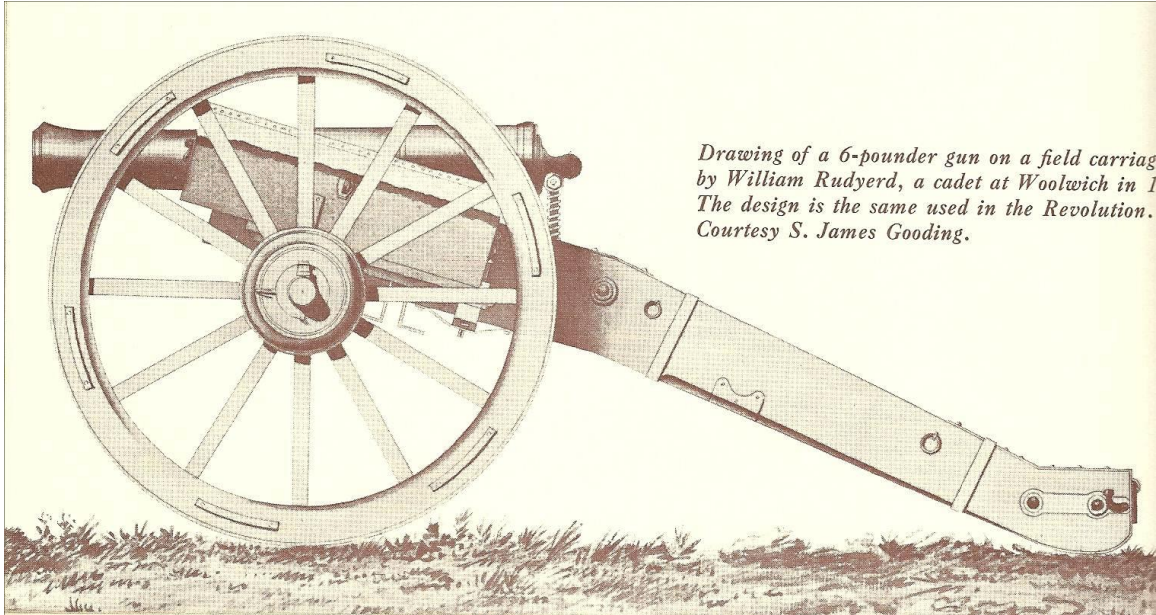


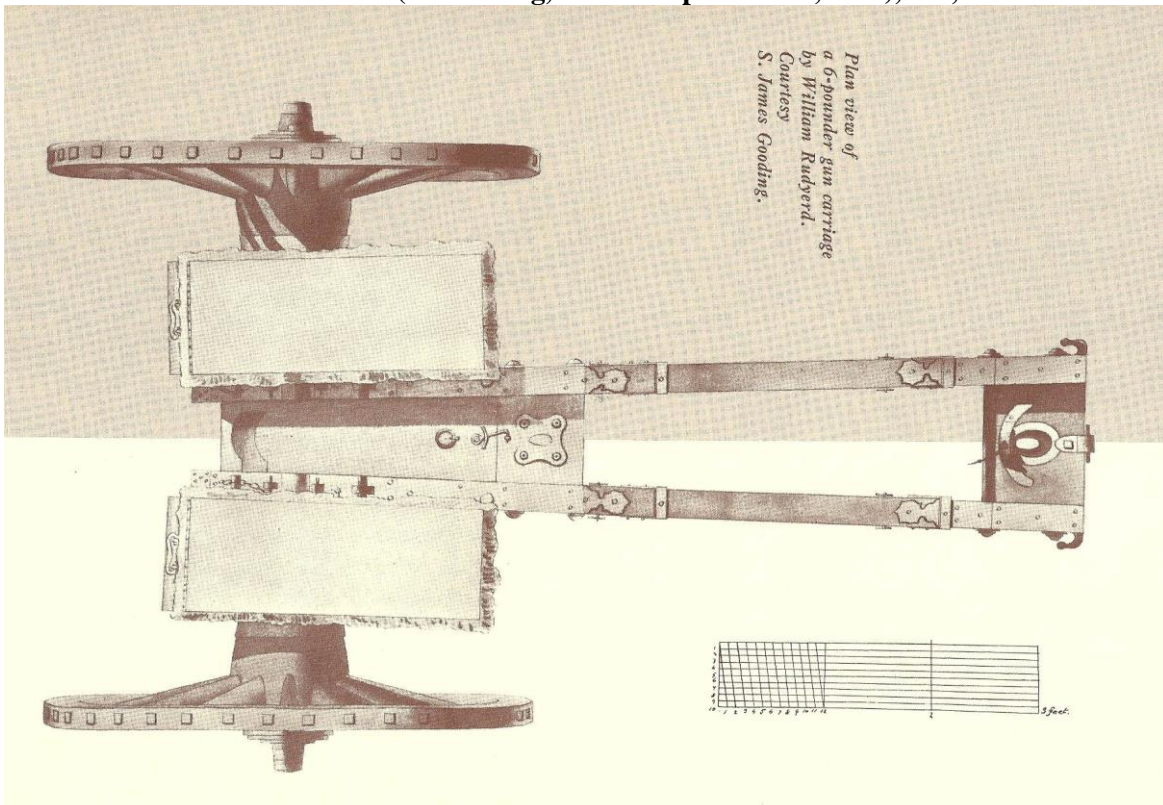
Snapshot:
“For the use of the field pieces with Colonel Proctor’s Regiment ...”
Equipping Artillery for the Field

