



Official Newsletter of the Michigan Company of Military Historians & Collectors  
**April 11, 2016**

**“Sailors and Dogs Keep Off the Grass” Sign on front lawn in Norfolk, VA 1939.**

**“The allies we gain by victory will turn against us upon the bare whisper of our defeat.” Napoleon, Political Aphorisms 1848**

**“The success of a commander does not arise fro following rules or models. It consists in absolutely new comprehension of the dominate facts of the situation at the time, and all the forces at work Every great operation of war is unique. What is wanted is a profound appreciation of the actual event. There is no surer road to disaster than to imitate the plans of bygone heroes and fit them to a novel situation” Sir Winston S. Churchill, Marlborough, 1933-1938**

**“Nothing is more worthy of the attention of a good general than the endeavor to penetrate the designs of the enemy” Niccolò Machiavelli Discourses, xviii, 1531**

**Our April speaker will be Lyle Shanks, served in the Navy during Viet Nam as a store keeper. He has an interesting perspective on his time in the service and where he was**

***MEETINGS** take place the second Monday of every month at the **Riverfront Hotel Grand Rapids** 270 Ann St NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504 (616) 363-9001. Socializing begins at 6:00 (1800), dinner at 7:00 (1900), business meeting 7:15 (1915), and program at 8:00 (2000).*

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**Company Notes**

◆ **The Sundance Movie Channel will be showing a 3 part series on the 1916 Irish Rebellion in late April.**

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# The Easter Rising

This year marks the centennial of an attempt by Irish patriots to gain freedom from English rule. Timothy Egan writes in The Immortal Irishman what it was like to live under the boot heel of a foreign power. “For the better part of seven centuries, to be Irish in Ireland was to live in a land not your own. You called a lake next to your family home by one name, and the occupiers gave it another. You knew a town had been built by the hands of your ancestors and you were forbidden from inhabiting it. You could not enter a court of law as anything but a criminal or snitch. You could not worship your God, in a church open to the public, without risking prison or public flogging. You could not even attend school, at any level, even at home. And if your parents sent you out of the country to be educated, you could not return. You could not marry, conduct trade or go into business with a Christian Protestant. You could not have a foster child. If orphaned, you were forced into a house full of people who rejected your faith. You could not play your favorite sports—hurling was prohibited.

Your ancient verses were forbidden from being uttered in select company. Your songs could not be sung, your music not played, your Celtic crosses not displayed. You could be thrown in prison for expressions of your folklore or native art. One law made it a felony for a ‘piper, story-teller, baller, or rimer’ to be in the company of an Englishman. Another six statutes banished bards and minstrels. You could not vote. You could not hold public office. You were nothing. John Bowes, an eighteenth-century lord chancellor of the island said ‘the law does not suppose any such person to exist as an Irish Roman Catholic, nor could any such person draw a breath without the Crown’s permission.’

The melodies of this nation and its favorite instrument were a particular target of English hatred. At one point, your fingernails could be removed if you were caught playing the harp. The indigenous music are to be seen as subversive—too nationalistic, too connected to the old stories. In 1603 it was proclaimed that ‘all manner of bards and harpers were to be exterminated by martial law.’ That same year, a few months before her death, it was said in Ireland that Queen Elizabeth had ordered her troops to ‘hang the harpers, wherever found, and destroy their instruments.’ The Virgin Queen allowed Shakespeare and Marlowe to reach great heights during her long reign, but Elizabeth had not a thimble of tolerance for a people she considered primitive. To encourage elimination of one musical aspect of that culture, the government paid a bounty to anyone who turned in outlaws of the harp. The musicians were easy to round up, many of them were blind, music being their only refuge and source of income.

What had the Irish done to deserve these cruelties? They had refused to become English.” WGVU, channel 35, is broadcasting of series entitled 1916 The Irish Rebellion. Episode 3 is this Sunday evening and previous episodes can be accessed on-line. How a any nation could deny simple human rights to a people resonates throughout history. The refugees of the 1844-52 Great Famine fled to America where they met a force not unlike the English. The Know-Nothings, had grown out of the American Nativist Party, which was violently anti-Catholic. The party called for American-born citizens to arm themselves against the “bloody hand of the Pope,” and formed a paramilitary arm—the Wide Awakes. They claimed that the United States was being conquered, indirectly and unplanned, by foreign hordes, unknowing of our ways, with foreign values. America was not by design a haven for the world’s rejects. It was a Protestant nation, Anglo-Saxon, and would descend into Babylon if it allowed itself to be mixed with “mongrel races” and “Papists.” There was yet no statue inscribed, welcoming the tired, the poor, the huddled masses. America had defeated a monarch but it was full of Anglophiles still. One hundred and eighty years later little has changed.

