses and fighting only the occasional battle, when both sides effectively agreed to fight, they were engaged in very different forms of warfare than their American colonists.

While the Duke of Marlborough attempted to defeat France in the Low Countries in Europe, Americans engaged in the same war on the other side of the Atlantic. Colonists dubbed the conflict Queen Anne’s War. In many ways, Queen Anne’s War followed the same pattern as King William’s War. While the New England colonies mounted several expeditions attempting to defeat French Canada decisively, the French, with Indian allies, pursued a policy of raiding the frontier towns and settlements of New York and New England. Most notably, in 1704 a French and Indian force of 250 to 300 raided Deerfield, Massachusetts, killing 50 town residents and capturing another 112.\(^7\) However, most raids focused on the Maine and New Hampshire frontiers.\(^8\) By using this tactic, New France attempted to overcome its weakness in war-making potential as compared to British North America, by forcing American colonists to focus on defending the frontier. During the course of the war, the combined forces of the New England colonies mounted three expeditions bent on taking Port Royal, Acadia. The first, in 1704, did not succeed.\(^9\) Three years later, in 1707, New England colonists twice attempted to conquer Port Royal and failed yet again. Finally, in 1710, a combined force of close to

\(^7\) Haefeli and Sweeney, *Captors and Captives*, 1, 54.
\(^8\) Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness*, 88.
3,500 colonists, a regiment of royal marines, and a royal navy taskforce successfully took the town.¹⁰

Concurrent with all these large-scale and generally unproductive efforts aimed at conventional targets in Acadia, ranger units composed of colonists who were comfortable using Indian methods to fight sought to eliminate the threat to frontier settlements. These ranger units did most of the actual fighting during the war.¹¹ Queen Anne’s War came to an end in 1713, due to the defeat of Louis XIV in Europe and the much greater military capacity of British North America. The relative size of the force that executed the Deerfield raid, compared to New England’s expedition to Port Royal, gives some sense of the uneven odds and suggests the cumulative effects of attrition on French and Indians alike. However, from the perspective of military theory and practice, what Queen Anne’s War conspicuously lacked were battles of the type that occurred in Europe. Instead, the war consisted primarily of raids, ambushes, and counter-raids. Yet, strikingly, these facts seem to have had little effect on colonial military publishing.

No doubt inspired by the success of British arms in Europe and intent on transferring that expertise to colonial America, the anonymous “Lover of the art-military” published his manual in 1717. The New Exercise of Firelocks was in many ways very similar to Boone’s Military Discipline. Containing only twenty-seven pages, the book was very short, even by the standards of early American publishing. The only significant difference between the American and British versions of the work was that the American edition included a brief, three-and-a-half-page grenade exercise that did not appear in the original. Like Boone and in contrast to Green, the author—or board of authors, given the

¹⁰ Leach, Arms for Empire, 142–44.
work’s provenance—created a simple, direct book. While the original was not written with North America in mind, the colonial edition of *The New Exercise* offered military knowledge that the colonists would have found useful, and this knowledge was presented in a clear, unadorned manner. Perhaps the most startling aspect of *The New Exercise* is the contrast it provided with *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline*. In the space of little over twenty years, the length of British Army service regulations declined from several hundred pages to well less than fifty.\(^{12}\) The heart of *The New Exercise* was a manual of arms that proceeded much like Boone’s, beginning with a command, followed by a short paragraph describing the particular motions needed to execute that command. While the book was written concurrently with Boone’s final edition of his *Military Discipline*, the anonymous author incorporated technology not appearing in Boone. In Boone and Green, the only bayonets mentioned were “daggers,” and they blocked the muzzle of the musket.\(^{13}\) In contrast, the bayonet was an integral part of the exercise described in *The New Exercise of Firelocks*, and the process of fixing a bayonet was described detail:

1. Come up briskly to the Front, entering the Socket of your Bayonet upon the muzzle of your Piece.
2. Shut the Bayonet down briskly.
3. Lock your Bayonet by giving it a turn from you.
4. Quit your Right hand from your Bayonet and seize your left hand full.\(^{14}\)

The plug bayonet technology to which both Green and Boone refer was outdated by the
time their works were published in North America, the French Army having adopted
socket bayonets in 1689, with the Prussians following suit in 1690.¹⁵

Save for the inclusion of the bayonet as an integral part of the exercise, *The New
Exercise*’s manual of arms differed little from Boone’s. Following the musket manual of
arms, the author moved to a short exercise on the employment of “Granados.”¹⁶ This
simple exercise included the steps required to incorporate the use of grenades into the
larger flintlock exercise. The author mentioned grenadiers but did not endow them with
any special significance or status, contrasting strongly with Green’s edition of
Monmouth, wherein grenadiers were one of a variety of specialized troops common to a
trained army. The grenade, in *The New Exercise*, was merely an additional weapon
available for soldiers to employ.

*The New Exercise* pursued the simplification impulse even further than Boone’s
*Military Discipline*. Gone are Boone’s directions for officers and enlisted men in a
company. Nor does *The New Exercise* contain a guide to the meaning of drum
commands. Similarly, the author did not include any descriptions of firing techniques
above the individual level. The front, flank, and rear firings to which Boone alluded were
not perceived to be vital, to say nothing of the square or cross battle formations. *The New
Exercise of Firelocks* contained no such sophisticated information. Following the manual
of exercise for muskets and the instructions on throwing a grenade, the author included a
short, three-page evolution that did little more than teach a soldier to maneuver his

weapon from pointing it at the enemy to leaning it on his shoulder to resting it on the ground. In order to make the book as accessible as possible, the author also included an appendix at the book’s end listing all the commands described in the book. The clear intent was to allow quick reference to the commands, or even to permit the reader to read aloud from them while instructing others. Only the very beginning of The New Exercise deviated from a concentrated focus on the individual. Before launching into a discussion of the various exercises, the author gave detailed descriptions of how to array a unit for exercise. The New Exercise assumed a battalion-sized unit as the starting point for instruction. Included in this unit was the full range of officers and NCOs to supervise training. Moreover, the author presumed to unit’s cadre would possess at least a rudimentary level of training. He instructed readers to be certain that both files and ranks were straight and that the soldiers were sufficiently spaced—three paces between ranks and one pace between files.

The New Exercise was yet another example of incomplete adaptation. The body of the text was simple and direct. It contained what might be considered the absolute minimum of information necessary to enable a soldier to function, namely instruction on how to employ his individual weapons. The weapons described were the most modern available—flintlock muskets, socket bayonets, and grenades. The author included no extraneous exercises or manuals of arms for specialists. Yet, as with all previous manuals, the author of The New Exercise assumed that those he was instructing would fight in linear formations as part of a multi-company battalion, commanded by a colonel and assisted by a lieutenant colonel and a major, as well as multiple lower-ranking

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17 Ibid., 18–20.
18 Ibid., 2.
officers and NCOs. As with the vast majority of eighteenth-century military manuals, the
author of The New Exercise sought to make military experience fit a predetermined set of
theoretical assumptions, instead of adapting knowledge to the experience of colonial
Americans.

The next military manual printed in British North America was an adaptation of
William Breton’s Militia Discipline: The Words of Command and Directions for
Exercising the Musket, Bayonet, & Carthridge. Originally published by Breton in
London in 1717, Militia Discipline first appeared in Boston in 1733, printed, according to
the title page, for Daniel Henchman. Henchman was the foremost bookseller and
publisher in Boston during the first half of the eighteenth century. He is best remembered
as a publisher of religious texts, most notably Jonathan Edwards’s first printed work, God
Glorified in the Work of Redemption, By the Greatness of Man’s Dependence Upon Him,
in the Whole of It (1731). However, Henchman had other skills that made him a suitable
publisher of military theory, as well; he served as an officer in the Boston regiment of the
Massachusetts militia and was an active participant in the colony’s political and military
life. Henchman was 44 at the time he printed Breton’s text.19

The American Breton was, from a literary perspective, one of the most interesting
military books published in North America. The 1733 Boston version was an exact copy
of the 1717 London edition until page 57. At that point, the two books diverged
significantly. The British printing included an exercise for mounted units that was
entirely omitted in the American printing. Instead, Henchman’s American edition of

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Breton included additional marching drill exercises that, in their format—a list of “commands,” followed by “directions” and concluding with “reductions”—strongly resembled sections of Boone. Moreover, the book concluded with a section on platoon exercise taken directly from Humphrey Bland’s 1727 *A Treatise of Military Discipline*.

Breton focused his book specifically on the needs of militia units. Therefore, like *The Exercise of Firelocks and Bayonets*, it was simple and concise. Nevertheless, it was a more detailed manual than its immediate predecessor. Breton began *Militia Discipline* with a detailed, command-by-command explanation of the manual of arms. He also included the number of motions necessary to execute each movement properly. Including bayonet commands, Breton’s manual exercise consisted of forty-seven independent commands. The entire text of the book is seventy-eight pages long. The manual exercise runs thirty-two pages, well over a third of the book. Like both Boone and the author of *The New Exercise of Firelocks*, Breton formatted his manual of arms for parade-ground use by someone actively training soldiers. Both previous authors listed a particular command, “present,” for example, and then offered a description of the actions necessary to execute that command.20 In *The New Exercise of Firelocks*, the author also lists the number of motions involved in each command; in his manual of exercise, “present” was one motion. Breton, in an effort to make the information even more accessible, wrote in columns. On the left he listed the command. To the right he gave descriptions, while in a center column he listed the number of motions that corresponded to each phase of a particular command. The publication of Breton in the colonies continued the trend of simplification seen in all editions of Boone and in *The New

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Exercise of Firelocks. The colonial edition of his work further evidences a trend toward books targeted at drilling soldiers and written to make knowledge accessible.

Following that the manual of arms, Breton described various drum commands that an infantry unit would likely hear when executing its duties. Breton listed the six principal field or combat drum commands as “1. a Call 2. a Troop 3. a March 4. a Preparative 5. a Battail and 6. a Retreat,” while “a Tato” and “a Revallee” were for use in garrison.21 Along with these basics, Breton included the standard specification of distances previously mentioned by both Green and Boone. Like those who published before him, Breton stated that “Close Order” was a foot and a half, “Order” three feet, “Open Order” six feet, and “Double Distance” twelve feet.22

The most significant change in Breton’s Militia Discipline from the information conveyed in previous manuals was his instructions on firing. He omitted the complicated battalion-level fire plans to which Boone alluded. Instead, Breton included a new system of firing by ranks. Boone, writing between 1701 and 1718, stated that firing should occur using three ranks, with the first rank kneeling, the second stooping, and the third standing straight. Implicit within these instructions was the belief that each rank would fire directly over the one in front of it. Breton’s Militia Discipline advanced a new, seemingly superior method. Breton’s technique involved the first rank kneeling on the command “make ready,” while, at the same moment, the center rank advanced forward and slightly to the right one step, until the left leg of soldiers in that rank were resting on the backs of the soldiers in front of them. All the while, the rear rank was also moving forward two steps and positioning itself just to the right of the center rank. To achieve the

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21 lover of the Art Military, The New Exercise of Firelocks, 34.
22 Ibid., 41.
correct position relative to each other, the soldiers of each rank overlapped feet with those in front of them. The center rank positioned their left feet to the inside of the kneeling first rank, while the rear rank did the same in relation to the center rank. Breton termed this technique “locking.” Once in position and commanded to “present,” the center rank pointed their muskets over the right shoulders of the first rank, and the rear rank pointed over the right shoulder of the center one. On the command “fire,” all three ranks were directed to fire at the same time. Once the unit had fired, the ranks were to stand up. The front rank remained in position, while the two rear ranks fell back to a distance of a foot and a half between each rank, at which point all ranks reloaded and prepared to fire again.

Henchman’s edition of Breton described these actions twice, first in a section presenting step-by-step commands for platoon firing techniques and later, at the end of the book, in an additional platoon exercise. The first of these descriptions was also in the original London printing of Breton and may have been the first printed explanation of “locking” a platoon to fire. The second, in the platoon exercise, was unique to Henchman’s colonial version of Breton. While the first explanation effectively described “locking,” it did not specifically name the technique. This portion of Militia Discipline explained the technique as follows:

The First Rank keeping the Left Foot fix’d, fall back with the Right Foot, and Kneels: The second Rank steping forward with their Left Feet, bend their Knees against their Leaders Buttock: The third Rank step first with their Right, then with their left Feet, (each Man inclining to the Right of his immediate Leader) still keeping their Arms recover’d, the front Rests their Butts on the Ground with their Right Hands securing the Cock. Every Man to the Right of his Leader.

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23 In Fit for Service, 281, Houlding stated that Humphrey Bland, in 1727, provided the first contemporary reference to “locking” a platoon to fire. Apparently, a general understanding of the technique existed at least ten years prior.

24 Breton, Militia Discipline, 55–56.
Writing in 1717, Breton clearly described actions that would result in a platoon “locked” to fire. However, Henchman—who printed both the colonial version of Breton’s *Militia Discipline* and, later, multiple abridged versions of another British text, *Treatise of Military Discipline* by Humphrey Bland—thought this explanation inadequate.

When locking was again described on the last several pages of the American Breton, the technique was labeled for the first time in the book. Significantly, the pages on locking at the end of the 1733 American Breton were taken directly Bland’s *Treatise of Military Discipline*. Bland’s work will be discussed in more detail further on, as an adaptation of that text by Henchman subsequently appeared in the colonies.²⁵

Breton asserted that this technique would allow a unit to load and fire more quickly. At the end of his platoon exercise, Breton also encouraged soldiers to ensure that their cartridges were made “to such an exactness” that “after they are placed in the muzzle, one thump with the butt-end on the Ground will make them run down to the Breech of the barrel.” This would allow soldiers to forgo ramming, thereby saving additional time.²⁶

![Fig. 2 diagram of a 30 man platoon locked to fire.](image)

Breton’s locking technique had significant advantages for volley fire. By spreading fire more evenly and not compelling ranks to either stoop or fire over those in front of them, the technique no doubt made for a more deadly unit. Further, if it allowed a battalion, company, or platoon to load and fire more quickly, the advantage would have

²⁵ Breton, *Militia Discipline*, (Boston), 70–72; and Bland, *A Treatise of Military Discipline* (1727), 70–72
²⁶ Breton, *Militia Discipline*, (Boston), 72.
been even more marked. Yet it is clear from Breton’s descriptions that locking and unlocking the ranks was not easily mastered. The steps he presented so clearly had to be well choreographed if ranks were to avoid tangling their feet. Repeated drilling would have been necessary. Further, as with all massed fire techniques employed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, locking was only really useful if it could be employed against an enemy in a massed formation. In wooded terrain, the proper space might not have been available to execute locking. The advantages to be gained from learning to implement smoothly such an elaborate system were hardly worth the training commitment.