Transcribed by John U. Rees



Drawing of a 6-pounder gun on a field carriage by William Rudyerd, a cadet at Woolwich in 1757. The design is the same used in the Revolution. Courtesy S. James Gooding.

Side and overhead views of British 6-pounder field gun. Harold L. Peterson, *The Book of the Continental Soldier* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1968), 116, 121.



Plan view of a 6-pounder gun carriage by William Rudyerd. Courtesy S. James Gooding.

In spring of 1781 Brig. Gen, Anthony Wayne was preparing his three Pennsylvania provisional battalions for a march southward, to join the small army under the Marquis de Lafayette, soon to be confronting British forces in Virginia. On April 6th, the War Office forwarded a return of the “First Detachment of the Pennsylvania Line” that also listed the presence of one brigadier general, one aide-de-camp, and one brigade major, and numbers for the attached artillery:¹

	Guns	Officers	Serjts	Bomrs.	G	M
Artillery four Peices	4					
four Captains four Captains Lieutt.		8				
four Serjeants four Corporals			8			
Eight Bombadiers eight Gunners				8	8	
forty Matrosses						40
<u>Total</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>40</u>

These arrangements were later modified, General Wayne informing Washington on 26 May that his artillery, “consists of One Major three Captains & six subalterns & Ninety NonCommissioned Officers & matrosses with six field pieces i.e four six & two three pounders.”²

Before the artillery, then in Newtown, Pennsylvania, could move to the rendezvous at York, the battery needed to complete their store of ammunition and equipage. On 19 April 1781 Samuel Hodgdon, Deputy Commissary General of Military Stores, received a note from the War Office:

Sir You will be pleased to deliver by the order of Lieutenant [John B.] Webster [Proctor’s 4th Continental Artillery Regiment] the different mentioned [equipment] for the use of the field pieces with Colonel Proctor’s Regiment at Newtown.³

Enclosed was this list of requisitions, set against a tally of gear already with the artillery,

“A Return of Ammunition and Materials wanting to Compleat Four 6 Pounders [and] Two 3 Pounders Philadelphia April 16.th 1781”⁴

“For 6 pounders”

Needed

800 6 pound round shot
 120 6 pound grape shot
 120 6 pound case shot
 1,200 tubes
 4 tube boxes
 144 port fires
 160 lb. slow match
 8 sponges
 0 rammers
 8 gunner’s belts complete

“Materials ... on hand belonging to the above mentioned 6 and 3 pdr. Ordnance at Newton”

8 port fire stocks
 8 “Lint” stocks
 4 leaden aprons
 4 oil cloths
 1 hank of “Marline”
“6 pdr. No. 1”
 1 sponge
 1 ladle and worm
 1 worm
 1 trail pole

“For 6 pounders”

Needed

8 sets drag ropes
8 spare sheepskins
3 [lb.?] sponge tacks
3 oil cloths
4 “Hanks Marlin”
8 trail poles
4 “Budge Barrels”
4 powder pouches
3 lead aprons
8 powder horns
4 gunner’s hammers
4 steel spikes
4 axes
200 spare cartridges