Egan writes that it was the Irish, persecuted by the English, that helped make America great. In particular he tells of Thomas Francis Meagher (pronounced *Mar*), sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered for his part in the Rebellion of 1848. The sentenced was commuted to transportation for life to Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania) in Australia, where he was assigned an area of habitation, 9x12 miles and there to remain without human contact till he died. He escaped to America in 1852 where he eventually became a General in the Union Army and led the Irish 69th Regiment throughout the Civil War. Religious racism was rampant in the Federal Forces. General William Tecumseh Sherman hated the Irish more than the Negroes and called them worthless. Irish troops did not run at Manassas, and they could have taken Richmond in 1863 if McClellan hadn't stopped the advance and dithered.

One can only wonder what kind of nation America would have been without immigrants had the Nativists prevailed. Nor can one imagine what England could have done if she hadn't degraded the Irish. The instigators of the 1916 Rebellion were authors, poets, reporters, the intelligentsia of the Irish. The English, in their hubris, executed the surviving leaders and continued to sow and nourish the seeds of rebellion till the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. Even then, she failed and left the island nation divided to this day. Catholic discrimination continues in the Northern Ireland province to this day despite efforts for joint rule. The Segregationists of 20th century America are alive and still practicing today in Belfast. Just as the American Civil War did not really end slavery, the Irish Rebellion did not give real freedom to the Irish.

## Forty-three Years Later

When newly elected President Richard M. Nixon requested the Department of Defense eliminate the draft and create an all-volunteer force, Army leaders knew there would be some hurdles. Instead of drafting young men to fill the ranks, the Army would need to spend money to ramp up recruiting efforts and portray military service as an attractive career choice. By July 1, 1973 -- now 43 years ago -- the draft had been eliminated. But the Selective Service Infrastructure is still in place.

In April 1971, Project VOLAR, for "volunteer Army," was implemented at select Army posts across the country. The project was an experiment designed to increase retention rates and morale among Soldiers and attract those who would want to serve. Sgt. Maj. Ray Moran, now retired, was assigned to the 1st Recruiting Brigade under VOLAR in 1971, at Fort Meade, Md., and said VOLAR brought about changes to life at the post. Comfortable furniture soon filled the open-bay barracks, which were divided into sleeping rooms. Beer, once prohibited, became a popular beverage. And grooming standards relaxed. But Army leaders soon realized some changes caused more problems than they solved, and new initiatives began that focused on instilling professionalism and building pride for the Army.

Moran said he thinks the all-volunteer force initiative has proven a success -- and he was proud to have been part of it. "We built a volunteer Army that really proved itself in Desert Storm," said Moran, in a 2011 interview. "They were just a marvelous bunch of Soldiers, and they have done it right through to Iraq and Afghanistan today. We are very proud of the all-volunteer Army."

Maj. Gen. Thomas C. Seamands, director of military personnel management, Army G-1, has served in the Army for 32 years now. As he grew up on a military post, he saw how the services transitioned from the draft to the all-volunteer force. Now 43 years after the transition, Seamands says he continues to see the Army improve as a result of the all-volunteer force. "Everybody in the Army

wants to be in the Army," Seamands said. "Everyone's volunteered to come in and be a part of something bigger than themselves." Seamands says the all-volunteer force creates a longer term of service, allowing for more complex training and cohesion-building for units. Under the draft system, draftees usually served for two years. Now, Soldiers enlist to serve for up to five years.

But all is not going well with this system, recruiting still remains a challenge. In 2012 only 20 percent of Americans were qualified to be in the Army under standards of health, behavior, and intelligence. In 2016, 30 percent of males, 18-24 years old were so overweight that they didn't even qualify for consideration. More than 30 percent of the remainder could not even pass the rudimentary physical fitness test. The candidate pool is shrinking dramatically while the needs of the military demand a higher quality of recruit. "We are very selective because we know what's at stake," Seamands said. "What's at stake is having a professional force that's capable of fighting and winning our nation's battles."

