

New Hampshire Marked French Muskets of the Revolutionary War

By Michael R. Carroll

INTRODUCTION

The outcome of the Revolutionary War was influenced by many factors. Information is provided on one of the most significant factors, French muskets sent to America as foreign aide. These French muskets, received from France in the spring of 1777, were of critical importance in turning the tide of war in favor of the American forces.

This article describes how the French muskets arrived in the Colonies and how these muskets were used by New Hampshire Continental Line and Militia regiments. Key individuals who were responsible for securing these muskets from the French government are identified. The roles these individuals played in the acquisition of the French muskets and their impact on the military affairs of New Hampshire during the American Revolution are clarified.

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE REGIMENTS IN EARLY 1777

The three New Hampshire Regiments that were numbered Continental Line units in 1776 were returned to their designation as the 1st, 2nd and 3rd New Hampshire Regiments in December 1776. In the spring of 1777, they were reorganized. Colonel Joseph Cilley had command of the 1st New Hampshire Regiment, Nathan Hale had command of the 2nd New Hampshire Regiment and Alexander Scammell had command of the 3rd New Hampshire Regiment.¹

The three New Hampshire regiments marched to Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain in New York in May of 1777 in response to ongoing British threats in New York State. General Burgoyne was advancing into New York from Canada via Lake Champlain and General Clinton was making plans to march up New York's Hudson River Valley. British Lt. Colonel St. Ledger, from Montreal, had sailed up the St. Lawrence River, crossed Lake Ontario and was conducting operations into the Mohawk River Valley. Burgoyne's plan was to have these three British units join together at Albany, New York.²

The long arms carried by soldiers while serving in the New Hampshire regiments in early 1777 were an assemblage of muskets left over from the French and Indian War and other conflicts. The long arms also included weapons captured from engagements with British troops from 1775 to early 1777.

The New Hampshire troops stationed at Fort Ticonderoga in June of 1777 were fully armed with muskets for their actual troop strength. The return of two New



Hampshire regiments at Fort Ticonderoga dated June 17, 1777 can be seen in Figure 1.

The returns for Hale's 2nd and Scammell's 3rd New Hampshire Regiments, as shown in Figure 1, show that no muskets were "Wanting". Only 29 "muskets" or "arms" were listed as "Bad" for the two regiments. The fact that no muskets were "wanting" at this time in the New Hampshire Conti-

A RETURN of Arms and Accoutrements belonging to the Third New-Hampshire Battalion, in the Service of the United States, commanded by ALEXANDER SCAMMELL, Esq.

	Good	Bad	Wanting
Arms, - - - -	408	14	0
Bayonets, - - - -	413	0	9
Cartridge-boxes,	294	0	128
Priming-wires and Brushes,	17	0	405
Horns, - - - -	144	0	278
Pouches, - - - -	31	0	391

ALEX. SCAMMELL, Colonel.

Ticonderoga, June 18, 1777.

A RETURN of Arms and Accoutrements of Colonel SETH WARNER'S Regiment.

	Good	Bad	Wanting
Firelocks, - - - -	140	40	18
Bayonets, - - - -	46	1	151
Ramrods, - - - -	107	55	36
Cartridge-boxes,	153	7	38
Pouches, - - - -	6	1	191
Waist-belts, - - - -	63	0	135
Slings, - - - -	6	0	192
Scabbards for bayonets,	48	2	148

SETH WARNER, Colonel.

Ticonderoga, June 17, 1777.

A STATE of the Arms and Accoutrements in Colonel HALE'S Regiment.

	Good	Bad	Wanting
Muskets, - - - -	355	15	0
Bayonets, - - - -	359	0	11
Cartridge-boxes,	347	0	8
Priming-wires and Brushes,	21	0	334
Horns, - - - -	91	0	264
Pouches, - - - -	28	0	327

WILLIAM ELLIOT, Adjutant.

Ticonderoga, June 17, 1777.

Figure 1. Fort Ticonderoga June 1777 Return of Arms.

Ticonderoga, June 28, 1777.	Officers present.													Rank and File.					Wanting to compl.	Altera. since last Return.							
	Commissioned.				Staff.					Non com.				Present, fit for Duty.	Sick, Present.	Sick, Absent.	On Command.	On Furlough.		Total.	Sergeants.	Dr. & Files.	Rank & File.	Initiated.	Joined.	Discharged.	Deserted.
	Colonel.	Lieut. Col.	Majors.	Captains.	Subalterns.	Chaplains.	Adjutants.	Dr. Masters.	Pay-Masters.	Surgeons.	Matels.	Serjeants.	Dr. & Files.														
Marshall's,	1	1	7	12		1	1	1	1	1	20	11	126	36	4	123	3	292	8	3	348						
Hale's,	1	1	8	17		1	1	1	1	1	31	13	212	58	2	87		300	1	3	283		14		1		
Bradford's,	1	1	6	15							27	10	265	17		51		333	5	1	307		104				
Scammel's,	1	1	6	11		1	1	1	1	1	25	15	153	71	12	126	1	363	2	1	277		4				
Cilley's,	1	1	7	14		1	1	1	1	1	24	12	193	88				396	3	2	244		5	1			
Jackson's,	1	1	1	3							11	3	45	11	7	22		85	19	13	555						
Brewer's,	1	1	8	13		1	1	1	1	1	21	10	144	15	1	92		252	11	6	388		27				
Francis's,	1	1	8	20		1	1	1	1	1	30	13	206	49	4	161		420	2	3	220				3		
Warner's,	1	1	7	15		1	1	1	1	1	24	10	99	25	1	48		173	8	6	467		7	1	1		
Long's,	1	1	6	16		1	1	1	1	1	18	1	91	38		25		154	6	11	326						
Leonard's Militia,											26	7	192	63	2	22		279									
Wells's Ditto,	1	1	7	11		1	1	1	1	1	28	8	197	44	4	64		309									
Whitcomb's Rangers,				4							6	3	19	14		2		35	1	1	71						
Lee's Rangers,				2							3	1	23					23			20						
Baldwin's Artificers, &c.	2	1	4	1							2					2		124	3						1		
Total.	10	11	10	84	169	3	10	12	7	10	8	296	117	2089	532	39	937	6	3604	66	55	3506	162	2	7	1	

Figure 2. Fort Ticonderoga June 1777 Return of Troops.



