The Pennsylvania Men of the American Regiment

The affair of Jenkins' ear finally ended the uneasy peace that had been precariously maintained between England and Spain in the Caribbean, and England declared war on October 19, 1739. Governor George Thomas of Pennsylvania and the other American governors were notified of the course of events by letters of identical text from Hollis Newcastle, then Secretary of State for the Southern Department. These letters, dated October 29, reached America in April, 1740, accompanied by another set of letters from Newcastle, dated January 5, 1740, which informed the governors that an expedition was to be sent from England to reinforce Vice-Admiral Edward Vernon's fleet in the West Indies. The land forces aboard the fleet were to be commanded by Major General Lord Cathcart, and further troops were to be raised in the American colonies under the command of Colonel Alexander Spotswood of Virginia, who would serve under Lord Cathcart.¹

The governors were given the task of raising as many men as they could within their colonies, providing for their food and quarters while being raised, and for ships to transport them to the point of rendezvous with the force coming from England, which was supposed to leave in April or May. They were advised to consult with their councils, and to correspond with Colonel Spotswood and the governors of adjacent colonies, and were told that the adjutant general of the expedition, Colonel William Blakeney, would soon leave England to assist them in raising the troops. Blakeney was to

¹ Archives of Maryland, XXVIII [Proceedings of the Council of Maryland, 1732-1753] (Baltimore, Md., 1908), 193-199. This volume prints the complete text of the declaration of war as well as the full text of the letters. The Council minutes of April 7 show that John Maccoy [sic] was sent express to Pennsylvania that same day "on his Majestys Service," probably to carry the letters addressed to Gov. Thomas. The letter to Gov. Thomas is printed in Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, I, 581-583.
bring with him the formal royal letters of instruction and authorization, commissions signed in blank for the officers, money, arms, and samples of the uniforms to be furnished the men. No quota of troops was assigned to any of the governors, “His Majesty depending upon your Care and Zeal for his Service, that you will procure as many as you possibly can.”\(^2\) While rumors of the proposed expedition had reached America, no official word had been forthcoming; these letters, therefore, caused turmoil in every colony when they arrived. There was so much to do, and so little time.

Colonel Blakeney arrived in America on June 21, 1740, on H.M.S. Ludlow Castle (40 guns), bringing with him the promised arms, clothing, and money, but only thirty sets of commissions. With him were British officers from the English and Irish half-pay lists who were detailed to “discipline” the companies. Camp colors, tentage, and miscellaneous equipment were also aboard ship for distribution.\(^3\)

The letters of instruction which Blakeney brought with him still did not assign any quota of recruits to the various colonies, that decision being left to Colonel Spotswood. Spotswood’s instructions stated that he was appointed a major general, quartermaster general of the expedition (chief of staff) and second in command, and commander of all troops in America as soon as they were raised and mustered. He was to direct that an experienced “old Soldier” from the New York Independent Companies be detailed to each company of the regiment to act as drill sergeant, and was given authority to issue any orders which were necessary but not covered by the instructions. Money in addition to the £8,000 that Colonel Blakeney had brought with him was to be obtained through Blakeney, who could draw on the Pay Master General of the Forces in England.

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\(^2\) Archives of Maryland, XXVIII, 193–199. The governors of South Carolina, Georgia, and Nova Scotia were not included, since they had difficulties of their own.

\(^3\) Col. Blakeney to Hollis Newcastle, June 25, July 8 and 31, Aug. 21, 1740, CO 5-41, Nos. 90–94, Public Record Office (PRO), London. In the Public Record Office is a file, T 301-1, in which there is an undated bundle of papers concerning the American Regiment. The regiment was to “go on the establishment” Apr. 25, 1740, although the field and staff officers were to be paid from Dec. 25, 1739. There were to be four grenadier and twenty-six other companies, each of four officers, four sergeants, four corporals, two drummers, and one hundred privates. The staff was to consist of a colonel, chaplain, and surgeon, with a lieutenant colonel, major, adjutant, and surgeon’s mate for each of the four battalions. The grenadier companies were apparently never organized, since the commissions brought over by Col. Blakeney did not include any for “third lieutenants” as would be proper for grenadier companies.
Article 9 of the instructions provided that in case Spotswood was not able to serve, command of the American Regiment was to devolve on Lieutenant Governor William Gooch of Virginia, who received a duplicate set of the instructions from Blakeney. Governor Gooch, however, was not made a major general, or placed second in command, a situation which had unfortunate consequences for the regiment, for Alexander Spotswood died of a chill on June 7, 1740, before his commissions arrived in America. Because of this, the American Regiment, while occasionally referred to as “Spotswood’s Foot,” is usually known in the records as “Gooch’s American Foot.”