Following and during the Vietnam War, public trust in the Army was at an all-time low, Seamands said. Significant amounts of draftees didn't want to serve and faced hostile environments when they returned home. Seamands said the transition to the all-volunteer force changed the national dialogue about the Army when it was implemented. "Americans have a lot to be proud of and one of them is the all-volunteer force," Seamands said. "It's unprecedented. And now, the American people realize the national treasure we have in our sons and daughters serving in uniform." Which brings up another factor to consider among many of the misogynists still in the government and the military. While the pool of high quality male candidates is shrinking, the implementation of Title IX, a part of the United States Education Amendments of 1972, has provided us with of reservoir of women with skills and abilities unmatched in history. Its implementation has not been without trouble and has met with much resistance and derision.

As the nature of combat has changed, so has the inclusion of women in the armed forces. Gone are the days of vast armies of men meeting like armies of men in large engagements. Today, with our advancement in technology fewer men can accomplish missions more efficiently without the carnage that accompanied 19th and 20th century warfare. There will still be death on the battlefield but the nature of the battlefield has changed dramatically. We appear to enter conflicts with a better understanding of a more effective method of resolution. Small units, highly trained, and supported by a variety of ancillary forces appear to be the new paradigm in asymmetric warfare. Disregarding any type of special forces training there are many military specialties that can be done by qualified women. The U.S. Navy provides a perfect example. Among the brave service members who operate on the flight deck, the women of Air department's V-2 division are manned and ready to launch aircraft off of *USS Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) (*Ike*) as an all-female catapult crew.

As aviation boatswain's mates (equipment) (ABEs), they are responsible for maintaining and operating the systems that launch multi-million dollar aircraft off the flight deck. In this profession, where those beside them are predominantly male, these women have proven they are just as capable of doing the difficult and demanding work as their male counterparts. "Working in this rate is actually pretty amazing," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) Airman Tanya Funez. "It is scary at times. You always have to keep your head on a swivel. A motto every ABE lives by. It only takes a split second for you or someone else to get hurt."

ABEs operate and perform maintenance on steam catapults, barricades, arresting gear, and associated equipment ashore and afloat; operate catapult hydraulic systems, retraction engines, water brakes, jet blast deflectors, deck edge, Integrated Catapult Control Stations (ICCS), and jet blast deflector control panels; arresting gear engines, sheave dampers, deck edge control station, and associated equipment; perform aircraft handling duties related to the operation of aircraft launching

and recovery equipment. Most of the work in this rating is performed outdoors on the deck of aircraft carriers, in all climatic conditions, in fast-paced and often potentially hazardous environments.

As a result of working together through the dangerous, yet organized, chaos, ABEs become like family members to each other, men and women alike. "They are our sisters and brothers, and we all have a job to do." Funez said the tight bonds she forges with her fellow ABEs permit her to trust that the work will get done well and that her shipmates will look out for her every day. "My favorite part about being on the flight deck is being able to know whoever is up there with me has my back, and that we're more than Sailors, we're family."

Women first served aboard aircraft carriers only 22 years ago, and within that span, they have overcome numerous challenges and stereotypes to prove they are just as capable as male Sailors. An important milestone for women's history occurred aboard *Ike* in October 1994 when the ship and its strike group deployed to the Arabian Gulf with 400 women aboard. Prior to 1994, women were not allowed to serve on combatant ships. Today, the women who launch aircraft off the flight deck don't stress over gender expectations, they simply recognize that a job needs to get done. "There isn't much difference, honestly," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) 2nd Class Jillian Riddall. "At the end of the day, we still have a job to do, male or female. I wasn't raised where you had a choice to get dirty or stay clean-a job is a job. Get it done to the best of your ability."

Despite the grease and the hard work, these women all said they enjoy the job they do and the experiences they share on the flight deck. It's probably one of the most exciting things I've ever done in my life. I still get nervous when I go up there sometimes, but launching aircraft is an amazing sight to see, and I get to watch it every day." -ABE Raquelle Bonds.



