The American Military

A Narrative History

Brad D. Lookingbill

WILEY Blackwell

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It is my pleasure to give thanks to all those who made this textbook possible. First and foremost, I would like to thank my daughter, Beatrice. She outran me to my computer many mornings and moved her 2-year-old fingers over my keyboard while repeating: "I do it!" I dedicate this work to her.

While working, I found inspiration in a framed photograph that shows my father in his ROTC uniform. In 1964, he stood confidently next to my mother. His brother enlisted in the Marine Corps in a time of war, while her brother was drafted into the Army. One of her brothers-in-law joined the Air Force. Another became an Army lieutenant. In other words, all of my uncles a generation ago served in the American military. Because of my father's wanderlust and early death, I never learned why he did not earn his commission. Whatever the reason, the black and white image seems to hint at his unrealized potential.

Perhaps that explains why the slogan "Be All You Can Be" resonated with me as a young man. I recall long conversations with an Army recruiter at my mother's kitchen table, where we weighed my options after graduating from high school. Consequently, I chose to enlist in the Army National Guard and became a "weekend warrior" along with my college roommates. The Montgomery GI Bill enabled me to earn my B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. by 1995. Proud to be an American, I am forever indebted to my Uncle Sam.

In writing this textbook, I owe debts to numerous people. Over the years, a number of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines have spoken with me about their experiences in the armed forces. Several reminded me of the military adage that professionals talk logistics rather than tactics. I greatly appreciate all of the lessons learned.

I benefited from the contributions of many fine scholars, whose books often appear among my suggested readings with each chapter. Special thanks are due to James C. Bradford, Beth Bailey, G. Kurt Piehler, Judith Hicks Stiehm, Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, William T. Allison, Jeffrey Grey, Janet G. Valentine, Michael D. Doubler, Adrian R. Lewis, Darlene M. Iskra, Robert O. Kirkland, Nicole L. Anslover, and John C. McManus. Beyond their careful attention to scholarship, their arguments and interpretations guided my work.

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I will conclude by thanking Deidra, my wonderful wife, and Augustus, my 6-year-old son. Deidra read every word of every chapter while pushing me to do better. In addition, she helped me by collecting many illustrations used in this textbook. While busy with kindergarten, Gus took time from his crowded schedule to teach me every day. When I felt that no one understood me, he reminded me that he, his sister, and his mom always love me. I am blessed by them, because we are family.

In spite of all the help that I received while writing this textbook, I alone am responsible for any errors.

Prologue
Freedom Is Not Free

Second Lieutenant Nicholas Eslinger preferred not to use his night-vision goggles on patrol, because he felt that he could see better with ambient light. A graduate of West Point, the 25-year-old Army officer served with the 327th Infantry Regiment of the 1st Brigade Combat Team in the 101st Airborne Division. On the evening of October 1, 2008, he led his platoon through a hostile neighborhood of Samarra, Iraq.

Suddenly, Eslinger glimpsed something in the darkness. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw a hand come over a wall to hurl a grenade. It landed around six feet in front of him. As it rolled into the middle of his formation, he felt an instant rush of adrenaline through his body. He dived on top of it, hoping to shield his platoon by absorbing the explosion with his torso. When it did not explode as anticipated, he grabbed it and threw it back over the wall. The grenade was no dud, though. It exploded on the other side.

Eslinger received the Silver Star for his actions that night, but he sought no special recognition for gallantry. "I think honestly that any leader in that situation would have done the same thing," he mused. Though grateful for the combat decoration, he insisted that he only did what was expected in the American military.

There are several reasons to study American military history, but the most important one is to understand the role of the armed forces in the United States. Almost everybody knows that Americans went to war to win independence from European empires, to expand national boundaries across the North American continent, and to defend U.S. interests near and far. However, most textbooks for American history courses downplay the importance of service members. They lack the kind of focus that enables students to question why Americans fought, how different people experienced conflict, and who served and ultimately sacrificed. All too many distort the past by erasing warriors from their pages. Now more than ever, it is time to think anew about American military history.

The American Military: A Narrative History, First Edition. Brad D. Lookingbill.

This undergraduate textbook introduces today's students to over 400 years of American military history. Recognizing a state of almost perpetual conflict, it begins with the clashes between militia and natives in North America and ends with the operations in theaters such as Afghanistan and Iraq. It considers the causes and the effects of wars large and small. Despite the vexing emotions stirred by extreme violence, it offers a sensible look at the human element in warfare.