In a foreword to the American edition of Breton’s *Militia Discipline*, Daniel Henchman indicated that he, “for the further instruction of soldiers in Military Exercises added to this Facings, Wheelings & Evolutions of a Company, or Battalion...”[27] Henchman supplemented the original text with detailed explanations of the drill techniques required to maneuver an infantry unit. This section explained such challenging movements as countermarches and wheel turns, as well as more complex doubling maneuvers during marching. Henchman also added a complete explanation and exercise of facing movements. Included in the sections that described the drill and marching techniques was a lengthy list of ways to double within a unit. These techniques, generally used to thicken or thin a unit in column or in line, involved either ranks or files moving to reinforce part of the formation. For example, the rear-half files of a formation might double to their right. In such a maneuver, assuming a four-man file formation, all the soldiers in the last two ranks, or the last two men in the file, would face to the right and march to the right of the formation, aligning themselves with the two-man

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[27] Ibid., 2.
files now on their left. By this maneuver, a four-deep formation with a relatively narrow front would transition into a two-deep formation that covered double the linear space.\textsuperscript{28} Henchman’s addition to Breton included fourteen different ways in which files or ranks could be doubled. While this might not seem particularly noteworthy, it represented a tremendous training task. As for its origins, this section—though apparently produced by Henchman—very closely resembled parts of Boone’s \textit{Militia Discipline} in format, if not in content.\textsuperscript{29}

Henchman’s edition of \textit{Militia Discipline} then moved into a brief, one-paragraph catalog of various aspects of the militia acts of Massachusetts. These Massachusetts “military law” summaries were similar to those included in Boone’s 1701 and 1706 editions.\textsuperscript{30} General requirements were unchanged: all men sixteen to sixty were required to serve in the militia. They had to possess specified weapons and military supplies, and attendance at musters was mandatory, with fines used to punish absentees. Towns were required to provide military stores for the use of their units and to subsidize equipping militiamen too poor to afford the mandated equipment. The legally mandated training schedule was also unaltered. Regiments were to muster once every three years, Boston excepted, and captains were to assemble their companies for one day fours time each year. Also named, but not described, were acts providing for the mobilization of the militia, responses to alarms, and the guarding of towns.\textsuperscript{31} Like \textit{The New Exercise of Firelocks and Bayonets}, the adaptation of Breton’s work concluded with a simple list of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 59–64.
  \item \textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 58–68.
  \item \textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 73.
  \item \textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 78.
\end{itemize}
the commands in the manual of arms, along with the number of motions required to
complete each exercise.

Though the skills of the individual soldier were still the focus of training, *Militia
Discipline* did incorporate techniques to allow infantry platoons to employ organized
volley fire. However, the book included only limited collective fire commands. The fact
that a colonial publisher adapted Breton’s *Militia Discipline* confirms the continued
centrality of infantry units to colonial militias. The colonial version of *Militia Discipline*
also shows the spreading demand for military literature. Breton’s was the first
specifically military book printed in multiple locations in the British North America.32 In
addition to the 1733 Boston edition, bibliographer Charles Evans records a second
printing in New York in 1738 under the title *Military Discipline*.33

Like *Militia Discipline*, Major William Brattle’s *Rules and Directions for
Drawing up a Regiment and Posting Officers* was published Boston in 1733. *Rules and
Directions* was a most interesting book. Brattle was an American and a major in the
Middlesex regiment of the Massachusetts militia at the time *Rules and Directions* was
published.34 He was also a Harvard graduate, in the class of 1722, from a prominent
Massachusetts family.35 In addition to his publishing career, Brattle worked as both a
doctor and a judge and was elected to the Massachusetts General Assembly. Sibley, the
nineteenth-century biographer of early Harvard graduates, agreed with one of Brattle’s
contemporaries that Brattle was “a man of universal superficial knowledge.” However,

34 William Brattle, *Sundry Rules and Directions for Drawing up a Regiment, Posting the Officers &c.*
(Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1733), 1.
35 Clifford Kenyon Shipton, *New England Life in the 18th Century: Representative Biographies from
Sibley made an exception for Brattle as a soldier, qualifying that he had "a real knack for things military."\textsuperscript{36} Brattle did rise to high rank in the Massachusetts militia. He was commissioned a brigadier in 1760 and, in 1773, appointed major general of the Massachusetts militia. Perhaps not coincidentally, \textit{Rules and Regulations for Drawing up a Regiment and Posting Officers} was reprinted that year.\textsuperscript{37} Despite his rise through the ranks, the content of Major Brattle's manual suggests that his military experience and knowledge, at least as it related to actual fighting conditions in North America, might have been limited. His only active service during a conflict was as a trainer of new troops in 1745 during King George's War.\textsuperscript{38} Despite the fact that Brattle was an American, his book betrayed his lack of actual North American campaign experience.

\textit{Rules and Directions} was very different from its two immediate predecessors. While it was also short—only twenty-two pages—and discussed only the operation of small infantry units, it was not concerned with the skills or training of private soldiers. Instead, Brattle covered the next-higher level of execution; his work dealt exclusively with the roles of officers and NCOs in controlling and leading units. The book was not focused on tactical questions or on providing useful information for soldiers to employ in the field. Rather, it offered directions for executing parades and ceremonies perhaps.

Brattle started \textit{Rules and Directions} assuming that a regiment was already drawn up on the parade field in preparation for exercise or review. Then, beginning with the colonel commanding the regiment, he listed the position for all officers, NCOs, and drummers. The next section described the appropriate actions for forming all parts of the

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 204.
\textsuperscript{37} William Brattle, \textit{Sundry Rules and Directions for Drawing up a Regiment, Posting the Officers, &c. Taken from the best latest Authority; for the use and benefit of the First Regiment of Militia in the County of Middlesex} (Boston: 1733, reprinted and sold by Mills and Hicks 1773).
\textsuperscript{38} Shipton, \textit{New England Life in the 18th Century}, 204.
regiment when being reviewed by a general officer. Brattle also explained the marching
drift of an infantry battalion by means of companies, platoons, three grand divisions, or
multiple subdivisions formed by splitting each division into between three and five parts.
The ability to form and employ an infantry battalion by grand or subdivision was
extremely important because, while platoons and companies formed the basic
administrative units of a battalion, the divisional structure was the way a battalion was
employed tactically. Acknowledging the difference between infantry battalions in North
America and England, Brattle described how a New England regiment, which lacked
staff officers like a chaplain, adjutant, and quartermaster, would array itself by division or
subdivision. Brattle also enumerated the proper formation of units by ranks and files.39
Perhaps the most interesting part of Rules and Directions was the instruction on forming
and collapsing a square. A square was a purely tactical formation, generally used in
cases when infantry faced cavalry and had to prepare to fight in all directions to
counteract the cavalry’s greater tactical mobility.40

Also of interest is what was not in Rules and Directions. The book contained no
directions on employment of individual weapons. Clearly, Brattle assumed that junior
officers and NCOs knew and were able to teach manual exercise. This implied a level of
professionalism and institutional knowledge that the more rudimentary instruction in
Militia Discipline and The New Exercise of Firelocks and Bayonets would seem to
contradict. Brattle intended his work for officers. While not as rudimentary as the other
American works of the early part of the century, Brattle’s text taught leaders very basic
skills; witness the complete lack of any commands to control and distribute the collective

39 Brattle, Sundry Rules and Regulations., 1–18.
40 Ibid., 20–22.
fires of infantry units. At best, the book was meant for officers facing a certain set of
tactical problems. Like most seventeenth- and eighteenth-century military theory, Rules
and Directions posited a very linear type of combat as the standard and provided a means
to engage in controlled linear warfare. None of this is particularly surprising on its face;
Brattle’s assumptions would be standard in a European author. Yet Brattle did not write
in Europe. Instead, he was a major in a Massachusetts militia regiment.

*The New Exercise of Firelocks, Militia Discipline, and Rules and Directions for
Drawing up a Regiment* were published over a period of roughly twenty years (if the no
longer extant 1738 New York edition of Breton’s work is included). They represented a
noticeable change from the works that preceded them. All were fully eighteenth-century
texts, unlike both Green and Boone, which at a minimum drew on seventeenth-century
sources for inspiration and included obsolete seventeenth-century weapons in their
instructions. However, the changes were not momentous. In both *The New Exercise of
Firelocks* and *Militia Discipline*, the manual exercise for flintlock musket was still
emphasized. Following the pattern started by Boone, both Breton and the author of *The
New Exercise* sought to present their information in simple, straightforward ways. Both
of these authors likely envisioned that their books would be used on the parade field.
Their books were intended to aid junior officers in training their men. By contrast,
Brattle’s work was less focused on practical tasks. Given that the book was written when
Brattle was only twenty-seven, a mere five years removed from Harvard and lacking any
serious military experience, it should not be surprising that *Rules and Regulations* seems
the work of a dilettante. However, what is most striking about all three books is their
dogged determination to see war as an activity best conducted by massed linear
formations firing coordinated volleys at each other. Breton’s *Militia Discipline* was most overt in this prejudice, with its detailed description of locking to maximize the effects of massed fire and to quicken loading, but similar tendencies can be seen in each of other two works. One of Brattle’s only tactical recommendations detailed the best means to form a square of infantry. This technique was in no way suited to the types of conflicts generally fought by Massachusetts militia units of the period, although it was certainly appropriate for European warfare. Of these three, *The New Exercise* was the least overt its continued dependence on European models, but its early assumption of a complete battalion with a full cadre of leaders and its origins as a British Army service regulation demonstrate the lack of a full North American adaptation.

The books published between 1717 and 1738 appeared on the market during a period that Douglas Leach, the most noted scholar of colonial wars, has described as an eighteenth-century “cold war.” Unlike the preceding period, Europe was at peace for most of that time. Consequently, the conflicts with New France, often sparked by European wars, that had roiled British North America during the previous thirty years were temporarily in abeyance. That is not to suggest that there was no military activity in colonies. Instead, New England colonies continued to engage in low-level raiding wars with the Indians along their frontiers. From roughly 1722 to 1726, Massachusetts and New Hampshire engaged in a war of raids and counter-raids against the Abenaki tribe. The conflict was generally known as Father Râle’s War, after the French Jesuit who New Englanders believed was responsible for inciting the Abenakis. The most well-known action of the conflict was a raid by a force of Massachusetts rangers on Norridgewock, in

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42 Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 47.
present-day Maine near the Kennebec River. Responding to an abortive attempt by
colonists to capture Râle in the winter of 1721–1722, Abenaki Indians engaged in a series
of forays and ambushes against frontier communities in Massachusetts, Maine, New
Hampshire, and Nova Scotia. Colonists in turn attacked Râle at Norridgewock in 1724,
killing him and destroying the town and mission. This effort, however, did not end the
conflict. The pattern of raids continued into until 1726, when the Indians were worn
down by the losses they suffered, a lack of sustained French support, and a desire to
resume the flow of English trade goods.\footnote{Leach, \textit{Arms for Empire}, 183–84.} Again, during the primary conflicts of the
period, British American strategic strength overcame the Indians’ tactical superiority in
most engagements. And, yet again, none of the experience gained in frontier campaigns
was incorporated into the published military texts available to New Englanders.

Notwithstanding colonial conflicts, however, sustained peace prevailed among the
great European powers during the period following the conclusion of Queen Anne’s War
in 1713. In North America, war did not recur between European nations until the War of
Jenkins’ Ear in 1739. That conflict resulted from commercial rivalry between Spain and
England and continued until 1743.\footnote{Grenier, \textit{The First Way of War}, 54.} While the war was confined to the southern colonies
and did not affect New England, it did follow the pattern of most previous American
wars—the vast majority of actions consisted of a back-and-forth pattern of raid and
ambush.

While the War of Jenkins’ Ear did not have much influence on the currents of
military publishing in British North America, the war that followed shortly after it did.
Frederick II of Prussia invaded Silesia at the end of 1740, igniting another European
conflict. England was drawn into the conflict in 1744. Known in Western Europe as the War of the Austrian Succession and in Central Europe as the Silesian Wars, the conflict was called King George’s War by colonial Americans in New England. This war against the French and Indians followed patterns similar to those of the conflicts that preceded it. French forces attacked a British garrison in Nova Scotia, seizing it. They then attempted to reduce Annapolis Royal, formerly Port Royal, in Nova Scotia. That effort failed.

William Shirley, the governor of Massachusetts, launched an expedition in cooperation of with the royal navy against the French fortress of Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island. Through a series of fortuitous events, the Massachusetts endeavor succeeded. However, French success in Europe resulted in the return of Louisbourg to New France at the end of the war.\(^{45}\) Even during the conflict, this triumph had little effect on the course of the war on the northern frontier separating Canadian New France from northern New England. At the same time that Massachusetts authorities focused on seizing Louisbourg, French and Indian bands raided this northern frontier, at one point striking Saratoga, New York.\(^{46}\) In another raid, a force of seven hundred Indians and Canadians infiltrated south from Crown Point on Lake Champlain and destroyed a Bay Colony company outpost at Fort Massachusetts.\(^{47}\) This collection of events illustrated the continuing disparity between the military capacity of British North America and that of New France and its Indian allies. The largest British endeavor was a three thousand man joint land and sea amphibious expedition against a fortified position, while the largest French and Indian raid, at seven hundred participants, was just over double the size of the 1704 Deerfield


\(^{46}\) Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 63.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., 63.
force. As with the previous wars between England and France in North America, the official end came in Europe, this time with the treaty of Aix la Chapelle in 1748. Furthermore, the Indians, who most frequently were tactically successful against northern New England outposts, suffered severe damage from colonial raids against their communities. Despite their tactical successes, the Indians were happy to make peace and end the incessant attrition.  

King George’s War occurred during the period when another work, by Humphrey Bland, became the standard American military publication. Abstracted versions of Bland’s Treatise of Military Discipline became the most ubiquitous and arguably the most influential military book published in North America prior to the American Revolution. Bland first published his book in London in 1727, and the text appeared in North America in 1741. His manual of arms for musket and basic marching evolutions were serialized in the second and third issues of Benjamin Franklin’s General Magazine, in February and March of 1741. Daniel Henchman, the aforementioned publisher of William Breton’s Militia Discipline, published the first book-length edition in Boston in 1743, just prior to the outbreak of King George’s War. Bland’s text was the most reprinted military book of the pre-Revolutionary period and even received official endorsement. The 1747 Boston edition contained a foreword from the provincial governor, William Shirley, stating, “I do direct and order the following Exercise to be observed and used by the officers of all the Regiments of Foot within this Province, in their training of the Soldiers under their respective Commands.” The foreword was actually dated 1743, so, although this directive did not appear in the 1743 Boston edition,

48 Leach, Arms for Empire, 230; and Grenier, The First Way of War, 62–63
49 Chet, Conquering the American Wilderness, 104.
it seems likely that the provincial government directed use of the Bland manual shortly after its initial publication. The same foreword was included in a 1754 version of the book published in both Boston and New York. Thus, as much as any text, Bland’s work can be viewed as the most accepted colonial understanding of military practice. No less a figure in early American military history than George Washington both ordered a copy of the unabridged version of Bland and recommended it to other officers in his regiment. Moreover, unlike the works that immediately preceded it, Bland’s book was not published in times of peace. During the range of years when Bland was in print—1741 to 1759—British colonists engaged in two substantial wars. Yet, as with the works that preceded them, the American versions of Bland offered little advice to prepare colonists for the actual conditions of American combat.

Although the Louisbourg expedition occurred in 1745, during King George’s War and at one of the high points in Bland’s popularity in North America, such a large endeavor was still an anomaly. Far more frequently, colonists participated in raid and ambush operations little different from those of previous wars. Moreover, the successful investment and reduction of Louisbourg was due more to luck than to tactical skill, and the seizure of the fortress did nothing to lessen the impact of French and Indian raids on the frontier. Colonial leaders might have believed that books such as the Boston and New York versions of Bland were necessary for them to realize their strategic vision of

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53 Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness*, 102–3
defeating the French and Indians and conquering Canada. However, that impulse
reflected more the wild optimism of certain colonial leaders than a reasoned appreciation
of the strategic needs and tactical abilities of the American colonies. While the best
version of Bland was far better than everything that had come before, the text still was
unsuited to North American use.