Governor Gooch had the double responsibility of raising the Virginia quota and of co-ordinating the whole American effort. In July, the quotas and commissions were distributed to the various colonies; Governor Thomas received four sets of commissions, and four British lieutenants reported to assist him. But, unlike most of the colonial assemblies, which were enthusiastic and co-operative, the Pennsylvania Assembly proved recalcitrant. In spite of all efforts of the governor, the dominant Quakers, joined by the Germans, flatly refused any support. The original religious reason behind this opposition was soon reinforced by irritation over the enlistment of indentured servants. Despite this, however, the quota of four companies was quickly raised at the personal expense of their officers, as well as four additional companies. Of the six companies raised above the American quota, Pennsylvania contributed two thirds.

There is no list of officers for the American Regiment to be found in the Manuscript Army Lists, and intensive search in the Public Record Office in London has failed to turn up any roster or pay list. The Pennsylvania Colonial Records lists only twenty-one of the

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4 “Royal Instructions for Alexander Spottswood,” Apr. 2, 1740, CO 318-3, No. 50. Included was a copy of the letter sent to the governors, and a list of items brought by Col. Blakeney. The royal instructions for Gov. Thomas are printed in the Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, I, 616-619. See also Leonidas Dodson, Alexander Spotswood (Philadelphia, 1932), 302.

5 William Gooch to Gov. Samuel Ogle, July 24, 1740, Archives of Maryland, XXVIII, 224.

6 Gov. Thomas to the Duke of Newcastle, Aug. 29 and Sept. 6, 1740, “Original Correspondence of the Governor of Pennsylvania,” CO 5-1234, Nos. 40 and 43. The difficulty over indentured servants is set out in a message from the Assembly read to the Provincial Council on Aug. 23, 1740. See Colonial Records, IV, 455-456. A copy of this message is also in the Thomas-Newcastle correspondence.
twenty-four Pennsylvania officers, but does give the names of the British lieutenants assigned to train the Pennsylvania companies.\(^7\)

The full complement of Pennsylvania officers listed below is taken from an inclosure to an unpublished letter dated August 29, 1740, from Governor Thomas to the Duke of Newcastle, as completed from another document in the Thomas-Newcastle correspondence.\(^8\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Captains</th>
<th>Lieutenants</th>
<th>Ensigns</th>
<th>Mustered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Clarke</td>
<td>Robert Spicer</td>
<td>Edward Harrison</td>
<td>14 July, 1740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archibald Gordon</td>
<td>John Clifford</td>
<td>Enos Dexter</td>
<td>14 July, 1740</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Freame</td>
<td>Henry Hodge</td>
<td>Richard Cager</td>
<td>14 July, 1740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Lowrie</td>
<td>James Sandilands</td>
<td>George Barr</td>
<td>20 July, 1740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Thynn</td>
<td>Anthony Palmer</td>
<td>Peter Grung</td>
<td>22 July, 1740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William McKnight</td>
<td>James Forster</td>
<td>Charles Mathew</td>
<td>24 July, 1740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Robert Bishop]</td>
<td>[Thomas Berkeley]</td>
<td>[William Marshall]</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Jenkins</td>
<td>George Sewell</td>
<td>Josiah Rolfe</td>
<td>1 August, 1740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The officers of the first four companies mustered received commissions which had been signed in blank by George II to be filled in by the governor; the others received letters of authority to raise their companies, and recommendations for commissions to the expedition commander, who had authority to grant them in such cases.\(^9\)

Governor Thomas’ letter makes an interesting reference to the officers: “Besides the Seven Companies before mentioned I have raised a Company in the Countys of Newcastle Kent & Sussex upon Delaware, which form a distinct Government under me.” Logically, this would be the company mustered last, the officers of which are not given in the published Council minutes of August, 1740. This conclusion is borne out by the roster of the enlisted men, which shows that Captain Jenkins’ company was from Newcastle, Kent,

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\(^7\) "Manuscript Army List of 1737, as corrected to 1744," PRO Index 5437; Colonial Records, IV, 468.