Figure 3. Silas Deane.

mental regiments is important to note. The reason for not lacking arms will be presented later. What is not shown in Figure 1 is the shortage of manpower within each New Hampshire regiment at that time. Figure 2 goes further to present the specifics of how desperate the manpower situation was at Fort Ticonderoga before the arrival of General

Burgoyne's troops.

The returns for June 28, 1777 (Figure 2) show clearly, with a full regiment having approximately 650 men, that Colonel Cilley's 1st New Hampshire Regiment was under strength by 249 soldiers, Colonel Hale's 2nd New Hampshire Regiment was under strength by 287 soldiers and Colonel Scammel's 3rd New Hampshire Regiment was under strength by 280 soldiers. Combining the information³ in Figures 1 and 2, it can easily be seen that, in order to be at full strength, the three New Hampshire regiments needed about 800 muskets. With Burgoyne's army at full strength numbering 7,000 soldiers, what could 2,089 "Rank and File" soldiers "Present, fit for Duty" be expected to do?

AMERICA'S SECRET COMMITTEE OF CORRESPONDENCE

The engagements of the Revolutionary War in 1775 made the members of the 2nd Continental Congress realize that arms and munitions for the Continental army were in very short supply. To address this, Congress formed a Commit-

tee of Secret Correspondence chartered to secure arms for the fledgling army. In March 1776, the committee sent their agent, Silas Deane (Figure 3) to France to determine what military supplies were available from the French King, Louis the XVI (Figure 4). In France, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Comte de Vergennes (Figure 5), together with Pierre Caron de Beaumarchais (Figure 6), had been trying to formulate a position for France, relative to the American Colonies and their struggle with Great Britain.

Beaumarchais, a clock-

maker, playwright and interloper to the French court, had met with Arthur Lee (Figure 7), another member of the Committee of Secret Correspondence, in London in May of 1776. During this meeting, Beaumarchais and Lee had discussions concerning the availability of arms and munitions for the American colonies and whether money was available from France and Spain to pay for these items. If the aid was provided by France, Arthur Lee promised favorable trade agreements with France after the American war with England ended. By mid-May, Beaumarchais revealed his plan to the Comte de Vergennes to secure French aid and to establish the front company of Roderique Hortalez and Company to provide arms and equipment to America.

In early July of 1776, Silas Deane arrived in Paris, France. He set up residence in a hotel and in a week's time, on July 11th began discussions with the Comte de Vergennes regarding French aid for arms and equipment for the military supplies needed by America. Vergennes stressed to Deane that the French government could not officially endorse the new united American colonies or openly supply them with



Figure 4. French King, Louis XVI.



Figure 5. The Comte de Vergennes.

aid. The Comte de Vergennes advised Beaumarchais to meet with Silas Deane. On July 13th, Beaumarchais met with Silas Deane's agent, Dr. Dubourg. At this meeting Dubourg learned of Beaumarchais' proposal for one million livres in aid from Louis XVI to support the purchase of supplies in support of the American Revolution. Louis XVI was promised repayment of this loan in the form of tobacco and cotton



Figure 7. Arthur Lee.

from the American colonies as authorized by the Secret Committee of Correspondence.

On July 24th, 1776, Silas Deane was advised in a letter from Beaumarchais that he was willing to come to an agreement with Deane concerning the one million livres in aid to America with an understanding that American ships would come to France to transport the arms and supplies to America. Beaumarchais also informed Silas Deane that the King of Spain would provide financial aid to America in the amount of an additional one million livres. On July 26th, Deane wrote to Beaumarchais that American ships would be available to transport the aid to the American colonies.

In August of 1776, Arthur Lee came to Paris and learned of the agreement between Silas Deane and Beaumarchais for French aid package. Arthur Lee was not pleased that his role in obtaining arms and supplies for the American war effort had been supplanted by the success of Silas Deane in his dealings with the Comte de Vergennes and Beaumarchais. Silas Deane wrote a letter to the American Congress later in August stressing Beaumarchais' assurances as to the availability of French aid. In this letter, Silas Deane enclosed a letter from Beaumarchais himself which indicated his particularly strong support to American independence which was also supported by King Louis the XVI.

The final arrangements for purchase of arms and supplies by Beaumarchais' front company, Roderique Hortalez and Company, were made in late August and September of 1776. Beaumarchais set up an office in Paris in a large



Figure 6. Pierre Caron de Beaumarchais.



Figure 8. Benjamin Franklin.



Figure 9. John Langdon.

building, the Hotel de Hollande. In addition, Roderique Hortalez and Company had a secondary office in Le Havre, France. This office in Le Havre was the financial exchange house which gave the cover of false documents for the French shipments of arms, munitions and supplies to America. Beaumarchais' initial agreement with Silas Deane was signed in mid-October of 1776. This agreement provided for the shipment of 200 brass 4 lb. cannon, 30,000 fusils, 100 tons of powder and items such as bayonets, clothing and other supplies for the American military.

Benjamin Franklin (Figure 8) arrived in Paris the third week of December 1776. Silas Deane met with Franklin and told him of the signed agreement for aid with Beaumarchais and also discussed the responsibility that America had for repayment with goods from the American colonies. The goods from America (tobacco and cotton) would be shipped to France on the return trip of the ships bringing military aid to America. At this meeting, Franklin indicated to Silas Deane and Arthur Lee that they, like himself, had been appointed American Commissioners of Trade with France by the Continental Congress. This appointment gave them official status in their endeavors to secure additional military aid and financial support to the American war effort. As American Commissioners, they stood to gain financially by commissioning war goods sent to France from America in exchange for the arms and equipment sent from France. Final arrangements were made with the Comte de Vergennes and Beaumarchais to send the cannon, fusils, gunpowder and other goods to America.