Humphrey Bland was a British Army officer born in Ireland in 1686. He entered
the army in 1704 and served on the continent during the first decade of the eighteenth
century. Bland remained active in the British Army from his commissioning until the
late 1750s. In the mid-1720s, Bland became concerned that a new generation of officers
was entering the army without the experience of the fighting in Flanders between 1689
and 1712. In response, in 1727 he published *A Treatise on Military Discipline: in which
is laid down and explained the duty of the officer and soldier, thro' the several branches
of the service*. The book sought to distill the knowledge gained in the wars of Louis XIV
and was aimed primarily at young, newly commissioned officers. The 1727 version of *A
Treatise on Military Discipline* was reprinted multiple times in London between its
appearance and the final 1762 edition.54

Various versions of Bland’s text remained in print in the colonies from 1741 until
1759, and, in contrast to most of the works that preceded it, the printing of his work was
not geographically restricted. Reflecting an expanding interest in military knowledge,
Bland’s book was produced in Philadelphia, Boston, and New York. Following his 1743
colonial edition, Daniel Henchman printed 1744, 1747, and 1756 editions in Boston.
Additionally, four versions of a *Military Discipline* were published in New York in 1754,

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H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004),
1756, and 1759, by three different printers. In fact, between 1741 and 1759, versions of Bland’s work were published, by a variety of colonial American printers, more times than all the military instructional books that preceded it—eleven versus eight. Not only did the book receive multiple printings, but two distinct versions of Bland were published in North America; one was shorter and more focused on individual tasks, while the other was longer and included more complex unit-level tactical information. These two versions of Bland, though similar in many respects, pursued startlingly different goals. The longer version, published in New York and Boston, was the edition first printed in 1743 for Henchman. This version provided a relatively comprehensive template for training an infantry battalion. On the other hand, the shorter edition, printed in Philadelphia, focused exclusively on individual tasks and did not engage in broader tactical questions. However, even with the more intelligent adaptation displayed in the Boston/New York version of Bland, the work never escaped the confines of European modes of thinking about war to incorporate the American experience or to provide a

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training template that more accurately reflected how Americans most frequently engaged in combat.

The American Blands, like many other European works brought to America, were abridgements. The version that Franklin published in 1741 was the first example of the shorter of the two versions of Bland printed in America. In February 1741, along with articles titled “Of the Constitution of the Government of Virginia” and “Proceedings of the Parliament of Great Britain on the Bill for prohibiting the Exportation of Provisions,” as well as poetry, obituaries, and commercial news, Franklin’s General Magazine printed “The new Manual of Exercise for the Foot.” The following month, Franklin continued his serialization with “Remainder of the New Manual Exercise” and “Evolutions of the Foot, by Col. Bland.” The edition of Bland presented by Franklin was thoroughly stripped. None of the complex tactical maneuvers that some later versions included are present in this magazine edition. The first half, in the February issue of Franklin’s magazine, was solely devoted to the individual task of loading and firing a flintlock musket, while in the March issue of the magazine, bayonet drill, facing movements, and marching were added. As with virtually all military books of the period, Franklin’s Bland assumed a battalion structure as the basis for training. However, what is most interesting about this serialized edition of Bland is less what it included or left out than the implications of its publishing. It is striking that, in the second and third issues of the first general interest magazine published in North America and aimed at a mass audience, the editor thought to include articles that taught military skills. Published in Philadelphia, this serialized edition of Bland not only expanded the geographical reach of American

60 Ibid., 153–74.
printed military texts but perhaps even the audience. Franklin reproduced his version of
Bland again in 1747, though this version is no longer extant. The version of Bland that
Franklin published in 1741 was reprinted again in Philadelphia by William Bradford in
1755. The passage of Pennsylvania’s first militia law authorizing the formation of
volunteer militia companies for the first time may have provided the impetus for this third
and final printing of Bland’s work in Philadelphia.62

There was one tactically interesting inclusion in the text published by Franklin.
Bland, reflecting a European urge toward simplification and a desire to focus training on
the tasks required for fighting, reduced the length and complexity of the marching
evolutions from that those presented in previous books. Bland stated:

The Evolutions of the Foot, which were formerly practiced, being found not only
of very little Use, but likewise of such a Length, that they had not time to perform
the more essential Parts of the Service, (the Firings) without over-fatiguing the
Soldiers: for which Reason, the greatest Part of them have been disused, and only
such retained as are thought absolutely necessary . . . But if any one is desirous to
see the Whole, he may find them in a book of Exercise, Printed in 1690, by Order
of King William and Queen Mary.63

The manual to which Bland referred was an updated edition of the Duke of Monmouth’s
An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline, discussed earlier. While Bland,
originally writing in 1727, discounted the importance of much of what was included in
seventeenth-century manuals, his statement that he retained what was necessary when
writing his manual, as well as the fact that his manual was in circulation in both England

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Manual Exercise by General Blakeney to which is added The Evolutions of the Foot by General Humphrey

62 “The Beginnings,” American Military History, Army Historical Series, Office of the Chief of Military
History, United States Army, http://www.army.mil/cmh/books/AMH/AMH-02.htm, accessed 14 April,
2005.

63 Ibid., 158.
and America well into the second half of the century gives some suggestion of the relatively static nature of a great part of military tactics over time.

Following Franklin’s serialized 1741 version of Bland’s work, the next edition was Henchman’s 1743 Boston version. Most subsequent extant editions of Bland’s work published in North America follow the general outline of this 1743 edition. Henchman’s 1744 and 1747 editions, as well as Henry de Forrest’s 1754 New York edition, closely mimic its form. No copy of Henchman’s 1756 printing of Bland exists, but as it was produced by the same publisher, it probably did not vary greatly. The final North American edition of Bland was printed in 1759 by Hugh Gaine in New York, a publisher who had not previously produced a version of the work. This edition is also unavailable.  

The Boston/New York version of Bland was both the most thoughtfully constructed and most fully abridged military manual published in North America to that date. Henchman’s Boston edition consisted of five chapters, with the emphasis squarely on the basic tactical and technical skills required by infantry units of the period. The ordering of the chapters was progressive—from simple individual tasks to, by the end of the work, complex battalion-level tactical undertakings. Each chapter was further subdivided into articles. The heading of each article was either a command, with the article describing in detail how to execute that particular command, or, alternatively, a

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64 For the purposes of close textual analysis of the longer Boston/New York adaptation of Bland’s text, I will primarily rely on Henchman’s printing, since it served as the basis for most of the later works. Humphrey Bland, “The New Manual Exercise for the Foot” (February 1741); Bland, “Remainder of the New Manual Exercise” and “Evolutions of the Foot by Col. Bland” (March 1741); Bland, The New Manual Exercise; Bland, An Abstract of Military Discipline (1743); Bland, An Abstract of Military Discipline (1744); Bland, An Abstract of Military Discipline (1747); Bland, An Abstract of Military Discipline (1755); Bland, An Abstract of Military Discipline (1756); Bland, The New Manual Exercise (1754); Bland, An Abstract of Military Discipline (1754); Bland, The New Manual (1756); and Bland, A New manual exercise for the Foot. (1759).
statement of one of Bland’s military principles or guidelines. In these latter cases, Bland suggested various techniques and how best to solve a variety of tactical problems.

The care that went into adapting the Boston/New York version of Bland is evident when this edition is compared to the original version. While the first printing of Bland in London in 1727 was organized by chapters, and not sections, it is useful to think of this printing of Bland as containing a number of sections within which the author sought to convey a defined set of skills and knowledge. Bland began with the most basic skills. The first six chapters of the London Treatise on Military Discipline discussed how to form a battalion and position officers, the manual exercise for flintlock muskets, grenadier manual exercise, marching drill, how to conduct parades, and, finally, how to fire a battalion on line. Of these six chapters, the Boston/New York Abstract of Military Discipline included five. Only the chapter on grenadiers was omitted. Most noteworthy about these chapters are that they constitute a relatively cohesive set of ideas and that all of the training described could be executed on the parade ground. By confining the Boston/New York version of Bland to the opening chapters, Henchman was able to reduce a 360 page book to less than 65, while still presenting a cohesive training plan.65

The 1727 London Treatise on Military Discipline went on to examine more complex tactical problems for infantry units, such as defending against mounted attack, marching when the possibility of enemy contact existed, and fighting in line as part of a larger force. The London edition then discussed administrative and garrison tasks for infantry units and an army as a whole, mounted drill and exercises, and even more specialized tactical knowledge, such as how to conduct a siege and assault fortified positions.66

65 Bland, A Treatise of Military Discipline, (1727); and Bland, An Abstract of Military Discipline, (1743).
The first chapter in the colonial version of Bland described in detail the manual exercise for an infantryman, a basic and imperative skill for any eighteenth-century soldier to master. Bland’s manual exercise contained thirty-four separate commands to allow a soldier to effectively load and fire his weapon. This chapter appeared first in all editions of Bland published in North America, whether they originated in Boston, New York, or Philadelphia. Chapter 2 in the colonial version of Bland covered the evolutions of the foot, or the marching drill. Intriguingly, evolutions were described “as they were practiced by the Foot during the late War in Flanders.”67 In this chapter, Bland gave a detailed account of the various commands and movements that the units of an infantry battalion must master to perform effectively. These commands were essential to maneuvering an infantry battalion, and Bland gave specific instructions on wheel turns, facing movements, and the various “doubling” techniques used to alter the orientation and alignment of the platoons, companies, or divisions.

Bland, more than many of the authors (European and colonial) who wrote before him, maintained a combat focus throughout his writing. Unlike Brattle, for example, Bland indicated that the purpose of training was not ceremonial but tactical. The first half of his section on marching drill was devoted to a variety of doubling maneuvers. He justified the time and attention paid to doubling as follows:

As the Foot are always drawn up three deep, that is three Ranks when they are to go upon Action, or thro’ their Firings; the Use of doubling the front and rear half Files is self-evident, since it is by those Movements that a Battalion is brought from six deep to three deep, and therefore necessary for the Men to perform now and then.68

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The reason to train, in Bland’s mind, was to be prepared to fight. Periodically throughout his description of the various marching steps, Bland provided justification for their mastery based on battlefield employment. In addition to using doubling to move from a six-rank movement formation to a three-rank fighting line, Bland indicated that doubling might be used to open larger gaps between units to allow other battalions or squadrons to pass through. At the same time, he stated that this technique, previously a common practice, was time-consuming and difficult when units were in contact with the enemy. He asserted that the more common method was to wheel a platoon or two back off the line so that other units might pass. Once that had occurred, the platoons could quickly be wheeled back on line.\footnote{Bland, \textit{An Abstract of Military Discipline} (1743), 20.} Bland also commented that doubling was a useful technique to narrow the front of a unit so that it might pass through restricted terrain. While in many ways Bland covered material similar, if not nearly identical, to that included in earlier manuals, his treatment of the tasks described—doubling, wheeling, and marching—was more focused on practical applications. Like the preceding chapter, chapter 2, “The Evolutions of the Foot,” was included in all printings of Bland. Significantly, the Philadelphia editions of Bland concluded with this chapter. These Philadelphia printings sought to teach only individual skills, while the versions published in both New York and Boston moved beyond the strictly individual soldier to the duties of officers and evolutions of battalions.
Chapter 3 in the Boston/New York version of Bland was titled “Directions for forming a Battalion, posting of Officers, &c.” This chapter described how officers, NCOs, and drummers should position themselves to control and direct the battalion and, further, how to manipulate a battalion tactically. While chapter 2 focused on training evolutions and, thus, taught inexperienced soldiers how to move individually and as part of a platoon, chapter 3 explained movement of a whole battalion, describing maneuver by companies, divisions, and subdivisions. Bland provided specific instructions on how to position officers around an infantry battalion based on seniority. The colonel commanding the battalion and his deputy, the lieutenant colonel, were in front and

70 Ibid., 29.
centered on the battalion, while all the captains were arrayed right and left, alternating based on seniority and posted in front of the companies. The subalterns continued this pattern, with the junior ensign at the very center. The battalion’s lone major was positioned to supervise the exercising of the battalion. Bland additionally specified that NCOs were to stand on the left and right of each rank and that, if the battalion lacked sufficient NCOs for this scheme, they should alternate, with sergeants on the right of the first, third, and fifth ranks and on the left of the second, fourth, and sixth.\textsuperscript{71} Beyond merely locating officers, all versions of Bland described how to position an infantry battalion. Like the positioning of captains and subalterns, companies were arrayed by seniority. Additionally, the more senior officers, from the colonel to the captains, had companies that were their own. The colonel’s company was on the extreme right, the lieutenant colonel’s on the very left. The major’s company was on the left of the colonel’s. This pattern continued until the most junior company was in the center. Bland further specified that, if the battalion had a company of grenadiers, this group should be positioned on the right of the colonel’s company. The grenadier company was always stationed on the right of the battalion for ceremonial purposes and was not counted in the seniority of the rest of the battalion.

Bland also indicated the proper distances for ranks and files depending on activity. When the battalion was exercising or conducting a review, the ranks were to be at four paces distant from each other, with the files separated by a full pace. If the battalion was engaged in firing, the ranks would close to two paces apart and the files to half a pace, while if the battalion was wheeling, ranks were to close to a single pace. Whenever marching, Bland stated that files should be so close that the men’s shoulders

\textsuperscript{71} Bland, \textit{An Abstract of Military Discipline} (1747), 30.
almost touched. After Bland positioned the battalion leadership in their correct positions, he suggested a short exercise in which the battalion modified the distances between files and ranks as necessary for an infantry unit to conduct its various duties. The goal of the chapter was to educate officers and NCOs and to ensure that they were able to control an infantry battalion, whether it was arrayed by company or by division. Officers and NCOs needed to understand their roles and positions in the maneuver of divisions, companies, and subdivisions, the tactical and administrative subunits of the battalion. In many ways, the information in this section did not differ greatly from the general content of Brattle’s Rules and Directions; both were concerned with the position and function of the officers and NCOs of an infantry battalion. Yet the tone was very different. Bland’s officers had to perform the full panoply of tasks. They needed to be able to lead a battalion through a review or the manual of arms, march, and, while marching, wheel the battalion. Finally, they must be able to position the battalion to fire effectively. Brattle, on the other hand, was concerned almost exclusively with ceremonial functions, and his only tactical guidance was thoughtlessly appended to the rest of the work. The more thoughtful focus evident here and elsewhere in Bland further demonstrates the general superiority of his work.

The most interesting section of the Boston Bland, included in Henchman’s 1743 edition and repeated in both the 1744 and 1747 versions of the work, is chapter 4, “Containing Directions for the different Firings of the Foot.” It is likely that Henchman’s no longer extant 1755 and 1756 editions were identical. At the most basic level, the firing arrangements described by Bland in chapter 4 differed little from those to which

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72 Bland, An Abstract of Military Discipline (1747), 32.
73 Ibid., 35.
Breton alluded in his *Militia Discipline*. The battalion was to be organized in three ranks—front, center, and rear—and, when the ranks moved into a firing posture, they were to align themselves on a slight diagonal to the right, using the “locking” technique first described in North America in Henchman’s 1733 edition of Breton’s *Militia Discipline* and borrowed from a London edition of Bland.74 The “locking” technique was employed so that all ranks could fire without having those in the front ranks mask the fire of the soldiers to their rear.75 Chapter 4 of Henchman’s Bland outlined three possible methods for organizing and controlling the fire of an infantry battalion. Each method depended on the number of platoons in the battalion, which was not set. Bland explained that, “in dividing the Battalion into Platoons, they should be composed of an equal Number of Files, or at least not above one file stronger than another.”76 While this charge was ordinary enough, it had important consequences, namely that platoons were not fixed entities. Instead, in order to equalize both the number of platoons and the number of men in a platoon, companies—the administrative units of the battalion—were not used tactically. This practice, though included in all the Boston and New York editions of Bland, undoubtedly proved most unsuitable for a militia force that, when it trained, trained at the company level.