The human element is evident throughout this textbook, which relates the struggles of people in their own terms. It appreciates not only key individuals but also cultural, social, political, economic, and technological developments. It traces the organization of the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the Air Force, and the reserve component from the colonial period to the global age. It gives due attention to the patterns of national service, the evolution of civil–military relations, and the advent of all-volunteer forces. The straightforward presentation examines the myriad ways in which military affairs have shaped the history of the U.S.

Generation after generation, a paradox has persisted within military affairs. On the one hand, the armed forces have exercised power in ways that troubled civil society. On the other hand, civil society would have ceased to exist without vigilant guardians moored to warrior traditions. This paradox resonates with the unforgettable words engraved on the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C.: "FREEDOM IS NOT FREE."

With these words in mind, I tell a story about the American military in the pages that follow. Starting in 1607 and ending in the present, my abridgement of the incredible drama brings the past to life. The fast-paced coverage encompasses the subject content common to most courses on American history, albeit with a martial thrust. Accordingly, the acts of war imparted meaning to those entangled with the constant strife. The development of the U.S. entailed sacrifices in the name of freedom, but often with unexpected twists and turns along the way. Though passionate about peace, no other nation in the world has fought on behalf of freedom for so long and to such an extent. What emerges from a well-rounded survey of the American military is not a polemical or controversial work, but one that focuses upon people first and foremost.

American military history features many different people, who experienced combat in a broad range of threat environments. Since humans began recording history, societies have organized themselves to use force against rivals. At the most basic level, the first populations across the western hemisphere engaged in conflict with knives, swords, shields, and spears. Indigenous ways of war appeared uncivil to European colonists, especially the English invaders of the North American woodlands. Conversely, Indian warriors adapted to the technological edge maintained by their opponents crossing the Atlantic Ocean. From the Virginia tidewater to the Massachusetts Bay, the colonial militia system linked the assumptions of manhood with the strenuous life of soldiering and seafaring. Owing to the proliferation of firearms as weaponry, the shifting borders produced battles of short duration yet high intensity. On the periphery of the British Empire, the wars for America raged for decades.

The War for Independence enabled Americans to organize the armed forces for national defense. Upon the ratification of the U.S. Constitution, the War Department formed in 1789. A separate Navy Department was established less than a decade later. Whereas military duties varied from community to community, citizens generally left their farms and

shops when mobilizing to secure their country. A vast number honored their obligations in principle but not always in practice. Although race and class impacted demographics, the most important determinant of national service remained ideology. The federal government maintained only a small cohort of regulars, who primarily served at territorial outposts or on maritime patrols. Professional military education set officers apart from the rank and file. Nevertheless, state militiamen comprised the bulk of the force structure. Devoted to nation-building, Americans provided for a frontier constabulary across the North American continent.

Time and again, the armed forces advanced the collective interests of an expanding nation. Military power surged not simply with superior armaments but also with significant advantages in organization, command, morale, and initiative. The Industrial Revolution modified campaign logistics, which service members mastered in fits and starts. While fighting the Civil War, they preferred to overwhelm foes with quick but decisive actions. They learned to shoot, move, and communicate in ways that produced massive destruction. Their strategies for attrition redefined combat for generations. To avoid casualties from enemy fire, Americans eventually wanted technological fixes while maximizing force protection. Troops assumed responsibility for less direct applications of military power as well. In other words, countering threats often included the securing of offshore bases, distribution of humanitarian aid, and engineering of non-military infrastructure. Whether on land, at sea, or in air, U.S. forces found themselves in a full spectrum of operations.

The growth of the nation-state continued to alter the composition of U.S. forces. Washington D.C. compelled young males to register for the draft beginning in 1917. The percentage of service members in relation to the total population remained stable through two world wars. An anti-draft movement during the Vietnam War prompted the federal government to abandon the compulsory arrangements, which resulted in major changes to the force structure. Consequently, the brass in the Pentagon integrated the reserve component into the planning and posturing of national defense. By the twenty-first century, the average recruit appeared better educated and more skilled than in the past. Most came from small towns and identified with the middle class. Minority groups comprised a slightly disproportionate part of the recruitment pool. Women found new opportunities across the branches. With higher standards and greater equity, the all-volunteer forces gave Americans confidence in a period of rapid globalization.