# Tip of the Spear

After WWII the United States slowly developed an offensive system built around the atomic bomb. The military slowly developed a concept that could be compared to a three-pronged spear carried by the mythological god, Neptune. Each tine of the Trident represented a service branch, Army, Navy and the newly formed Air Force; and each tine wanted access to the newest weapon technology. The early years were filled with much in-fighting not only between the services but also within the services. Although the Army displayed much restraint within their command for their only concern was atomic munitions that could be delivered by cannon fire or used in as an anti-armor mine. The Navy, for a number of years (well into the 1970's), was divided between the Big Gun, battleship, advocates and the other forces, most notably the Carrier admirals. It wasn't until the nuclear subs became operational with the realization of the Polaris missile did the rivalry resemble a fight over a ball at an elementary school playground. But it was the newly formed United States Air Force where the differences became heated.

Early in the development of the nuclear bomb the delivery system was the critical factor. The initial payload was so heavy that a plane could not escape the blast effect fast enough to survive. The hydrogen bomb at this time weighed in at almost 40,000 pounds. During WWII the Nazis dropped tanks from planes with special parachutes. The Air Force wanted the inventor of this system. Project Paperclip had brought over many German scientists of great intellectual capacity but deprived of any semblance of moral conscience. The Army had taken the cream of the rocket scientists, led by Wernher von Braun, and set them up at the Huntsville Alabama Arsenal to continue their work. The Air Force manage to find Theodor Knacke, who was working for the Navy in California. He said it would be no problem to design a parachute strong enough to bear the weight of something that weighed 40,000 pounds.

Project Caucasian was a collaboration between the Air Force and Sandia Laboratory, an offshoot of the Los Alamos project that was tasked to further develop atomic warheads. They made a three-parachute system that would slow the descent of a hydrogen bomb and give an American bomber enough time to escape. Dropped from forty thousand feet by a B-36, a small pilot chute would open immediately, followed by a slightly larger extraction chute. The first two chutes would protect the bomb from being jerked too violently, and then the third chute would open—an enormous ribbon parachute. Knacke's invention, with narrow gaps in the fabric that let air pass through it and prevented the whole thing from being torn apart. The 10 megaton bomb would float gently downward for about two minutes then explode, roughly a mile and a half above the ground.

In his book Command and Control, Eric Schlosser describes Sandia: "It was no longer a small offshoot of Los Alamos. It now had more than four thousand employees, state-of-the-art buildings with blast walls for work on high explosives, and a year-round test site in the California desert. Plans were underway to open another division in Livermore, California, where the Atomic Energy Commission had recently established a new weapons laboratory to compete with Los Alamos. The University of California managed the lab at Livermore and Los Alamos, but Sandia was a nonprofit corporation operated by AT&T. The mix of public and private management, of academic inquiry and industrial production, helped to form a unique culture at Sandia—rigorous, grounded, and pragmatic; eager to push the boundaries of technology, yet skeptical of wild and abstract schemes." The rapid advancements in bomb development made concurrent designs in delivery systems obsolete before they even began the production stage. Shortly after one test of Project Caucasian the system became unnecessary as Sandia produced a munition with an identical yield at one-third the weight.

Meanwhile in Huntsville, the ex-Nazis continued refining their V-2 rocket, now called the Redstone. It was still a vertically launched missile and could carry a 4 megaton warhead but only for 175 miles. To test these new designs the Air Force built a missile research center an hour north of Santa Barbara, California and later named it Vandenberg Air Force Base. Within a few years of its opening in 1957 the base had launch pads, silos, underground control centers, storage facilities, administration buildings and a population of ten thousand. In meeting the demands of this new weapon the Air Force employed the practice of concurrency, where facilities and services needed to support a weapon are built while the weapon is still being developed, this created problems. A small design in a missile could require costly changes in silo equipment that had already been installed. The prototype of a new airplane could be flight-tested repeatedly to discover its flaws—but a missile could only be flown once. And missiles were expensive, limiting the number of test flights and the opportunity to try new improvements.