The Boston/New York *Abstract of Military Discipline* illustrated how an infantry battalion might fire if it had eighteen, fifteen, or twelve platoons. Bland advocated his first plan for strong battalions, those numbering six hundred or more, the second plan for battalions of five hundred men, and the final fire plan for small battalions of four hundred soldiers. Bland’s was the first military book published in America in the

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eighteenth century to advance any techniques for harnessing the fire of an infantry battalion. However, none of these fire plans was simple. The first plan divided the battalion into five different firing sets, or divisions. It also included three platoons set aside to serve as a reserve. The battalion was arrayed in line formation, with all eighteen platoons on line. However, the battalion did not fire sequentially down the line. Instead, the first platoon of the far right division fired, followed by the first firing platoon of the far division, and so on, until all of the platoons had fired.

![Front of the Battalion](image)

Fig. 4: In this illustration of Bland’s 18 platoon fire plan, the firing order is 1, 14, 4, 11, 7. These platoons fire sequentially when ordered to do so. On the next order to fire 2, 15, 5, 12 and 8 discharge their weapons. The battalion finishes its first set of firing with platoons 3, 16, 6, 13, and 9. One platoon acts as a reserve in the center of the formation, and the Grenadiers are split on either side of the formation to act as an additional reserve.

The second fire plan was almost identical and was based on sequential fire by platoon, spaced evenly along the battalion front to prevent the weight of the battalion’s fire from concentrating on only one part of the enemy line at a time. As in the previous firing order, the platoons on the right flank were the first to fire each time the battalion was ordered to do so.

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77 Eighteenth-century infantry battalions generally combined platoons from different companies to form either three, four, or five divisions per battalion.
Fig. 5: Bland’s second fire plan includes the same number of platoons firing with the battalion also organized into 5 divisions. However, it lacks the 2 grenadier platoons on each flank and the reserve platoon in the center. In this, plan platoons 2, 14, 5, 11, and 8 fire in sequence in the first firing order. Platoons 3, 15, 6, 12, and 9 fire next, and 1, 13, 4, 10, and 7 complete the last firing.

Bland’s third alternative fire plan was intended for a twelve-platoon battalion. The platoons were divided into four divisions of three platoons each. No platoons were held in reserve.  

Fig. 6: Bland’s third fire plan is also meant for sequential fire by platoon. The fire is spaced evenly across the battalion front. While the number is divisions is reduced to 4, the battalion still fires sequentially in 3 separate firing orders. The first order is platoons 2, 11, 5, and 8. The next is 3, 12, 6, and 9. The final firing order is 1, 10, 4, 7.

The goal of these various fire plans was to mitigate the relatively lengthy amount of time it took an eighteenth-century infantryman to reload once he had discharged his musket. In addition, given the inaccuracy of a smoothbore musket, European armies sought to concentrate their fire to achieve the greater effects of volley fire. Bland advocated these complicated patterns of sequential firing so that a well-trained battalion

could quickly deliver a substantial and nearly sustained volume of fire along its whole front, while that the same time retaining sufficient unexpended firepower as a reserve, to repulse any unexpected threat. While these fire plans were an effective means for controlled, evenly distributed fire, they demanded a high degree of repetitive training to execute successfully. J. A. Houlding contends that simpler volley fire techniques had supplanted Bland’s rigid sequential firing method by the middle of the eighteenth century. However, these simpler techniques were not included in an unabridged 1759 London edition of Bland or in a 1760 abstract modified for the York County militia in Britain.\(^7^9\) The complexity of Bland’s system of battalion fire highlights the substantial increase in difficulty when military training advanced from intricate but not excessively complex individual tasks to unit-level tasks that required precise coordination among different elements in the unit. These difficult, regimented fire plans also highlight the very linear, mathematical nature of eighteenth-century European military theory.

Henchman’s inclusion of these techniques suggests that at least Massachusetts militiamen were generally expert at the control of their individual weapons and that, as a result, leaders were looking for means to both mass and control the fire of their units.

These techniques also indicate that the Boston/New York Bland, like all the books produced before it in North America, was fundamentally written for a very specific type of battlefield, namely a European one. All platoons were on line, and Henchman’s Bland described exactly the correct spacing of the ranks and files of a platoon. He set the appropriate strength of a platoon at no less than thirty, to give it sufficient firepower, and

no more than forty-eight, the maximum number that he asserted an officer could successfully control in action. When firing, this Bland specified that ranks were positioned two paces apart, approximately sixty inches, and files are one half-pace separate, roughly fifteen inches. Let us then assume that a fully equipped infantryman took up roughly two and a half feet of space himself. These calculations yield a forty-eight-man platoon that took up between twenty and twenty-five yards when arrayed in three ranks and a thirty-man platoon that extended ten to fifteen yards. If we further assume that, when online, platoons were separated by one to two yards, to allow their officers and NCOs to control them more easily, a battalion on line might then have had a front, depending on the number of platoons, of between 450 and 130 yards.

Fig. 7: a diagram of the proper spacing between ranks and files as well as the correct spacing between platoons.

48 man platoon online, “locked” and properly spaced for firing

Spacing between platoons

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Since battalions seldom, if ever, deployed to face the enemy individually, fighting in this style demanded large open areas. Three battalions so arrayed on line could easily have taken up nearly a mile. While this highly regimented, linear style of battle was effective on the relatively open northern European plain, it was much less suited to the forested, difficult landscape of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century North America. Henchman, despite the general thoughtfulness of his version of Bland’s work, had not adapted the book for North American circumstances.

Chapter 4 of Henchman’s editions of Bland continued with detailed instruction on firing in various circumstances. Not only did Henchman include firing techniques suited to open battlefield conditions, he incorporated even more specialized firing techniques. Henchman printed Bland’s methods for firing in streets while advancing and retiring, as well as suggestions for firing from parapets. An article on how to form a square and repel attack by cavalry was also included. These tasks further complicated the training of Massachusetts militia units. In firing while advancing and retreating, for example, battalions were divided into firing units as if they were stationary, and the firing order proceeded similarly. However, in addition to the challenge, for officers, of controlling the sequential fire of twelve to eighteen moving platoons, soldiers were expected to reload their muskets on the move.\(^{81}\) This could not have been an easily mastered task. Nonetheless, it was conceivable that, in some circumstances, these methods might have been of use. Techniques for street, square, and parapet firing were less useful. Bland himself stated that the parapet technique “is only used in fortified Towns when besieged, in Intrenchments that are attacked, or that you are to fire over a Hedge or Wall at the

Enemy." While mastering these techniques would have yielded a relatively well-trained infantry battalion, it would not have been a unit well suited to the particular circumstances of North America.

Article 5 of chapter 4 was likely the most valuable article on firings included by Henchman. It described how to fire by rank, firing from rear to front, starting with the third rank, and was included as a technique employed to repel mounted attack. Interestingly, Bland disparages it with reference to stopping a cavalry charge:

This Method of firing by Ranks is seldom or ever used in service, tho' sometimes practiced in Exercise but another Method is now substituted in its Room, which is, that of saving the Fire of the whole front Rank of the Battalion to the last, and firing the two rear Ranks by Platoon; it being the compact Fire which does the Execution requisite to break a Squadron; whereas the Fire of a single Rank is so thin that it will not easily stop their progress if their Resolution don't fail them."

While this may have been true of the specific circumstance to which Bland refers, fire by rank did offer a simple and easily controlled means of engaging the enemy. While more sophisticated techniques might have been appropriate to trained regular army units, simple rank firing would likely have been easier for Americans to learn. This approach did not demand the complex coordination of various platoons and divisions required by Bland’s preferred method, methods more clearly suited to trained, regular troops. Moreover, small units, such as militia companies that trained infrequently, could practice firing by ranks on their own. If the third rank always knew it was to fire first, there was no need to coordinate which platoons in a battalion were part of a particular firing order. Rather, if the ranks fired sequentially, even if different companies fired at slightly different times, fire spread along the entire line and enough was reserved for contingencies.

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82 Ibid., 54.
83 Bland, An Abstract of Military Discipline (1743), 56.
While the subsequent editions of Bland were generally consistent with Henchman’s 1743 edition, there were notable changes. Much of Bland’s chapter 4 was omitted from Henry de Forest’s 1754 New York edition. Instead of detailed descriptions of Bland’s three fire plans, the 1754 New York version of *Military Discipline* contained more limited techniques for fire control. The shorter version of the chapter included the same specific individual and rank directions offered by Henchman’s version. Yet they mentioned only in passing that:

The Major should take particular Care to let the Officers and Soldiers know distinctly What Firings they belong to, whether of the first, second, or third, or the Reserve, as also what Number each Platoon is of in the different Firings, as the first, second, third, fourth or fifth Platoon, of the first, second, or third Firing, or of the Reserve.  

While the change may simply have been a cost-driven editorial one, it does indicate a certain compromise in the New York publication between the completely individually oriented Philadelphia version of Bland and the more systematic, comprehensive Boston printings. This illustrates a key part of militia units’ dilemma: in order to be fully trained and “fit for Service,” in the vocabulary of the time, a militia battalion had to master complex unit-level tasks. Among the most daunting was effectively controlling and distributing musket fire against an enemy. Unfortunately, as then conceived by European military thinkers like Bland, these tasks were difficult and demanded a long, focused period of training that militia units simply lacked. Besides, given the markedly different circumstances between European and North American warfare at the time, these methods were neither wholly appropriate nor effective. Thus, once colonists realized the lack of utility of a four- to six-hundred-man infantry battalion firing sequentially by platoon in a

86 Ibid., 318–21.
pattern spread along the entire battalion front, minimizing the importance of these
techniques was an obvious solution. Intended either to keep constant fire on an
approaching enemy infantry battalion or to maintain enough ready firepower unused to
break a cavalry charge, these methods were simply less useful in North America.

Later American versions of Bland made more accommodations to prevailing
circumstances in North America. The 1743 Military Discipline contained no instruction
on the bayonet manual of arms or use. Subsequent editions added a chapter focused on
bayonet training. The physical layout of all American editions of Military Discipline
indicates a book meant for reading and study. However, similar to The New Exercise of
Firelocks and Bayonets and William Breton’s Militia Discipline, all of the Boston and
New York editions of Military Discipline, starting with Henchman’s 1744 printing,
concluded with a list of manual exercise commands along with number of motions for
both musket and bayonet. As with the earlier militia-focused works, this suggests that
colonial printers understood the importance to American militia members of learning the
manual exercise for their personal weapons. These printers, therefore, put an easily
consulted chart at the end of the book in anticipation of use on the training ground. None
of the American versions of Military Discipline contained any instruction on mounted
operations, again illustrating the relative unimportance of cavalry in the generally
wooded terrain over which Americans typically fought.

In contrast to the American abridgments of Bland, the full British edition sought
to explain as comprehensively as possible numerous aspects of military operations and
life. An examination of the full Treatise of Military Discipline helps further discern
colonial Americans’ perceptions of their particular needs by revealing what they left out.

87 Bland, An Abstract of Military Discipline (1744), 68–70.
Instead of the four or five chapters presented in the American *Abstract of Military Discipline*, *Treatise of Military Discipline* ran to twenty-three chapters and was at least 360 pages long. 88 American publishers maintained the general structure of the work in their abstracts. The British work was divided into chapters by topic and further subdivided into articles. The first chapter was titled “Directions for the forming of Battalions, posting of Officers, &c” and covered in exhaustive detail all aspects of forming a battalion, as well as the preparatory steps necessary to exercise an infantry battalion. 89 The next several chapters were the body of the book adapted for the American editions. They covered “The Exercise of a Battalion of foot,” “Manual Exercise of the Grenadiers,” “General Rules for wheeling,” and “passing in review.” 90 Chapter 6 was titled “Consisting of directions for the different firings of the foot” and proposed how best to control and exploit the firepower of an infantry battalion. 91 This chapter both described and illustrated the best methods for organized infantry battalion fire. In addition to the methods cataloged in the various colonial editions of Bland, the full British *Treatise* included: “How to go through the firing advancing; Directions to fire retiring; How to fire by sub-divisions standing; How to fire by sub-divisions advancing; How to fire by sub-divisions retreating; How to fire by grand-divisions, standing, advancing, and retreating; [and] How to fire by the firings, standing, . . advancing, . . .[and] retreating.” 92 Chapter 7 covered how an infantry battalion should defend itself against cavalry attack.

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88 Humphrey Bland, *A Treatise of Military Discipline* (1727), i–xxi
89 Ibid., 1.
90 Ibid., 18–72.
91 Ibid., 74.
92 Ibid., 86–90.
Up to chapter 7, most subjects discussed in *Treatise* received at least some
treatment in the various colonial versions of *Abstract of Military Discipline*. Chapter 8
engaged topics not reprinted in America. Yet, it was here that Bland dispensed some of
his most valuable tactical advice. In chapter 8, when describing how to move effectively
when enemy contact was possible, Bland emphasized the need for both an advance and
rear guard, saying:

The van guard is to march before the regiment. The distance which they are to be
advanced, cannot be absolutely determined; since it must depend on the nature of
the country you march through; so that in an inclosed country it can hardly exceed
two hundred yards without losing sight of the regiment, which they are by no
means to do, unless they have orders: an in an open or champaign one, they ought
not to be above three or four hundred yards, lest they should be attacked and cut
off by a superior party, before the regiment could come up to their relief.\(^{93}\)

Later in the chapter, he explained:

When a Regiment, or detachment marches through an enclosed or woody country,
the danger which they are to apprehend must be from the foot, and not from the
horse: and lest a partisan party should escape the discovery of the van-guard, it
would be proper to have small parties, commanded by sergeants, marching on the
flanks of the battalion.\(^{94}\)

The effective use of advance, rear, and flank guards in densely wooded terrain was never
made more explicit than by what befell General Edward Braddock’s command in 1755,
during the French and Indian War. Braddock and his forces, composed of the 44\(^{th}\) and
48\(^{th}\) regiments, reinforced with colonial militia, were traveling on a narrow trail in
Western Pennsylvania when they were ambushed by a combined force of French and
Indians. After a three-hour engagement in which almost two-thirds of the British force
were killed or wounded, those remaining finally broke and retreated in disorder. General
Braddock was among the dead, and the expedition failed in its task to seize Fort

\(^{93}\) Ibid., 137.
\(^{94}\) Ibid., 143.
Duquesne at present day Pittsburgh.\footnote{Stephen Brumwell, Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755–1763 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 16.} Explanations for what cause the disaster differ. French participants in the battle stated afterwards that the destruction of Braddock’s command was due to the British insistence on forming lines and attempting to fight a European-style battle of massed forces against a dispersed enemy fighting from behind cover. Conversely, the official British investigation blamed the rout on a panic that infected the troops.\footnote{Ibid., 200.} Regardless of the exact cause, the British army was at the time unprepared for warfare in the wilderness of North America.

In chapter 9 of the British text, Bland described how units should prepare themselves for battle. He recommended “Necessary inspection into the arms and ammunition the day before the action” and when engaged on the field. He reconfirmed the linear concept of European warfare with his injunction in article 3 of the chapter that “No battalion is to advance before the line in pursuit of the enemy.” He ended the chapter with an interesting assertion that British troops had a reputation for being ill-disciplined. Chapters 10 to 14 covered infantry operations in garrison and the associated ceremonial and guard tasks. In the next three chapters, Treatise addressed the duties of the infantry when encamped in the field. Chapter 18 reinforced the importance of sieges to eighteenth-century warfare, speaking at length to the role of infantry in a siege. The following chapter served as an excellent reminder of the bureaucratic nature of all professional armies, as it was concerned with the distribution of orders to various units and the even levy of troops for details. A lengthy chart was included that allowed the appropriate authority to order each battalion to send a specified number of men for work details, so that the higher authority received the right number and so that all shared
equally in the task. *Treatise* was focused on infantry operations. However, in a noteworthy contrast to all the American versions of Bland, the full British work also covered cavalry operations in detail. Bland included chapters titled “Manual and Evolutions of the Cavalry explained,” “Exercise of the Dragoons explained,” and “Guards ordinary of the cavalry,” as well as a chapter on the exercise and evolutions of light dragoons.\(^97\) The British *Treatise of Military Discipline* was a well-executed attempt to provide a comprehensive instructional text geared at company and field officers. The strategic and operational aspects of war interested Bland less. He focused instead on tactics and on ensuring that battalions and squadrons, the basic units in eighteenth-century European warfare, were fully trained and able to do their duty.