\(^8\) Gov. Thomas to the Duke of Newcastle, Aug. 29, 1740, CO 5-1234, No. 40. See also enclosure in *ibid.*, No. 68. This enclosure was damaged along a fold and the names of the officers of Capt. Bishop’s company are thus missing. The names have been supplied by elimination from the list of officers who signed the letter to Gov. Thomas in August, 1740. Colonial Records, IV, 468.

\(^9\) Although the companies were mustered later, all commissions were dated June 9, 1740, because the blank commissions had been partially dated “... in the Thirteenth Year of Our Reign,” and June 9 was the last day of that year.
and Sussex counties.\textsuperscript{10} Other references indicate that only the seven companies actually recruited in Pennsylvania were concentrated at Philadelphia.

With officers appointed and men recruited, Governor Thomas was next responsible for moving the companies to Jamaica. Since he was entirely dependent upon the hostile Assembly not only for his salary but also for all other governmental funds, this awkward position could only be relieved by the merchants of Philadelphia who subscribed to an unsecured loan of £7,000 Pennsylvania currency for the hire of transports, "relying on his Majesty's Justice to be repaid."\textsuperscript{11}

\textbf{Contributors to the Subscription for Transports}

\begin{tabular}{llll}
Andrew Hamilton & £500 & Wm Atwood & £100 \\
Wm Till & 200 & Tench Frances & 200 \\
Alex. Wooddrop & 100 & Tho. Lawrence & 500 \\
Geo Ellice & 200 & John Sober & 300 \\
A. Hamilton & 300 & Thomas Penn & 1500 \\
(for) John Hamilton & 200 & John White & 400 \\
& & & Joseph Turner & 500
\end{tabular}

Transports were made available by Philadelphia shipowners and merchants, another measure of their patriotism and loyalty. Governor Thomas was appreciative enough of their sacrifice to advise Newcastle of it, mentioning that they could have profited more by loading their vessels with wheat for Ireland or Lisbon.\textsuperscript{12}

\textit{List of Ships with their Masters}

(ship) \textit{Bettsey}, Richard Budden
(snow) \textit{Industry}, George Davis
(ship) \textit{Catherine}, John Goodwin
(ship) \textit{Wm and Mary}, Archibald Montgomery
(snow) \textit{Hercules}, Lawrence Anderson
(ship) \textit{Simpson}, John Simms
(ship) \textit{Molly}, Geo Beardman

\textsuperscript{10} Gov. Thomas to the Duke of Newcastle, Aug. 29, 1740, CO 5–1234, No. 40; Colonial Records, IV, 468; "Roster of Samuel Jenkins Company," which is headed "Lower Counties on Delaware," CO 5–1234, No. 88.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., No. 75. There is a discrepancy of £100 between the amount subscribed and the amount reported by Gov. Thomas to the Duke of Newcastle in a letter of Oct. 2, 1740. Ibid., No. 74.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid. The names of the ships and their masters are given in \textit{ibid.}, No. 79.
The troops sailed on September 25, 1741, eight hundred and twenty-four officers and men, according to an embarkation return made the previous day. This was not the total contribution made to the war by the colony of Pennsylvania, however, for officers were sent back to the mainland by Major General Thomas Wentworth, the expedition commander, to raise recruits to fill the gaps in the ranks caused by the terrible conditions under which the regiment was serving. Sixty-five men were recruited by Captain William Thynn and sent to Jamaica in April and May, 1742. In the fall of 1742, Captain Thomas Clarke recruited twenty-eight more.

The Pennsylvanians shared the misery and bad fortune of the rest of the American Regiment. Upon arrival at Jamaica, it was discovered that no provision for the rations or the pay of the Americans had been made with the contractors who were to supply the British regiments, and until necessary arrangements could be made the officers had to feed the troops at their own expense. The funds came from Jamaica merchants, who profited greatly on the rate of exchange as well as on the provisions. Another serious omission in the planning was the failure to provide surgeons, hospital attendants, and the necessary equipment to fit out the hospital ships which accompanied the transports. To climax the tragedy of errors, when Admiral Edward Vernon found that the Americans who had been serving as marines aboard ship had been admitted to the Jamaica Naval Hospital, he blustered and stormed as only he could rage. Colonel Gooch, as junior colonel with the army, was not even a member of the Council of War and was thus powerless to protect his men.