The Navy began production of the first Intercontinental Ballistic Missile call the Snark. It had wings, a jet engine and carried a 4 megaton warhead 6000 miles from a near horizontal launch position. From conception to deactivation the missile had a very short operational history. In flight tests many were lost. A missile launched in Florida, 1956, went so far off course that it landed in North-Eastern Brazil, where it was found in 1983. Many of those connected with the program commented in jest "That the Caribbean was full of 'Snark infested waters'. The missile was deployed in May 1959, to Presque Isle Air Force Base, Maine, the only Snark missile base. A total of 30 Snarks are known to have been deployed. A year later they were deactivated. Technology was advancing so rapidly on many fronts that projects were abandoned in midstream when their implementation would have been obsolete before their installation.

As delivery systems were being developed, upgraded, and refined, the bomb was also going through many transformations. Most notably the fuzing, the process which detonates the bomb, and more importantly the installation of a procedure to prevent accidental explosions, a fail-safe device. Eisenhower had become so frustrated by the out of control spending by the military, supported by a fearful Congress and encouraged by the munition makers that it was a most happy day when he left the Presidency to John F. Kennedy. On only his third day on the job as Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara almost fell out of his chair with fright when he was made aware of a number of Air Force accidents. Most notably was a B-52 carrying two, 4 megaton hydrogen bombs, it became known as the Goldsboro Incident. This particular plane experienced problems after a 10 hour flight along the East coast. After its second mid-air refueling at 1:00 AM the boom operator noticed fuel leaking from the B-52's right wing. Within two minutes the plane had lost forty thousand gallons of jet fuel! The command post at Seymour Johnson Air Base ordered the plane to dump the rest of the fuel in the ocean and prepare for an emergency landing. The fuel from the tank inside the left wing would not drain, creating a weight imbalance. A half hour later, with the flaps down and the landing gear extended, the B-52 went into an uncontrolled spin. Major Tulloch ordered the crew to bail out as the plane started to break apart at ten thousand feet. Four of the seven crew members survived.

As the aircraft spun downward, centrifugal forces pulled a lanyard in the cockpit which was attached to the bomb release mechanism. When the lanyard was pulled, the locking pins were removed from one of the bombs, which then fell from the plane. The drogue parachute opened and then the main chute. The arming wires were yanked out, and the bomb responded as though it had been deliberately released by the crew above a target. The ignition sequence began and sent a firing signal, but the weapon did not detonate. Every safety mechanism had failed, except one: the ready/safe switch in the cockpit. The switch was in the SAFE position when the bomb dropped. Had the switch been set to GROUND or AIR, the arming unit would have been charged, the detonators would

have been triggered, and a thermonuclear weapon would have exploded in a field near Faro, North Carolina.

What had floored McNamara was that when a B-47 had been recently unloaded at another base, the ground crew noticed that all the bombs were armed even though the seal on the ready/safe switch in the cockpit was intact and the knob hadn't been turned to GROUND or AIR. The bombs had not been armed by the crew. A seven month investigation by Sandia found that a tiny metal nut had come off a bolt inside the plane and lodged against an unused radar-heating circuit. The nut had created a new electrical pathway, allowing current to reach an arming line—and bypass the ready/safe switch. If a similar glitch had occurred on the B-52 near Goldsboro, the ground burst of that 4-megaton bomb would have deposited a lethal fallout over Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York City. The Goldsboro accident was far from being an isolated or improbable event. It was a portent have the nuclear threats that the Kennedy administration would have to confront. Not so much from Russia, but from within our own air force.

Air Force personnel found the first bomb from the B-52, harmlessly stuck in the ground, nose first, its parachute draped in the branches of a tree. The other bomb plummeted straight down and landed in a meadow near the Nahunta Swamp. Its parachutes had failed to open. The high explosives in the fuze did not detonate and the primary circuit was largely undamaged. But the dense uranium core of the bomb penetrated more than seventy feet into the soggy ground. A recovery team never found it, despite weeks of digging. The Air Force had assured the public that the two weapons had been unarmed and that there was never any risk of a nuclear explosion. Those statements were misleading and thus began the Secretary of Defense's belief that our military was led by a cabal of idiots.

Coming from Harvard Business School and private industry the new Secretary of Defense was appalled by the lack of control, presence of safety measures, and the utter paucity of security in our nuclear arsenal. Tactical nuclear devices were stored in bunkers throughout Europe, oftentimes guarded by only one soldier. Moreover, their actual decision to be deployed followed no established change of command. McNamara's greatest fear was of a rogue officer starting World War III. In trying to establish security measures for the storage of the army's atomic mines and shells, the general balked. They were afraid that if needed, those weapons would not be available in time. They believed less security made them safer, the secretary felt the opposite, and even questioned the actual need for such ground base munitions to be used. The notion of destroying a village in order to save it seems to be an all too common method of combat. The weapons were slowly removed from Europe.