Despite all their faults, the American abridgements of Bland’s *Treatise* reveal the process of editing that occurred in military publishing between Samuel Green’s printing of the Duke of Monmouth’s *Abridgement of the English Military Discipline* and the printings of the Boston and New York versions of Bland. In these colonial editions of Bland, publishers brought forth coherent, thoughtfully organized texts. Moreover, as the books were centered on a series of progressive tasks for infantry units, the material was immediately applicable to colonial militia units as they were organized. The Boston and New York versions of Bland progressed from the strictly individual (the manual of arms) to introductory unit tasks (marching evolutions) to leader tasks (where to position officers and NCOs to control an infantry battalion) and, finally, to more complex, combat-oriented unit tasks (the various firings possible for an infantry battalion). Only at the end of the Boston and New York versions of Bland did the text veer from the strictly practical. The final chapter, on passing in review, speaks to important cultural questions

and to the symbolic roles served by colonial militias, but it was not focused on tasks that had immediate battlefield applications. Clearly, the structure and progression of the Boston and New York editions of Bland made the text both the most comprehensive manual printed in the colonies since the 1690 edition of Monmouth and the most intelligently focused. However, as with all the colonial reprints that preceded it, the abridgements of Bland still suffered from an assumption of European circumstances.

The fact that two relatively distinct versions of Bland’s work emerged in colonial North America reveals at least a theoretical split in the approach to military training in the various colonies. The Boston and New York versions of Bland were well-conceived and reasonably complete manuals for training infantry units. They addressed training individual soldiers both in the use of their weapons and in marching. Once that level of expertise was mastered, the books moved on to rudimentary training for officers and NCOs. While the advice offered was exceedingly basic—where the battalion cadre should be positioned and how to open the formation for training—the instructions provided were focused on those tasks that officers needed to execute to facilitate the training and tactical employment of their units. In the following section, the colonial printers even included what Bland himself identified as the primary focus of training: the firings. Put more simply, the Boston and New York versions of Bland presented the basic template for creating and coordinating an infantry unit—start with individual training, move on to leader training, and culminate with tactical training. Undoubtedly much was omitted. This version of Bland offered no instructions on how a unit should move from marching formation into fighting formation, for example, and, unlike the full English version of Bland, the Boston and New York editions did not deal with fighting in

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or moving through restricted terrain. Nor did they cover the full range of administrative and garrison questions addressed in the British editions. But even with these redactions, the model provided, if followed diligently, should have yielded an infantry battalion reasonably trained in a European style of warfare. The Philadelphia version of Bland betrayed much less ambitious goals. As the contents made perfectly clear, all the various printers of the Philadelphia version sought to accomplish was to teach individual soldiers their most basic tasks, namely to use their individual weapons and to march with some degree of proficiency. In other words, the Boston and New York editions sought to train units, while the version published in Philadelphia restricted its scope to individuals.

The events of the period provide interesting context for the publication of the various editions of Bland. The two clusters of Bland abridgements were published in times of war in North America. The first cluster of printings occurred between 1743 and 1747, just before and during King George's War.\(^99\) The second cluster emerged between 1754 and 1759, as the French and Indian War raged across British North America.\(^100\) Clearly, conflict influenced the frequency of publication. Yet Bland's text, as it was presented in North America, had little to offer that would have benefited Americans fighting in the French and Indian War.

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The French and Indian War began in North America with a skirmish between a force from the Virginia militia, under the command of George Washington, and a French military detachment operating in the Ohio Valley. Both sides endeavored to fortify critical terrain beyond the Appalachian Mountains. This policy of competitive fortification turned bloody in 1754. That year, Washington’s subordinates attempted to build a fort at the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers, where the two joined to form the Ohio. Their efforts were repulsed by a larger French military detachment.\textsuperscript{101} The French rapidly fortified the strategic location, naming it Fort Duquesne.\textsuperscript{102} The confrontation became a war when Washington attacked a French reconnaissance party observing his efforts to fortify an alternate site in the region. Following a skirmish, more powerful French forces overwhelmed Washington’s detachment and forced it to retreat to Virginia.

These events precipitated the largest of the wars fought by British colonists against French and Indian foes. The French and Indian War, which corresponded to the Seven Year’s War in Europe, ranged across much of British North America and was the first colonial war to involve large-scale participation by both British and French regular forces. The French and Indian War differed substantially from the three major conflicts that preceded it. On the frontier, the conflict was less a war of raids than a war of forts. Both British and French armies attempted to control key terrain and avenues of approach by building fortifications. Most crucial to that phase of the war were the aforementioned Fort Duquesne, at present day Pittsburgh, Fort Ticonderoga, on the banks of Lake Champlain in northern New York and Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island. Fort

\textsuperscript{101} Leach, \textit{Arms for Empire}, 332.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 332.
Ticonderoga was crucial because it controlled the most direct approach to the heart of New France, Montreal and Quebec City, while Fort Duquesne was the linchpin of French efforts to control the continent west of the Appalachian Mountains and unify Louisiana with Canada. Louisbourg, in a long war, was likely the most important location of all, as it controlled the mouth of the Saint Lawrence river and thus French ability to aid Canada easily.

The French and Indian War lasted longer than its predecessors. The duration of the conflict was no doubt due to the presence of regulars on both sides. Regular troops, especially on the French side, partially redressed the tactical and strategic imbalance that had previously characterized wars between the British and the French in North America. New France simply did not have the population or the economic capacity to mount the efforts undertaken in the French and Indian War, absent this direct French support. During the opening phase of the war, France achieved great success. French forces were the first to fortify the crucial Ohio, Allegheny, and Monongahela River junction. Moreover, French and Indian forces decimated the British expedition sent to reduce Fort Duquesne. Additionally, the French were able to seize crucial fortifications in northern New York at Oswego and, further south, at Fort William Henry on Lake George.¹⁰³

The course of the war began to change in 1758, when a British force took Louisbourg, on Cape Breton Island, after an extended siege. British forces also finally succeeded in securing Fort Duquesne in November 1758. However, Britain suffered a severe reverse that same year, when a combined British and colonial expedition was repulsed in its efforts to seize Fort Ticonderoga. The war continued into 1759, when an expedition lead by General James Wolfe captured Quebec City after a pitched battle

before the city walls. Still, British forces were not able to complete the conquest of New France that year. The original plan for the year was that a three-pronged operation would finish the war. Wolfe’s expedition up the St. Lawrence River was the eastern branch. As Wolfe tackled Quebec, other expeditions were intended to converge on New France from other directions. One was to proceed north from Albany, New York, along the Lake George/Lake Champlain axis, while a third arm would come from the west, first along Lake Ontario and then down the St. Lawrence River. Unfortunately for the British, only the eastern prong—the expedition up the St. Lawrence—achieved great success, and even that effort was compelled to stop after the seizure of Quebec. The following year, Jeffery Lord Amherst, the overall British commander in North America, completed the destruction of New France by fully executing the plan that he intended to employ the year before.\textsuperscript{104}

The tactics employed during the French and Indian War also differed from those used in previous wars between New England and New France. More traditional campaigns pitting regular forces against each other replaced the older colonial pattern of raids and counter-raids. Yet the war did not take on a purely European caste. Instead, both French and British forces adapted their methods of fighting to North America. The French and Indian ambush that destroyed General Braddock’s expedition against Fort Duquesne is a perfect example of how French regular forces practicing Indian techniques produced devastating results. While the British never achieved such a spectacular outcome, they too recognized the importance of transforming the way they fought to accommodate North American circumstances. To better fight in the North American wilderness, in 1758 the British Army created a new, separate regiment of light infantry—

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 120–28.
the “80th Regiment of Light Armed Foot”—intended to emulate American ranger units.\textsuperscript{105} The following year, the move towards light infantry intensified, as each British battalion in North America formed a light infantry company.\textsuperscript{106} Even institutionally, the British Army recognized the imperative of operating with light infantry in North America. Battalions serving in other parts of the world did not have light infantry companies, but, when transferred for service in the American colonies, were obliged to create them.\textsuperscript{107} Colonists faced a somewhat different challenge, one that they met less successfully. Colonial authorities were forced to mobilize larger numbers of men on a more sustained basis than they had theretofore attempted. Moreover, unlike British regulars, American colonists did not already have a reservoir of military knowledge and experience that could be redirected into new tactics. For the vast majority of those who participated in the French and Indian War, that conflict was their only real military experience, and the experience was often confined to a single campaign season.\textsuperscript{108} Thus, if colonists were to have any impact militarily, they had to be trained quickly. The books printed in the colonies after the abridged versions of Bland tried in varying ways to address these problems specific to the French and Indian War.

The instructional military books printed in North America starting with \textit{The New Exercise of Firelocks and Bayonets} were well suited to overcome one perennial problem in colonial military knowledge: simplicity. From the end of the second decade of the century until the French and Indian War rendered the various versions of Bland obsolete, American printers produced short, simple texts that were easy to use. Overall, these

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\textsuperscript{105} Brumwell, \textit{Redcoats}, 229.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 230.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 231.
\textsuperscript{108} Anderson, \textit{A People's Army}, 26–63.
\end{flushleft}
books successfully explained how to handle individual weapons, the most basic level of military skill. Both *The New Exercise* and the Daniel Henchman’s version of Breton’s *Militia Discipline*, if used appropriately, would produce infantrymen moderately skilled in the manual of arms and drill, while Henchman’s version of Bland offered a clear path to generate not only trained soldiers but also reasonably competent battalions. However, none of these books faced the more difficult question of not simply translating knowledge but adapting the particulars of European tactical thinking to fit North American circumstances. Regardless of how well the texts explained the process of creating the formation, a battalion on line, divided into five firing orders and fifteen platoons, had no tactically useful place in British North America.
Chapter 3: Adapting
Confronting North American Circumstances, 1757–1759

Towards the end of the primary period of Bland’s publication in the colonies—1757 to 1759—six new military books appeared in British North America.¹ Four of these books still exist. This burst of publishing was primarily due to the demands of the French and Indian War. The war provided a pointed and immediate incentive for colonists to learn how to fight wars better. As with the publication of various versions of Bland’s *Military Treatise*, the books that followed Bland were published in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. In many ways, this period represented the most intriguing episode in American military publishing in the eighteenth century. During these years, the first works appeared that accounted for American circumstances in ways that moved beyond basic simplification of European tactics to the adaptation of those tactics to the North American topography. However, at the same time, colonial Americans continued to publish, with little thoughtful modification, shortened European works of little use in much of North America.

The first book published during this war-stoked efflorescence was a short version of the British Army’s 1756 service regulation, printed in both Boston and New York in

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¹The Gentleman’s compleat military dictionary (1759); British Army, A new exercise to be observed by his Majesty’s troops on the establishment of Great Britain and Ireland (New York: J. Parker and W. Weyman, 1757); British Army, The New Rules of His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland to be observed in the Army (Philadelphia: W. Dunlap, 1758); British Army, The New rules of his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland to be observed in the Army, (Philadelphia: W. Dunlap, 1758); Massachusetts, The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay, (Boston: Green and Russell, 1758); and Thomas Webb, A Military Treatise on the appointments of the Army. Containing many useful hints, not touched upon before by any author; and proposing some new regulations in the Army, which will be particularly useful in carrying on the war in North America (Philadelphia: W. Dunlap, 1759). While there is record of six titles published during the period, only four are still extant. This chapter is restricted to the currently existing books.
1757.² The structure of the American version of the book was uncomplicated. The first few pages explained the elaborate layout of a typical British infantry battalion of the day as it would be arrayed if it were to fire with all its subunits online. The pamphlet-length work illuminated the correct positions for all officers and non-commissioned officers in the battalion and divided the battalion into platoons, subdivisions, and grand divisions. Both Boston and New York printers thoughtfully included a diagram of the formation that showed the correct positions for all named participants graphically. Also included in the schematic was a designation of each platoon’s precedence in the firing order, though the body of the text contained no explanation of this information, leaving it to the discerning reader to grasp what exactly was intended. The battalion described was composed of four grand divisions, eight subdivisions, and sixteen platoons. The battalion’s grenadier company was not included in the delineation of grand and subdivisions, but was separated into two platoons stationed on the right and left flanks of the battalion formation. To lead such a battalion, the British Army’s regulation required twenty-seven commissioned officers and thirty NCOs. Thus, the regulation demanded a fifty-seven member cadre to lead an infantry battalion. Additionally, subdividing a battalion by divisions, subdivisions, and platoons meant that the battalion employed different subunits tactically than it did for daily administrative purposes. When not in a tactical firing formation, a battalion was organized into companies, but the structure described above did not employ companies. Thus, when an infantry battalion deployed to fight, one of the units to which soldiers were most accustomed disappeared, and

² British Army, *A New Exercise To Be Observed by his Majesty’s Troops on the Establishment of Great Britain and Ireland* (Boston: Green and Russell, 1757); and British Army, *A New Exercise To Be Observed by his Majesty’s Troops on the Establishment of Great Britain and Ireland.* (New York: J. Parker and W. Weyman, 1757).
soldiers necessarily found themselves next to other soldiers with whom they were not particularly familiar, under the direction of officers from companies other than their own. For a militia that trained primarily at the company level, this was not a recipe for success.

Moreover, there is an implicit assumption that the majority of the officers and NCOs in the battalion would be relatively experienced with their duties. Examining the British forces in North America during the period provides evidence of the experience level of the average British infantry battalion. In 1761, the British Army stationed twenty-five infantry battalions in North America. On average, these battalions consisted of seven captains, sixteen lieutenants, and eight ensigns who were primarily responsible for training the battalion. Most of these officers were not inexperienced. Among ensigns, the most inexperienced officers in a battalion, the average time as an ensign was just over two years, and experience levels increased with rank. Lieutenants averaged almost three and a half years at their rank, while captains, though they had served longer overall, averaged just over two and a half years in that position. In general, these units were experienced and fully manned. The 1757 regulation called for six captains, eight lieutenants, and nine ensigns; battalions in North America significantly exceeded those requirements. None of this speaks directly to how well trained any of these battalions were. However, it is reasonable to infer, from the fact that the average battalion had more than the required number of officers and their level of experience and service that they were generally proficient at leading their units in the field and in training. The same

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3 British Army, *A List of His Majesty's Land Forces in North America, with the rank of the Officers in the Regiment and Army*, (New York, J. Parker, 1761). See also Appendix I for analysis of the British Army in North America for the period by battalion, rank, and length of service.