“For 3 Pounders”

Needed

400 3 pound round shot
60 3 pound grape shot
60 3 pound case shot
750 tubes
2 tube boxes
72 port fires
80 lb. slow match
4 sponges
0 rammers
4 gunner’s belts complete
4 sets drag ropes
4 spare sheepskins
1 lb. sponge tacks
2 oil cloths
2 “Hanks Marline”
4 trail poles
2 “Budge Barrels”
2 powder pouches
2 lead aprons
2 powder horns
2 gunner’s hammers
2 steel spikes
2 axes
100 spare cartridges
“NB in addition to the above there is wanted 5 Barrells
Cannon Powder Thos Proctor”

**“Materials ... on hand belonging to the above
mentioned 6 and 3 pdr. Ordnance at Newton”**

“6 pdr. No. 2”

1 rammer and sponge
1 ladle
1 trail rope

“3 pdrs. No. 1 & 2”

1 sponge
1 ladle
1 worm
1 trail pole



**3-pounder grasshopper gun,
New Windsor Cantonment State Historic Site New Windsor , N.Y.**

Wayne's detachment left York, Pennsylvania, on May 26, 1781, and formed a junction with Lafayette's troops the 10th of June near the South Anna River, north of Richmond. Col. Richard Butler reported on their activities up to July 8, 1781:

After a fatiguing march, prosecuted with bad weather, we join^d the Marquiss, the 10th of June; about this time L^d Cornwallis was really sporting through the country without opposition. The very name of a dragoon had such influence on the minds of (not only) country people, but the troops of the army, that few dar^d to approach them; the consequence of which was very bad Intelligence. Charlottesville was sack^d without a shot, and every kind of depredation committed with Impunity, the people seem^d Scar^d to Death, and nothing but dispondency & resignation appear^d in their countinances. Indeed, they seem^d quite prepar^d for the yoke; however, our junction gave a zest to business, and things began to wear a new face. Cornwallis turn^d about on hearing of our arrival, & the Exaggerated Acct^s of our force aded to his anxiety in return, & he mov^d back with a little more Caution than he Advanc^d. The militia was now call^d, Provisions collected, & on the 14th we mov^d toward Richmond. The people from the back country join^d us in considerable numbers, & are really good troops. On the 24th, I was sent out with a small Advanc^d light Corps, to try to strike the Brittish rear; after three days and nights successive march, I got up with Simcoe; I gave him a handsome stroke [on the 26 June at Spencer's Ordinary], with little loss to myself; we kill^d about 50, and some officers, took a few prisoners, a good many dragoon horses & furniture, with a number of Cattle belonging to the Inhabitants; but being but 8 miles from Williamsburgh and their whole force, could not think of running a greater risque; and want of sleep, threw me into a violent fever & Diaroehea, which had like to have taken me off, but am

now perfectly restor^d, and shall join the Army to-morrow. I cannot acc^t for the Enemy's movements; they have lain since the 26th, at and below Williamsburgh, and yesterday mov^d to Jamestown but a few miles from there; our troops mov^d down near town, but return^d 8 miles again the same day [this was Butler's understated reference to the Green Spring action]. The Army is generally healthy, though they undergo much fatigue; the Country here is poor and sandy, the weather intensely hot, & the water but middling; our provisⁿ is tolerably good, and the troops get some apple-brandy, which I think is of service to them; these are the things I know your humanity & good wishes for a Soldier Interests you in, I therefore take pleasure in informing you I find we shall be at a great loss for shoes, overalls, & shirts in a little time; indeed, many of the men are now barefoot, owing to the heat of the sand, which burns the leather, & is insupportable to the bare foot; the swet, & want of soap & opportunity to wash, destroys the linen so that the men will be naked if they don't get a supply soon ... My Battallⁿ is now very small, the Companies not being quite full at first, & a considerable desertion and sickness since. I have, therefore, wrote Col. [Francis] Mentges [in Pennsylvania] to send what he can Collect, with some fifers, & A number of spare fifes for the line – I think about 30 will do. I must request of you, my dear Gen^l, to have them push^d on as fast as possible, as I think that assistance will be wanting, in case the Earl plays the cunning game & lays by till our militia is dispers^d by the calls of their harvest, (which is now in,) and other Necessitys, and a push, when weak, may oblige us to move backwards, which I would not like.⁵