In late January and early February 1777, two ships set sail from French ports for Portsmouth, New Hampshire, loaded with Beaumarchais' first shipment of muskets and bayonets along with other supplies for the war against Britain. The *Amphitrite* sailed from Lorient and the *Mercure* sailed from Nantes. The *Mercure* arrived in Portsmouth, New Hampshire on March 17, 1777 and the *Amphitrite* docked there on April 20, 1777.⁴

NEW HAMPSHIRE RECEIVES MUSKETS

In March and April 1777, 10,000 muskets arrived in Portsmouth, New Hampshire aboard the *Mercure* and the *Amphitrite*. These muskets were under the control of the Continental Agent for Maritime Affairs. The person who held this position was John Langdon (Figure 9) from Portsmouth, New Hampshire. John Langdon's background was that of a ship captain, sea merchant, privateer and Portsmouth shopkeeper. He was active in early Revolutionary War military affairs and participated in the attack on the British-controlled Fort William and Mary at New Castle, New Hampshire, in the Portsmouth harbor. During this attack, 100 barrels of gun powder and several dozen muskets were captured.

John Langdon served as a Representative from New Hampshire to the 2nd Continental Congress in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Early in 1776, he learned of the Congressional Agent for Maritime Affairs position in New Hampshire. Mr. Langdon soon had himself appointed to this position. Subsequently, a strongly worded Congressional letter

informed him that he could not hold two government jobs at the same time. At the end of July 1776, John Langdon resigned his New Hampshire seat to the 2nd Continental Congress and assumed his position as Continental Agent for Maritime Affairs. In this position, and in his opinion, John Langdon served for “the whole business of the Continent.” It is said that lack of definition in the scope of responsibilities did not bother the sleeping or waking times of John Langdon.⁵ It is clear that John Langdon did not want to distance himself too greatly from the potentially lucrative business of commerce in military supplies for the war.

The State of New Hampshire recognized the shortage of muskets for the three regiments being raised for Continental service in February 1777. On February 6, 1777, the New Hampshire House of Representatives Committee of Safety wrote to General Artemas Ward, second in command to Commander in Chief George Washington, soliciting clothing and muskets for 600-900 soldiers. General Ward replied that none were available.⁶

The New Hampshire House of Representatives voted on March 19, 1777 to establish a committee under Joseph Whipple to “apply immediately to John Langdon Esquire, the Continental agent, for what fire-arms, Blankets, Clothing & etc. he can furnish to supply the regiments now raising in the State for the Continental service and to forward the same to Exeter with the greatest expedition.”⁷

On March 21, 1777, the New Hampshire House of Representatives’ Committee of Safety wrote to John Langdon requesting arms and blankets for the three New Hampshire Continental Line regiments. The request states that the troops are “at present destitute” and that the arms to be furnished “by no means ought to be delayed.”⁸

John Landon managed, as Continental Agent for Maritime Affairs, to secure 2,016 of these French muskets with bayonets for the State of New Hampshire. On March 26, 1777 the New Hampshire House of Representatives Committee of Safety voted to have these muskets for the three Continental regiments delivered into store under the care of John Taylor Gilman.⁹ Under this direction, “the Colonels or Commanding officers of said Battalions - who shall be accountable to the state for what they receive.”

The Committee of Safety voted on April 1, 1777 “That the soldiers belonging to the three Continental Battalions now raising in the State be furnished with proper belts too carry their Bayonets in, and that Mr. Thomas Odiorne be and hereby is appointed to procure the same and deliver them to the Hono. Brigadier General Poor, and take his receipt for the same.”¹⁰ A receipt dated May 9, 1777, for 30 of these belts from Mr. Odiorne to Lt. Moses Dustin of the 2nd New Hampshire Continental Line Regiment, signed by Moses Emerson, a Captain in the 2nd Regiment, is shown (Figure 10).

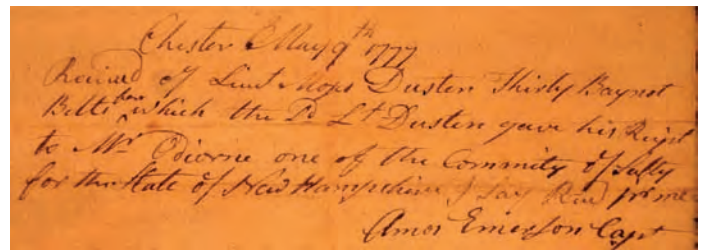


Figure 10. Thomas Odiorne Bayonet Belt Receipt.

The New Hampshire House of Representatives Committee of Safety discussed the matter of transporting these muskets to Fort Number 4 at Charlestown, New Hampshire and then shipping them to Fort Ticonderoga in New York. On April 1, 1777, the Committee voted that “wagons be appointed to carry the Baggage of the officers and soldiers to No. 4, not exceeding one wagon to a Company and that five Baggage horses to a Company be employed to carry their baggage from No. 4 to Ticonderoga.” The Committee also voted that “the guns for the soldiers raising in the western parts of this State be sent as soon as may be to No. 4.”¹¹ The Committee of Safety then voted on April 8, 1777, that “Major Samuel Philbrick be and hereby is directed & empowered to receive of Mr. John Taylor Gilman, Store Keeper in Exeter, eight hundred arms to convey to Charlestown and two hundred & Eighty to Concord.”¹²

Muskets from the arms made available to New Hampshire by John Langdon bear markings on the barrel that designate ownership by the state of New Hampshire. The markings for each musket consist of the letters N and H joined at the intersecting leg, followed by a “1B”, “2B”, or “3B” and then a “No.” with a sequential number from 1 to 672 applied to each musket. French bayonets were also marked and numbered to the matching musket. These bayonets were sequentially numbered with the marks “No.” followed by the sequential number matching them to the musket.