4 See tables 1–3 in Appendix I for a complete analysis of the British Army battalions in North America by rank and experience level. The tables calculate both the number and experience level in a particular rank of all officers in the British Army in North America in 1761.
could not be said for American militia units of the same period. Most Massachusetts units that served in the French and Indian War were recruited at the start of each year for service during that summer’s campaign.\textsuperscript{5} The complicated formation mandated by the 1757 regulation was a structure that a regular British infantry battalion could reasonably be expected to master and was created with a professionalizing British Army in mind. This formation was much less appropriate for the under-trained militias of Massachusetts and New York. A case in point, the 1758 Massachusetts militia act required that each foot company train only six days a year.\textsuperscript{6}

Once the pamphlet explained the layout of an infantry battalion, the text moved on to cover a platoon exercise. The platoon exercise dealt exclusively with how the men of a unit should load and fire their weapons. Divided into three parts, the exercise took infantrymen through the steps of fixing bayonets, priming and loading their muskets, and firing. Reflecting the central role of this type of exercise in British Army training of the day, the adjutant general stated that, when practicing the exercise, “the men should be taught to do all the motions with great briskness, and as it were with a Spring, which not only helps to mark the Time, and distinguish the Motions, but gives Spirit to the Men themselves.”\textsuperscript{7} It is unlikely that many infantrymen derived any great spirit from the repeated practice of these exercises, and this exercise differed little from the manual exercises included in previous books published in North America. North Americans undoubtedly found the second half of the pamphlet, which provided detailed instructions on the proper handling of muskets by foot soldiers, more useful. However, the first half

\textsuperscript{5} Fred Anderson, \textit{A People’s Army}, 27.
\textsuperscript{6} Massachusetts, \textit{An Act in Addition to the Several Acts of this Province for Regulating the Militia} (Boston, 1758), 1.
\textsuperscript{7} British Army, \textit{A New Exercise to be Observed by His Majesty’s Troops}, 8.
of the manual suffered from the same defects that plagued most of the military books printed in North America. Implicitly, the book’s recommendations assumed circumstances different from those that existed in the colonies. This “adapted” version of the British Army service regulation did not account for wooded and dense terrain, nor was the firing plan included one that any militia unit, constrained by both inexperience and lack of training time, could hope to master.

At roughly the same time, Massachusetts province published one of the most thoughtful military treatises printed in North America during the eighteenth century. In 1758, the province released a thirteen-page manual titled *The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay.* While the work was not groundbreaking in the history of military thought or tactics, it was significant for several reasons. First, it was the first officially published—rather than just endorsed—military book printed by a North American government. Second, the work sought not only to simplify European works for an American audience but, going a step further, to adapt those works purposefully to American circumstances. The book began by exalting the citizen soldier. The anonymous author suggested that “Every Man therefore that wishes to secure his own Freedom, and thinks it his Duty to defend that of his Country, should, as he prides himself on being a Free Citizen, think it his truest Honour to be a Soldier Citizen.” Nor did the author restrain himself in declaring the importance of a trained citizenry, declaring:

‘Tis base and slavish not to be allowed to bear Arms in his Own and Country’s Defence: ‘Tis Perfidy and Treachery in a Free Citizen not to be willing so to bear Arms. But to affect to bear Arms, not know or learn the Use of them—is worse

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8 Massachusetts, *The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay.*
9 Ibid., 3.
than Slavishness and Treachery; it is cruelly, with Aggravation to mock his Country in it’s Distress.\textsuperscript{10}

The rhetoric here employed differs little from the country Whig sentiments identified in Bernard Bailyn’s \textit{Ideological Origins of the American Revolution}.\textsuperscript{11}

On a more practical level, the author spent the first several pages of his work denouncing the application of standard European tactics and training methods to American militia units. On the subject of the manual of arms, the author was unconvinced of its utility. He wrote that, while regular British Army soldiers were unfamiliar with the use of weapons prior to enlisting, American militiamen were not. Instead, he asserted, “every Man here knows and is peculiarly expert in the Use of the Firelock.”\textsuperscript{12} Moreover, he continued, “As an Individual[,] therefore, he knows already better than Six Days, or six Times six Days in a year, would teach him the use of his Arms.”\textsuperscript{13} The author further declared that any attempt at teaching a uniform manual of arms would inhibit rather than improve any given soldier’s performance. He advocated instead that every militia soldier continue to load and fire generally as he had learned on his own. However, aware of the confusion that might result from a body of men in close order acting individually, the author emphasized that “Every Motion therefore that he makes with his Firelock, must of absolute Necessity be right up and down directly before him or in a direct Line Front to Rear in the Space betwixt him and his right hand Man.”\textsuperscript{14} This idea—that it was better to allow soldiers to load as they saw fit, as long as the process they adopted did not interfere with anyone around them—was radical. Yet this

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 3.
\textsuperscript{12} Massachusetts, \textit{The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay}, 4.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 4.
was not the only tactical orthodoxy that the Massachusetts author was prepared to renounce.

In addition to rejecting the manual of arms for militia units—an exercise that was at the center of all but one of the previously published military books—the author questioned the utility of much of the marching drill then in vogue. The author accepted that men must move around a battlefield effectively, but he did not believe that traditional European methods were the best way for militia units to accomplish that task. This new manual questioned the utility and practicality of dividing militia battalions into divisions and subdivisions, as most of the previously published books advocated (the various editions of Bland and the 1757 British Army regulation being the most recent examples). The author was clearly familiar with Bland and cited him as an authority against attempting maneuvers that exceed a unit's capabilities. Paraphrasing Bland, the Massachusetts manual stated that:

Many things, says Mr. Bland, that might be greatly useful, and of the utmost Service, were they so perfectly learnt as to be executed with an habitual Readiness, should never be practiced, where ther' a want of constant Training and military Discipline, the officers cannot be supposed to have a thorough ready Knowledge of the Service; and where we know the private Men, as in the case of Militia, cannot be brought to be very exact: In such a Case, it would be infinitely dangerous to attempt it.\textsuperscript{15}

In the writer's mind, this was undoubtedly the case for complex battalion formations incorporating divisions and subdivisions. While, in the proper circumstances, these formations might have been highly effective, for American militia units that lacked both experienced leadership and trained soldiers, these ideas were more dangerous than useful. The author described the danger even more starkly, warning:

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 6.
Besides no Man without, constant and continued Training (which cannot be the Case of Militia) will ever learn to know the several Divisions and Platoons to which he belongs: The Battalion therefore by that means would be in Confusion; and if ever broke, either by the Interruption of broken Ground, or thick Woods, or the Force of the enemy, would never be able again to Rally and form.\textsuperscript{16}

To avoid the difficulty of training militia units that assembled infrequently on a complex division, subdivision, and platoon structure that could change frequently, the 1758 Massachusetts manual proposed instead a battalion formation based on companies. The companies would be further divided into two commands, one on the left and the other on the right. The captain leading the company would assume responsibility for one command, and one of the company's subalterns would command the other half. To achieve a further division, each command was separated into two parties; a commissioned officer would direct the right side party, while a non-commissioned officer had responsibility for the left.\textsuperscript{17} The author favored this alignment because it ensured that both the officers and the men of a battalion had fixed assignments within the battalion.

The author asserted that his scheme would avoid problems inherent in a divisional system. "[I]nstead of the artificial Division of the Battalion into Grand Divisions, Sub-Divisions, an Platoons, which must constantly vary according to the Number of the Battalion, and which consequently a Militia Soldier, and perhaps the Officers, would never learn to know," his solution would allow both soldiers and officers to never be "ignorant of which Company they belong[ed] to . . . ." He enthused further that "[T]hey could never be ignorant under which Subaltern's Command they fell; and it would be as easy as knowing their right Hand from their Left to know which Division of this

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 6.
Command, namely, whether the Subalterns or the Serjeants they belong’d to.\textsuperscript{18} Nor did the Massachusetts manual object to the battalion level of tactics. While the author asserted that all units, including militia ones, had to be able to march and wheel in unison, he believed that many of the platoon marching evolutions taught in previous manuals were unsuited to American purposes. Most particularly, he found the doubling by both half-files and half-ranks useless. He opined that:

Any of those intricate Evolutions, such as doubling the Files, wither by half Files, or half Ranks in Divisions; such as I fear wou’d never be learnt with Exactness, nor executed with a habitual Readiness, wou’d in my Opinion, waste much of the Men’s Time in learning; and when wanted to be done in Action, being done imperfectly, would rather throw the Body into Confusion, and tend to break it.\textsuperscript{19}

In sum, in the space of little more than five pages, the author of the 1758 Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay denounced as inapplicable to his province’s forces most of the central features of the European military training to that date and much of what previous American military publications had advocated.

In its place, the author proposed his own training scheme that was, in his mind, both more thoughtfully adapted to the physical conditions of North America and better suited to the particulars of American militia units. However, the Massachusetts author’s scheme was less radical than his denunciations of established doctrine suggested. The training program that followed his indictment of overly formalized European training techniques was actually the manual of arms from the 1756 British Army regulation, which had been printed previously in New York.\textsuperscript{20} The author of Massachusetts’ 1758 militia manual incorporated this text verbatim. As with the New York version of the

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 5.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 8; and British Army, A new exercise to be observed by his Majesty’s troops on the establishment of Great Britain and Ireland.
1756 British Army regulation, the Massachusetts text included the injunction that soldiers should perform the exercise “with great Briskness” because to do so “gives Spirit to the Men themselves.”\textsuperscript{21} The author of the Massachusetts manual clearly identified the need for greater adaptation than had been offered by Bland and his predecessors, but did not achieve that adaptation fully. In the same work, presumably the same author advocated that no time be wasted on training soldiers to execute the manual of arms and, a few pages later, provided what was essentially the British Army’s manual exercise.

That is not to say that \textit{The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay} did not offer the militia units of the province better training guidance than was readily available elsewhere. In the section of the pamphlet following the manual and platoon exercise portion, the author included guidance on marching. Clearly thinking of the specific conditions likely to face militiamen, the author wrote that “as the Paths and Ways by which a Regiment or Company may be obliged to march in the Woods, will not admit of the Battalion’s marching even by the smallest Sub-divisions; it is directed that you teach them to march whole companies and even the whole Battalion by Files.”\textsuperscript{22} Additionally, \textit{The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay} either completely omitted or greatly simplified the complex wheeling and countermarch movements espoused by previous manuals. The Massachusetts manual attempted to provide useful alternatives to traditional European techniques. While marching a battalion in a file through wooded or dense terrain is perhaps not the ideal solution, particularly absent flank and advance guards for security, it is preferable to many other methods.

\textsuperscript{21} Massachusetts, \textit{The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay}, 12.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 13.
The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay was clearly the most effective adaptation of European military theory to American circumstances yet published. By acknowledging the limits that colonial militia units faced in both experience and available training time, the manual provided guidance that was more specifically suited to militia needs than anything previously offered. The author sought to simplify both the way soldiers used their weapons and the elaborate and complicated battalion-level tactical formations that previous authors like Nicholas Boone, and the American versions of William Breton, and Humphrey Bland proposed. Furthermore, the author attempted to both simplify and provide alternative marching techniques for militia units. Yet, on a more fundamental level, The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay did not solve the fundamental tactical problem faced by British North Americans when fighting Indians and Indian allies on the frontier: how to employ less linear formations that did not offer relatively easy targets but that still allowed commanders to control their subunits. Given the technology available and most colonists’ ignorance of the wilderness compared with Indians, perhaps this was an impossible hurdle to overcome. However, while The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay allowed colonial militiamen to train at techniques they could hope to master and sought to incorporate the skills, particularly with individual weapons, that most colonists no doubt possessed, it still resulted in a linear tactical formation dependent on unified volley fire.

At roughly the same time that The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay was published, Thomas Webb, a lieutenant in the British Army’s 48th regiment, published a book in Philadelphia titled A Military Treatise on the Appointments
of the Army. Containing Many Useful Hints, not touched upon before by any Author: And
Proposing some New Regulations in the Army, which will be particularly useful in
carrying on the War in North-America.  

Webb likely participated in Braddock’s ill-fated encounter en route to Fort Duquesne. Webb was first commissioned in 1754 and was promoted to Lieutenant in the 48th regiment, one of the regiments ambushed on Braddock’s expedition, on 9 July 1755, the day of the battle and was almost certainly promoted to make up for losses suffered in the engagement.  

In addition to being a British Army officer and a veteran of the French and Indian War, Webb later became an early proponent of Methodism in America, as well as a British loyalist during the Revolutionary War. Webb’s book seems to have been printed only in Philadelphia and was never released in Europe.  

Published in 1759, much of A Military Treatise is of little interest, as it discussed how best to deploy the British Army by ship and a more effective system of awards for the British Army. However, at the same time, Webb seriously considered both the overall British military situation in North America and several tactical problems that the British Army—and, by extension, any army-faced during the French and Indian War. Webb noted that North America differed significantly

26 In attempting to confirm that Thomas Webb’s A Military Treatise was published solely in North America I consulted the British Library Catalogue, OCLC’s WorldCat, and the English Short Title Catalogue. None of those resources revealed any printings of the book other than the 1759 Philadelphia edition. Webb’s text also fails to appear in J.A. Houlding’s Fit for Service. Nor does it appear in Ira Gruber’s catalogue of military books preferred by eighteenth century British Army officers. While this is not necessarily conclusive, I am confident in my assertion that Webb published only in North America.
from other locales, such as northern Europe, where the British Army was accustomed to
fighting. As he said:

the greatest Part of North America consists of a thick woody Country, abounding
with Mountains, Swamps, Rivers Defileés, &c. through which it is impossible for
Troops to march, even by Files, without being frequently thrown into the greatest
Confusion; in particular, the heavy armed Troops, who would be continually
impeded in their March, by the Obstructions they must meet with from Swamps,
Bushes, Thickets, &c. so that oftentimes two or three Hundred Men are obliged to
crowd together in one Place; by this Means the Line of March is entirely broke,
and if they should be attacked by light armed Troops in this Situation, they must
be inevitably defeated and destroyed”

Webb clearly understood the problems resulting from the altered circumstances of
colonial North America.

Webb’s Military Treatise is very much a book of a particular time. Reflecting the
moment at which he wrote, Webb advocated the stationing of a permanent standing army
of twenty reduced-strength infantry battalions in North America. Webb asserted that
these forces were necessary to counteract the persistent machinations of the French, who,
he contended, “take Advantage of a profound Peace; as well as to strengthen themselves,
as to make secret Encroachments on our Settlements.” Moreover, this inclination was
not a of a recent vintage, but, rather, part of a plan initiated by Cardinal Richelieu to
establish forts from the Saint Lawrence River to the Mississippi. Webb believed that, if
the British adopted his proposal, the force suggested would be sufficient to defend British
North America permanently. In 1759, the idea of British troops permanently stationed on

28 Ibid., 58–59.
29 Webb stated that the standing army in North America should be manned at “Irish” numbers. See Webb, A
Military Treatise, 6. J. A. Houlding’s Fit for Service states that the British government maintained
proportionally more battalions in Ireland than in England but manned them at below authorized strength to
serve as the cadre to full units in time of war. This would seem to be what Webb advocated for North
America.
30 Ibid., 5.
31 Ibid., 5.
the frontier to guard against Indian and French attack was likely a popular one with most colonists. This view did not persist beyond the French and Indian War.

Webb’s *Military Treatise* was both superficial and possessed of some insight. In an effort to overcome the particular difficulties presented by the North American environment, Webb proposed changes to the equipment and the organization of the British Army then fighting in North America. Webb believed that the key to fighting successfully in North America was to adapt some portion of the British Army’s forces to counter the enemies that British regulars and American colonists faced directly. To triumph, colonial forces must be able to fight so as “to repel the Enemy’s Indians and Irregulars, who are always lightly accoutred, and accustomed to the Woods.”

Webb suggested several solutions, both organizational and technical, to achieve this.

