



Southern Campaigns of the American Revolution

www.southerncampaign.org

The Journal of the Southern Campaigns of the American Revolution

Vol. 14, No. 1.2

February 2018

Francis Marion and the Training Fields of Mars: *the Primer of War for the Swamp Fox*

Karen L. MacNutt

In the course of a few months, Francis Marion went from a competent, but obscure, regimental commander in the Continental Army, to a national hero. Although relentless in battle, he was known for his humanity once the fighting stopped. A master of the surprise attack, he usually fought on ground of his own choosing. He did not share information about himself or explain his methods beyond what his followers needed to know to carry out his operational plans.¹ This lack of knowledge by those who served under him, helped create the myth of an uneducated farmer who burst upon the scene as a great leader in the darkest hours of the American Revolution. Marion was indisputably a great leader. Although he did not attend an academic institution of higher learning, he was not an uneducated planter as some have claimed.

Marion needs to be judged against the values of his own time giving consideration to the resources available to him at the time and place in which he lived. While the early life of General Marion is somewhat obscure, the events going on around

him, and the shared experiences of those living in South Carolina at that time, are revealing.

Early Lessons

Much of Marion's extant correspondence contains misspelled words. It is curt, and lacks style. Because of this, some writers called Marion "semi-literate." Others implied that Marion's "bossy" style of writing irritated people. Such comments fail to note the context of the man and the letters.

Marion was as well-educated, in his pre-war station in life, as a gentleman was expected to be. He is said to have had a common country school education.² According to William Dobein James, an early biographer and contemporary of Marion:

"It was indeed a rare thing, in this early state of our county, to receive any more than the rudiments of an English education; since men were too much employed in the clearing and tilt of barren lands, to attend much to science."³

¹Alexander Garden, *Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War in America: With Sketches of Character of Persons the Most Distinguished, in the Southern States, For Civil and Military Service* (Charleston, SC: A. E. Miller, 1822) 19, 20, and 23. Garden served as a member of Lee's Legion, Continental troops which served with Marion's militia on three occasions. By January of 1781, Marion was dually commissioned by Congress as a Continental Lt. Col. Commandant and as a South Carolina Brigadier General of Militia.

² Henry ("Light Horse Harry") Lee, ed. Robert E. Lee, *American Revolution in the South*. (New York: University

Press, 1827, 1869; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1969) 584. Lee and his Continentals served with Marion's militia in 1781.

³ William Dobein James, *A Sketch of the Life of Brig. Gen. Francis Marion*. (Charleston, SC: Gould and Riley, 1821; reprint, Marietta, GA: Continental Book Company, 1948) 16. James had been a teenager serving in the militia in Marion's Brigade; his father, Maj. John James, was an officer in Marion's militia brigade.

Born in 1732, Marion would not have been in school later than his 16th birthday. Given the times, he probably would not have been in school past his 13th birthday.⁴

Education in the 18th century was very different from what it is now. The thought that all children should have access to a free public education was not accepted in Europe or in most of the colonies. Many were illiterate. Just being able to read and write meant a person was better educated than many of his contemporaries.

The major colonial cities of Boston and Philadelphia had a public “Latin School” and an “English School.” Boys in the Latin School learned Latin, Greek, and Hebrew in preparation for the ministry. Boys in the “English School” conducted their studies in English with a view to entering business.⁵ Schools were usually one-room affairs where students were taught at their own pace. The purpose of colonial schools was to give boys enough education to read the Bible and keep good accounts as businessmen or farmers.⁶ Latin, grammar, and mathematics were common subjects. In addition, dancing, fencing, surveying, and navigation were often taught to boys. Charlestown had a number of grammar schools but no

“academy” (what today would be a “high” school) until 1790.⁷

Outside of Charlestown, educational opportunities, even to attend a grammar school, were poor. Although Georgetown was laid out in 1730, it was not until 1757 that the Winyah Indigo Society founded the first school in Georgetown.⁸ The Winyah Indigo Society School taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and Latin.⁹

In the country, several planters might join together to hire a tutor for their children in what were called, “field schools.” It is likely that this is the type of school Marion attended. A fair number of Marion’s relations were well-educated. They were members of the assembly and justices of the peace. His grandfather was Dr. Anthony Cordes. His Uncle Thomas Cordes was a trustee of the Childsbury free school in Childsbury in 1733.¹⁰

When Henry Lee wrote his biographical sketch of Marion in 1810, he stated that Marion had a strong mind improved by its own reflections, not by books or travel.¹¹ At that time, however, to be well-read, a person must have read the classical authors in Latin and Greek.¹² One could have read hundreds of books on science and mathematics, but that did not count. A man could have walked across the

⁴ An interesting view of colonial education can be found on the University of Pennsylvania web page under the heading of “Penn in the 18th Century.”

<http://www.archives.upenn.edu/histy/features/1700s/penn1700s.html>, accessed on Dec. 17, 2016.

⁵ Carl and Jessica Bridenbaugh, *Rebels and Gentlemen, Philadelphia in the Age of Franklin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962) 29, *et seq.*, 65, *et seq.* The distinction between the “Latin” school and “English” school persisted in Boston through mid-20th century. “Boston Latin School” prepared boys for college and “Boston English School” was the city’s business high school.

⁶ David B. Mattern, *Benjamin Lincoln and the American Revolution* (Columbia: USC Press, 1995) 13, describing Lincoln’s country education and attitudes valuing education for all citizens. His thoughts are similar to those attributed to Marion by Mason L. Weems in his early biography of Marion.

⁷ George C. Rogers, Jr., *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys* (Columbia: USC Press, 1969) 109.

⁸ George C. Rogers, Jr., *History of Georgetown County, South Carolina*, (Columbia: USC Press, 1970) 32.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 91. Some writers have stated that the Marions moved to Georgetown so that their children, including Francis, could attend school. This is unlikely as the school in Georgetown was not founded until after Marion was an adult while the area they moved from had a school at Childsbury as well as a parish school at St. Thomas.

¹⁰ Emma B. Richardson, “Dr. Anthony Cordes and Some of His Descendants,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. 43, (1942) 136-137. (Hereafter called *SCHM*) For a copy of the Childsbury free school charter, see http://www.carolana.com/SC/Education/1733_06_09_Act_f or_Free_School_in_Childsbury.html, accessed on 12-26-2016.

¹¹ Lee, [first published in 1812] *American Revolution*, 585.

¹² In a letter of August 19, 1785 to Peter Carr, Thomas Jefferson outlines the books a well-read gentleman should read. They include among others: Herodotus, Thucydides, Anabasis Arrian, Quintus Curtius, Diodorus Siculus, Justin, Virgil, Terence, Horace, Anacron, Theocritus, Homer, Euripides, Sophocles, Milton, Shakespeare, Pope, Milton, Plato, and Cicero. Adienne Koch & Willima Peden, ed., *Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Random House, 1944) 375.

North American Continent, but he was not considered “traveled” unless he had been to France and Italy. Henry “Light Horse Harry” Lee, a graduate of Princeton, was a polished and formally educated Virginian gentleman.¹³ Marion, a middle class planter from the Colonial Wars generation, was old enough to have been Lee’s father. Marion’s generation, as James noted, worked hard and had little time for education for its own sake. Lee’s generation reaped the rewards of that hard work.

Francis Marion, and his brothers, had a common country education. That was the standard education of the middle class in the colonies. It is all the formal education that Benjamin Franklin had. It is all the education George Washington had.¹⁴

That Marion’s letters were not literary gems, or do not follow modern standardized spelling is not significant.

Most of Marion’s surviving correspondence is his military letters.¹⁵ Even today, military writing tends to be filled with abbreviations, stylized forms and technical terms. Marion’s letters are short and to the point as military letters should be. What is considered good form in military writing, might seem rude in civilian writing. Marion’s letters were often written in haste while in the field. There was no time for multiple drafts or refinements.

In spite of their faults, Marion’s letters indicate a good expanse of vocabulary as well as a depth of knowledge of professional military terms. He uses words such as debilitated, approbation, adjudged, vested, delegated, pretense, precipitation, abatis, lodgement, capitulation, indefatigable, and tedious.¹⁶ After the fall of Georgetown, his letters reflect concerns about price controls, free trade,

and other economic issues well beyond what one would expect from an “uneducated” country farmer.¹⁷

Around 1738, when Francis Marion was about six, his family moved from the area of the West Branch of the Cooper River in South Carolina, 34 miles inland from Charlestown, where there were schools, to the Georgetown area, a minor seaport 60 miles north of Charlestown, where there were no schools. By 1746, his father had, “become a little embarrassed in his affairs,” and was unable to set his two youngest sons up in business or farming as he had done for his older children.¹⁸ Francis’s older brothers and sister, however, had married into some of the wealthiest families in the colony, including the Alston family of Georgetown.

James recounts that at the age of 16 Marion determined upon a seafaring life and shipped on board a small coasting vessel.¹⁹ It is unlikely that Marion signed on as a common seaman. To serve “before the mast” was the nautical equivalent of being a ditch digger. As he was related to some of the most prominent families in the Georgetown area, it is likely that favors were called and Marion went to sea as “super cargo” (the owner’s agent), or as a ship’s officer in training. Becoming a ship’s master was a fitting goal for the youngest son from a good family. It was healthier than living in South Carolina. It did not require physical strength. A clever man could make his fortune. It was considered respectable. It did not, at the apprentice stage, require a large outlay of money by the family. A ship’s master needed to be strong in math. He had to be sharp in the ways of trade as it was often the ship’s master who determined the price at which his cargo would be sold and what would be purchased for the return voyage. More significantly, he had to be able to navigate.²⁰ In a

¹³ Lee, *American Revolution*, 16.

¹⁴ See for example: Matten, *Lincoln*, 12.

¹⁵ It is known that Marion carried on a private correspondence with Mary Esther Videau before they were married, with Theodore Samuel Marion while the younger Marion was at the University of Pennsylvania, and with Francis Dwight (later Francis Dwight Marion) while he was in college. This author knows of only two of Marion’s private letters which have survived, one on the Cherokee campaign and one to Francis Dwight Marion.

¹⁶ R. W. Gibbes, M.D., *Documentary History of the American Revolution* (Columbia, SC: Banner Steam-Power Press, 1853; Spartanburg, SC: Reprint Company, 1972) III:53. The words are from the report of the fall of Ft. Watson and letters selected at random.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 237 and 276.

¹⁸ Lee, *American Revolution*, 584.

¹⁹ James, *Marion*, 1. James got the information from “Cpt. Palmer,” a friend of Marion’s.

²⁰ Schaper, *Sectionalism*, 60.

growing port such as Georgetown, Francis Marion had ample opportunity to learn about trade and navigation from a tutor or as an apprentice on board ship.²¹

On the outward voyage to the West Indies, Marion's vessel was suddenly upset in a gale. It sank so quickly that the crew and the ship's dog were barely able to get into the vessel's row boat. Not having time to bring food or water, the crew eventually resorted to eating the dog raw in an attempt to survive. That was not sufficient. One after another, crew members began to die. On the seventh or eighth day, just as the boat was reaching land, the survivors were picked up by a passing ship.²² After enduring this hardship, Marion gave up the idea of a life at sea.

