****

**The Battle of Bunker Hill, 1775**

*An account of the battle given by Peter Thacher, an eyewitness, about two weeks after the battle. To start this assignment, you might want to do some brief background research on the Battle of Bunker Hill.*

In consequence of undoubted information received from Boston by the commanders of the Continental Army at Cambridge that Genl Gage with a part of his troops purposed the next day to take possession of Bunker's Hill, ~ a promontory just at the entrance of the peninsula of Charlestown, they determined with the advice of the Committee of Safety of the Massachusetts I Province to send a party who might erect some fortifications upon the hill and prevent this design.

Accordingly on the 1 6th of June, orders were issued that a party of about one thousand men should that evening march to Charlestown and entrench upon the hill. About 9 o clock in the evening the detachment marched upon the design to Breed's hill situated on the further part of the peninsula next to Boston, for by a mistake of orders this hill was marked out for the entrenchment instead of the other. As there were many things necessary to be done preparatory to the entrenchments being thrown up which could not be done before lest the enemy should observe them, it was nearly twelve o clock before the work was entered upon, for the clocks in Boston were heard to strike about lo minutes after the men first took their tools into their hands. The work was carried on in every animation and success so that by the dawn pf the day they had nearly completed a small redoubt about eight rods square.

At this time an heavy fire began from 3 men of war, a number of floating batteries and from a fortification of the enemy’s on Cops hill in Boston directly opposite to our little redoubt. These kept up an incessant shower of shot and bombs, by which one man pretty soon fell. Not discouraged by the melancholly fate of their companion, the soldiers labored indefatigably till they had thrown up a small breastwork extending from the north side of the redoubt . . . to the bottom of the hill but were prevented by the intolerable fire of the enemy from completing them wholly in such a manner as to make them defensible.

Having laboured thus between 12 and I o'clock a number of boats and barges filled with soldiers were observed approaching towards Charlestown. These landed their troops at a place called Moretons Point, situated a little to the eastward of our works. The brigade formed upon their landing tho they were something galled by the fire of two small field pieces which we had placed at the end of the intrenchments. They stood thus formed till a second brigade arrived from Boston to join them.

Having sent out large flank guards in order to surround them they began a very slow march towards our lines. At this instant flames and smoke were seen to arise in large clouds from the town of Charlestown [which] had

I been set on fire from some of the enemys batterys with a design to favour their attack upon our lines by the smoke which they imagined would have been blown directly that way and thence covered them in their attack, but the wind changing at this instant it was carried another way.

The provincials in the redoubt and the lines reserved their fire till the enemy had come within about lo or 12 yards and then discharged at once upon them. The fire threw their body into very great confusion, and all of them after having kept a fire for some time retreated in very great disorder down to the point where they landed, and there some of them even into their boats.

At this time their officers were observed by spectators on the opposite shore to come there and then use the most passionate gestures and even to push forward the men with their swords. At length by their exertions the troops were again rallied and marched up to the entrenchments. The Americans reserved their fire and a second time put the regulars to flight who once more retreated in precipitation to their boats.

The same or greater exertions were now again observed to be made by their officers, and having formed once more they brought some cannon to bear in such a manner as to rake the inside of the breastwork, and having drove the provincials thence into the redoubt they determined now, it appeared, to make a decisive effort. The fire from the ships and batteries as well as from the cannon in front of their army was redoubled. Innumerable bombs were sent into the fort. The officers behind the army of the regulars were observed to goad forward their men with renewed exertion. The breastwork on the side of the entrenchment without the redoubt was abandoned, the ammunition of the provincials was expended, the enemy advanced on sides of the fort at once and scaled the walls.

Can it be wondered at then that the word was given to retreat? But even this was not done till the redoubt was half filled with regulars, and the provincials had for some time kept up an engagement with the but ends of their muskets which unfortunately were not fixed with bayonets....

With very great signs of exultation the British troops again took possession of the hill whither they had fled after their retreat from Concord, and it was expected that they would have prosecuted the advantage which they had gained by marching immediately to Cambridge which was then indeed in an almost defenceless state; they did not however do this, but kept firing with their cannon from the hill and from their ships and batteries across the Neck. The wonder which was excited and the conduct of them soon ceased when a certain account arrived from Boston that of 3 thousand who marched out on the expedition, no less than 15OO, among which were 92 commission officers, were killed and wounded, a more severe blow than the British troops had ever before met with in proportion to the number who were engaged, and the time the engagement lasted from the first fire of the musketry to the last was exactly an hour and an half.