Webb first proposed that a portion of each infantry battalion be converted to light infantry for use in North America. Webb did not restrict his idea to simply adding a small corps of skirmishers to the standard British infantry battalion. Rather, he sought to recast the basic organization of each regiment dramatically. He advocated dividing each regiment into two battalions. These battalions should consist of four regular infantry companies, a grenadier company, and a light infantry company. In contrast, at the time, the standard British infantry battalion had ten companies, one of which was the grenadier company, and no dedicated light infantry force. Webb also sought significant changes in the leadership of each battalion. He advocated officering each battalion with one colonel, one major, six captains, and eighteen subalterns. In his conception, the colonel would command the senior battalion in a regiment, while the lieutenant colonel would

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32 Ibid., 59.
command the second battalion. Further, each regiment was to be provided with sufficient
staff officers that each battalion had its own adjutant, engineer, quartermaster, chaplain,
and surgeon. 34 Perhaps more important Webb indicated that, instead of a structure of
grand divisions, subdivisions, and platoons, infantry battalions should employ the
company as the primary tactical unit. 35

Webb sought to change more than just the way in which the typical British
infantry battalion was organized. He proposed specific tactical modifications for
operating in dense, wooded terrain. His primary concern was how best to move an
infantry unit through a forested environment while maintaining cohesion, control, and
adequate security for all parts of the formation. To travel through the woods, Webb
suggested that an infantry battalion should break into two columns, each of which should
consist of two files and roughly two hundred men. The columns should march separated
by roughly one hundred paces. For security, the grenadier company would provide both
an advance and a rear guard, each one hundred paces distant from the main body of the
formation. For added security, the light infantry was to advance a small party one
hundred paces in front of the grenadier advance guard. The rest of the light infantry
company’s strength was placed on the flanks, to guard the column and act as a moving
skirmish line. 36 Nor was this the end of the security measures advocated by Webb. He
also thought that a battalion or regiment moving on its own through forested terrain
needed a group of rangers scouting three to four miles ahead of the main body of troops,
to prevent any unexpected and unpleasant surprises. 37 All the subunits in such a battalion

34 Webb, A Military Treatise, 63.
35 Ibid., 62.
36 Ibid., 66.
37 Ibid., 73.
or regimental movement formation had to remain close enough to each other that they might quickly provide mutual support if one portion of the battalion was attacked while moving.

Webb also believed that his scheme of maneuver, in addition to providing security around the formation, would allow troops to transform quickly and effectively from a movement formation into a fighting one. He proposed tactical maneuvers for the formation to undertake if enemies attacked the column from the front, the rear, or the flanks. In case of attack from the front, the light infantry and grenadiers were to form a line quickly, with the right and left files of the column moving off the trail to their respective sides and then moving forward to form ranks to face the enemy. Once the main body of the battalion formed to confront the enemy, the light infantry and the grenadiers were to move, on a previously established signal, to a flank and, from there, to attempt to encircle the attacking force.\(^3^8\) Webb advocated the same technique in case of attack from the rear, only instead of marching forward and forming to confront the attacker, the main columns would reverse their direction and march to the rear, while the grenadier rear guard reinforced with light infantry fought a delaying action. If enemies attacked a column from either flank, the lead column was to turn and face the enemy, while the following columns were required to close up with the section of the column under attack, come on line, and return fire.

Webb advocated other movement formations, as well. In the case of a smaller unit moving in the woods, he described two separate columns traveling twenty to thirty paces apart, with a light infantry patrol guarding the space between. This formation maintained the same perimeter security as the larger one; the main difference was that,

\(^3^8\) Ibid., 68.
upon contact on the flanks, the two columns would not attempt to draw closer to each other. Instead, the light infantry would secure the center of the line to prevent any penetrations. The details of Webb’s movement formations and how to transition from a formation designed for marching to one used to fight are less important than the fact that he addressed the question. Webb significantly expanded the range of topics discussed in military books published in North America. While he offered little in the way of concrete advice, Webb also covered the use of hasty obstacles and the need for units on the march to fortify their positions when they bivouacked at night. Webb’s few sentences on these topics represent the first discussion of engineer and field fortifications in American military books.

Webb’s manual was the first book published in North America to address explicitly questions of how to move successfully and how to deploy to fight in dense terrain. At the same time, once his units made contact with the enemy, Webb implicitly advocated techniques little different from standard European methods. First, Webb assumed that infantry units had to come on line in a battalion formation to fight, and, once the battalion was on line, he further assumed that it would employ standard volley fire methods. He never explicitly stated these views. However, when discussing the problem of muskets too heavy for use in North America in a later section, Webb asserted that the problem was a combination of two factors: officers delaying their fire commands and, thus, fatiguing soldiers by compelling them to hold their weapons at the ready for long periods and soldiers struggling under the weight of the standard British army

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39 Ibid., 68–72.
40 Ibid., 36, 73–77.
British weapons might well have been too heavy, but more important from the tactical perspective was Webb’s implicit endorsement of massed and closely controlled fire in linear formations. Webb clearly believed that the firepower of a massed British infantry unit would shatter most enemies. He asserted that neither “the Indians nor Canadians will be able to stand against such a situation.”

Further, Webb explained that, even in forested terrain, a unit “should take up near the same ground as in an open Country,” a distance that he calculated to be approximately four hundred yards for an infantry battalion. Webb did not follow through on the implications of his ideas. He never addressed the control problems that would naturally occur if soldiers fought in linear formations in wooded terrain. Given the lack of extended visibility, senior officers would not have been able to supervise the battalion with nearly the effectiveness they enjoyed in open country. Rather, any fight would have quickly devolved into one handled by junior officers and NCOs. Webb implicitly endorsed this outcome. He advocated that the field-grade officers of the battalion not bear any direct command responsibility for particular companies; instead, command fell to the captains of the battalion.

Webb declared that “he who commands a Company ought to be enabled to support the Dignity of it.” This opinion, accompanied by Webb’s endorsement of the company as the basic tactical unit of a battalion, suggests that he was aware of the increased leadership burden assumed by junior officers. And, while Webb might have recognized the increased leadership challenge of North American warfare obliquely, he

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41 Ibid., 86–87.
42 Ibid., 69.
43 Ibid., 66–67
44 A field-grade officer is one in the ranks of major, lieutenant colonel, or colonel. Lieutenants and captains are customarily called company-grade officers, while all officers above the rank of colonel are referred to as general officers.
did not address the question of target acquisition in the wilderness and the problem of a massed formation confronting a less tightly packed one. Though Indians and Canadians would undoubtedly have suffered if they faced a British volley in a close order formation, the effect would have been significantly lessened if they were dispersed and firing from covered positions. Although some have suggested that in earlier periods Americans loaded their muskets with multiple rounds of small shot to increase the likelihood of hitting targets, Webb did not mention this possible solution.46

One of main changes suggested by Webb for North American combat was to lighten the artillery that supported the British Army then fighting the French and Indians. Instead of two six-pounders supporting each regiment, Webb advocated the use of four three-pounder cannon per regiment.47 In addition to employing a different caliber of weapon, Webb sought to replace the horses that drew the six-pounder guns with teams of men. Webb asserted that teams of horses were difficult to provision on the march in North America and given to getting lost if left to wander for forage. Moreover, according to Webb, three-pounder guns would be easier to remove from their gun carriages and embark on the small boats frequently used to move forces on the numerous rivers armies encountered on the American frontier. Tactically, Webb believed that the smaller caliber guns he championed were sufficient for the primary artillery tasks—reinforcing obstacles and strong points—most often faced by the British Army in North America.48 None of Webb’s suggestions for artillery changes in North America was groundbreaking. However, A Military Treatise was the first book published in North America that

46 Chet, Conquering the American Wilderness, 57.
47 Webb, A Military Treatise, 39–42. Six- and three-pounder cannon refers not to the weight of the piece, but rather to that of the projectile intended to be fired from a given cannon.
48 Ibid., 41.
considered questions of artillery. Prior to its 1759 publication, all the military books printed in the colonies focused on infantry training and tactics exclusively. Webb and his *Military Treatise* represented not only a more thoughtful consideration of the tactical problems faced in North America, but an expansion of the focus from a strictly infantry centered one to one that included other branches of the army.

While Webb and the author of *The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay* seem to have produced more thoughtful and appropriate military doctrine for the actual circumstances of North America, it is important to remember some of the advantages that these authors, and particularly Thomas Webb, enjoyed. As a permanently serving officer in a regular army, Webb was a de facto participant in an ongoing discourse of professional development and knowledge.49 While military education was not yet formally structured, some British officers were concerned with improving the training and tactical performance of the army.50 The British Army published service regulations beginning in 1672 and continuing at regular intervals throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.51 While there was relatively little change in the content of these books over that period, their existence and the regularity of their publication allowed for the possibility of adaptation and improvement. In contrast, in North America, the publication of military books before the 1750s was a strictly private affair, and none gained official sanction until the 1740s. Put more simply, the fact that Lieutenant Webb wrote as British officer, as part of a bureaucratic and professionalizing organization, meant that his opinion might shape the ways in which that

49 Ira Gruber, “The Education of Sir Henry Clinton,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 72 (Spring 1990), 131–53; Also see Ira Gruber’s study of the reading habits of eighteenth-century British Army officers and how military theory shaped military practice in the British Army.
51 Ibid., 426–27.
bureaucracy developed. In contrast, the extremely ad hoc nature of most colonial military structures prior to the formation of the Continental Army offered a less clearly defined arena in which to voice thoughts on improved tactics and organization. For example, Benjamin Church and Robert Rogers, American veterans of King Phillip’s War and the French and Indian War respectively, developed concrete, distinctive thinking on how best to fight in North America. Instead of writing with the intention of shaping American military policy such as it existed, however, Church published a history aimed at a popular audience well after the war in which he fought ended, and Rogers’s Journal of Major Robert Rogers was first printed in London.\textsuperscript{52} In contrast, Webb indicates throughout his Military Treatise that British military officials were at least part of his intended audience, and he published proposals to improve the British Army in the midst of fighting the war that shaped his thinking. While this may not completely explain his motivation for writing, service in a regular army did allow Webb the realistic possibility that his ideas might be adopted. Webb expressed this hope, writing:

I flatter myself that these Considerations will serve to convince my Readers, that the above Regulations will be found of particular Advantage; and shall think myself very happy, if, in the Course of this Work, I may chance to light on any one Thing which may be approved of by those who are skill’d in the Art-Military, and may in an Degree be of Service to his Majesty’s Arms.\textsuperscript{53}

The authors of The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay and A Military Treatise were pursuing the same basic goal: the more effective

\textsuperscript{52} Benjamin and Thomas Church et al., The entertaining history of King Philip’s war, which began in the month of June, 1675 As also of expeditions more lately made against the common enemy, and Indian rebels, in the eastern parts of New-England: with some account of the divine providence towards Col. Benjamin Church. (Boston.; Newport, Rhode-Island: Reprinted and sold by Solomon Southwick; 1716) and Robert Rogers, Journals of Major Robert Rogers : Containing an Account of the Several Excursions He Made Under the Generals Who Commanded Upon the Continent of North America, During the Late War ; From Which May by [Sic] Collected the Most Material Circumstances of Every Campaign Upon That Continent, From the Commencement to the Conclusion of the War (London: 1765).

\textsuperscript{53} Webb, A Military Treatise, 42.
adaptation of the European system of war to North American circumstances. For the
author of *The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay*, the most
imperative task was the creation of a training program sufficiently simple for
Massachusetts militiamen to master. In order to achieve that goal, he sought to take into
account the latent knowledge possessed by most residents of Massachusetts, and, at the
same time, to focus their training efforts on tasks simple enough for quick mastery. More
overtly than Thomas Webb, the author of *The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the
Massachusetts-Bay* sought to organize the units of the Massachusetts militia so that
soldiers, NCOs, and officers would work together in both training and tactical situations.
*The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay* and *A Military
Treatise* presented very similar models. Both focused on making rigid European tactical
structures more flexible and, thus, better suited to North America. Additionally, both
books recognized the importance of company-grade officers to the effectiveness of units
fighting in North America. The author of *The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the
Massachusetts-Bay* extended that recognition to NCOs, a group that Webb never
addressed. However, Webb gave much greater attention to the problem of moving and
fighting in the forest than was presented in *The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the
Massachusetts-Bay*. Despite all these positive and adaptive features of both books,
the net result was not radical. The model that each proposed for an infantry battalion was
to eliminate or, at least, minimize complex battalion firing patterns, while making the
company the basic tactical and training unit of a battalion. Further, both simplified the
marching drill to accommodate the American landscape. Even with these significant
changes, both books advocated fighting in linear formations and employing volley fire.
In 1759, even as the most thoughtful and American-centered books were being printed in the colonies, a Boston printer released *The Gentleman's Compleat Military Dictionary, Containing the Military Art, Explaining the Terms and Phrases Used in the Field and Garrison. With a Plan of Fortification*. The dictionary focused primarily on terms and ideas suited to European warfare. The book offered details ranging from the duties and responsibilities of adjutants and aides de camp to the definitions of a *well* and a *wad-hook*. Given the level of military knowledge that *The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay* implied for most of the officers of the Massachusetts militia, a dictionary that explained basic military knowledge was no doubt highly useful. Moreover, by its very publication, it demonstrated both the increased demand for military books during the French and Indian War and an even greater expansion in the topics covered in American military books. While *The Gentleman’s Compleat Military Dictionary* did not impart in-depth knowledge on any particular subject, it at least familiarized Americans with the technical vocabulary of armies and European warfare. Perhaps most interestingly, the dictionary included a series of illustrations of fortifications on its very last page. About half of these drawings were of traditional, fixed fortifications, complete with glacis, crown-works, parapets, interlocking fields of fire, and all the rest of the components of a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century fortress in continental Europe. Along with the complex, stone-built fortification illustrations, the dictionary included pictures of simple devices used to construct hasty obstacles in field circumstances. The obstacles shown included *gabions* (large woven

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*The Gentleman's Compleat Military Dictionary, Containing the Military Art, Explaining the Terms and Phrases Used in the Field and Garrison*. A “well” was defined as “a depth sank in the ground by the miner from whence he runs out branches or galleries in search of the enemies mines to disappoint it, or to make a mine.” A “Wad-hook” or “worm is a small iron turned serpent wise like a screw, and out upon the end of a long staff, to draw out the Wad of a Gun when she is to be unloaded.” See pp. WAD–WEL.
baskets designed to be filled with earth to form a hasty barrier), *fascines* (in the
dictionary, a series of logs staked in place), and *chevaux de frize* (a type of spiked fence
that served a purpose similar to modern-day barbed wire). Yet, though the dictionary
included pictures, no explanation was included alongside the drawings. Along with
Thomas Webb’s opinion that temporary fortifications were crucial in securing units when
they stopped for extended periods, the illustrations in *The Gentleman's Compleat Military
Dictionary* were the first presentation of fortification and engineering-specific
information offered in American books. It was a limited beginning. However, even with
the small amount of information included, the very discussion of these topics represented
a definite expansion of the American military discussion.

The period between 1757 and 1759 was one of the most fertile in American
military publishing during the colonial era. Clearly, the French and Indian War and the
pressing desire in the colonies to expand colonial military power to meet the immediate
threat fueled most of the demand for military books during those years. Additionally, in
the same period, the range of military subjects covered in books expanded. While the
discussion of artillery and engineering operations was generally very cursory, the few
references to these subjects that occurred had no precedent. The more expansive
knowledge evident during these years suggests that colonists were starting to consider the
wider scope of military topics, rather than viewing military knowledge to be merely a
question of mastering the rudiments of the parade ground, as the books, save Bland,
printed in previous periods indicated. Their thinking had moved beyond the problem of
simple drill to address questions of tactics, operations, and integration of different
military arms. Moreover, the most thoughtfully adapted military books published prior

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to the Revolutionary period were printed during these years. Both the author of *The Exercise for the Militia of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay* and Thomas Webb in *A Military Treatise* sought explicitly and deliberately to adapt European military knowledge to the different circumstances of North America. Specifically, these authors started to address the problem of terrain in ways that previous books did not. Yet it is imperative to remember the solutions that both books proposed. Neither could be construed as advocating that the British Army and colonial Americans adopt Indian styles of warfare, nor was either book a manual for training Europeans in the “rangering” tradition that had formed part of the vernacular of American military traditions since the seventeenth century.\(^{56}\) Rather, both books sought to simplify European techniques to better accommodate North America, particularly the difficulty of moving in forbidding terrain. Once a unit made contact with a French or Indian force, however, both colonial and British officers sought to achieve victory in a traditional manner—by coming on line and destroying the enemy by fire.