During the Revolution, the backcountry farmers who followed Marion marveled at his ability to find his way across South Carolina at night. It is said he avoided roads, traveled in straight lines, and would set out for a raid at dusk. The nights he picked were often moonless nights when the stars would be visible to travel by.²³

In addition to navigation, Marion undoubtedly learned another lesson at sea. Adrift in a small boat with only the raw flesh of the ship's dog to survive on, he watched stronger men lose hope and die. He

learned about men in crisis. He learned about facing death.

The Fields of Mars²⁴

The next phase of Marion's education was an internship in war. All males of military age in South Carolina had to attend four training musters per year as part of the militia. Marion's first exposure to the military was probably watching his father and the other men of the community training at the militia drills. His uncle Thomas Cordes, who died when Francis was about 16, was a colonel in the colonial era Berkeley County Militia.²⁵ When Marion turned 16, about 1746, he was required to register for the militia, drill on training days, and be prepared to turn out for duty if called upon. Military leadership was a family tradition. Gabriel and Francis Marion enrolled in the St. John's Berkeley militia company on January 31, 1756.²⁶

The French and Indian War in North America was mostly fought in what is today Canada, upstate New York and Pennsylvania. The South Carolina Indians, such as the Catawba and Cherokee, were on the side of the English. That would change as the fighting in the north came to an end in 1758. Prior to that date, South Carolina had only minor problems with the Indians during the French and Indian War.²⁷

²¹ Brodie claimed (without citing his source) that Henry Mouzon credited Marion with helping him gather information for the Mouzon map of the Carolinas. If Marion had a knowledge of navigation that would certainly have helped with the accuracy of the map. William W. Brodie, *Traditions of the Swamp Fox* (Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company for the Williamsburg Historical Soc., 2000), 36.

²² Ibid. Some biographers discount the shipwreck story because it first appeared in the Weems/Horry biography but Lee and James, who knew Marion personally, also related it.

²³ A study of the timing of Marion's partisan raids was made by George Summers, Col. USAF, Ret. His data came from the United States Naval Observatory. He determined that most of Marion's raids were conducted on either moonless nights, or nights when the moon had set early leaving the stars visible for land navigation. Unpublished verbal report by Col. Summers presented at a Francis Marion Symposium.

²⁴ (Latin: *Campus Martius*) Reference to the Roman God of War, and the area in Rome where military drills were conducted, to a later area in Paris in front of the Military Academy, and also in St. Petersburg. Moultrie commented in

his *Memoirs*, "General Marion and myself, entered the field of Mars together, in an expedition against the Cherokee Indians ... in 1761; when I had the honor to command a light infantry company in a provincial regiment; he was my first lieutenant He was an active, brave and hardy soldier, and an excellent partisan officer." William Moultrie, *Memoirs of the American Revolution*, (New York: David Longworth, 1802; reprint New York Times, 1968) II:223

²⁵ Richardson, "Dr. Anthony Cordes" *SCHM*, Vol. 43, (1942) 137.

²⁶ Richard Yeadon, "The Marion Family." *Southern and Western Magazine and Review*, Vol. 1, II, (1845) 275.

²⁷ David Ramsay, *Ramsay's History of South Carolina: From Its First Settlement In 1670 To the Year 1808* (Newberry, SC: W.J. Duffie, 1859) 94, *et seq.* The summary of the South Carolina Indian Wars is from Ramsay. For modern scholarship, see Daniel J. Tortora, *Carolina in Crisis* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2015) and Jeff W. Dennis, *Patriots & Indians* (Columbia: USC Press, 2017)

The Lyttelton Expedition

As the Cherokee warriors who had fought for the British against the French were returning to South Carolina through Virginia in 1758, they were attacked by backcountry English settlers. Depending upon accounts, three dozen Cherokee warriors were killed. A spirit of blood revenge spread through the tribe when the survivors reached home. The Cherokees attacked white settlers all along South Carolina's frontier. In response, Gov. William Henry Lyttelton called out the militia.²⁸ Three South Carolina militia battalions, though undermanned and unequipped, answered his call. They were commanded by Cols. Richard Richardson, George Gabriel Powell, and John Chevilette. Francis Marion, although not called up, is on a list of "volunteers" led by Christopher Gadsden that joined Lyttelton's 1759 Cherokee campaign.²⁹

The Cherokee approached Lyttelton with offers of peace; but, the governor rejected their offers, demanded return of specified Cherokee "murderers" and formed a plan to march his militia "army" northwestward to Ft. Prince George. He took 90 Cherokee peace delegates hostage, including women and children. Some were able to escape to tell of Lyttelton's treachery. Upon reaching Ft. Prince George the governor realized that his militia was in no condition to fight. The men lacked supplies, lacked discipline, and were

mutinous. Lyttelton released all but 28 of his hostages who were Cherokee headmen of note. He then coerced an unworkable treaty on the Cherokee chiefs. By this time the militia were abandoning the expedition because they had discovered that there was smallpox amongst the Indians. With the fear of smallpox sweeping his camp, Gov. Lyttelton, declared victory and went home before there had been any fighting. Thus Gov. Lyttelton's 1759 Cherokee expedition ended but no real peace was achieved.³⁰

Almost as soon as Lyttelton returned to Charlestown, hostilities were renewed. In addition to raiding settlements, the Indians besieged Ft. Prince George, the village of Ninety Six and Ft. Loudoun.³¹ The militia either could not, or would not, turn out because of the smallpox epidemic then raging across South Carolina. In an attempt to stem that dreaded disease, almost 2,500 people were inoculated at Charlestown.³² In the midst of this epidemic and a threatened slave rebellion, Lyttelton left South Carolina to become governor of Jamaica, leaving Lt. Gov. William Bull to take his place as acting governor of South Carolina.³³

An astute observer would have learned several things from Lyttelton's Expedition. He would have learned the necessity of discipline in a military organization, the necessity of proper preparation for an expedition, and the unreliability of the militia due to lack of training, equipment, and

²⁸ Tortora, *Crisis*, 52-56, and 70.

²⁹ Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, 95, *et seq.*, 228. Ramsay says Francis Marion was a volunteer in his brother Gabriel's militia cavalry troop. Neither Francis nor Gabriel show up on the audited pay accounts, "House of Commons, Expedition to Ft. Prince George, 1759 Audited Accounts," S.C. Archives, S165229. A John and Benjamin Marion are listed. Francis shows up as a volunteer at the Congarees to go with Gov. Lyttelton on October 31, 1759. See Christopher Gadsden, *The Writings of Christopher Gadsden, 1746-1805*, ed. Richard Walsh (Columbia: USC Press, 1966) 12-13, (document from Lyttelton papers, William L. Clements Library, Univ. of Mich.). For a general description of the French and Indian War, see Seymour I. Schwartz, *The French and Indian War, 1754-1763*, (Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 1994) and in the South, Tortora, *Crisis*, *supra*. Tortora reports that amongst the "gentlemen volunteers" were "future revolutionaries Christopher Gadsden, Francis Marion, and Thomas Lynch, Sr." He also mentions future revolutionary

leaders, Richard Richardson and George Gabriel Powell, led troops in this expedition. 75.

³⁰ Tortora, *Crisis*, 73-80. Ft. Prince George was located on the "Cherokee Path" in what is now Oconee County, South Carolina in the Keowee River valley now flooded by Lake Keowee.

³¹ Tortora, *Crisis*, 90-98. Ft. Loudoun was South Carolina's remote post, northwest, across the Blue Ridge and Great Smokey Mountains, located on the Little Tennessee River (now Tellico Lake), near modern Vonore, Tenn.

³² *South Carolina Gazette*, Charlestown, S.C., Feb. 21-28, 1760, p. 2.

³³ The Royal Governors of South Carolina were often tardy at coming to SC to govern. When the Royal governor was not in residence in the colony, it was administered by a Lt. governor who resided in the colony. William Bull (II) of Sheldon Hall in Prince William's Parish, was a popular SC resident and often acted as governor. See Ramsay, *History*, colonial officers were usually from the nobility or the upper middle class. 98-100.

supplies, and concerns about their farms, homes, and families. During the Revolution, Francis Marion was known as a strict disciplinarian who diligently trained his troops.³⁴

The Cherokee hostages and the command of Ft. Prince George were left to Lt. Richard Coytmore. Other Cherokees soon arrived in force at the fort with the intent to bargain for the hostages' release or to take them by force if necessary. Bargaining soon failed. The Cherokees attacked, killing Lt. Coytmore. In revenge, Coytmore's soldiers murdered the fifteen hostages that were in their care. With Ft. Prince George under siege, the Cherokees then attacked Ft. Loudoun, some 150 miles away. This began a general war against all Europeans. The Indians not only attacked the frontier posts such as Ninety Six and Ft. Dobbs, but also attacked farms and settlements across the southern frontier in Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina.

South Carolina forces were soon joined by those of Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia in a campaign against the Cherokee. 1760 was not a good year for South Carolina. Not only was it at war the Cherokee, it was fighting a smallpox epidemic and it feared a slave revolt.

The Montgomery Expedition

In response to Gov. Lyttelton's request for regular troops, Gen. Jeffrey Amherst detached Col. Archibald Montgomery with 400 men from the 1st Royal Regt. and 700 men from the 77th Regt. (the Montgomery Highlanders). Arriving in Charlestown in April 1760, Montgomery immediately set out for the Lower Cherokee towns. He marched to Ninety Six where he was joined by Col. Richard Richardson with about 80 provincials and a few hundred South Carolina Rangers under Maj. William Thomson. Richardson resigned leaving Capt. John Morrison in command of the provincials. Arriving unexpectedly in the Indian

territories, Montgomery achieved initial success in burning the Lower Villages and killing the inhabitants. He returned to Ft. Prince George expecting to negotiate a peace. The terms demanded by South Carolina, however, were too harsh to be acceptable to the Indians. Montgomery then moved west and turned north to try to relieve Ft. Loudoun. As he moved north in June, Montgomery's luck changed. He was ambushed in a mountain pass along the Little Tennessee River between the Lower and Middle Cherokee towns.

David Ramsay described the area as follows:

“Dismal was the wilderness...passing though dark thickets, rugged paths and narrow defiles, in which a small body of men properly posted might harass the bravest army. He [Montgomery] also had numberless difficulties to surmount... from rivers fordable only at one place, and overlooked by high banks on each side, where an enemy might attack with advantage, and safety. When he advanced within five miles of Etchoe, the nearest town in the middle settlements, he found a low valley covered so thick with bushes that the soldiers could scarcely see three yards before them.”³⁵

Shortly after the advanced party entered the thicket, they were attacked. The fighting was heavy for about an hour before the Cherokees were pushed back. By the rules of European armies, Montgomery won because he remained on the field. Strategically, he lost because his casualties were heavy enough that he could not continue on into Cherokee territory. Montgomery returned to Charlestown and left South Carolina in accordance with his orders from Gen. Amherst. Montgomery quickly returned to New York as ordered, but left behind four companies of his Highlanders at the Congarees commanded by Maj. Frederick Hamilton.³⁶

³⁴ Garden, *supra*. See also Patrick O'Kelley, *Unwaried Patience and Fortitude, Francis Marion's Orderly Book* (West Conshohocken, PA: Infinity Publishing, 2006)

³⁵ Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, 101. This ambush occurred on the Little Tennessee River near Otto, NC. Etchoe [Echoe] is thought to be Franklin, NC.