The state markings for New Hampshire Revolutionary War muskets are very finely done and are consistent in style and workmanship across all of the known New Hampshire marked arms. The “1B”, “2B” or “3B” is the mark for the New Hampshire Battalion Number. During the Revolutionary War, it was common practice to interchange the name “Battalion” for “Regiment”. The New Hampshire muskets were stamped with these state ownership numbers by a well known New Hampshire silversmith, John Ward Gilman (Figure 11) of Exeter, New Hampshire. He was paid two pence per musket to apply the New Hampshire markings these arms. A receipt (Figure 12) indicates that a total of 2,016 muskets, or 672 muskets per regiment, were stamped by John Ward Gilman. On May 6, 1777, he was paid a total of 16 pounds and 16 schillings for his work.¹³

It is very important to track the time line of actions taken by the New Hampshire House of Representatives from March



Figure 11. John Ward Gilman.

19, 1777 through April 8, 1777. Following this timeline, with respect to the arrival of French muskets on board the French ship *Mercure*, it can be clearly seen that the French muskets that were given to the New Hampshire troops did indeed arrive on board the ship *Mercure*. The French ship *Amphitrite* arrived later, on April 20, 1777. John Langdon was indeed quick to act in providing muskets to his home state.

NEW HAMPSHIRE FRENCH MUSKET MARKINGS

New Hampshire-marked French Revolutionary War muskets which are documented include the Models of 1763, 1766 and 1768. These muskets will be found with lockplate markings indicating manufacture in the Charleville, Maubeuge or St. Etienne arsenal. The New Hampshire markings for French muskets are shown below (Figures 13 and 14).

Forty-five original arms have been identified with New Hampshire regimental markings as of the writing of this article. Forty two are original muskets and three are restocked muskets.¹⁴

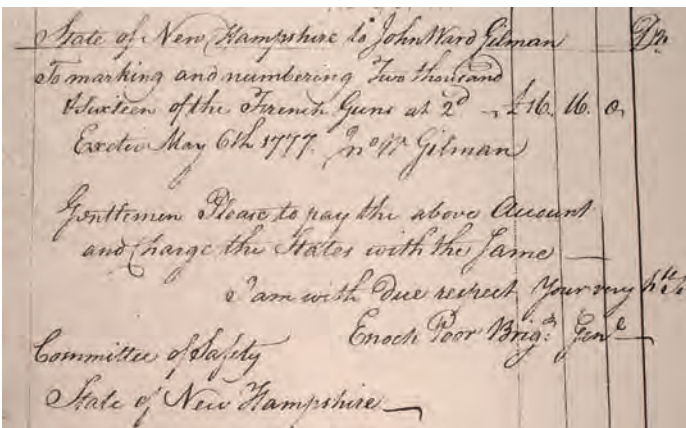


Figure 12. John Ward Gilman Receipt for Marking Muskets.



Figure 13. New Hampshire 2nd Battalion Musket Markings.



Figure 14. New Hampshire 3rd Battalion Musket Markings.

NEW HAMPSHIRE FRENCH BAYONET MARKINGS

French bayonets with New Hampshire markings are documented for the Models of 1763, 1771 and 1774. Figure 15 shows a modified New Hampshire Marked French 1771 Model bayonet which has an extra right angle cut in the mortise and the locking ring removed. Figure 16 is a close up of the socket with the New Hampshire markings. All models of French bayonets identified above will have similar New Hampshire markings in the same location on the bayonet socket.

Currently, there are 12 original bayonets are known with the New Hampshire regimental markings.¹⁵

THE ROLE OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE MUSKETS IN THE WAR

New Hampshire was raising troops in the spring of 1777 to fill the state quota in their three Continental Line regiments. The New Hampshire Continental Line regiments were short of men and muskets in early 1777. The "Return of Arms" for the three New Hampshire regiments in Figure 1 and the "Return of Troops" in Figure 2 document the need for additional men and 804 arms for the Continental regiments. The New Hampshire Committee of Safety and House of Representative papers show that 800 of the New



Figure 15. Modified New Hampshire Marked French Model 1771 Bayonet.



Figure 16. New Hampshire Markings on Socket of Modified French Model 1771 Bayonet.

Hampshire marked muskets, secured by John Langdon, arrived at Fort Number 4 in Charlestown, New Hampshire in late June or early July of 1777. These muskets, which arrived in March, were at Ticonderoga by late June 1777.

The rapid issue of muskets to the New Hampshire Continental Line regiments at Fort Ticonderoga is the reason no muskets were "Wanting" in the June 17, 1777 "Return of Arms" for the three New Hampshire regiments at the fort. Caleb Stark provides further information on the French muskets provided by John Langdon. He states in his memoirs of his father, John Stark, that "the army stationed at Ticonderoga for the defense of the northern frontier, was immediately equipped."¹⁶

General John Burgoyne left Quebec in early June of 1777. Word of this advance soon reached New Hampshire. The State Legislature called a special session which met in mid-July to address the situation. Lengthy discussions were held about financing a militia response to Burgoyne to finance and equip the soldiers. General John Stark was the choice to lead the militia, but financial resources were in short supply. After many hours of frustrating talk, John Langdon volunteered to help.¹⁷ He strongly voiced that "I have three thousand dollars in hard money. I will pledge the plate in my house for three thousand more, and I have seventy hogsheads of Tobago rum which shall be disposed of for what it will bring." Langdon's "plate" was his family's sterling silver, a significant family holding at the time. It is interesting to note that we have John Langdon volunteering his money and resources to support the arming of the New Hampshire Militia. Who stood to gain besides the State? Langdon was right in the middle of the affair. He was one of the few people who owned and had possession of materials that were vital to the cause. As Continental Agent for Maritime Affairs with the insider information this office provided, Langdon was the one who stood to profit from being the agent or middleman and could provide needed supplies and equipment to aid New Hampshire soldiers. Was he a true supporter of New Hampshire or only an opportunist looking for a profit?

On the 3rd and 4th of July, Burgoyne placed his cannon on the heights of Mount Defiance. Recognizing that they were outnumbered, short on supplies and subject to unanswerable cannon fire from Mount Defiance, the American troops under the command of Major General Arthur St. Clair, withdrew from Fort Ticonderoga on the nights of July 5 and 6, 1777.