Americans made the military one of the nation's most respected institutions. With a long and storied tradition of excellence, the uniformed services reinforced positive characteristics among members. Each branch imparted core values, although the differences between them seemed profound and pervasive. More often than not, officers and enlisted personnel showed drive, energy, determination, discipline, and empathy. Whatever the mission, individuals from all walks of life reported for duty in times of trouble. They understood that great power brought tremendous responsibility. Some became fighting legends, while others grew proficient at handling units, paperwork, and gadgets. From entrenchments to flattops, most took pride in a job well done. Deployments overseas tested their abilities to operate in various theaters. Of course, their adversaries tried to exploit their weaknesses. The tragic blunders of wartime notwithstanding, Americans in the military strove to become all that they could be.

Through the years, Americans in the military shared a sense of patriotism that many civilians found reassuring. Whenever the armed forces flourished, disparate communities seemed to come together. Courage on the front lines of a struggle depended to a considerable degree on attachments to the home front. Networks of families and friends helped to sustain individuals, who sometimes endured the fog of war under great pressure. Even in the darkest days, they inspired one another to give everything for cause and comrades. Moreover, popular culture left vivid impressions of military life. The mass media shaped public perceptions of the boots on the ground, whether the imagery depicted action heroes or wounded warriors. As the standard bearers for the nation, citizens swore oaths to defend the U.S. Constitution against all enemies – foreign or domestic. Above all else, character counted in uniform.

With men and women in uniform as a focal point, my narrative is written for undergraduates lacking specialized knowledge or military experience. No student can understand the armed forces without first coming to terms with chronological developments. To learn from history, one must see the present emerging from the past. Even cadets in military academies or ROTC programs will be enriched by the breadth and depth of the coverage, as will educators, journalists, diplomats, analysts, and policymakers interested in military affairs. Military professionals seeking insights from historical episodes will discover lessons applicable to future wars. Anyone engaged in peace, conflict, or comparative studies will find sections relevant to their interests.

Each of the 16 chapters opens with an introductory vignette about Americans in the military. The personal story sets the stage for the significant outcomes that unfold in the chapter. It also will grab the reader's attention before considering the constraints within a historical context. Though brief, colorful, and anecdotal, it puts a human face on the diverse experiences of service members over the years.

As a one-volume synthesis of American military history, my accounting of events is fair and balanced. Short quotes distilled from documents, newspapers, and memoirs mingle with readable prose. A handful of photographs and maps provide illustrations but not distractions. Mindful of a "cultural turn," I mix the concerns of civil society with a penchant for the "full battle rattle." The chapters on the Civil War and World War II are a bit longer than the others, which stir us to imagine a whiff of gun smoke in the air. The pages are unencumbered by jargon and theories, because I believe that story-telling makes the past come alive for the broadest audience possible. Narration of military action glosses over complexity, to be sure, but all histories do so while contemplating subjects that seem immeasurably chaotic and unstable. In other words, my work shows how momentous episodes fit together like the pieces of a puzzle without cluttering passages in needless technicalities. Distinguished by a coherent, unified voice, I blend aspects of "new" military history with the "old."

To facilitate lively classroom discussions, each chapter closes with a few summative remarks. While restating the main themes of the aforementioned content, the culminating passages also allude to myths that inform historical consciousness. They touch upon the military in American memory, thereby pointing toward cultural patterns. Three essential questions appear after the conclusion, which encourage students to think critically about what happened. Each should help active learners to engage in historical thinking as a

process of inquiry and discovery. If they wish to investigate a topic further, then I urge them to turn to the scholarship listed in my suggested readings.

A scan of any scholar's bookshelf reveals innumerable works that consider the role of the armed forces. Military history is as ancient as Herodotus and Thucydides, yet it remains alive and well today. The vast literature includes specialized volumes on subjects like ships, aircraft, artillery, tanks, swords, rifles, and bayonets. Resonating with the "drums and bugles" of battlefields, book after book has been published on innovative tactics and winning strategies. Several delve into leadership and unit cohesion, doctrines and campaign logistics, and the accouterments of different nations. While exploring the world's ways of war, a growing number accentuate the remembrances of ordinary men and women in uniform. The study of the past is forever entangled with what historian Russell F. Weigley once called the "state-organized instruments of mass murder."