³⁶ Paul David Nelson, *General James Grant* (Gainesville: Univ. Florida Press, 1993) 27-28

There is no evidence to suggest that Marion was on the Montgomery Expedition, as most of the provincials and Rangers were from Amelia Township, Long Canes, and the Congarees. No payrolls or muster lists survive, and there is no later reference linking Marion to the Montgomery Expedition in 1760 in any government or military correspondence. Marion probably had a keen interest in the Cherokee situation and may have followed Montgomery's progress in the newspapers.

The Grant Expedition

Lt. Gov. Bull knew peace with the Cherokee had not been achieved. He not only made a second request for troops from Gen. Amherst but he also set about raising a provincial regiment to be commanded by Col. Thomas Middleton.³⁷ Middleton was well connected politically but had little military experience. Middleton's second in command was Lt. Col. Henry Laurens, a future leader in the Revolutionary Continental Congress. The Regiment's Major was John Moultrie, Jr.³⁸ Between creating a provincial regiment and expanding the South Carolina Rangers, Bull hoped to raise 1,000 men. Recruiting that many men would not be easy. South Carolina only had about 6,000 men capable of military service. A significant number of those men had to remain in the settled areas for fear of "internal enemies," that is, a slave revolt.³⁹

³⁷ Col. Thomas Middleton was a long-time SC Commons House member, and the younger brother of William and Henry Middleton.

³⁸ When James Grant became the Royal Governor of British East Florida in 1764, he appointed John Moultrie, Jr., and his brother James to the Royal Council. John Moultrie served on the Royal Council, developed roads and agriculture, and was alternately acting governor and lieutenant governor from 1771-1784 until East Florida was ceded to the Spanish. John Moultrie died in London in 1798. Maj. John Moultrie, Jr. and his younger brother, Capt. William Moultrie, would divide loyalties over the American Revolution.

³⁹ William Bull to the Lord Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, January 21, 1761, British Public Records Office copies at South Carolina State Archives, XXIX, 17-21.

⁴⁰ Marion's appointment is recorded in the Charleston County Registry of Deeds, Misc. Records, vol. 86A, p. 508. Moultrie in "Officers in the South Carolina Regiment in the Cherokee

Bull started commissioning officers for his regiment in September of 1760. On the 25th, he commissioned 28 year old Francis Marion as a lieutenant and Marion's neighbor, William Moultrie, as a captain.⁴⁰ The officers were expected to enlist their own platoons and companies. They would not be paid until they had recruited at least half of the men who would serve under them. Recruiting for the regiment was slow even though a generous enlistment bounty was offered. In November Moultrie and Marion were congratulated in the *South Carolina Gazette* for being the first to fill their units.⁴¹

It was Francis Marion's first experience recruiting men into the military. His ability to win the trust of common soldiers and get others to accept his goals as a leader was essential to his later success as a partisan commander.

While Bull was trying to raise a provincial regiment, Amherst agreed to send Lt. Col. James Grant back to South Carolina with troops to help suppress the Indian uprising.⁴² Grant had served as second in command with Montgomery in the 1760 Cherokee Campaign. He fully understood the difficulties that faced the expedition.⁴³ Arriving in Charlestown in January of 1761, Grant did not want, and Bull could not support, a winter campaign. There were not enough wagons in all of South Carolina to transport the amount of fodder

War, 1760-1761," *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Oct., 1902), 202-206.

⁴¹ *SC Gazette*, Nov. 8-15, 1760, p. 3. A company in the regular regiment contained about 40 common soldiers referred to as "files." Moultrie had about 71 men of which Lts. Marion and Mason recruited 35. Marion was misidentified as an ensign but the company did not have anyone in the rank of ensign. Bull wanted companies of 75 men. *Colonial Records of South Carolina, The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, 1757-1761*, Terry W. Lipscomb, ed. (Columbia: SC Dept. Archives & History, 1996) 464 and 666. See also Scott Withrow, "Cherokee Field School", *American Revolution* magazine, Vol. 1, Issue 1 (January 2009), 8-22.

⁴² Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, 105.

⁴³ Grant had been Montgomery's adjutant. *Colonial Records*, 666.

required to feed the horses and cattle required for a winter campaign.⁴⁴

Being unwilling to dismiss the men recruited for the provincial regiment, Bull sent his regiment to winter at the Congarees.⁴⁵ Conditions in camp were not good. Col. Middleton, the regimental commander, made only a brief appearance in camp, then went home.⁴⁶ The legislature argued over whether money should be spent to provide tents to the troops. Proper arrangements were not made for the needs of the troops resulting in a hard camp and discontent.⁴⁷

It was a lesson the young Marion clearly learned. In his later campaigns he was diligent in taking care of his men. He lived in the field and shared in all their hardships. As Henry Lee observed, “the procurement of subsistence for his men and the contrivance of annoyance to his enemy, engrossed his entire mind.”⁴⁸ Marion’s men loved him because of his dedication to their welfare.

Grant organized his expedition as a capable soldier would. Supply depots were established. Transportation for supplies was arranged. Every detail needed for a successful campaign was attended to, including the establishment of military justice. In April, nine men were charged with desertion. Eight were convicted. Grant pardoned seven of the group. The remaining man was executed as a warning. Granting pardons to the

seven made Grant look like a humane commander.⁴⁹

With Grant, Amherst sent four companies of the 1st Rgt., two light infantry companies from the 17th Rgt., and two from 22^d Rgt., eight companies of a newly raised “independent” regiment.⁵⁰ Also detached was a company of Rogers’ Rangers complete with Stockbridge (Mohican) and Mohawk Indians.⁵¹

It fell to these men to train the provincial soldiers for, as Henry Laurens noted, not one man in fifty of the provincials had ever heard a gun fired in anger. Many of the officers were young. Many had never traveled beyond the cleared areas of South Carolina. The regiment was composed of all sorts of people including a good many honest “tars.” Strange to say, it was the British regulars who taught the South Carolina provincials, including Francis Marion, how to fight Indian style.⁵²

About April 4 one-half of Col. Middleton’s provincial regiment was detached under Maj. John Moultrie, Jr. with Capts. Owen Roberts and Ainslie, Lieutenants Thomas Savage, Francis Marion, Jeremiah Terry, and Huger, Ensigns Benjamin Ward and John Huger and 220 picked men of Col. Middleton’s provincial regiment set out from the camp at the Congarees with 50 wagons of flour to go to the frontier trading post of Ninety Six. Grant’s main column would not follow for another week.⁵³

⁴⁴ William Bull to the Lord Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, January 21, 1761, British Public Records Office copies at South Carolina State Archives, XXIX, 17-21.

⁴⁵ *SC Gazette*, Nov. 8, Dec. 6-13, and 16-26, 1760. The area was just downstream from where the Saluda River joins the Broad River to form the Congaree River, now Cayce, SC. Daniel J. Tortora, “Ft. Congaree, II: British Outpost in the South Carolina Midlands, 1748-1756,” 2013, p. 25.

http://www.historysoft.com/granby/Fort_Congaree_II_Revised.pdf, accessed Dec. 18, 2016.

⁴⁶ Henry Laurens, *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, (*Laurens Papers*) Vol. Three, Jan. 1, 1759 - Aug. 31, 1763, Philip M. Hamer and George C. Rogers, Jr. eds., (Columbia: USC Press, 1994) 318.

⁴⁷ McCue, Margaret C., 1967, “Lieutenant Colonel James Grant’s Expedition Against the Cherokee Indians, 1761”, ms, University of South Carolina, 44. This is an excellent account. *Laurens Papers*, 3:319.

⁴⁸ Lee, *American Revolution*, 585.

⁴⁹ *Laurens Papers*, 3:64.

⁵⁰ *SC Gazette*, March 14-21, 1761, p. 2. Christopher French, “Journal of an Expedition to South Carolina, Dec. 22, 1760-Nov 14, 1761,” 300S, MMS Library of Congress, copy in the South Carolina Archives, P900109, Mar. 20, 1761.

⁵¹ *SC Gazette*, April 11-25, 1761, p. 2. Lt. Farrington and the Stockbridge Indians were part of Rogers’ Rangers. Rogers would not arrive in South Carolina until the fighting was finished. Burt Garfield Loesch, *Rogers Rangers, The First Green Berets, The Corps and The Revivals, April 6, 1758 - December 24, 1783*. (San Mateo, CA: by author, 1969; reprint, Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, 2000) 152-197.

⁵² *Laurens Papers*, 3:350-351. “Tars” and “Jack Tars” being slang for common sailors.

⁵³ *SC Gazette*, Apr. 4-11, 1761, p. 3. Goudy’s Trading Post, called Fort Ninety Six, was on the main trading path from

Marion was an insignificant cog in Grant's war machine. That anything is left to describe his role is remarkable. Although Marion kept a journal as a good officer should, it has been lost to history.⁵⁴ In 1821, William Dobein James, one of Marion's first biographers, said Marion had distinguished himself in some way during the Indian war but James could not discover how.⁵⁵

Mason L. Weems, Marion's first biographer, who "edited" Gen. Peter Horry's manuscript biography of Marion, tells his readers that Marion distinguished himself by leading a "forlorn hope" [a suicide mission] of 30 men into a defile where an Indian ambush was expected. Advancing from tree to tree, his men fired on the Indians until the van of the main army came up to support them.⁵⁶ This describes a textbook light infantry tactic quite unlike what soldiers in a line unit would do.

There are those who say the account of Marion's leading a "forlorn hope," was Weems's fabrication. They point to Grant's account which lacks any mention of Marion. Grant, however, was a regular British officer.⁵⁷ He had seen harsh battles in the northern theater of action, most notably just outside Fort Duquesne (later Fort Pitt).⁵⁸ The brush with the Cherokees in 1761 would not have seemed like much of a battle to him. On the other hand, someone who had never been in battle before might have seen things differently.

Charlestown to the Cherokee Nation. The post was thought to be ninety-six miles from Ft. Prince George on the Keowee River.

⁵⁴ See Peter Horry's notes to Mason Lock Weems's *Life of Francis Marion*, (Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1809). Ch. 2, in the Caroliniana Library, Columbia, SC. Horry does not dispute Weems's account and notes that he has Marion's journal. Weems and later biographers, state Marion lost 21 of his men.

⁵⁵ James, *Marion*, 17.

⁵⁶ Horry's notes to Weems's *Life of Marion*, supra, seem to support this account.

⁵⁷ After the expedition, Middleton would accuse Grant of not giving the colonials proper credit. The matter played out in the newspapers and eventually led to a duel. Alexander Hewatt, *An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Colonies of South Carolina and Georgia*, (London: Alexander Donaldson, 1779) 474-475. Hewatt's work was relied upon heavily by later authors, especially Ramsay.

Another early biographer of Marion, William Gilmore Simms, who published in 1844, related an account similar to that in the Weems biography. Simms had Horry's original manuscript which had, in part, been based on Marion's journal.⁵⁹ The major problem with both accounts is that the number of casualties that Marion's platoon is alleged to have suffered is unlikely in light of other reports.