St. Clair's men marched toward Castleton, Vermont, leaving the 2nd New Hampshire Continental Line Regiment at the end of the column to serve as a rear guard. Hale's 2nd New Hampshire, Colonel Seth Warner's Vermont troops and Colonel Ebenezer Francis' Eleventh Massachusetts Regiment

had responsibility for the sick and weak soldiers from the Ticonderoga evacuation. As such, they lagged behind St. Clair and encamped for the night at Hubbardton, Vermont the night of July 6, 1777.

Early in the morning of July 7, 1777, Burgoyne's Brigade Commander, General Simon Fraser, and two companies of his soldiers from the 24th Company of Foot, five companies of light infantry commanded by Major Alexander Lindsay, five companies of Major Acland's 20th Grenadier Regiment along with Major General Baron Friedrich Adolph von Riedesel's German Brunswick detachment attacked the American encampment at Hubbardton. The men under Hale, Francis and Warner fought the British troops actively, but eventually were overwhelmed by Fraser's forces when von Riedesel's German soldiers entered the engagement.

The battle at Hubbardton resulted in over 200 British and German casualties, and over 150 casualties on the American side. Sixty British and 40 Americans were killed during the engagement. Over 200 American prisoners were taken by the British, many from the 2nd New Hampshire Regiment. American troops who did not surrender or were not captured at Hubbardton made their way to Manchester, Vermont, where St. Clair's troops were able to regroup. St. Clair joined other American soldiers under General Schuyler at Fort Hudson in New York during the second week of July, 1777.¹⁸ New Hampshire-marked French muskets saw their first combat use during the Battle of Hubbardton and more was yet to come.

The New Hampshire Militia was called out to support Fort Ticonderoga. Soldiers from the New Hampshire Militia regiments, under the commands of Colonels Bellows, Ashley and Chase, marched toward Ticonderoga. However, they met the retreating army and soon returned to New Hampshire.

New Hampshire learned of Burgoyne's advances southward. Low on supplies, Burgoyne sent Colonel Frederick Baum 1,500 Hessians and British soldiers along with 200 Indians to seize the cattle, horses and other stores at Bennington, Vermont. The New Hampshire Militia commanded by General John Stark, along with two brigades commanded by Stark and General William Whipple, was dispatched on August 8, 1777 to respond to this threat. On August 14, 1777, the Starks advance party learned the enemy forces were entrenched in the area of Cambridge, New York, just northwest of Bennington.¹⁹

The British and Hessian entrenchments were on both sides of the Hoosic River, their flank extended along the side of the Walloomsac River. General Stark engaged the enemy on August 16, 1777. The enemy's soldiers were driven from their entrenchments and retreated from the field with heavy casualties, beaten soundly by Stark's men. Soon after the

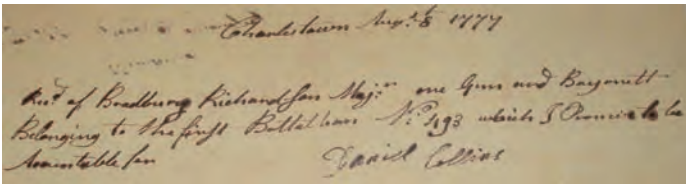


Figure 17. Colonel Richardson's Company New Hampshire Militia Company Receipt for New Hampshire Marked Musket.

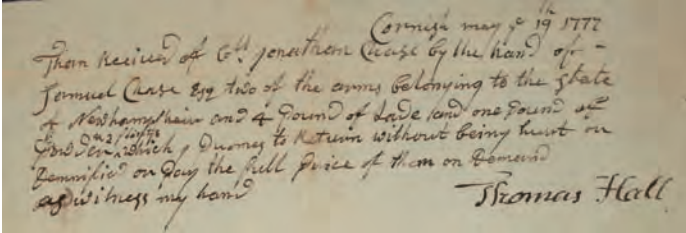


Figure 18. Colonel Chase's Company New Hampshire Militia Receipt for Muskets.

retreat, German reinforcements under Colonel Heinrich von Breymann approached the battlefield but were repulsed by Colonel Seth Warner's troops from Vermont and Starks's New Hampshire Militia that had regrouped after earlier fighting. In this defeat, the British and Hessian troops left behind four brass cannon, one thousand stands of arms and many loads of baggage. Over 200 soldiers were killed and 750 prisoners were taken.²⁰

The New Hampshire Militia regiments that fought at Bennington were armed with the New Hampshire-marked French muskets that had been made available by John Langdon. A receipt dated August 8, 1777, from Major Bradbury Richardson (Figure 17) identifies "one Gun and Bayonet belonging to the First Battalion No. 493..." by Daniel Collins of Captain McConnell's Company. Captain Samuel McConnell's Company was in General Stark's Brigade and was raised from Colonel Thomas Stickney's 11th New Hampshire Militia Regiment.

Another receipt, dated May 19, 1777, is shown in Figure 18. This paper documents the receipt of two New Hampshire "arms" belonging to the "State by Colonel Jonathan Chase's 13th New Hampshire Militia Regiment.

After the battle of Bennington, Washington recognized that he had not stopped Burgoyne and his troops. Washington gathered his Continental regiments and called for militia support throughout New England. The Army's Northern Department was placed under the command of General Horatio Gates. By late August of 1777, Gates had established his headquarters camp on Van Schaick's Islands at the juncture of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers, nine miles above Albany, New York. At this location, in response to Burgoyne's continuing advances down the Hudson River, the American militia and continental forces under General Gates increased to over 6,000, including Morgan's riflemen from Virginia.

Gates decided to find a location which was defensible and suitable to meet Burgoyne's continued southern advances. Moving north along the Hudson River through Stillwater, New York, he chose Bemis Heights as the site to establish his headquarters and fortifications against Burgoyne. Bemis Heights provided an elevated location to fortify. Gates and his forces soon went to work building an extensive defensive position. The forces at Bemis Heights under Gate's command, now over 8,000 troops, mounted 20 cannon in the fortifications and trenches.