No historian has informed my work more than James C. Bradford, who edited the two-volume anthology, *A Companion to American Military History* (2010). The 67 essays analyze the historiographical issues pertinent to wars, battles, and military institutions. A number address the presence of women and minorities in U.S. forces, while others note military operations other than war. As an essential reference for research, the well-crafted compendium covers a wide range of disciplinary perspectives.

In addition, I previously edited a primary source collection that presents American military history from the "inside out." With respect for the experiences of those who fought, *American Military History: A Documentary Reader* (2011) contains illuminating, first-person accounts of war. They express what endures at the heart of military affairs, that is, the will to fight for something greater than the self.

For fighting men and women, "freedom is not free" represents more than a catch-phrase. It is a reminder that the freedoms enjoyed in civil society exist largely because of the sacrifices made by service members. For over four centuries, American warriors joined forces to fulfill their calling at home and abroad. Their actions speak far louder than mere words, for they worked together in war and peace. This is their story.

1

An Uncommon Defense (1607–1775)

Introduction

On September 24, 1759, a force of nearly 150 men maneuvered in the marshy woods of North America. They included Indians, provincials, and regulars, although most of them possessed no formal military training. After entering Quebec, they gathered to the northeast of Missisquoi Bay for a "council of war."

Major Robert Rogers, their commander, addressed the gathering. Clothed in a green-jacket and bonnet, he stood over 6 feet tall. His face was marked by smallpox scars and gunpowder burns. His forehead revealed a line carved into his flesh by a lead bullet. He spoke deliberately with few words, exhibiting a coolness that inspired confidence in the weary men. Their line of retreat was cut off by their enemy, he announced, while an ambush awaited them ahead. Drawing upon his understanding of the terrain, he quickly designed a plan of action. Although the mission that he outlined seemed impossible, they voted to "prosecute our design at all adventures."

Modifying their route, Rogers guided them through the spruce bogs in the boreal forests. As they stepped into the cold, acidic water, the submerged branches, needles, roots, and logs tore their moccasins to shreds and left many of them barefoot. They marched abreast in a single "Indian file," so as to prevent their enemy from tracking them. Their movement through the bogs continued for nine days and culminated near the Saint-Francois River.

The men stood almost 6 miles away from their target, an Abenaki village on the other side of the waterway. They stripped and bundled their clothes inside their packs. While carrying their packs and muskets as high as possible, they cautiously stepped into the river. They waded into the icy, turbulent currents of a channel nearly 5 feet deep and hundreds of yards across. They formed a human chain, sidestepping through the raging water across

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Figure 1.1 *Robert Rogers – commandeur der Americaner*, 1778. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

the slippery rocks. After reaching the northern shoreline, they heard the sounds of the village in the night air.

At dawn on October 4, Rogers divided his forces into three groups for the raid. They readied their muskets, fixed their bayonets, and secured their tomahawks and knives. As they crept to the edge of the village, they held their breath. In an instant, the sudden crackle of the first shot reverberated in their ears.

The raid on the Abenaki village illustrated how deeply Rogers and his comrades immersed themselves in the martial arts of the woodland Indians. They studied Native American warriors, who possessed great skill in a surprise encounter and used the terrain to their tactical advantage. While maneuvering in a bewildering landscape, they learned to discern unexpected patches of color or movement against the forest hue. They utilized the plants and the animals to orient themselves and to track their foes. Over the decades, they found ways to unite the stealth and mobility of the indigenous cultures with the European appetite for technology and adventure. Their synthesis of the Old and New World modes of fighting evolved into a kind of warfare that would define early America.

Beginning in 1492, European empires waged war against each other and against the first people of the Americas. During the age of conquest, they forged highly disciplined and powerful military organizations capable of invading and occupying vast territories across the globe. They established outposts in distant corners of North America: the Spanish at

St. Augustine and Santa Fe, the French at Quebec, the Dutch at Fort Nassau, and, most significantly for the future United States, the English at Jamestown. Colonization accentuated an exaggerated sense of localism as well as a naive faith in improvisation. Thus, the English colonists devised a militia system to defend the settlements, to police the backcountry, and to extend the borders.