Although Marion's journal has not survived, that of Capt. Christopher French of the 22^d Regt., Light Infantry, has. It provides insight into Marion's experiences as member of the expedition.⁶⁰

Capt. French arrived in South Carolina on January 9, 1761. His company moved to Monck's Corner three days later. On March 28, they were joined by 20 Rangers. On April 15, they reached Eutaw Springs, the "light infantry always leading" and always camping in a defensive square.⁶¹ On the 22nd of April, after almost two weeks on the road, they reached the Congarees where they joined the waiting South Carolina provincial troops. Maj. John Moultrie, Jr., Marion and a select body of South Carolina provincial troops had already left for Ninety Six with supply wagons.

On April 24 Capt. French's light infantry company left the Congarees, escorting a second convoy of supply wagons going to Ninety Six. The road was

⁵⁸ Ft. Pitt was located in modern Pittsburgh. For a summary of James Grant, Laird of Ballindalloch (1720-1806) military experience see Paul David Nelson, *Gen. James Grant, Scottish Soldier and Royal Governor of East Florida*, (Gainesville: Univ. Press of FL, 1993).

⁵⁹ William Gilmore Simms, *The Life of Francis Marion*. (New York: G. H. Langley, 1844; reprint, Charleston, SC: History Press, 2007), p. 27, *et seq.* See footnote 14 in which Simms cites Horry's manuscript, as well as, Weems's book and Hewatt's history. Horry's manuscript is now lost.

⁶⁰ French, Christopher. "Journal of an Expedition to South Carolina." *Journal of Cherokee Studies* 2 (Summer 1977):275-296

⁶¹ The hollow square was one of the British army's strongest defensive formations as it protected the unit from all sides. By saying they camped in a square, French was implying that they were ready for battle.

little more than a path. Even though Maj. Moultrie's provincials had just pushed a convoy over that same road, French noted that his black pioneers (construction workers) had to "mend" the road as they marched. The supply convoy that followed French also found the road washed out. They too had to construct bridges over the creeks to get their wagons through.⁶² Beyond Ninety Six the road was impassible to wagons. The army would use pack horses.

It was a dangerous trip. Fortified Ninety Six had been attacked by Indians on February 3. A second assault with over 200 warriors took place on March 3. On April 4, about the same time John Moultrie with Marion set out for Ninety Six, a hunting party from the fort was attacked by Indians. Ninety Six was not a safe place.⁶³

Fort Ninety Six was a crude trading post consisting of a house, a barn, and some outbuildings surrounded by a stockade of sharpened poles. One of Moultrie's first projects on reaching Ninety Six was to entrench, strengthen and enlarge the stockade.⁶⁴

On April 30, after six days of trudging through deep woods, Capt. French's light infantry escorted the second wagon train into Ninety Six. It was 215 miles from Charlestown and 75 miles from the Congarees. Ninety Six, French noted, was a small fort of pickets, "of no consequence."

Francis Marion had trudged over that same path from Eutaw Springs to the Congarees to Ninety Six. His unit also repaired the road. He would have noted the swamps, the streams, and every other obstacle that difficult journey could muster. Twenty years later, when Ninety Six was a hub of

the British Army's operations against American forces in western South Carolina, Francis Marion knew what rain could do to that road and how difficult it could be to move supplies to Ninety Six.⁶⁵

In the spring of 1761, British authorities estimated that the Cherokees had about 600 warriors in a population of about 5,000 Indians.⁶⁶ They also believed that the Cherokees were short of supplies due, in part, to Montgomery's destroying their Lower Towns (those closest to the English settlements) and crops the year before. Grant's expedition was said to consist of 1,400 regulars, 689 provincials, 401 rangers (mostly locals), 240 drovers and wagoners, 57 Indians, and 41 Negroes, a total of about 2,800 men.⁶⁷ The English had every reason to believe a treaty could be reached as the Cherokees seemed disposed to swap the captives they held for supplies. Although the Cherokees appeared to be conciliatory, all was not well on the frontier.⁶⁸

The night Capt. French arrived at Ninety Six he noted that wolves prowled about the camp. The following night presented a surreal combination of sights and sounds. The friendly South Carolina "Cickasas" Indians built a fire to dance the war dance. After overcoming some language difficulty, they invited the Mohawks from New York to join them. Once can only imagine what Marion, a 28 year-old planter witnessing this for the first time, must have thought.

The next day, Capt. Ainsley of the provincials was sent back with twelve rangers to guide the main army to Ninety Six. On May 15 the rest of the provincial regiment arrived with the bulk of Grant's force, including a detachment of Major

⁶² *SC Gazette*, May 16-23, 1761, p. 3.

⁶³ Robert M. Dunkerly and Eric K. Williams, *Old Fort Ninety Six, A History and Guide* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2006) 14-17.

⁶⁴ Dunkerly and Williams, *Old Ninety Six*, 15-19. *SC Gazette*, Apr. 25-May 2, 1761, p. 1. On Robert Gouedy's fortified Trading Post at Ninety Six, see Tortora, *Crisis*, 76, 106-107.

⁶⁵ To better facilitate communications with Ninety Six, the western SC settlements, and the extensive Cherokee trade, colonial SC constructed a ridge road between the forks of the

Edisto River from Orangeburg to Ninety Six in 1770 though it was probably no wet-weather prize.

⁶⁶ Bull to Lord Commissioners, January 21, 1761, British Public Records Office, SC Archives, XXIX, 17-21. James Grant, "Journal of Lieutenant - Colonel James Grant, Commanding an Expedition Against the Cherokee Indians, June-July 1761," *Florida Historical Society Quarterly*, XII (1933), 29.

⁶⁷ *New-York Mercury*, New York, June 29, 1761, 2.

⁶⁸ *SC Gazette*, Apr. 4-11, 1761, 3.

Rogers' Rangers.⁶⁹ Each night, the soldiers camped in a square, ready for battle. On the 16th Capt. French again noted, "In the Evening all our Indians, consisting of Chikasas, Catawbas, Mohawks, & Stockbridge (Mohican) Indians, assembled near a great Fire & danc'd the War Dance with several others peculiar to themselves." The dance was repeated two nights later.⁷⁰



Before leaving Ninety Six, Lt. Col. Grant formed a special unit called the "Indian Corps" consisting of about seventeen Chickasaws, nineteen Catawbas, the Mohawks from New York, the Mohicans from Massachusetts, the men from Rogers' Rangers, ten men from the 17th Rgt. and about 20 men from the South Carolina provincials who were said to be well acquainted with Indian fighting. Capt. Quinton Kennedy of the 17th Rgt. Light Infantry was placed in command. Kennedy, although a regular British officer, had worked extensively with Indians.⁷¹ He had studied the tactics of Rogers' Rangers and went so far as to dress as an Indian when participating in patrols.⁷² He now dressed all the men of his Indian Corps in Indian dress.⁷³

The route of Lt. Col. Grant's forced march from Ninety Six to Ft. Prince George was marked with the burnt Indian villages that Montgomery had destroyed the year before. In spite of that, Capt. French noted that the Cherokee lands were "well clear'd & is a fine Country."⁷⁴ On the 29th, after the entire army reached Ft. Prince George, wolves broke into the cattle pen causing the cattle to break out in panic. French recorded, "The Camp was a little alarmed at Night by a vast howling of Wolves, our Indians, screaming at the same time, making it impossible to judge for some time what it was."

On the 30th, Grant formed a new light infantry company consisting of 70 picked men from the South Carolina provincial regiment to be joined to the British light infantry.⁷⁵ By doctrine, the men picked for the light infantry would be the smallest, most agile, most aggressive men who were the best marksmen and most capable of independent action. They would be trained in light infantry tactics

⁶⁹ *SC Gazette*, May 23-30, 1761, 2. Rogers was not himself present. The detachment was commanded by Lt. Jacob Farrington of the Rangers. *The New-York Mercury*, New York, June 29, 1761, p. 1.

⁷⁰ French, "Journal", May 18th, 1761

⁷¹ *SC Gazette*, May 23-30, 1761, p. 2; *The New York Mercury*, New York, June 29, 1761, p. 1.

⁷² Bob Plott, *Colorful Characters of the Great Smoky Mountains*. (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2011) 17 *et seq.*

⁷³ *SC Gazette*, June 13-20, 1761, p. 2.

⁷⁴ French, "Journal", June 7th, 1761, 96.

⁷⁵ Alexander Monypenny, Maj., *Diary & Order Book*, 1761, end. SC Archives, PR00097, from The Thomas Gilcrease Inst. of Am. History and Art. *New-York Mercury*, June 29, 1761, p. 2. Grant apparently left some of his light infantry at Ninety Six and Ft. Prince George to guard the supply lines, thus necessitating the formation of a new light infantry company to take their place.

according to the doctrine developed by officers such as Maj. Robert Rogers⁷⁶ and Capt. Kennedy.

Capt. William Moultrie was chosen to command the new light infantry company with Lts. Francis Marion, Bellamy Crawford, and Ens. McDonald as its officers.⁷⁷ To be chosen for this duty was a great honor. Marion, as a light infantry officer, had to be able to fight in a skirmish line, act independently, or fall back and become a part of the formal line of battle.

The army left Ft. Prince George on June 7 with the Indian Corps scouting ahead of the army. The three light infantry companies under Capt. Sir Henry Seton, Christopher French, and William Moultrie, and some 200 light infantry men in six platoons, supported by 50 rangers, formed the advance guard for Grant's main column.⁷⁸ Behind the light infantry were three battalions of regulars, followed by the provincial regiment. Bringing up the rear, under the care of the remaining provincials, were about 600 pack horses and more than 400 head of cattle to provide the expedition with 30 days of supplies. The column stretched out for over two miles.⁷⁹

The army marched without tents. Most of the officers left their horses behind.⁸⁰ Grant did all that he could to remove anything that would slow down his army.

French repeatedly noted that the way west was filled with steep defiles, high mountains that commanded the road, paths along precipices, waterfalls, rapid rivers, and streams swollen by recent rains. In military terms, there were multiple choke points that would prevent the army from

deploying, thus providing the enemy with an opportunity for ambush.⁸¹

At each of these points of danger, two lines of light infantry probed the trail for signs of ambush. They were the point of the spear. They were there to "take" the enemy's spear to protect the column if need be. They never knew which, if any, of these choke points might hold a deadly ambush. It was a job that required nerves of steel. Because it was fatiguing duty, doctrine called for the platoons of light infantry to take turns at the head of the column.

On June 7 and 8 the army passed two particularly narrow places in the trail. Although these were excellent locations for an ambush, the army passed without incident.

On June 10 French recorded that the road passed a defile by the foot of a mountain near a river. The road at this point was so narrow that the pack horses had difficulty getting through. The location was about two miles from where Montgomery's expedition against the Cherokee had been ambushed the year before. Here the provincial commander of Montgomery's advanced party had been killed almost as soon as he entered the defile.⁸²

Everyone expected Cherokees to ambush the column in that defile. Prior to the 10th, only the Indian Corps and light infantry had loaded weapons. Now, the entire line was ordered to load. Grant broke camp about 6 AM. The Indian Corps and light infantry were in the lead and acting as flankers. The column was divided into fifteen "brigades." The pack horses with ammunition and

main path to the Cherokee Middle Towns went west to Earl's Ford over the Chattooga River, then west along Warwoman Creek to modern Clayton, GA. Then it turned north crossing the Rabun Gap at Mountain City, GA., and continued north up the Little Tennessee River Valley (US Hwy 441), towards Franklin, NC.