Burgoyne continued south with his army of 7,000 men and crossed to the Hudson River's west side on September 13, 1777, at Saratoga, New York. Burgoyne's advance continued south on the west side of the Hudson River and he encamped just north of Bemis Heights in an area known as Freeman's Farm on September 17, 1777. At this time, Burgoyne still hoped for western support from Lt. Colonel Barry St. Ledger, but was not to get it. St. Ledger, who had attempted to reach Burgoyne by leaving Canada and crossing Lake Ontario, had stalled advancing through New York's Mohawk Valley. St. Ledger and his advance forces were repelled at the battle of Oriskany. After hearing of Benedict Arnold's troops advancing toward Fort Stanwix, St. Ledger decided to cease his siege of Fort Stanwix and withdraw the way he came, returning to Canada. Burgoyne still hoped that General Sir Henry Clinton was advancing up the Hudson River toward Albany to provide him with additional support in his fight against the Americans.

The attack on the Americans was made by Burgoyne through the fields of a Loyalist farmer, John Freeman, on September 19th, 1777. Burgoyne sent General Fraser and the 24th Regiment of Foot to attack the American left flank, General James Hamilton to attack the center and Major General von Riedesel's Brunswick soldiers to fight the Americans on their right. Benedict Arnold and the Virginia riflemen under Daniel Morgan moved to fight Fraser and his 24th Regiment. The Americans met with initial success, but had to withdraw when attacked by a large bayonet charge.

Seeing the results of the bayonet charge, Gates gave the command to attack for Benedict Arnold's Continental forces including Cilly's 1st New Hampshire. The attack continued with Scammel's 3rd New Hampshire Regiment joining Morgan's men in engaging the British in the center line of battle. In response, Burgoyne's forces under Fraser and Hamilton met the Continentals in the fields of Freeman's farm and were soon subjected to heavy fire including the two New Hampshire regiments. This fire caused heavy casualties among the British forces, but again, another charge by Burgoyne's soldiers halted the Americans. Benedict Arnold repeatedly asked for more support from Gates who was reluctant to commit more troops away from the fortifications.

Burgoyne finally sent von Riedesel's Brunswick men and their artillery through a deep trench on the edge of Freeman's farm. Defeating the American troops in the center of the field, the Brunswick men were the victors as evening fell on the battlefield. The British and German troops had won the day but suffered 600 casualties. The Americans had 300 killed or wounded. After the battle, the British and Germans entrenched at Freeman's Farm and the Americans returned to their fortifications at Bemis Heights. Thus ended the First Battle of Saratoga, also known as the battle of Freeman's farm.

The British forces unexpectedly rested in their encampments the next day after winning the battle. Burgoyne received word that General Sir Henry Clinton would leave New York City around September 22, 1777, and meet him in approximately ten days. During the next several days, Burgoyne entrenched his troops to fortify his position and waited for the urgently needed arrival of Sir Henry Clinton. As time passed, no word had been received from Clinton. Military and food supplies were low and Burgoyne needed to decide what to do with the large American force still encamped nearby.

After consulting with his field commanders, he decided to attack the American forces lightly entrenched on the south end of Freeman's farm in front of the fortification at Bemis Heights. Burgoyne knew this attack would be a high risk effort. His scouts had reported to him that the American forces had increased to over 12,000 men while he had waited for relief from the south end of the Hudson River.

On October 7, 1777, Burgoyne had his men attack at noon in a three-pronged effort. The right side of Burgoyne's force was composed of Fraser's 24th Infantry, Breymann's Regiment and their artillery and a few Canadian troops and Indians. English grenadiers, Hessian units and British regiments on foot comprised the center formation. Additional British line regiments along with Canadian and Provincial units combined to make up the left wing of Burgoyne's attack.

In response to the British movements, General Gates had Morgan's riflemen advance to the west of the right side of the British advance in front of Breymann's Redoubt. Gates then ordered General Poor and his brigade, including the three New Hampshire regiments, to attack Burgoyne's line regiments at the thrust's in the area of Balcarre's Redoubt. General Ebenezer Learned and his Massachusetts men were sent to support the attack on Breymann's Redoubt.

Heavy fighting continued on the left and center of the American units on the field in front of Bemis Heights. Spurred on by Benedict Arnold, who had previously been removed of command, Poor's three New Hampshire regiments and other troops totaling 3,000 men were now

engaged in fighting in front of Balcarre's Redoubt. 1,500 British and Brunswick Hessians manned positions at Balcarre's Redoubt. These 3,000 Americans could not defeat the British and Hessian troops. Suffering heavy casualties, the German troops along with British units repulsed the American assault on the Redoubt.

Benedict Arnold moved again and began fighting on Burgoyne's right wing where Morgan's men were involved. Arnold saw clearly that the British soldiers were rallying around British General Fraser and stressed to Morgan that Fraser was a high value target. It is reported that one of Morgan's men then shot Fraser at a distance. Fraser, the General of the Brigade and the Colonel of the 24th Regiment of Foot, died later of his wound. Fighting on the American left, Fraser's men and the Canadians and Indians were beaten by Morgan's Virginia riflemen. Breymann's Redoubt was captured by Learned's and Nixon's Massachusetts soldiers aided by men of Morgan's Corps.

Fighting continued on all fronts throughout the afternoon and gradually evolved into unorganized firing and fighting at will. The loss of Breymann's Redoubt left Burgoyne open to direct attack from a large area to the right center and right rear of his command position. Attempts to recapture Breymann's Redoubt failed and Burgoyne ordered his troops to the fortified left side into a position known as the Great Redoubt where they spent the night and the following day, October 8. General Burgoyne and his surviving forces were positioned near where they had started that day, at the northeast edge of the battlefield.