By the time England established a beachhead on the Atlantic seaboard, North America was already a war zone. The bases of the Spanish, French, and Dutch supported the European occupation of the Amerindian homelands, while their search for portable wealth spawned violence at almost every turn. For the English colonists, appropriating land proved more important than extracting tribute or booty. Their outposts on far and distant shores offered refuge to newcomers. The process of empire-building helped to shape the structure and composition of the armed forces. Steeped in ancient tradition and codified into common law, the colonial societies called forth warriors to provide an uncommon defense.

The Militia

The English word "militia" comes from the Latin term *miles*, meaning soldier. In ancient Greece, the city-states required military service from all able-bodied citizens. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the concept of localized militia spread across Europe and migrated to England. Thus, the militia system that the English-speaking people inherited owed much to assumptions about citizen soldiers in antiquity.

During the middle ages of Europe, the English militia system resonated with feudalism. It took the form of the Anglo-Saxon *fyrd*, which required every freeman between the ages of 16 and 60 to take up arms in defense of the community. In 1181, the English King Henry II declared in his "Assize of Arms" that men should keep and bear arms in service to the realm and in allegiance to their lord. Subsequent laws in England placed constraints on the employment of a well-armed militia, especially beyond the boundaries of the kingdom. Local governments formed militia based upon notions of social order, basic rights, and civic obligations. Consequently, English monarchs turned to mercenaries to undertake foreign ventures.

English monarchs expected the ruling classes to lead collective efforts to protect the homeland. The aristocracy dominated the officer ranks while celebrating the virtues of service, honor, and chivalry. The knights of the realm deferred to the nobility of a hierarchical order, thereby placing the king at the apex but fixing the masses at the base. The yeomanry across the countryside mustered on occasion as infantry, although they tended to remain adjuncts to the mounted and armored cavalry. Feudal armies defended fortified castles, which arose on commanding points of terrain as bulwarks against all gathering threats. Common law referred to the notion of *posse comitatus*, which derived from the Latin phrase for "force of the county." In an emergency, a sheriff wielded the legal authority to conscript any able-bodied male over the age of 15 to pursue and to arrest bandits. In other words, the English population assumed a shared responsibility for maintaining peace and security.

The reign of Queen Elizabeth I from 1558 to 1603 produced significant refinements to the militia system of England. Rather than expending resources to support all members of the militia, she preferred to focus domestically on a smaller portion of the whole. They were dubbed "trained-bands," or trainbands. They constituted a select group of militia, who received better armaments and experienced frequent drilling. By 1573, trainbands in London included 3,000 men. Ten years later, as many as 12,000 men appeared on the English muster rolls as members. Generally, the Elizabethan trainbands protected property, policed towns, and erected defenses.

By the end of the sixteenth century, English soldiers and sailors showed more interest in raiding Spanish treasure than in colonizing the western hemisphere. Closer to home, English monarchs devoted blood and treasure to the military subjugation of Ireland. No army of professionals sailed in mass for North America, leaving settler societies more or less to defend themselves against all enemies. In 1585, Sir Walter Raleigh funded a fleet of five ships and a handful of military veterans to establish a fortress on Roanoke Island. They returned to England a year later, but the colonists sent to the island by Raleigh in 1587 were lost.

Arriving in 1607, the first English colonists of Virginia included a few military veterans such as Captain Christopher Newport. They built a simple, triangular fort in a settlement known as Jamestown. They encountered a Pamunkey chieftain named Powhatan, who governed the Native people along the James River through tribute, diplomacy, and trade. Called a *Werowance*, or great ruler, he asserted supremacy over a host of Algonquian-speaking groups. They affiliated with what came to be known as Powhatan's Confederacy. Powhatan initially considered the strangers from England as potential allies in a struggle to extend his power still further over Indian tribes around the Chesapeake Bay. In addition to their loyalty, he desired to acquire technologically advanced swords, hatchets, guns, and powder.

Instead of submitting, the Virginia Company authorized the colonists to raise a militia to plunder Powhatan's Confederacy. During 1609, Governor Thomas West, who was known as Lord De La Warr, increased the number of soldiers at Jamestown and turned the settlement into a garrison. With greater military discipline, their regimen replicated the conventions of the Elizabethan trainbands. Accordingly, all adult males were required to buy, to maintain, and to carry muskets. Among the mercenaries, Captain John Smith commanded several sorties inland. Five expeditions occurred during 1610, which killed Indians, burned wigwams, and confiscated food. Raids on Indian cornfields amounted to "feed fights." They sparked retaliation against Jamestown and the surrounding settlements. The relations between the Indians and the Virginians grew more adversarial, because the colonists frequently stole to survive.