Butler mentioned only in passing the July 6th Green Spring action, being absent from illness at the time. By contrast General Wayne's report to the commander-in-chief provides a detailed account, including the role of the artillery:

Chicohominy Church 8 Miles from James town 8th July 1781

Dear General After a variety of Marches and counter marches frequently offering battle to Lord Cornwallis upon Military terms, the Marquis Lafayette recd. Intelligence on the 5th. that the Enemy had Marched from W^msburg for James town & was preparing to throw their baggage and troops over that river, this Induced the General to make a forward move to that place (with the Continental troops Including [Pennsylvania] Major [William] McPhersons little Legeon together with a few Volunteer Dragoons under Colo [John Francis] Mercer & Capt Hill [Virginia militia] ... the vicinity of which to the Enemy was such as to put it into his power to strike them should the passage of the James be their Object.

on the morning of the 6th several corroborating advices arrived removing every doubt upon that head, with the addition that nothing but a forced march with the lightest & most advanced part of the troops could arrive in time to effect their rear.

this Induced the Marquis to order the advanced Guard, Major McPhersons, Colo Mercers & Capt Hills Corps one Hundred & fifty rifle men, with Colo [Walter] Stewarts Detachment of Penns[ylvani]ans amounting in the Whole to about 500 men Artillery & Dragoons included, to make a forward move under my Conduct, & endeavour to come up with the enemy. upon our arrival at the Green spring farm, a variety of contradictory intelligence rendered it prudent reconnoitre them with a Military eye, their vast superiority in horse also made it expedient to advance the whole of our little Corps to drive in their Guards and keep their horse in check, about this period the Marquis arrived in person & adopted the Maneuver, which being effected it was soon discovered that a very considerable part of their army yet remained on this side the river which induced the General to send for the remainder of the Continentals distant about six miles, at 2 O'clock PM a large smoke was raised by the Enemy, probably as a signal to their parties to return to camp, & for all such as had crossed the river to repass it. at 3 O'clock the rifle men supported by a few regulars began & kept up a galling fire upon the Enemy which continued until five in the Evening when the British began to move forward five Columns, the

Marquis anxious to view them near had proceeded rather far upon their left, it was therefore thought proper to Order Major [William] Galvan [French volunteer, granted a commission in January 1780, Massachusetts Provisional light battalion] at the head of the Advance Guard to meet & attack their front who after a spirited tho' unequal contest retired upon our left, a Detachment of the Light Infantry under [Connecticut] Major [John] Willis [Wyllys, Provisional light battalion] having that moment arrived also commenced a severe fire upon the Enemies left but were obliged to fall back, which the enemy taking advantage of & beginning to turn our flanks, a Manoeuver in which had they persevered, they must inevitably penetrated between this Corps & the Other part of the army, but being joined at this Crisis by Lieut Colo [Josiah] Harmar & Major [Evan] Edwards with two Detachments from the 2nd. & 3rd Battalions of Pennsya. under Colo [Richard] Humpton, it was determined among a Choice of Difficulties to advance & Charge them, this was done with so much vivacity as to produce the desired effect i.e checking them in their advance & diverting them from their first Manoeuvre,, but being enveloped by numbers many brave & worthy Officers & soldiers killed or wounded, we found it expedient to fall back half a mile to green spring farm, – **two of our field pieces which were necessarily Introduced to keep up the Idea of our being in force, were served with equal spirit & effect, until disabled by having Capt. [Jesse] Crosly [4th Continental Artillery] with many Matrosses Dangerously wounded & all the horses killed, at last fell into their hands – the Waggons & Amunition were carried off safe**, the Enemy [sore?] from the Contest & finding us supported at that place by the remainder of the Light Infantry were content with barely keeping the field, altho opposed but by a handful of men Compared with their Numbers & which from the the [sic] nature of the Ground were obliged to act in a Detached manner except that part of the Pennsa. Line who had time to arrive & those not more than 500 men with a few Dragoons under Major McPherson

from the Mutual emulation in the Officers & men of each Corps I am confident that had the army been in force Victory would have inclined to our Arms – however every Circumstance considered our small skirmishing party of Horse & foot who had the hardiness to engage Lord Cornwallis at the head of His Whole army with the Advantage of so Numerous a Cavalry on their own ground & in their own Camp, is more to be envied than pitied – as it not only disconcerted the British General & effectually [illegible] him from his premeditated Manoeuvres, but precipitated him to retreat to James Island the same night to avoid a General action in the morning, which the pointed Attack he experienced in the Evening might be the sanguinary prelude to.⁶