While Webb’s *A Military Treatise* was the first American military book to openly confront the question of how an infantry unit should move through the countryside, as well as how, if attacked, it should shift from a movement to a fighting formation, the book was not as path-breaking as it might seem. Additionally, Webb approached the problem of the proper employment of artillery in the colonies and implicitly the question of how best to use combined arms in wooded terrain. Webb’s basic idea was not revolutionary; he advocated establishing security around a moving formation and thinning the column sufficiently to allow easier passage though dense terrain. These ideas were available in Humphrey Bland’s original 1727 London edition of *Military

\(^{56}\) Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 37.
Discipline. Still, Webb’s *A Military Treatise* was the first time they were widely publicized in North America.

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Conclusion

During the colonial period, European military knowledge provided the basis for colonial military publishing. From 1690 to 1759, residents of British North America drew upon military books from Europe for use in colonial America. Yet, for most of the period, the military books printed in the colonies offered little, beyond the most basic individual skills, that was of real use to colonists preparing for war. Colonial Americans initially chose to forgo books that did not deal primarily with infantry training. However, even the books focused on the infantry that were published still required modification to fit the particulars of North America. The process of modification took three main forms—reprinting, editing and finally adapting. First, publishers and booksellers reprinted or otherwise appropriated passages from European books for use by colonists. The goal of this initial phase was to simplify European military knowledge sufficiently that colonists, more constrained by time and resources, could master the basics of military training. This was the dominant trend of the period, beginning with Samuel Green Jr.’s reprint of *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline* in the late seventeenth century. Publishers abbreviated long, complex books or chose to import shorter, simpler books and publish them whole.

Over the course of the next seventy years, a series of European military books were erratically adapted for American use. Nicholas Boone recognized the challenge posed by American circumstances and produced books that were simpler, both in content and in presentation, undoubtedly making them more useful to New England audiences. Two of the three works that followed Boone were also short and simple, teaching basic skills. These books, along with the various American versions of Humphrey Bland’s
work, were edited by Americans to try to fit colonial needs. None, however, moved beyond simple presentation to effective adaptation. The third book, by William Brattle, was more a youthful indulgence than a serious work of military thought. Not until the publication of the Boston and New York versions of Humphrey Bland's *Abstract of Military Discipline* in the 1740s did a book provide a clear and well-conceived template for military training. However, despite the general excellence of the Henchman adaptation of Bland's work, the text proposed a means to train a European-style infantry battalion, instead of being geared toward the conditions of American warfare. Henchman had mastered the process of abridgement and synthesis without attempting adaptation.

Only with the coming of the French and Indian War in 1754 did American books actually begin to adapt to the real conditions of colonial warfare. Efforts by Thomas Webb and an author commissioned by the Massachusetts province recognized the problems presented by American circumstances, both in terms of terrain and training within severe time constraints. The books they produced sought to modify traditional European military practices to make them more successful in North America. By the middle of the French and Indian War, books had finally appeared in British North America that proposed solutions to the tactical problems common in colonial America and to the training problems associated with a reliance on militia units. However, following the French and Indian War, conditions of American life changed dramatically, and the process of halting adaptation that had characterized the seventy preceding years quickly ended.

Yet the general failure of pre-Revolutionary American military books to adapt to the tactical realities of the war on the North American continent demands explanation.
Throughout much of the eighteenth century, residents of British North America continued to publish, ever more widely, military books derived from European origins. These books, simplified and slightly adapted versions of their European antecedents, were conceived with a “civilized” European opponent in mind. They were replete with both the form and the function of European war. All the books spoke of regiments and battalions; they instructed their readers how best to train soldiers to march in columns and lines and, when in such formations, how to wheel and countermarch. Detailed linear fire plans for infantry battalions made more than an occasional appearance over the course of the century. These books reflect the system of limited, dynastic war practiced in Europe from the end of the religious wars of the mid-seventeenth century until the rise of Napoleon and the mobilization of the people. Yet colonial Americans never fought these types of wars. Instead, they fought destructive, often guerrilla-style conflicts against French and Indian opponents, and eventually, a revolution that some have termed a civil war against the British Empire.  

From the time British colonists initially landed in North America, the main foes they confronted were not European national armies, but tribes of American Indians, frequently reinforced with French soldiers and militiamen. The Indian inhabitants of North America had very different traditions of combat than the recently arrived colonists. And while the general practice of Indian combat focused less on killing the enemy than European practices, these native combat techniques were adapted to the geography and topography of North America. Indians did not fight in lines, Europeans did. Indians fought instead in looser structures, without the rigid lines of command and control utilized by European armies of the period. Instead of fighting fixed battles, Indians

1 K Phillips, The Cousins’ Wars, xi.
employed a fighting style centered on raids and ambushes that colonists contemptuously labeled "skulking." Indian encounters were not limited to the initial phases of European colonization. Colonists fought Indians in Virginia and New England beginning in the 1620s and continuing well past the founding of the United States. Over the course of this protracted conflict with Indians, Americans were forced to develop more effective methods of engaging in confrontations than the techniques they imported from Europe. Confronted with native inhabitants highly skilled at using the wilderness to their advantage, generally unable to find and fix Indians to allow them to bring firepower to bear, and lacking the open spaces necessary for European tactics, colonists turned to other methods. As James Grenier describes in his recent book, *The First Way of War*, settlers adopted a pattern of war, often called a "feed fight," that centered on destroying non-combatants and compromising Indians' ability to sustain themselves.\(^2\) While this was gruesome, it was also the most effective way for British North Americans to accomplish their ultimate goal, domination of the continent. Colonial American militia units were inevitably less skilled at moving and fighting in dense, wooded terrain than their Indian enemies. Simply put, they lacked the tactical skill in the correct techniques to have any expectation of winning fights with Indians if the contests were on Indian terms. Colonial Americans therefore found a way to both defeat Indians at war and acquire additional land for settlement.

The tactics employed in most American wars were extraordinarily unrelated to the instructions these same soldiers received from books on war, and this failing did not change over time. The basis for the Continental Army's drill regulation during the Revolutionary War was the same as the regulation employed by Frederick the Great's

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Prussian Army, an army that used only solid battalion and brigade formations and employed no skirmishers forward of its main line, since anyone not locked in place under the watchful eye of officers and NCOs was likely to desert. And while Frederick was the foremost soldier in Europe at the time, his rigid tactical thinking was not completely appropriate to North America. British North Americans never sought to codify the knowledge they gained from fighting Indians into a tactical system or to use that system to train soldiers. Instead, many Americans wrote and trained for war as Europeans thought best until at least well after the founding of the Republic. Why, then, did colonists never transfer their experience into theory? Why did they fail for the most part to adapt their military texts to the circumstances of North American wars?

To answer that question it is necessary to look beyond the simple tactics described in infantry manuals to the level of strategy and the military potential of the main participants in North American warfare during the period. For most of the eighteenth century, British colonists faced two potential enemies: Indian tribes in North America and French settlers in Canada. The relative strengths and weaknesses of these groups offer some insight into the tactical choices made by British Americans in the course of their conflicts with Indians and French settlers. “Net assessment” is a term attached to the modern process of evaluating the overall war-making capabilities of a given nation.\(^3\)

While no such system of evaluating potential participants in a given war existed in the eighteenth century, it is instructive to think about how Indian tribes, New France, and

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\(^3\) The process of “net assessment” is a regular function of the intelligence and defense establishments of modern great powers. See Williamson Murray and Allan Reed Millett, *Calculations: Net Assessment and the Coming of World War II* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 1–6. As Murray and Millet note, the former Soviet Union spoke of the “correlation of forces.” However, that phraseology focuses too much attention on the comparison of respective armed forces and not enough on a more holistic analysis of the overall war-making potential of prospective rivals.
New England might compare if they were subject to a net assessment of their military capabilities. Three primary components governed ultimate military success at the time: population, access to technology, and tactical skills. If Indian tribes, New England, and New France are gauged in each of these categories, New England emerges with dramatic advantages. The New England colonies were strong in two of the three areas, access to technology and population, whereas Indian tribes and French settlers were weak in two areas apiece and strong in only one. Indians were tactically superior but suffered from a small relative population and greater difficulty accessing technology. Meanwhile, French access to technology was relatively equal to that of British colonists, but the French suffered from a substantially smaller population and, without Indian support, lacked decisively better tactical skill.

Ironically, in order for the residents of British North America to maximize their tactical effectiveness, they would have had to limit the effect of many of their strategic advantages. While British colonists lacked the modern governmental organs that articulate present-day nation strategies, their overriding strategic goal was clear: colonists wanted to take possession of as much land as possible. Put another way, they wanted to master the continent. This desire was implicitly in conflict with any large-scale pursuit of improved tactics. To improve the tactical function of militia units, leaders of colonial militias would have had to convince Indians to teach colonial charges to fight more like Indians. This would have been possible only if British colonists were willing to be more accommodating of Indian concerns, not likely when many colonists wanted Indian land. Alternatively, colonists could have used the few among them with some knowledge of Indian-style combat, primarily those with experience in ranger units, to train the less
experienced. Yet this second solution would have involved much greater expenditure of both time and money. Moreover, it would have necessitated a much more intrusive state. Better, then, to focus on simple, traditional tactical solutions and allow the strategy of attrition by way of the "feed fight" to accomplish the ultimate goal of gaining control of ever larger chunks of North America. This choice does not seem to have been a conscious one. Rather, colonists pursued this plan unconsciously, and, since the policy was never confronted with dramatic failure, no compelling reason to change course existed. The French, in contrast, faced a strategic deficit and tried to remedy their weakness by changing tactics; they allied themselves closely with Indian tribes and more commonly employed Indian methods of fighting.

Colonists might also have experienced a cultural hesitancy to accept Indian means of fighting and to validate them as the appropriate way to conduct wars. In Europe, conflicts were fought between combatants who shared similar concepts of what did and did not constitute war. By contrast, British colonists and native Indians had different and essentially irreconcilable notions of war. Seeking a theoretical basis for war, Yvon Garlan has offered the following definition: "War is both a law of nature and a human invention, a reality that is experienced and at the same time a legal construct."\(^4\) Allowing the possibility that Indians could legitimately make war was too much for some colonists. As William Hubbard contended, describing Indian participants in his account of King Phillip’s War, "The Matter of Fact therein related (being rather Massacres, barbarous inhumane Outrages, than Acts of Hostility or valiant Achievements [sic]) no more deserve the Name of a War than the Report of them the Title of an History."\(^5\) Later, less


\(^5\) Lepore, *The Name of War*, xvii.
literary commentators responded to the events of the Deerfield raid with similar sentiments, saying of Indians that:

They are to be looked upon as thieves [sic] and murderers. They doe acts of hostility, without proclaiming war. They don’t appear openly in the field to bid us battle, they use those cruelly that fall into their hands. They act like wolves and are to be dealt withall as wolves. ⁶

War, then, was not merely a circumstance in which two separate groups used violence to decide a question of politics. The existence of war between two factions implied a level of legal and cultural recognition. While colonists might employ some level of Indian tactics to confront Indian enemies, they were not willing to recognize Indians’ full rights to participate in fighting wars by incorporating Indian means into the official canon of military theory.

The period that followed the French and Indian War temporarily changed the circumstances of American warfare and permanently changed the nature of American military publishing. By the late 1760s, the threat of Indian war in the thirteen colonies had been dramatically reduced. Moreover, New France no longer existed to pose any type of threat. Instead, American colonists became increasingly aware of the divergence of their interests from those of Great Britain. This perspective, and its eventual outcome, shaped the evolution of American military thought from 1766, when William Harvey’s The Manual Exercise, As Ordered by His Majesty in 1764 appeared in New York, until the end of the 1780s. ⁷ The changes in military publishing during this period were dramatic. While the books published during the previous seventy years had focused almost solely on the rudiments of infantry tactics and techniques, this focus changed in

⁶ Leach, Arms for Empire, 130.
the Revolutionary period. Between 1766 and 1775, infantry manuals remained the heart of military publishing. However, the start of the Revolutionary War gave rise to the publication of a series of specialist texts never before printed in North America. Publishers produced books on subjects such as field engineering and fortification, irregular warfare, and artillery.\(^8\) Works concerned with strategy and the art of war also appeared.\(^9\) Even among these new specialized texts, however, the works chosen for reprint in North America still reflected the particularized needs of the colonies. The military engineering books, for example, concentrated on the construction of fieldworks, not permanent fortifications. Moreover, the subject of irregular warfare, or petit guerre, in the military vernacular of the period, received significant attention.\(^10\) The works chosen for reproduction reflected a deepening understanding that, while some European military knowledge was useful in North America, this knowledge should be chosen with care. Instructions on building permanent masonry fortifications were not useful, for example, but information on quickly and effectively constructing hasty obstacles was excellent knowledge to have.

In addition to the specialized works on artillery and field fortifications, works with explicit government endorsement also proliferated. As in the seventy preceding years, Massachusetts was at the forefront of this phenomenon. Between 1768 and 1774, Massachusetts published four editions of a British militia manual that had been modified

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for use by the militia of the province. By 1775, colonies beyond Massachusetts had recognized the immediate need for a government-sanctioned military manual. In that year, Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island collectively adopted a common manual. Both the movement to import increasingly specialized military books and the proliferation of government-endorsed texts is comprehensible, given the intensification of revolutionary inclinations.

While the history of military books during the American Revolution is imminently understandable, the preceding period is less so. Rather than accommodating themselves to the condition of the continent, colonial Americans sought instead to transform North America. Both the military strategy and the system of tactics they employed reflect that predilection. Strategically, population told in the end, and as a result, tactics had little reason to change substantially. There were simply too many settlers in British North America for either the Indians or the French to contain, let alone defeat. And by means of a constantly expanding population, colonial Americans eventually made the land hospitable to European cultivation, thereby also making it more fit for European warfare. This, then, was the ultimate answer: British settlers were determined to bend North America to their will and to prevent the continent from remaking them.

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11 William Windham, A Plan of exercise for the militia of Massachusetts-Bay: extracted from the Plan of discipline of the Norfolk militia (Boston: Richard Draper, 1768); Windham, A Plan of exercise for the militia of Massachusetts-Bay; extracted from the Plan of discipline of the Norfolk militia (Boston: Richard Draper, 1771); Windham, A Plan of exercise for the militia of Massachusetts-Bay; extracted from the Plan of discipline of the Norfolk militia (Boston: Richard Draper, 1772); and Windham, A Plan of exercise for the militia of Massachusetts-Bay; extracted from the Plan of discipline of the Norfolk militia. (Boston: Richard Draper, 1774).

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<th>Average Number of Officers in an Infantry Battalion</th>
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<td>Total Number of Officers in North America</td>
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Table 1: British Army Ensigns Experience Level and Number per Battalion

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Note: The table above represents the average number of officers in an infantry battalion for each rank. The total number of officers for the 60th Regiment had four battalions, while the 42nd Regiment had two battalions. Table 1: British Army Ensigns Experience Level and Number per Battalion.
TABLE 2. British Army Lieutenant experience level and number per battalion

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* The 42nd Regiment had two battalions.
** The 60th Regiment had four battalions.

Average experience in grade of British Army Lieutenant.
**The 60th Regt. had four battalions.**

**The 42nd Regt. had two battalions.**

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*Table 3: British Army Captains' Experience Level and Number per Battalion*
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