Though usually protected by palisades, Indian villages lacked defenses against the spread of European diseases along the North American coast. In 1620, a group of religious dissenters called Pilgrims crossed the Atlantic on the *Mayflower* and landed at Cape Cod. They established Plymouth Plantation on the site of an abandoned Indian village already decimated by smallpox. Only one experienced English soldier, Myles Standish, arrived with the Pilgrims, even though he did not adhere to their particular doctrines. Nevertheless, they elected him as their captain and military commander. He owned a snaphance musket,

rapier sword, double-edged dagger, and body armor, but he found that most colonists knew nothing about armed conflict. Within a year, they built a fort at Plymouth Plantation. For conducting watch patrols near the settlement, they organized a four-squadron militia in 1622. Hauled from the *Mayflower* and emplaced upon a hill, imposing cannons discouraged an Indian attack.

Initially, the Indians preferred to trade with the Pilgrims rather than to attack them. Known as *wampum*, beads cut from white or purple shells found along Cape Cod excited the Algonquian speakers. The beads were drilled and threaded into decorative strings and elaborate belts. Like their Dutch counterparts in New Netherlands, English traders used their tools to turn the sacred objects into a commodity for exchange. Massasoit, a Wampanoag chieftain, viewed the English colonists as potentially useful for combating his enemies, the Narragansett, who received arms and supplies from the Dutch. In fact, he encouraged the Pilgrims to employ their militia to preemptively strike the Massachusetts, another rival group in the area. For several decades, the Plymouth Plantation maintained a military alliance with their Wampanoag neighbors in the area.

With the arrival of more colonists, the Massachusetts Bay Company established the first enrolled militia regiments of New England. On December 13, 1636, the General Court directed towns to muster men into units for local service. Nevertheless, deferments from training days went to officials, ministers, students, craftsmen, and fishermen. Most towns prohibited non-English inhabitants from serving at all. To guarantee a rapid response to attacks, the General Court passed a law on August 13, 1645, directing each militia unit to select a third of its members for a heightened state of readiness. They would respond to alarms "at half an hour's warning" with their arms, ammunition, and equipment. Laws regulating the service of a citizen soldiery achieved vitality in New England at the same time that the militia system declined as an institution in Oliver Cromwell's England.

With the exception of Pennsylvania, all of the original 13 colonies established a form of compulsory militia service. Requirements varied from place to place, but individuals on government rolls ranged in age from as young as 16 to as old as 60. Men were required to own a basic weapon such as a musket, which fired using a matchlock or flintlock mechanism. Most units trained once or twice a year. Some formed patrols to capture runaway servants and slaves. Local authorities maintained reserve supplies of musketry to arm those unable to buy them and collected stores of ammunition and small cannons for major campaigns. The colonial assembly appropriated the money for supplies and exercised fiscal control over the funding of expeditionary forces. The colonial governor often acted as the "commander-in-chief" of the militia and mobilized the members through secular and religious appeals. The militia mustered reluctantly for duties that took them away from their homes or left their families unprotected.

Often neglected by their mother country, the English colonists raised four types of militia. First and foremost, the standing militia included the citizenry enrolled in local units to provide defense and security. Secondly, colonies organized specialized companies from the militia for patrolling the backcountry as well as for apprehending fugitives. Third, expeditionary volunteers came from the standing militia and received special inducements or bounties to serve during longer campaigns. Lastly, militia relied upon impressed, hired, or conscripted individuals – usually convicts or vagrants – who were coerced into

service to fill a levy assigned to a county or town. Whatever the exact force composition, the militia provided a large pool of able-bodied men from which colonial governments drew for strength in times of trouble.

Skulking

The growth of the English colonies and their encroachment upon Indian country escalated the violence along the Atlantic seaboard. While the colonists shifted the balance of power to the coastal towns, the natives of the woodlands fought them in ways that the English pejoratively called "savage." From the tidewater of Virginia to the forests of Massachusetts, the key attribute of Indian warfare was skulking.

