



# The American Revolution

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

www.nbsar.net

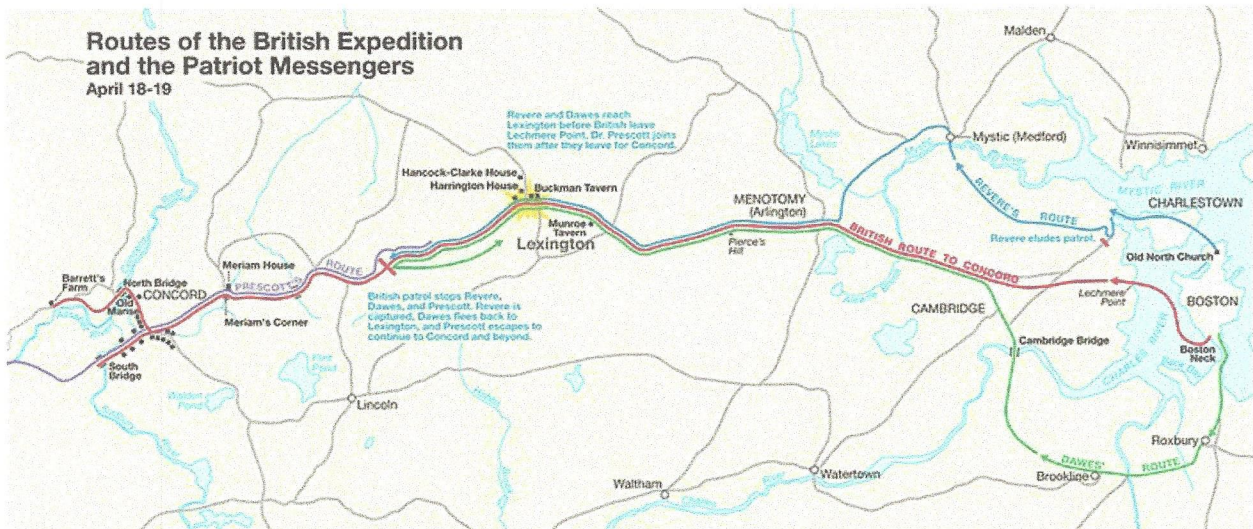
Author, Dr. Patrick D. Hollis

## Battles of Lexington and Concord, 1775

## Article 2 of 6

On 18 April 1775, General Gage's men were preparing to invade the countryside, and targeting colonial war supplies at Concord, Massachusetts. On that same day, the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, resolved to meet with opposition to the last extremity any military effort coming out of Boston. The colonists attending the congress were well informed about the secret British plans for 19 April 1775. This confidential information had arrived in colonial hands, because none other than Margaret Kemble Gage, a New Jersey girl and wife to Governor General Gage had divulged it.

Around the hour of 9 PM on the night of 18 April 1775, the alarms rang. Everyone



*The Route of British Attack on Lexington and Concord, 1775*

knew that Adams and Hancock were safe, and the supplies removed from Concord. It was clear that the leaders in Lexington were unaware that they were also targets for British invasion. Therefore, Dawes and Revere responded to Joseph Warren's alarm and set out on their famous ride to alert the countryside. Dawes covered the southern route out of Boston Neck, while Revere proceeded from Old North Church across the bay to Charlestown and the countryside beyond. Revere was captured, Dawes was thrown from his horse, and only Prescott escaped to alarm Concord (See the map of this article). Relying on methods developed during the Indian wars, the colonists resorted to bells, drums, alarm guns, bonfires and a trumpet in order to spread the alarm. This system of communication was so effective, that people in towns 25 miles away from Boston were aware of British movement, while the army was still unloading their boats in Cambridge.

The British Army invasion unit was composed of around 700 infantrymen, drawn from eleven of Gage's thirteen regiments. Major John Pitcairn commanded ten elite light infantry companies, and Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Bernard commanded eleven grenadier companies (grenadiers carried grenades). The central command fell to Lieutenant Colonel Smith. Regulars present were 350 in number, and drawn from the 4th (King's Own), 5th, 10th, 18th (Royal Irish), 23rd, 38th, 43rd, 47th, 52nd, and 59th Regiments of Foot. In addition, were His Majesty's Marine Forces and protecting the grenadier companies were about 320 light infantry from the 4th, 5th, 10th, 23rd, 38th, 43rd, 47th, 52nd, 59th Regiments and finally, the 1st Battalion of Marines. This was no small force and clearly attracted the attention of everyone in the vicinity. Each company

had its own Lieutenant, but the Captains commanding these Lieutenants along with their men were volunteers attached to these units at the last minute, thus making the “chain of command” filled with unfamiliar replacements. In our next article, we will explore the British Army advances on the towns of Lexington and Concord, the colonial responses to this invasion of privacy, and the first meeting of Patriot Militia and British Army Regulars. Learn in our next article just how far 17 miles can become.