⁷⁶ Zaboly, *American Colonial Ranger*, 17.

⁷⁷ Reported in the *SC Gazette*, May 23-30 and June 13-20, 1761.

⁷⁸ Hewatt, *Historical Account*, 469. Other than newspaper accounts which tend to be biased, Hewatt's account is the first published history of the expedition. As he undoubtedly had access to sources that no longer exist, his is probably one of the more accurate accounts. Ramsay's account is an almost verbatim copy of Hewatt's.

⁷⁹ French, "Journal", 96; *SC Gazette*, June 13-20, 1761, p. 2; *New York Gazette*, July 30, 1761, 1; *The Royal Magazine*, 1761, 153; *Boston News-Letter*, 7-23-1761, 3; Hewatt, *Historical Account*, 469; and McCue, 61. From Ft. Prince George on the Keowee River, just north of Seneca, SC, the

⁸⁰ *Boston News Letter*, Boston, MA, July 16, 1761, 2.

⁸¹ Grant, 26.

⁸² French, "Journal", 103. US Hwy 441 leads north along the Little Tennessee River from modern Clayton, GA. through Mountain City, GA. to Franklin, NC. This is the route both Montgomery's and Grant's expedition took in 1760 and 1761.

other supplies were taken from the rear of the column and interspersed with the brigades. The cattle brought up the rear followed by a rear guard. As the last units were clearing camp, some ineffective shots were fired at the cattle guard at the rear of the column. Grant assigned another 50 provincials to the rear guard.⁸³

The Indian Corps spread out along the flanks and forward of the column. The light infantry provided the advance for the main column along the road.

The accounts of what happened next vary somewhat. This is to be expected: soldiers often see only what is happening directly in front of them.

About 8:30 AM, when the column was about six miles from its last encampment, Capt. Kennedy's Indian Corps ran across some Cherokees on the mountain on the right flank of Grant's column. They shouted a "holloo" followed by some exchange of fire but the Cherokees fell back. Grant ordered the column to keep marching as he did not want to get caught where he could not deploy and where any firing from the main line companies would be ineffective. By this time the column had reached a point on the path that was very narrow with steep hills on both sides. To the left of the column, the river was not fordable. On the far side, a mountain rose up covered in dense forest.⁸⁴ This was the defile mentioned in so many accounts. It was, in military terms, the killing zone of the ambush. The closest ford over the river, the only escape from the ambush, was a half mile beyond the ambush spot.⁸⁵

A shout went up from the Cherokees on both sides of the river running from the front of the column to the rear accompanied by "brisk" firing by the Cherokees from all sides. A party of Cherokees rushed down on the advanced light infantry guard.⁸⁶ The lead light infantry company, although temporarily thrown back, was able to push ahead with the help of the follow-on companies. This

would have caused a ripple effect, halting the column's line of march until the light infantry was able to move forward.

While Capt. Kennedy with his Indian Corps was fighting the Cherokees on the hill on the right side of the column, the Cherokees on the left fired on the column from the forested area on the far side of the river. Grant ordered part of his light infantry to form a skirmish line along his side of the river to keep the Cherokee marksmen across the river at a distance. Grant also ordered a party to march up the hill on his right to drive off the Indians which was accomplished with "some dispute."⁸⁷ The main column was ordered to face to the left and fire a volley across the river at the hidden enemy.⁸⁸

Meanwhile, Capt. French sent another light infantry platoon over the river to "amuse" the Indians. That platoon of light infantry, including Lt. Marion, pushed through the defile, fought its way up the path for a half mile until it came to the river ford. After crossing the river, it pushed the Cherokees back and covered the main army, until the entire column could also get across the river. Grant's column had been attacked on all four sides. If his army pushed the Cherokees back in one area, they would attack in another.⁸⁹ Marion, with his 30-man platoon, either pushed through the defile, conducted a river crossing under fire and then protected the main army as it crossed, or passed through the defile to a point where the mountain could be climbed, climbed the mountain and engaged the Cherokees on the mountain.

French's diary for June 10 noted, "Other Corps were as warmly saluted in passing the defile as the light infantry & suffered pritty considerably, whereas we escaped very well."

Col. Grant's account stated:

"Before the rear had moved out of the ground of encampment a few shots were

⁸³ Grant, 27.

⁸⁴ Grant, 28. The Cherokees picked a natural choke point just north of modern Otto, NC, for their 1761 ambush of Grant's column. It was within two miles of their 1760 ambush of Montgomery's column.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Hewatt, *Historical Account*, 470.

⁸⁷ *The New-York Mercury*, New York, August 3, 1761, 1.

⁸⁸ Hewatt, *Historical Account*, 470.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

fired at the cattle guard from a hill at a considerable distance This was immediately reported and as their first act of hostility seemed to point at our provisions, the rear guards were reinforced with 50 Provincials. The Indian corps which has been useful served as flankers [on the sides] to the line and marched in front of the advanced guard of light infantry [where Marion and French would have been]. About half an hour after light in the morning a party of them fell in with a body of the enemy upon our right flank, their being discovered disconcerted them, a few shots were exchanged and the Cherokees tho' numerous gave way; but the yelp went from front to rear of the line upon both flanks upon a ridge of mountains upon our right and on the opposite side of the Cowahowee River which could not be passed on our left. This Indian cry served as a signal for the attack and they began a pretty smart fire but at a considerable distance; - stopping and forming in disadvantageous ground against an invisible enemy could answer no good end, the line of march was therefore continued, a platoon of light infantry was sent to the river side with orders to cover themselves in the best manner they could and to fire from time to time at the enemy to prevent their drawing nearer and becoming more troublesome. . . . About a half a mile from the place where the attack began there is a ford and on the opposite side a rising ground; as soon as the light infantry got over, they were posted to cover the passage of the river. . . .the other troops were formed in columns as they came up and continued in that position till the rear had passed the river. The firing was pretty smart till near twelve o'clock and popping shots continued till after two which is hardly to be believed as our loss is so very inconsiderable.⁹⁰

The action lasted three hours by Grant's account. Five officers were wounded, forty seven men were killed or wounded. Forty horses were killed.

Grant reported the following casualties:

“The Royals - 1 killed, 5 wounded: the 17th and 22nd Light Infantry - 2 wounded: Batte [Battalion?] Corps - 1 killed, 6 wounded: Burton's (The Independents) - 5 killed, 18 wounded: Carolina Reg. - 1 killed, 14 wounded: Indians - 1 killed: rangers - 1 killed, 2 wounded: pack horse men - 1 killed, 5 wounded.”⁹¹

The Cherokees admitted to losing about 35 men.⁹²

The heaviest losses were to the line companies that had to stand and take the enemy fire while the light infantry was trying to force a passage through the defile. The battalion corps and Burton's (line units) had 30 killed or wounded, as opposed to the light infantry and rangers that lost only six. The South Carolina provincials had 15 casualties; there is no way of determining how many were in the line unit, rear guard, or in the light infantry company.

The weight of casualties is not a mark of how hard a unit fought, rather it is the difference between standing in the open when being fired at or taking cover as the light infantry and rangers were trained to do. A company that charges the enemy is no less brave just because it takes fewer casualties than one that stands on the road and gets shot at.

Lt. Colonel Henry Laurens, the second-in-command of the South Carolina provincial regiment,⁹³ recounted to a friend that the hostile Indians had fired on the column for over a mile from front to rear from the tops of hills on their right and from over the river on their left from “amazingly advantageous” positions. “Our Men,” he said, “behaved bravely, returned their Fire, advanced briskly up the Hills, & push'd with great

⁹⁰ Grant, 26, *et seq.*

⁹¹ Jeffery Amherst, Amherst Papers, 1756-1763, *Southern Sector: Dispatches from South Carolina, Virginia and His Majesty's Superintendent of Indian Affairs*, Edith Mays, ed.

(Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 1999) 280, Report Grant to Amherst, July 10, 1761.

⁹² *Laurens Papers*, 3:288.

⁹³ *Ibid.* 74-76.

intrepidity across the River.”⁹⁴ “Our men” would have been Capt. William Moultrie, with Lts. Marion or Crawford.

Weems’s biography of Marion has Marion and his platoon at the head of the column “to explore the dangerous pass:”

“At the head of his command he advanced with rapidity, while the army moved on to support him. But, scarcely had they entered the gloomy defile, when, from behind rocks and trees, a sheet of fire suddenly blazed forth, which killed twenty-one of his men. With the remainder, he faced about and pushed back with all speed; whereupon great numbers of tall savages, frightfully painted, rushed from their lurking places...nothing but the nearness of the advanced guard saved them from destruction.”⁹⁵

Simms’s biography of Marion, relates the event as follows:⁹⁶

“[The Cherokees] Finding themselves discovered, they opened their fire upon the advanced guard, and followed it up with a gallant charge. But the van, being vigorously and promptly supported, they were driven back, and resumed their position upon the hill. Under this hill the line of march lay for a considerable distance. To attempt, therefore, to continue the march before dislodging the enemy in possession of it, would be to expose the troops to a protracted fire, the more murderous, as it would be delivered by a foe in position of perfect security. The advanced guard was ordered upon this duty, and from this body a forlorn hope of thirty men was chosen, to force the perilous entrance to the foe. The command of this devoted corps was assigned to

Francis Marion, still a lieutenant under the command of Moultrie, in the provincial regiment of Middleton. The ascent of the hill was by means of a gloomy defile, through which the little band headed gallantly by their leader, advanced with due rapidity; a considerable body of the army moving forward at the same time in support of the advance. Scarcely had the detachment penetrated the defile, when the war-whoop gave the signal. The savages, still concealed, poured in a deadly fire, by which no less than twenty-one of this fated band were prostrated. . . . The residue were only saved from destruction by the proximity of the advance [French] . . . From eight in the morning until noon the fight was continued . . . about two o’clock in the afternoon the field was yielded by the reluctant Cherokees. . . .”

The accounts, although differing, are not contradictory. Simms had Peter Horry’s original manuscript and Peter Horry had Marion’s journal of the event.⁹⁷ The only part of these accounts which are inconsistent with other accounts, are the number of casualties. It is possible, that Marion’s biographers misunderstood the journal notation. The light infantry, although doing a lot of fighting, did not suffer much in the initial attack.⁹⁸

Men in battle tend to see only what is directly in front of them. Grant’s force of some 2,800 men, pack horses and cattle was stretched out over two miles along the narrow paths through the North Carolina backcountry.⁹⁹ It is unlikely that Grant knew all the details of what was going on. The same is true of French and Marion who would see the battle in terms of what they had to deal with at the head of the column.

The Cherokees had set a double envelopment ambush. They waited until Grant’s main force was

⁹⁴ Ibid. 75.

⁹⁵ Weems, *Marion*, 23. Horry’s notes at this point of Weems book state, “The author P Horry got a Book or journal of Marion’s & under his hand was wrote these particulars of Grant’s expedition.”