When skulking against enemies, Indian warriors preferred indirect actions over frontal assaults. War parties gathered with remarkable stealth and avoided direct engagements whenever possible, instead seeking victory by surprise and with the calculated use of terrain. Their approach to a threat environment involved nonlinear tactics – concealment and surprise, skirmishing, movement, envelopment, and, when the enemy's ranks collapsed, hand-to-hand combat. Because stone tools appeared scarce in areas with deep alluvial soils, they armed themselves with long bows, wooden swords, spears, knives, and clubs. Their weaponry suited a swift raid against an isolated settlement but seemed less conducive to pitched battles in open fields. They utilized speed and cover to strike and to retreat out of harm's way without suffering heavy casualties. An ambush often awaited any pursuing colonials.

Skulking helped to develop and to preserve the martial spirit of the Native Americans, because it underscored the symbolic meanings of the struggle for power. In most battles, warriors confronted foes to earn honors or to claim prizes. In a one-on-one match, an individual revealed bravery and strength by catching an opponent off guard. War parties attacked men, women, and children, to be sure, but they did so primarily to seize them for captivity, adoption, or exchange. According to the concept of a "mourning war," the vanquished were apportioned among the aggrieved to compensate for previous losses. Through stylized and ritualistic combat, military actions settled scores without necessarily causing massive destruction.

The Europeans observed that Huron, Iroquois, and Muskogee warriors removed scalps from the heads of victims, although the practice was not a universal one. Of course, body parts taken by warriors in battle often represented trophies for exhibition at home. They also wore them as badges or ornaments with traditional clothing. They typically consisted of removable appendages such as the head, fingers, or ears. The scalp represented a very special kind of prize, because it involved removing a portion of an enemy's crown with only a knife. Some cultures encouraged the removal of a small hair-braid or scalp-lock, often decorated with paint or jewelry. Although the practice of taking a scalp appeared in pre-contact North and South America, the specific forms of scalping varied from tribe to tribe.

Once drawn into the European web of trade, Indian tribes became entangled with the economic and political system of the colonists. Officials offered scalp bounties to encourage

strikes against those deemed hostile to the interests of the Europeans, who demanded proof of success on a raid. The need for proof prompted the colonists to encourage and to reward the taking of scalps, which permitted the victims to survive the bloody acts on occasion. In fact, the bounties fostered the spread of metal knives to tribes previously unfamiliar with the practice of hair removal. In terms of Indian warfare within the Americas, scalping turned skulking into a tactic of terror suitable to the woodlands.

In addition, the permanent presence of Dutch and English traders along the coast and in the valleys transformed the technologies and tactics of Indian warfare. Most warriors lost any inhibitions against slaughtering their enemies, especially when population centers appeared vulnerable. Firearms proved instrumental in precipitating the changes over time, although the adoption of the European musket involved many factors. Indian tribes showed an immediate preference for the flintlock over the more common and inexpensive matchlock. They became quite adept at utilizing the former in deadly hit-and-run raids, employing the new weaponry more or less as skillfully as they used their bows and arrows. They also learned how to repair arms, to cast bullets, and to form European-style perimeters. As the fighting over contested grounds intensified, the range and accuracy of the muskets made skulking even more effective.

By the end of the seventeenth century, an extraordinary style of combat evolved in the woodlands. Innovations in techniques made the Indians formidable on raids, which drove many colonists to turn to the same tactics that they bitterly denounced. Furthermore, the employment of friendly Indians provided colonial governments with their best countermeasures to belligerent tribes. Since the English previously described a patroller as a "ranger," mixed companies that maneuvered in the forests appropriated the term. "Now we are glad to learn the skulking way of war," boasted Reverend John Eliot of Connecticut.

Effective tactics, however, could not compensate for strategic weaknesses. Whereas indigenous populations relied on European trade for firearms and for gunpowder, their fragile economies could not sustain a spirited resistance. Their diffuse organizations for war became a liability against the military discipline of the invaders. Known as "fire-water" in many communities, alcohol as a trade commodity negatively impacted the behavior of war parties. Vulnerable to disease and to fragmentation, the Indians lacked the cohesiveness to prevail in a long war against the Europeans.

Despite superior weaponry, the Europeans required more than a century to conquer the Native Americans east of the Allegheny and Appalachian Mountains. The colonists appeared inefficient when operating in a threat environment conducive to the dispersion of armed forces. Victory required first understanding and respecting Indian warfare and then devising defensive and offensive concepts that fully exploited the advantages of technology and logistics.

Wars of Extirpation

The English colonists tended to view the Indian villages as obstacles to their expansion into the North American interior. Colonial arms trading with Indians, though officially out-