Burgoyne recognized his defeat at Bemis Heights. He withdrew his forces on October 8, 1777, having suffered over 750 troops killed, wounded or captured. American losses were around 200 killed, wounded and missing. Burgoyne had also suffered the loss of several of his key leaders and was even shorter on supplies. He tried to make a run for Fort Ticonderoga but was cut off by militia regiments under the command of General Stark who had positioned his militia in response to General Gates's orders to prevent the northward retreat of Burgoyne back to Fort Edward. Returning northward to Saratoga, Burgoyne encamped and contemplated his options. He had been defeated, St. Ledger was returning to Canada and General Clinton had not arrived from New York with critically needed supplies and additional forces. After holding several meetings with his troops and discussing terms of surrender with General Gates, Burgoyne and his remaining forces of 5,700 men surrendered to Gates at Saratoga on October 17, 1777.²¹

John Langdon had activated his own company, the Independent Company of Light Infantry, in July and August of 1777. His Company supported the American militia at Bennington and was actively involved in turning back

Burgoyne's efforts to reach Fort Ticonderoga after the battle of Bemis Heights. John Langdon helped negotiate the terms of Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga and continued to play a key role in providing supplies to the Continental forces throughout the war.²²

The importance of the New Hampshire-marked French muskets is again seen in Caleb Stark's memoirs of his father. He states with respect to the action at Bemis Heights that "the Beaumarchais arms, followed by their Yankee comrades, after forcing the enemy from the field with great slaughter, leaped boldly into his camp, drove his forces from part of it, capturing a portion of his artillery, and discomfiting the whole army." Stark goes even further, when he states that "I firmly believe that unless these arms had been thus timely furnished to the Americans, Burgoyne would have made an easy march to Albany."²³

These New Hampshire-marked French muskets had a significant impact on the events and outcome of the Revolutionary War. They were responsible for turning the tide of the war to the favor of the American colonies in the New York engagements during the fall of 1777. In addition, victories enabled by these French muskets changed the state of American international relations. The French government formally recognized the United States soon afterwards and additional aid came to America from France and other new allies. Without these French muskets, Americans would have had difficulty winning the Revolutionary War, and the future of independence in the American colonies would have been in serious jeopardy.

The New Hampshire-marked French muskets were used by the New Hampshire Continental Line units, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd New Hampshire Regiments as well as New Hampshire militia regiments, including the 11th New Hampshire Militia under the command of Colonel Thomas Stickney which made the main attack on Friedrich Baum's troops during the Battle of Bennington²⁴ (Figure 17). The muskets carried by the New Hampshire 1st, 2nd and 3rd Continental Line units were used later in the Battle of Monmouth, New Jersey in 1778 and the Sullivan Campaign in Pennsylvania and New York in 1779. They were also used at the Battle of Yorktown, Virginia in September and October of 1781.

The 2nd New Hampshire musket which is shown (Figure 13) was carried by a soldier named Solomon Grey. He was in Captain Robinson's and Captain Potter's Companies of the 2nd New Hampshire Regiment from April 1781 until December 1783. Solomon Grey was at Yorktown, Virginia in 1781. He also participated in skirmishes in the Mohawk Valley in New York in 1782.²⁵ In May of 1781, when these regiments were quartered at West Point, New York, the 1st and 2nd New Hampshire Continental Line Regiments

are known to have received 299 additional muskets and 314 bayonets.²⁶

The matter of payment for these muskets was never fully settled. Silas Deane told Congress that the United States owed France for the full value of these muskets. His fellow member of The Secret Committee of Correspondence, Arthur Lee, told Congress at this time the arms were a "gift" from France. Lee was still jealous of Deane's reaching an agreement with Beaumarchais before Lee had a chance to finalize a deal himself. Beaumarchais continuously asserted that he was owed 5,000,000 francs. Alexander Hamilton proposed a settlement of 2,800,000 francs, but Beaumarchais died in 1799 before he could accept the offer. In 1825, the United States gave 800,000 francs to Beaumarchais' daughter in an attempt to settle this debt.²⁷ When President John F. Kennedy visited France in 1961²⁸, Jacques de Beaumarchais, a descendant of Pierre Caron de Beaumarchais, presented him with an original copy of an agreement signed by the United States Congress to pay for the arms and goods received as aid from France. Kennedy asked if he could keep the receipt as a "souvenir", to which Jacques de Beaumarchais replied, "Of course, there are many more where that came from."

NEW HAMPSHIRE-MARKED FRENCH MUSKETS AFTER THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

French muskets with New Hampshire markings continued to be used after the end of the Revolutionary War. Some of the muskets went home with the soldiers after their military service and others went to the federal arsenals at the end of the war. One musket went home with a soldier from the 2nd New Hampshire Continental Regiment (Figure 13). This musket was obtained from the Felker family who came from Barrington, New Hampshire.²⁹ The Felker family lineage³⁰ can be tracked to Solomon Grey from Barrington, New Hampshire. Grey served in Captain Robinson's and Captain Potter's Companies of the 2nd New Hampshire from April 1781 until December 1783. This musket is marked with the initials "IF" on the left side of the stock opposite the lock-plate. William Felker married Hanna Grey, daughter of Solomon Grey, and had a son named Levi Felker, who served in Captain John Hayes Company of New Hampshire Militia during the War of 1812.³¹

Two muskets that have barrels with New Hampshire regimental markings are known to have been restocked into civilian or militia arms. One is stocked in the Brown Bess style with a pin fastened stock. The other musket has utilized the metal bands, butt plate and trigger guard along with the New Hampshire-marked barrel from a French musket and features an early type of American stock with a dropped butt.



Figure 19. US Surcharge Stamp on Rear of Lock.



Figure 20. US Surcharge Stamp on Barrel Tang.

Table 1.

Model*	Weight	Lock Width	Overall Length	Barrel Length	Caliber	Bayonet Stud
1763	9.2 lbs.	6 11/16 inches	60 3/4 to 61 3/8 inches	44 3/4 to 44 7/8 inches	.69	Bottom 1 1/8 inches Back
1766	8.5 lbs.	6 1/4 inches	59 1/2 to 60 1/4 inches	44 5/8 to 44 3/4 inches	.69	Bottom 1 1/8 inches Back**
1768	8.4 lbs.	6 1/4 inches	59 1/2 inches	44 3/4 inches	.69	Bottom 1 1/8 inches Back**

All characteristics are based on observed specimens. Minor variations will occur.