⁹⁶ Simms, *Marion*, 29. Weems’s account contains more accurate details than Simms.

⁹⁷ Simms, *Marion*, 29-30, fn 14.

⁹⁸ See also *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, Philadelphia, PA, August 6, 1761, 2, indicating the light infantry did not suffer casualties in the initial attack.

⁹⁹ *SC Gazette*, May 16-23, 1761, p. 3.

strung out along the narrow forest trail which was channeled on one side by a mountain and on the other by the Little Tennessee River that could not be crossed at that point. Grant's column was very vulnerable. The men were sufficiently bunched up so as to present good targets but could not form to effectively return fire or get away. The ambush began with a diversion, firing at the rear guard, causing Grant to redeploy men to the rear. Having distracted Grant's attention to the rear of the column the Cherokees held their fire until most of Grant's force was in the killing zone. The attack against the advanced light infantry was not so much an attempt to destroy that party as it was an attempt to pin Grant down on the road. He could not move forward out of the killing zone until the light infantry cleared the defile. In the meantime, the rest of the column had to stand in the open and take the hostile fire. Every dead horse across the path became an obstacle to be cleared before the men behind could move forward. Once the fighting began, Grant's only escape was to make it to the ford across the river which was a half mile north. That ford was defended by the Cherokees. Crossing a river, even a small one like the Little Tennessee was at this point, under fire is one of the most difficult and dangerous tasks a military unit can undertake. The light infantry would have used "aimed fire" against specific targets from behind cover, fighting from "tree to tree," as opposed to volley firing, as was done by the line units. Grant, knowing he was in a bad spot, did the right thing. He pushed his army ahead as quickly as he could to get out of the killing zone. By doing so, each of his units had to pass through the kill zone. As the line progressed through the defile, more and more of the enemy fighters could be concentrated in the area of the defile so that the firing would be more intense for the units at the end of the column. As could be expected, when the bulk of Grant's column made it through the defile, the Cherokees concentrated their attack on the cattle guard and the pack horses at the rear of the column. This was also the Cherokees' last chance to stop Grant from getting into their Middle Villages. Without food, Grant would have to turn back. The pack horse men and drovers at the end of the column, panicked

when they reached the defile. Many abandoned their post, throwing the packs off of the horses so that they could use the horses to escape. Grant sent reinforcements to the rear who forced the panicked civilians¹⁰⁰ to pick up the supplies they had dumped. What supplies could not be retrieved were thrown into the river to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Cherokees.

It was a good ambush. The Cherokees' mistake was that they were firing at too great a distance from Grant's force to do much damage. Grant found it hard to believe that his casualties were as light as they turned out to be. The Cherokees were low on ammunition and outnumbered four to one.¹⁰¹

Is the account of Marion leading his platoon against the hostile Indians possible? Absolutely. Why was he not mentioned at the time? Because he was, from the British point of view, a provincial, a nobody who was just doing his job.

During the Revolution, Marion would become known as a master of the surprise attack. He used diversions to lure his prey into killing zones. He attacked on multiple sides causing confusion amongst his enemies. He frequently used a natural barrier, such as a swamp or river, between his men and the enemy to keep the enemy from deploying as they had been trained or from being able to reach Marion's men with their bayonets. Unlike the Indians he faced in 1761, Marion's men always had the proper range. Those foolish enough to attempt to charge into the swamps in response to one of Marion's attacks, suffered fatal consequences. Marion learned from Grant's experiences.

He also learned how brutal the British could be. The newspaper accounts of what happened next were sanitized.

There was no further resistance by the Cherokee. When Grant's force reached the key Cherokee town of Etchoe, the town was empty. Grant ordered everything to be destroyed, including crops growing in the fields. Capt. French and the light infantry, of which Marion was a part, were sent

¹⁰⁰ Grant, 29.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 28.

ahead of the main army to surprise the town of Tasee. They had orders to put to death every man, woman, and child they could find; but, the town had been abandoned by the Cherokee.¹⁰²

Grant's army was ruthless. Capt. French related that a Catawba took a captured Cherokee, knocked him down with a club, tomahawked his head, scalped him, blew out his brains, disembowel him, cut off his private parts and "mangled in a shocking manner" the body. Each town they came to was torched. All provisions were destroyed. Growing crops were torn up from the fields and burnt. The few Cherokee that fell into Grant's hands, mostly old people and women, were tortured and killed by Grant's Indian auxiliaries.¹⁰³ Soldiers, who considered themselves Christians, who had some feeling of humanity, had no say in the matter. They did not have to watch, but they must have heard.

Marion described his feelings in a letter to an unidentified friend:

"We arrived at the Indian towns in the month of July...the lands were rich, and the season had been favorable ... We encamped the first night in the woods, near the fields, where the whole army feasted on the young corn, which, with fat venison, made a most delicious treat.

The next morning we proceeded, by order of Colonel Grant, to burn down the Indian

cabins. Some of our men seemed to enjoy this cruel work. . . . But to me it appeared a shoking sight. 'Poor creatures!' I thought, 'we surely need not grudge you such miserable habitations.' But when we came, according to orders, to cut down the fields of corn, I could scarcely refrain from tears.... I saw everywhere around the footsteps of the little Indian children, where they had lately played under the . . . corn. No doubt they had often looked up with joy to see the rustling corn... When we are gone, thought I, they will return . . . with tearful eyes, will mark the ghastly ruin poured over their homes, and . . . fields where they had so often played. 'Who did this?' they will ask their mothers. 'The white people, the Christians did it!' will be the reply."¹⁰⁴

Grant boasted in his journal that he had destroyed fifteen towns and all the "plantations" in the county, above 1,400 acres of crops had been burnt, and "about 5,000 people, including men, women and children drove into the woods and mountains to starve. They have nothing left to subsist upon . . ."¹⁰⁵

After the one battle, the Cherokees focused on evacuating their towns rather than fighting Grant. Grant's force was only stopped because it was running out of food. Almost half the men had worn through their shoes.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² French, "Journal", 104, 105, and 143.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Weems at page, 24 and Simms at page 32, both quote this letter but with slight differences. This author has edited the letter to remove some of the more flowery language. Some historians believe the letter was created by Weems. Horry, when he annotated his copy of the Weems biography made no comment on the letter. Simms, who had Horry's original notes, untouched by Weems, printed the letter with minor changes. Letters home from the Grant campaign can be found in the papers of other participants, including Henry Laurens who was quoted earlier. Although neither of Marion's biographers named the recipient of the letter, the main reason to withhold the name would be a feeling that the disclosure of the letter violated a social taboo. If so, the most likely recipient would be the future Mrs. General Marion (Mary Esther Videau). Within polite company, people did not make public letters between husbands and wives. The letter is not

accurate as to the date of when the troops entered the Indian towns. The troops entered about the 10th of June and stayed until the 9th of July. As both Weems and Simms knew the dates, it seems odd that they would put an incorrect date on a letter they made up. Although Marion had an extensive private correspondence, this author knows of only one other private letter of Marion's that has survived. It is difficult to judge the style of writing he may have used in private correspondence. Some other provincial soldiers were also remorseful about the treatment of the Cherokee including Laurens, and Andrew Pickens who, in a letter to Henry Lee many years later, stated that the Grant Expedition was where he found out how cruel the British were. Quoted in Alice N. Waring, *The Fighting Elder, Andrew Pickens, 1729-1817* (Columbia: USC Press, 1962), note 23.

¹⁰⁵ Grant, 35.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 36.

Later in life, Marion often spoke of this part of the war as a transaction which he remembered with sorrow.¹⁰⁷ Marion was a humane man. He did not tolerate cruel or vengeful acts by soldiers under his command. Perhaps, that was also a lesson he learned in the Cherokee Campaign. You have to live with what you have done.

Epilogue

In a letter to Lord Jeffrey Amherst, Commander of British forces in North America, Grant stated:

“We returned to this place last night, the officers and men I believe are most heartily tired of the service they have been upon, the fatigue & hardships have been considerable; 33 days without tents, heavy rains frequently during that time, short allowance of bread, long marches, bad roads, hard duty, & what the men thought worse than all, no rum. I have great reason to be satisfied with the behavior of both the officers and men. Everything was done cheerfully, not a single complaint. The Provincials have behaved well, as I always expected they would do ...they seem now to dispise the Indians as much as they were suspected to fear them before.”

To which Amherst replied:

“[The Indians] dare not face real danger; this I wanted much the Provincials & Rangers should be convinced of ... because they will now the readier withstand those savages upon future occasions, without the assistance of His Majesty’s Regular Troop whom they may not always have at call; & indeed, they should made to understand that they must not expect their Aid hereafter, but must stand up in their own defense.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Weems, *Marion*, 24. Simms, who was a more thorough researcher, repeated that “this campaign filled him, long after, with recollections of sorrow.” Simms, *Marion*, 32.

¹⁰⁸ Edith Mays, ed., *Amherst Papers, 1756-1763, Southern Sector: Dispatches from South Carolina, Virginia and His Majesty’s Superintendent of Indian Affairs*, Heritage Books, Bowie, MD, 1999, 277-278, 287.

¹⁰⁹ Arthur H. Hirsch, *The Huguenots of Colonial South Carolina* (Columbia: USC Press, 1878, reprint 1999) 26.

Amherst and Grant would see the fulfillment of that training fourteen years later.

Many who achieved fame during the American Revolution were trained during the Grant campaign by a British officer corps hardened by the French and Indian War. William Moultrie, Francis Marion, and Andrew Pickens all became American generals.

Francis Marion returned from the Grant Campaign to the life of a small planter. Marion farmed a tract on Gabriel’s Belle Isle Plantation and then bought Pond Bluff Plantation before the Revolution. Leaving Georgetown in 1775, Gabriel, Francis, and their mother Esther joined the growing number of French Huguenot families moving west along the Santee River to settle in what was then the frontier.¹⁰⁹ The land was fertile. Rice could be grown in converted swamps along the river. Back from the river, the land was favorable for growing the profitable cash crop of indigo as well as for raising cattle and hogs. “Black” cattle were allowed to roam the forests much of the year.¹¹⁰ In the late fall they would be rounded up. The stock cattle were separated for future breeding, and the remainder driven to town for slaughter in December. Fruit trees grew well. Peaches, potatoes, Indian corn, and rye were all grown and distilled.¹¹¹

Karen MacNutt lives in Dorchester, Mass. She is an attorney in private practice and retired Mass. Army National Guard Staff Judge Advocate. She has extensively studied Gen. Francis Marion’s life, presented numerous times on Marion and his family, and acted as a tour guide to Marion sites in Georgetown, SC.

¹¹⁰ There is no clear definition of “black” cattle. The reference was probably to common beef cattle as contrasted to dairy cattle or to the better quality of grain fed beef cattle.

¹¹¹ Johnston, *A Description of South Carolina*, 28-29. James A. Wallace, *History of Williamsburg Church* (Salisbury, NC: Bell & James, 1858, reprinted, State Printing Company for Williamsburg County Historical Society, Kingstree, SC, 1971) 42, 105.

What happened to the other participants?