Study of the papers of the expedition shows that most of the Americans served aboard the warships, either to supplement the crews, or as marines. While these men were spared the hardships of the others who were packed into the transports, they had troubles of a different sort. The captains and field officers finally memorialized Major General Wentworth to do something to stop the brutality of the naval officers and the harassment of the soldiers by the ships'
crews. Americans were required to do all of the heavy work of the ships, were rowed from ship to ship to pump the bilges; enlisted men were moved from ship to ship without knowledge or permission of their officers (this had been forbidden for marines since Queen Anne’s day); half of one company had been carried off to England with their arms on the Dunkirke; one man had died after being beaten by a midshipman, and another had bones broken by a boatswain’s mate’s cane; the Americans were furnished neither berths nor hammocks aboard ship, and while the men were asleep the sailors threw their clothing overboard. General Wentworth took the matter up with Admiral Vernon, but ill-feeling between the army and naval officers prevented much improvement.  

Records of the expedition do not give the names of the enlisted dead, and a great many officers are not accounted for in the returns as dead, although their names are not on the lists of survivors. A rough estimate of the survivors can be made by comparing the number of ships, seven, that carried the Pennsylvania men to war with the three ships that brought back not only the Pennsylvania men, but the survivors from the four Virginia and four North Carolina companies as well. Thirteen of the original Pennsylvania officers are known to have survived.

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The main difficulty in tracing the casualties and the service of the Pennsylvania men is the absence of some vital records. Among the Colonial Office Records in the Public Record Office in London is file 5–42, which contains all the existing letters and reports made by General Wentworth to the Duke of Newcastle. These include musters of the troops, which by regulation had to be made every two months, but the file is incomplete; its incompleteness is confirmed by the fact that the existing returns cannot be made to balance. There are deaths

16 Ibid., No. 116.
17 New-York Weekly Journal, Jan. 17, 1743, reported the return of the survivors.
of officers listed in the Ship Muster Books in the Admiralty Records that are not reported in the casualty section of the regular musters. From these records, however, it appears that the Pennsylvania companies formed the Fourth Battalion of the regiment, with Captain Pratt's North Carolina company added later. The battalion staff can be determined only from the death list: John, Lord Colvil was the original lieutenant colonel, and Richard de La Valle, adjutant.\(^\text{18}\)

The American Regiment was disbanded on October 24, 1742. There were more than the fourteen officers and 133 enlisted men reported as returning to America, and the final return of October 17 also showed seven officers and 155 enlisted men still on board the warships, 268 men absent sick in hospital, and, in addition, the force at Roatan Island, which consisted of eighteen officers and 215 enlisted men. This last group, having been formed by a company drafted from each battalion, plus a company of marines, thus included one company which was largely made up of Pennsylvania men. The Roatan force remained in existence until 1747, when it was regimented with the eight Jamaica Independent Companies to form the 49th Foot, which is presently known as the Royal Berkshire Regiment.\(^\text{19}\) Since the term of enlistment of the Americans was for the duration of the expedition only, few could have been legally drafted with this group.

\textit{San Diego, Calif.} \\

\textbf{WILLIAM A. FOOFE}

\(^\text{18}\) Treasury Papers, T 1-311, Nos. 34, 35, 36, 37; T 1-315, Nos. 5 and 6 (Officers' Claims for Half-pay), PRO; CO 5-42, Nos. 7, 11, 16, 21, 24, 25, 29, 32, 42, 45, 46, 52-56, 62, 68, 123, 137, 143, 180, 182 (Casualty Returns and Musters).

\(^\text{19}\) Ibid., No. 183. See also Francis L. Petrie, \textit{The Royal Berkshire Regiment} (Reading Barracks, England, 1925), I, 4-6. The Berkshires, then Trelawney's Foot, later recruited extensively in North America as did the South Staffordshire (38th Foot), which was in the Leeward Islands from 1707 to 1764.