



# The American Revolution

A Historical Series Sponsored by William Hightower Chapter #35  
Sons of the American Revolution

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Battles of Lexington and Concord, 1775

Article 6 of 6

On Brooks Hill about 1 mile from Meriam's Corner a 500 man militia body had positioned itself on the heights above the road and lay in wait for the British. Lieutenant Colonel Smith sent his lead force up the hill to engage these Patriots and drive them from the heights. The colonials held their position and inflicted heavy casualties upon their attackers. The British column moved on down the road to Brooks Tavern and a small bridge nearby the community of Lincoln. Here the militiamen attacked from the north side of the road, right at the position where the road made a right angle. At this point (The Bloody Angle) militiamen attacked from both sides of the road, issuing a deadly crossfire on the British. The British suffered 30 soldiers killed in this action, while the Patriots only lost four men.

At the town of Lexington, the British encountered the strongly reinforced militia force, and this time, they were not reluctant to fire upon the British. Lieutenant Colonel Smith was wounded and Major Pitcairn was thrown from his horse. No other officer was left to command, and the panicked British force began to break and run. Fortunately for them, at 2:30 PM, a full brigade of reinforcements commanded by Colonel Hugh Percy arrived and restored order.

Percy formed the British into a moving square formation, which the militiamen immediately encircled, producing a “ring of fire” surrounding this square. This deadly formation blazed its way back to Boston. Battlefield estimates place Percy’s command at 1,500 British Regulars and the colonial force at 3,960 men. Casualties for the British were 73 killed, 174 wounded and 53 missing in action. This action had cost the British 20% of its army. The colonials suffered 49 killed, 39 wounded and 5 missing in action. The Patriots still had 98% of their force ready to fight.

The romantic mythology of a lone colonial farmer with his musket, standing against all odds, is part of the imagery that grew up around this event. The clear conclusive facts are that the militias were well organized, abundantly supplied, and experienced in this type of “Indian Warfare.” They had brave, intelligent commanders, who achieved well coordinated attacks with accuracy.

Colonel Percy was the first, but not the last British commander, to observe this distinct American colonial quality, when he made his battlefield report. He said, “During the whole affair the Rebels attacked us in a very scattered, irregular manner, but with perseverance and resolution, nor did they ever dare to form into a regular body. Indeed, they knew too well what was proper, to do so. Whoever looks upon them as an irregular mob, will find himself much mistaken. They have men amongst them who know very well what they are about, having been employed as Rangers against the Indians and Canadians, and this country being much covered with wood, and hilly, is very advantageous for their method of fighting.” For now the British, although bruised, were safe and back in Boston planning their next move.