Thomas Middleton (1719-1766) was a member of the colonial government in South Carolina and became locally popular after his duel with Col. James Grant after the French and Indian War.¹¹²



Henry Laurens, c. 1781 while a prisoner of King George in the Tower of London. Portrait by Lemuel Francis Abbott.

Henry Laurens, Middleton's second-in-command, became President of the Continental Congress between 1777 and 1778. He was captured by the British in 1779 while on a diplomatic mission to Holland and was held in the Tower of London for fifteen months. After being exchanged for Lord Cornwallis, Laurens was appointed as one of the commissioners to negotiate a peace treaty with England. Laurens' finances suffered severely

during the British occupation of South Carolina. He died at his Mepkin Plantation in 1792.¹¹³

William Bull, a highly respected native of South Carolina, was appointed Lt. Governor in 1759. He served for sixteen years until 1775. Several times he was acting governor. A supporter of the Crown, he left South Carolina with the British in 1782. He died in England in 1791. His property was never confiscated by the State of South Carolina. He could have returned at any time if he could have brought himself to do so.¹¹⁴

Jeffrey Amherst was known for giving blankets used by smallpox victims to the Indians as a means to "extirpate this execrable race." He was called back to England just as the American Revolution began. He served as Commander and Chief of all British forces for most of the war. He was recalled to that position during the French Revolution. He died in 1797.¹¹⁵

Col. James Grant became Royal governor of East Florida in 1763. His administration had good relations with the Indians. He returned to England in 1771 to become a member of Parliament. He did not like Americans. He once remarked that the colonists could not fight and that he could "go from one end of America to the other and geld all the males." Promoted to general, he returned to Boston in the summer of 1775. He suggested that the British burn Boston, Marblehead, New York, and Philadelphia. He continued to serve in the New York/New Jersey area until 1778 when he was sent to the West Indies. In 1789 he was appointed commanding general of forces in Scotland. He retired from the army in 1796 and died in 1802.¹¹⁶

Robert Rogers, famous New England Indian fighter, arrived in South Carolina after Grant's expedition ended. With the end of the French and Indian War, he fell on hard times. He was appointed Royal Governor of Mackinaw City,

¹¹² "Thomas Middleton" *SC Historical and Genealogical Magazine* (Vol. 1, No. 3, July 1900) 260-262. Tortora, *Crisis*, 156-157, 170-171.

¹¹³ Henry Laurens, David R. Chesnutt, et al., eds., *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, 16 volumes (Columbia: USC Press, 1968-2002)

¹¹⁴ <http://www.carolana.com/SC/Governors/wbulljr.html>

¹¹⁵ J. C. Long, *Lord Jeffery Amherst: A Soldier of the King* (New York: MacMillan & Co., 1933).

¹¹⁶ Nelson, *Grant*

Michigan but ran afoul of politics in the British Army. By the time of the Revolution, Rogers had a serious drinking problem. Neither side trusted him. Although he formed a provincial unit for the British called the Queen's Rangers, he was forced to retire based on "poor health." He died an alcoholic, in obscurity, in England in 1795. His rules for Rangers are still taught in both the Canadian and United States Army.¹¹⁷

Christopher French returned to England after the French and Indian War. Just before the American Revolution, he was promoted to major and posted to North America. The war began while he was at sea. Upon landing in Pennsylvania, he was arrested as a prisoner of war. He protested saying that he should be allowed to go back to England because he had arrived not knowing a war had begun. He became a pawn in the disputes over prisoners of war. In December of 1776 he escaped from his American captors and rejoined the British forces. He served in the New York/New Jersey area with various units. For a short time he commanded the Queen's Rangers after Rogers' forced retirement. French retired to England in 1778.¹¹⁸

The Cherokee were forced to give up territory after the Grant Campaign. They sided with the British during the American Revolution. As a result, they were forced to give up more land. Westward expansion in the 19th century caused the state of Georgia to attempt to seize all Cherokee lands. The Cherokees brought suit in the United States Supreme Court in the cases of *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* and *Worcester v. Georgia*. Although the Court recognized the rights of the Indians to their lands, President Andrew Jackson refused to enforce the Court's ruling. Most of the Cherokee

were forcefully removed west of the Mississippi River.¹¹⁹

The Catawba nation sided with the Americans during the Revolution, some serving with Francis Marion. They continued to live in South Carolina but their numbers gradually declined until by 1826 it was said there were only 110 left. There was a resurgence of their numbers in the 20th century. 3,370 people claimed Catawba ancestry in the 2010 census.¹²⁰

The Mohawks of New York sided with the British during the American Revolution. After the war they were forced to surrender most of their territory to the United States. The British settled them on reservations in Canada. Today most Mohawks live in the Province of Quebec or in northern New York. They maintain a strong tribal identity and government.¹²¹

The Stockbridge Mohicans, returned to Stockbridge, Massachusetts after Grant's Campaign. During the Revolution they sided with the Americans and fought in most of the early battles in the North. In August of 1778, while defending the American lines in the Bronx, about 60 of their warriors were ambushed and massacred by the Queen's Rangers under Lt. Col. John Graves Simcoe and a troop of cavalry under then Maj. Banastre Tarleton. After the war, the tribe suffered declining numbers. Most moved west to the reservation of Oneida in New York. These then moved further west to live with the Munsee Indians in Wisconsin.¹²²

¹¹⁷ Gary S. Zaboly, *A True Ranger: The Life and Many Wars of Major Robert Rogers* (Garden City Park, NY: Royal Blockhouse, 2004).

¹¹⁸ Gary Shattuck, "Major Christopher French, Prisoner of War," *Journal of the American Revolution*, May 5, 2015, <http://allthingsliberty.com/2015/05/major-christopher-french-prisoner-of-war>. Donald J. Gara, *Queen's American Rangers* (Yardley, PA: First Westholme Paperback, 2016)

¹¹⁹ Their forced removal is known as "the trail of tears." Alfred H. Kelly and Winfred A. Harbison, *The American Constitution, Its Origins and Development*, 3rd ed. (W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. New York, 1963) 302-303; William

R. Reynolds, Jr. *The Cherokee Struggle to Maintain Identity in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015)

¹²⁰ Douglas S. Brown, *The Catawba Indians: People of the River*, (Columbia: USC Press, 1966; reprinted 1983).

¹²¹ Nancy Bonvillain, *The Mohawk* (Langhorne, PA: Chelsea House Publications, 2005)

¹²² Richard S. Walling, "Death in the Bronx, The Stockbridge Indian Massacre, August, 1778," *The American Revolution.org*, <http://www.americanrevolution.org/ind3.php>. "Mahican", <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Machian>.

APPENDIX A

Colonial Militia Service

Before 1754, the English settlements in North America did not receive much military protection from the English army. It fell to the militia and local forces to meet threats to the community. In this vacuum, the settlers learned their own way of fighting, especially when it came to fighting Indians.¹²³ The last Militia Act colonial South Carolina enacted was in 1747 by an Assembly sanctioned by the Crown. It provided the basis for the militia organized through the initial stages of the American Revolution. It was not until March 1778 that the South Carolina General Assembly enacted very detailed new Militia Act. Men were formed into companies, regiments, and brigades commanded by officers either elected by the General Assembly or, in the case of field grade officers, appointed by the Governor as provided in the Act. Men reported to musters for training and served in the campaigns and battles that occurred during this period including the campaign against the Cherokees in the late summer and early fall of 1776 and subsequent campaigns.¹²⁴

South Carolina received the first independent company of British regular troops in 1721 which was posted at Ft. King George in what would be later known as Darien, Ga. In 1756, as the French and Indian War heated up, a provisional company was sent across the Appalachian Mountains to man South Carolina's outpost, Ft. Loudoun. Because of the French and Indian War (the Seven Years War 1754-1763), England took a greater interest in

North America. Britain sent its military commanders with professional soldiers to counter French attempts to seize English territory. Two years later the Crown sent an independent company which was divided between Ft. Prince George and Charlestown.¹²⁵

England's professional soldiers consisted of the regular British regiments and the independent regiments or companies. These independent companies were regular troops stationed in the colonies. They had no "home" regiment located in the British Isles so that they would be disbanded if not needed in the colonies. Although the Royal Military Academy started training British officers for the artillery and engineers in 1741, throughout the 18th century most infantry line officers bought their commissions. Such officers learned the military arts by "on the job" training. Books such as *A Treatise of Military Discipline*, or *Reveries or Memoirs Concerning the Art of War*¹²⁶ were available to officers, both professional and militia, who wished to be proficient in military affairs.¹²⁷ It was not unusual for a junior officer's family to buy his commission at the age of sixteen. Nor was it unusual for officers without finances to spend their entire military career in the lower officer ranks. As a result, officers were mostly from the nobility or the upper middle class. In contrast, common British Regular soldiers were often from the very lowest classes of society.

In 1754 European armies were trained to fight in open fields. The tactics were driven by the weapons used. The men in each army lined up shoulder to shoulder facing each other across a field, 50 to 100

¹²³ Michael E. Stauffer, *South Carolina's Antebellum Militia*, (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives & History, 1991); Jean Martin Flynn, *The Militia in Antebellum South Carolina Society*, (Spartanburg, South Carolina: The Reprint Company, 1991)

¹²⁴ William T. Graves, *Backcountry Revolutionary* (Lugoff, SC: SCAR Press, 2012) 49, 53

¹²⁵ An Independent Company is one which is not subordinate to any regiment but theoretically answers directly to the King. These were professional soldiers most often used to garrison strategic posts. Foote, William Alfred. "The American Independent Companies of the British Army 1664-1764." Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1966.

¹²⁶ Humphrey Bland, Esq. Brig. Gen., *His Majesty's Forces, A Treatise of Military Discipline* (London, 1743) (owned by

George Washington in the Library of Congress); Maurice, Count de Saxe, *Reveries or Memoirs Concerning the Art of War* (London, 1759) (owned by William Moultrie, MG in the University of South Carolina, Caroliniana Library.)

¹²⁷A good general description of the British Army in this period can be found in the following sources: Matthew H. Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets Only* (Norman, OK: Oklahoma Press, 2008); John Mollo, *Uniforms of the American Revolution in Color* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1975); Edward E. Curtis, *The Organization of the British Army in the American Revolution* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1926); John S. Pancake, *This Destructive War, The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782* (Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 2003) Chapter 3.

yards apart. They discharged their guns and then charged with bayonets. It was said that the musket would strike a man at 80 yards but the soldier who was wounded at a 150 yards was very “unfortunate.”¹²⁸ The British service musket did not even have a sight. There was no command in the British manual of arms for “aim.” Men were taught to “present” (point the gun in the general direction of the enemy) and fire. Victory was often decided by the bayonet. Given those conditions, linear tactics made sense on open battlefields such as were found in settled areas. The army that held the field was said to be the winner. The army with the best discipline generally won.

The principle military organization in the colonies was the militia which could be called upon to defend the community in time of need. In colonial South Carolina, the militia consisted of all white males, with some exceptions, between 16 and 60 years of age. Free blacks were required to serve but they served as laborers, not as armed soldiers. Militia officers were appointed by the Royal governor.¹²⁹ The militiaman was expected to provide his own equipment including a musket, bayonet or camp ax, blanket, haversack, canteen and other such equipment. Although the officers often had uniforms, the individual soldiers usually did not.