Artillery personnel casualties were as follows,

“Capn. [Joseph?] Savage [seconded from the 2d Artillery] & [Patrick] Duffys artillery”:
1 captain–lieutenant [Jesse Crosly], 1 sergeant, 2 rank and file wounded; 3 R&F missing.⁷

After another period of marching, countermarching, and uncertainty, Lafayette's troops formed a junction with General Washington's small army from the north, and French forces under Lt. Gen. Jean–Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau, trapping the British in their fortified post at Yorktown. The siege ended successfully for the Allies in mid-October.



Continental Army field artillery in action. Detail from William Mercer, “Battle of Princeton on 3rd January 1777” (Historical Society of Pennsylvania)

For more on the summer 1781 Virginia campaign and artillery in the American War, see below,

“Their presence Here ... Has Saved this State ...”: Continental Provisional Battalions with Lafayette in Virginia, 1781”

Part 1. “This Detachment is Extremely Good ...”: The Light Battalions Move South”

“The Fire of the Light Infantry ... checked the Enemys Progress ...”: Light Battalion Composition and Service”

“Ill founded jealousies, and groundless suspicions.” ‘: Unrest in the Light Battalions”

“The Cloathing you ... long ago Sent to the light infantry is not Yet Arrived.‘: Apparel and Equipment”

The Brigade Dispatch, vol. XXXVI, no. 2 (Autumn 2006), 2-23.

<http://revwar75.com/library/rees/pdfs/light.pdf>

Appendices for Above

1. Diary of Soldier with Lafayette’s Light Infantry, 1781

<http://revwar75.com/library/rees/pdfs/Atkins.pdf.pdf>

2. Asa Redington, Scammell’s Light Infantry Regiment, 1781

<http://revwar75.com/library/rees/pdfs/Redington.pdf>

3. Barber’s Light Battalion, 1781 (New Jersey Light Company Personnel)

<http://revwar75.com/library/rees/pdfs/Barber.pdf>

“Their presence Here ... Has Saved this State ...”: Continental Provisional Battalions with Lafayette in Virginia, 1781”

Parts 2-4. “Almost all old soldiers, and well disciplined ...”: Brigadier General Anthony Wayne’s 1781 Pennsylvania Provisional Battalions”

A. “I fear it is now too late ...”: The Pennsylvania Line Mutiny, January 1781

<http://revwar75.com/library/rees/pdfs/PA-A.pdf>

B. “Our Regiments are yet but very small ...”: Settling with the Troops and Rebuilding the Line

<http://revwar75.com/library/rees/pdfs/PA-B.pdf>

C. “The whole Line ... behaved in a most orderly manner.”: Reorganizing the Pennsylvania Provisional Battalions and Service in the 1781 Campaign

<http://revwar75.com/library/rees/pdfs/PA-C.pdf>

The Brigade Dispatch, vol. XXXVII, no. 2 (Summer 2007), 2-19; vol. XXXVII, no. 4 (Winter 2007), 2-15; vol. XXXVIII, no. 1 (Spring 2008), 2-21.

Appendices for Above

1. “A Smart firing commenc’d from from both parties ...”: Brig. Gen. Anthony Wayne’s Pennsylvania Battalions in Virginia, June to November 1781”

Contents:

A. “We will be much inferior to the enemy ...”: May 31 to July 5 1781

B. “A charge ... under a heavy fire of Grape shot ...”:
Battle of Green Springs, 6 July 1781

C. “Cornwallis ... threatens every Devastation that fire & sword can produce ...”:
Marching and Countermarching, 9 July to 25 August

D. “The batteries were opened and fired with great success ...”:
September to November 1781

E. “The Cloathing was drawn near twelve month ago ...”:
1780-1781 Pennsylvania Clothing, Letters and Returns

<http://revwar75.com/library/rees/pdfs/Virginia.pdf>

2. “The British army marched out and grounded their arms ...”: Pennsylvania Lt. William Feltman’s Diary, 26 May to 5 November 1781”