* Locks may be marked Maubeuge, Charleville or St. Etienne

** 1770 Modification Top, 1 1/4 inches Back

1771 Modification Bottom 1 7/8 inches Back

Several muskets are known to have gone to the Philadelphia Supply Agency/Depot after the war and were marked with U.S. stampings on the barrel and lockplate. Figures 19 and 20 show the "US" markings on the lock and barrel tang of a New Hampshire-marked French Musket which was issued to the 3rd New Hampshire Battalion. One musket was marked by a Baltimore, Maryland gunsmith when he repaired it, circa 1812. This musket is marked to a Maryland regiment that saw service in the War of 1812 and participated in the battle of North Point, Maryland.⁵² It is believed that this musket was given to the state of Maryland under the Militia Act of 1808.

French Muskets: Model 1763, 1766 and 1768

Table 1 provides the characteristics for the French Model 1763, 1766 and 1768 muskets.

NOTE OF RECOGNITION

I wish to thank Roger Blaisdell, Don Carroll, John Cloute and George D. Cooper for their contributions and assistance to this article. Without the support and encouragement of these long time friends, this article would not have been written.

ENDNOTES

1. Chandler E. Potter, *The Military History of New Hampshire*, Mc Farland & Jenks, Concord, NH, 1866, pp. 336-340.
2. John F. Luzader, *Saratoga, A Military History of the Decisive Campaign of the American Revolution*, Savis Beatie, New York, NY, pp. 25-30.
3. New York Historical Society, *Court Marshall of Major General St. Clair*; New York Historical Society Collection, White Plains, NY, Aug. 25, 1778, Appendix A and Appendix E.
4. Brian N. Morton and Donald Spinelli, *Beaumarvais and the American Revolution*, Lexington Books, Lanham, MD, 2003, pp. 34-125 & 225.
5. Lawrence Shaw Mayo, *John Langdon of New Hampshire*, Kennikat Press, New York, NY, 1937/1970, pp. 130-133.
6. Legislature of New Hampshire, *State Papers, Documents and Records Relating to the State of New Hampshire During the Period of the American Revolution From 1776 to 1783*, Vol. VIII, Nathaniel Boulton, D.D. (Editor), Concord, NH, Edward A. Jenks, 1874, pp. 485-486.
7. Legislature of New Hampshire, p. 513.

8. Legislature of New Hampshire, p. 517.
9. Legislature of New Hampshire, p. 523.
10. Legislature of New Hampshire, p. 527.
11. Legislature of New Hampshire, p. 528.
12. Legislature of New Hampshire, p. 535.
13. State of New Hampshire, Division of Archives and Records Management, *New Hampshire Revolutionary Documents, Misc. Papers Folio*.
14. Thayer - Troiani List, *New Hampshire Battalion Marked Muskets*, 1998, Revised, Michael Carroll & John Cloute, 2009.
15. Michael R. Carroll, Personal Observations, 2002-2009.
16. Caleb Stark, *Memoirs and Official Correspondence of Gen. John Stark*, G. Parker Lyon, Concord, NH, 1860, p. 356.
17. Mayo, p. 149.
18. Luzader, pp. 46-67.
19. Mayo, p. 150.
20. Luzader, pp. 93-112.
21. Luzader, pp. 201-335.
22. Mayo, p. 151-153.
23. Stark, p. 357.
24. Wikipedia, *Stickney's Regiment of Militia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stickney's_Regiment_of_Militia.
25. Heritage Quest Online, *Revolutionary War Pension Search*, Solomon Grey, Pension File, Page 3, 7 May 1818.
26. Scott G. Maitland, *Second new Hampshire Regiment Revolutionary War Era Historical Information for Re-Enactors, An Account of the Arms Ammunition & accoutrements in the Brigade of Foot Commanded by Brigadier General Stark, May 26th*, 1781, http://home.comcast.net/~sgmaitland/Historical/Historical_Page1970.htm.
27. Martin and Spinelli, pp. 293-297.
28. Martin and Spinelli, p. ix, Preface.
29. Personal Notes, Michael R. Carroll, 2009.
30. Ancestral Quest, *New Hampshire Families*, Felker Surname, <http://nhfamilies.com/findindex16.htm#felker>.
31. Potter, p. 193.
32. Michael R. Carroll, Personal Observations, 2002-2009.
1. Fort Ticonderoga, Return of Arms, Vermont Division of Historic Preservation, October 1988, *The Battle of Hubbardton*, John Williams, *The Americans Stem the Tide*, <http://community.middlebury.edu/~mcgill/battle/index/html>
2. Fort Ticonderoga, Return of Troops, Vermont Division of Historic Preservation, October 1988, *The Battle of Hubbardton*, John Williams, *The Americans Stem the Tide*, <http://community.middlebury.edu/~mcgill/battle/index/html>
3. Silas Deane, "Silas Deane Online, The Mysterious Life and Death of an American Revolution, http://www.SilasDeaneonline.org/class_slave.htm
4. Louis the XVI, Discover France, Place de la Bastille, Part 3, http://www.discoverfrance.net/France/Images/people/Louis_XVI_portrait-01.jpg
5. The Comte de Vergennes, U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1776-1783/FrenchAlliance>
6. Pierre Caron de Beaumarchais, Wikimedia Commons, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Beaumarchais_oil_painting_big.jpg
7. Arthur Lee, Stratford Hall, Home of the Lees of Virginia & Birthplace of Robert E. Lee, <http://www.stratfordhall.org/learn/lees/williamlee.php>
8. Benjamin Franklin, Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BenjaminFranklin>
9. John Langdon, Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JohnLangdon>
10. Personal Collection, Michael R. Carroll.
11. John Ward Gilman, Silversmiths and Related Craftsmen, <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~silversmiths/makers/silversmiths/10853.htm>
12. John Ward Gilman Receipt, State of New Hampshire, New Hampshire Division of Archives and Records Management, New Hampshire State Papers, Revolutionary War 1176-1783, Misc. Papers Folio.
- 13-20. Personal Collection, Michael R. Carroll.