The militia could only be called out for a limited time and generally would only serve close to home. Theoretically, the militia was formed into regiments organized along the lines of the regular army regiments. Most professional soldiers, British and American, had small regard for the militia because of its lack of discipline and its habit of going home at the most inconvenient time.¹³⁰ Although militia officers tended to be from the upper classes, unlike the regular military, a man of

wealth or influence could end up as a common soldier.

The British also used “provincial” regiments in North America. These regiments were raised from the colonists. The training, equipment, pay, and discipline were same as in the regular British regiments. The men were generally enlisted for one to three years or sometimes for the duration of a conflict. The officers in a provincial regiment were commissioned by the Royal governor. They were not entitled to the benefits of a regular officer. Although considered superior to a militia commission, a provincial officer was inferior in authority to an officer of lesser grade in the regular British Army.¹³¹

British authorities gave provincial commissions to prominent men in the community even if those men had no military experience. It was thought such men were natural leaders who could recruit others into the regiments. Once in service, such men could be trained to perform their duties as officers.¹³²

Men in the grenadier company and the light infantry company were handpicked. The grenadier company consisted of the tallest and strongest men in the regiment. They were originally trained to throw a primitive hand grenade at the enemy. The hand grenade was so unreliable, that by the time of the French and Indian wars, it was not used. The grenadiers were simply an elite company consisting of the largest men in the regiment. They were usually posted on the flank (end or side) of the regiment when it was formed into a line of battle. The flank company was critical to the safety of the regiment. If an enemy could gain your flank, it could fire along the line of the regiment before the regiment could turn to face the attack.

¹²⁸ Harold L. Peterson, *The Book of the Continental Soldier* (New York: Promontory Press, 1968) 27 quoting Col. George Hanger of the British Army.

¹²⁹ James Glen, *A Description of South Carolina*, Geo. Milligen-Johnston, MD, (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1761) 34. Glen was the former Royal governor. Dr. Johnston’s name also appears in the title but it is not clear in what capacity. Geo. Milligen-Johnston, *A Short Description of the Province of South Carolina*, (Charlestown, London, 1763) 24. (These two books were reprinted by the University of

South Carolina from copies in the Caroliniana Library under the name of *Colonial South Carolina, Two Contemporary Accounts*, edited by Chapman Milling (Columbia: USC Press, 1951).

¹³⁰ Stauffer, *South Carolina’s Antebellum Militia*, —

¹³¹ Mollo, *Uniforms*, 36.

¹³² Robert L. Dallison, *Hope Restored, the American Revolution and the Founding of New Brunswick*, (New Brunswick, Canada: Military Heritage Project, 2003) 30-33.

The second specialty company was the light infantry company. It was a product of the French and Indian War in North America. In July of 1755, about a year into the war, Gen. Edward Braddock led British forces into what was, at the time, the heavily forested wilderness of Western Pennsylvania. His purpose was to attack the French at Fort Duquesne (now Pittsburgh). In spite of Braddock's taking all the conventional precautions, the column was ambushed by a much smaller force of French and Indians. Braddock formed his troops in classic European fashion. The British then volley fired into the dense woods at an unseen enemy who picked off the British troops with ease. When the provincial troops with Braddock tried to fight Indian fashion from behind cover, aiming and firing at specific targets, they were forced back into formal lines. Of the 1,500 British and provincial troops engaged in the battle, only 500 escaped to tell the tale. Braddock was killed and buried in the road so that the retreating army could march over his grave to prevent his body from being found and mutilated by the Indians.¹³³

As a result of this disaster, Lord Jeffrey Amherst, Braddock's successor, developed a new "drill" for fighting in North America. What had been looked upon as the "undisciplined" methods used by provincial troops, was now embraced as a valuable adjunct to the line troops. A new type of company was formed which became the "light infantry." The light infantry company would lead the main column as skirmishers, going forward in two columns of men. They were trained to fight from behind cover, picking their targets. If ordered, they could redeploy into a formal line of battle within two minutes.

Because British soldiers were not trained in marksmanship, the first light infantry companies were formed from the best marksmen in the

provincial troops. Later, light infantry companies were drawn from, and incorporated into, the regular regiments. The light infantry company was composed of the smallest and most agile members of a regiment. The men had to be good marksmen, resourceful, and able to act independently in small units. They were expected to operate ahead of, or on the flanks of, the main army. They often operated in small groups, sometimes only in pairs. When possible, they were armed with a rifle or smaller version of the standard musket.¹³⁴ Like the grenadiers, the light infantry consisted of handpicked men who were thought to be the bravest and most skilled soldiers in the regiment.¹³⁵

The last military unit discussed, is the Rangers.¹³⁶ Rangers were often a mix of colonial soldiers and Native Americans. At first they were used to man frontier forts and patrol wilderness areas. The most famous ranger regiment was that of Maj. Robert Rogers of New Hampshire. Rogers led raids against hostile Indians deep into French-controlled territory. His rangers were used for long range patrols, locating the enemy in wilderness terrain, scouting, conducting raids and fighting Indians.

Rogers was so good at what he did that in 1757 the commander of British forces ordered him to write down his rules for rangers. Those rules became the core doctrine of the light infantry companies.¹³⁷ More significantly, Rogers and his key officers were used to train other troops, including fifty volunteer regular officers, on how to fight like a ranger.¹³⁸

By 1760, the careful military commander, engaged in a campaigning in the wilderness against hostile Indians, would have his ranger/scout company out well beyond the main column looking for enemy formations, assessing the terrain and gathering

¹³³ John W. Fortescue, *History of the British Army* (London: MacMillan and Company, Ltd., 1899) II:272, *et seq.*

¹³⁴ Fortescue, *History of the British Army*, II:334, 403.

¹³⁵ Mollo, *Uniforms*, 11.

¹³⁶ The British also used Indian allies. The warriors were under their own command structure and came or left as they pleased. They were not a British military unit.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Gary Zaboly, *American Colonial Ranger, The Northern Colonies, 1724-1764*. (Oxford, UK: Osprey Pub., 2004) 17 *et seq.* Rene Chartrand, *Colonial American Troops, 1610-1774* (3) (Oxford, UK: Osprey Pub., 2003) 21 *et seq.*

information. His light infantry would lead the column as a force of skirmishers watching for ambush. The light infantry might also be deployed to protect the flanks of the column. The commander would keep the intervals of his column on the march in good order so that the army could quickly form into battle lines. He would avoid having his column stretched out any further than necessary because that would make forming battle lines difficult.

APPENDIX B

Rogers' Rules of Ranging (1757)¹³⁹

1. All rangers are subject to the rules of war.
2. In a small group march in single file with enough space between so that one shot can't pass through one man and kill a second.
3. Marching over soft ground should be done abreast, making tracking difficult. At night, keep half of your force awake while the other half sleeps.
4. Before reaching your destination, send one or two men forward to scout the area and avoid traps.
5. If prisoners are taken, keep them separate and question them individually.
6. Marching in a group of three or four hundred should be done in three separate columns, within support distance, with a point and rear guard.
7. When attacked, fall or squat down to receive fire and rise to deliver. Keep your flanks as strong as the enemy's flanking force, and if retreat is necessary, maintain the retreat fire drill.
8. When chasing an enemy, keep your flanks strong, and prevent them [the enemy] from gaining high ground where they could turn and fight.
9. When retreating, the rank facing the enemy must fire and retreat through the second rank, they causing the enemy to advance into constant fire.
10. If the enemy is far superior, the whole squad must disperse and meet again at a designated location. This scatters the pursuit and allows for organized resistance.
11. If attacked from the rear, the ranks reverse order, so that the rear rank now becomes the front. If attacked from the flank, the opposite flank now serves as the rear rank.
12. If a rally is used after a retreat, make it on high ground to slow the enemy advance.
13. When laying in ambush, wait for the enemy to close enough that your fire will be doubly frightening, and after firing, the enemy can be rushed with hatchets.
14. At a campsite, the sentries should be posted at a distance to protect the camp without revealing its location. Each sentry will consist of 6 men with two constantly awake at a time.
15. The entire detachment should be awake before dawn each morning as this is the usual time of the enemy attack.
16. Upon discovering a superior enemy in the morning, you should wait until dark to attack, thus hiding your lack of numbers and using the night to aid your retreat.
17. Before leaving camp, send out small parties to see if you have been observed during the night.
18. When stopping for water, place proper guards around the spot making sure the pathway you used is covered to avoid surprise from a following party.
19. Avoid using regular river fords as these are often watched by the enemy.
20. Avoid passing lakes too close to the edge, as the enemy could trap you against the water's edge.
21. If an enemy is following your rear, circle back and attack him along the same path.
22. When returning from a scout, use a different path as the enemy may have seen you leave and will wait for your return to attack you when you are tired.
23. When following an enemy force, try not to use their path, but rather plan to cut them off

¹³⁹ http://weclark.com/jw/rogers_r.html

- and ambush them at a narrow place or when they least expect it.
24. When traveling by water, leave at night to avoid detection.
 25. In rowing in a chain of boats, the one in front should keep contact with the one directly astern of it. This way they can help each other and the boats will not become lost in the night.
 26. One man in each boat will be assigned to watch the shore for fires or movement.
 27. If you are preparing an ambush near a river or lake, leave a force on the opposite side of the water so the enemy's flight will lead them into your detachment.
 28. When locating an enemy party of undetermined strength, send out a small scouting party to watch them. It may take all day to decide on your attack or withdrawal, so signs and countersigns should be established to determine your friends in the dark.
 29. If you are attacked in rough or flat ground, it is best to scatter as if in rout. At a pre-picked place you can turn, allowing the enemy to close. Fire closely, then counter attack with hatchets. Flankers could then attack the enemy and rout him in return.

6. When we march, we keep moving till dark, so as to give the enemy the least possible chance at us.
7. No matter whether we travel in big parties or little ones, each party has to keep a scout 20 yards ahead, 20 yards on each flank, and 20 yards in the rear, so the main body can't be surprised and wiped out.
8. Every night you will be told where to meet if surrounded by a superior force.
9. Let the enemy come till he's almost close enough to touch. Then let him have it and jump out and finish him up with your hatchet.

SCAR's special thanks to Cherokee War scholar, Daniel Tortora, PhD and Marion scholar David Neilan for their assistance with research and editing. Also, SCAR's tip-of-the-hat to George and Carole Summers for their indefatigable work in planning and promoting the annual Francis Marion Symposium and the Clarendon County murals.

A more complete version of this article is published in *Southern Campaigns of the American Revolution*, which is found on-line at www.southerncampaigns.org.

Rogers' Standing Orders¹⁴⁰

1. Don't forget nothing.
2. Have your musket clean as a whistle, hatchet scoured, sixty rounds powder and ball, and be ready to march at a minute's warning.
3. When you are on the march, act the way you would if you were sneaking up on a deer. See the enemy first.
4. Tell the truth about what you see and what you do. There is an army depending on us for correct information. You can lie all you please when you tell other folks about the rangers, but don't ever lie to a ranger or officer.
5. Don't ever take a chance you don't have to.

¹⁴⁰ <http://goarmy.com/ranger/heritage/rogers-orders.html>