<http://revwar75.com/library/rees/pdfs/Feltman.pdf>

3. “Pennsylvania Battalion Troop Returns, 1781-1783’:
(In Camp and on Campaign in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and South Carolina)”

<http://revwar75.com/library/rees/pdfs>Returns.pdf>

“A very smart cannonading ensued from both sides.’: Continental Artillery at Monmouth Courthouse, 28 June 1778”

Appendices

1. Col. Richard Butler’s 1778 Map of the Monmouth Battle (drawn by William Gray)

2. “The Company was sent to Eastown with the pieces taken at Saratoga ...”: Brig. Gen. William Maxwell’s Jersey Brigade Artillery at Monmouth.

3. Recreations of late 18th Century Cannons, Limbers, and Ammunition Wagons

4. Period Images of English Cannon and Ammunition/Powder Wagons

5. Images of German (mostly Hessian) Artillery, Limbers, and Ammunition Wagons during the Period of the War for American Independence

<https://www.scribd.com/doc/139365107/A-very-smart-cannonading-ensued-from-both-sides-Continental-Artillery-at-Monmouth-Courthouse-28-June-1778>

Sources

1. Board of War to Congress, 6 April 1781, enclosed return:

“First Detachment of the Pennsylvania Line.

1 Brigadier General	1 Aid de Camp	1 Brigade Major	R & F	Serjt	D & F
First regiment to furnish	5 Companies of 40 Rank & File		200	12	8
Second do to furnish	3 do do		120	6	4
Third do to furnish	2 do do		80	4	2
Fourth do to furnish	4 do do		160	6	4
Fifth do to furnish	6 do do		240	15	10
Sixth do to furnish	4 do do		160	9	6
	24 Companies to form three Battalions of 320 Rank and File each		<u>960</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>34</u>

Colonels Lt Colonels Majors Captains Subalterns
 3 3 3 24 48 Officers to be appointed to the 3 Battalions

Serjt Majors QM Serjts Drum Majors Fife Majors
 3 3 3 3

By order Major Genl St Clair
 April 5th: 1781 Isaac B. Dunn
 ADCamp”

Artillery four Peices	Guns	Officers	Serjts	Bomrs.	G	M
four Captains four Captains Lieutt.	4					
four Serjeants four Corporals	8					
Eight Bombadiers eight Gunners		8		8		
forty Matrosses						40
<u>Total</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>40</u>

N:B: this must be added to the estimate on the other side –

Isaac B. Dunn
 ADCamp

April 5th 1781”

Isaac B. Dunn, Return of the “First Detachment of the Pennsylvania Line,” enclosure in “Report of the Board of War” to Samuel Huntington (President of Congress), 6 April 1781, *The Papers of the Continental Congress 1774–1789*, National Archives Microfilm Publications M247 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1958), reel 160, vol. 6, 375, 387–388.

2. Anthony Wayne to Washington, 26 May 1781 George Washington Papers, Presidential Papers Microfilm (Washington, 1961), series 4, reel 78.

3. “A Return of Ammunition and Materials wanting to Compleat Four 6 Pounders [and] Two 3 Pounders Philadelphia April 16.th 1781” (with attached letter), Miscellaneous Numbered Records (The Manuscript File) in the War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records 1775-1790's, no. 21105 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M859, reel 69) U.S. War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Record Group 93, Washington, D.C.

4. Ibid.

5. Richard Butler to William Irvine, 8 July 1781, John Blair Linn and William H. Egle, *Pennsylvania in the War of the Revolution, Battalions and Line 1775–1783*, vol. I (Harrisburg, Pa.: Lane S. Hart, State Printer, 1880), 530-532.

6. Anthony Wayne to Washington, 8 July 1781, George Washington Papers, series 4, reel 79. Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris, eds., *The Spirit of ‘Seventy–Six: The Story of the American Revolution as Told by Participants* (New York and London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1975), 1208.

7. William Barber (“Major and D.A.Genl.,”) "Return of the killed wounded and missing of the detachment commanded by General Wayne in a skirmish with the British army near the Greene springs, in Virginia, July 6th 1781," The Papers of the Continental Congress 1774–1789, National Archives Microfilm Publications M247 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1958), reel 176, page 173.



“Battery Fire” by Bryant White