In the meantime a new policy of meeting the Soviet threat of nuclear war was established, the Trident Response. Navy submarines with Polaris missiles, Air Force bombers on constant alert, and bunkered ICBMs able to be launched, all only on the okay of the commander-in-chief. It would take a number of years for the tines of the Trident to be sharp and strong. Right now it resembled a fork with wet noodles. As the Navy's advancement in missiles and warheads progressed, the noodle got stronger. Bomber Command became more disciplined with their weapon storage and handling. It took Missile Command a number of years to transition from liquid fueled to solid fuel rockets, and not without a number of incidents that the Air Force attempted to minimize. We were assured that there was no danger.

Over the years politicians tinkered with the various tines. One American president even wanted missiles to criss-cross the country in specially built rail cars, the better to keep the Soviets guessing as to their whereabouts. But like the Domino Theory of Communist Expansion, the threat of a Soviet attack on America appeared to be hyperbole. Eisenhower had warned us of the proliferation of the self-serving triumvirate and yet we still fail to heed.



# Maine in the Revolutionary War

By the beginning of the American Revolution, Maine occupied a buffer zone between English Nova Scotia and the rebels in Massachusetts. The English cut off supplies of gunpowder and shot to both Indians and the insurgent Americans, influencing the tribes to side with America in the conflict. In return for aid against the British, the Americans promised the tribes a priest, protection, and hunting and fishing rights. The British occupied much of eastern Maine during, and for a time after, the war. The small settlement of Machias was a stronghold of American sympathizers and rebels. When the British occupied and closed Boston in 1774, Maine towns could no longer ship their wood and fish to Boston and return with much-needed imports. Ichabod Jones, of Machias, was a Loyalist lumber trader who decided to defy his neighbors and sail into Boston Harbor. Since British authorities in Boston needed firewood as badly as Mainers needed food and other goods, they ordered the armed sloop *HMS Margaretta* to accompany Jones' boats for protection. When Jones' vessels returned to Machias, some settlers bought his goods, but most sided with rebel leader Jeremiah O'Brien who sailed out in pursuit of the *Margaretta* and seized her and two other British vessels. This was the first naval engagement of the American Revolution. O'Brien was dubbed the Machias Admiral. In retaliation, the British admiral in Boston, Admiral Graves, ordered Captain Henry Mowat to burn Falmouth (now Portland). He allowed the inhabitants one night to vacate the town, but rebellious militiamen fired on Mowat, who fired back. At the end of the day, 400 buildings had been destroyed and the British had captured two American ships and sunk 11 others.

When the British occupied the St. John Valley in 1777, 500 Maliseets went south to Machias, where they joined with other tribal groups to fight the English. Micmacs gathered a force of 200 canoes, with which they attacked British coastal positions. The presence of so many Native Americans in Machias during the war helped that area remain securely within American control.

In June of 1779 the British constructed a series of fortifications centered on a fort located on the Bagaduce Peninsula in Penobscot Bay. In part to protect several hundred American Loyalist refugees, driven from their homes who had landed at Penobscot, Maine, but without protection, their situation was precarious. So General F. MacLean commander of British forces Nova Scotia was sent with one Scottish regiment and part of another in 3 sloops from Halifax (total of 640 men) to construct a fort which could both protect them and also act as a forward defensive position for his own territory. The Americans in Massachusetts were alarmed at the thought of an English headquarters so close.

The feelings against Loyalists were strong and an offer of a bounty, encouraged a large number of men to volunteer and join an expedition organized by the likes of Paul Revere, who claimed it would be short, not too difficult nor too risky. To retake Bagaduce, they sent 39 ships under the command of Brigadier General Solomon Lovell and Commodore Dudley Saltonstall. It became the worst American naval defeat until Pearl Harbor in 1941. The British goal was to create a military presence in the beginning of a new colony known as New Ireland. The state of Massachusetts, with support from the Continental Congress, raised an expedition to drive the British out. Three thousand men were enlisted, nineteen warships with a total of 350 guns and twenty-one supply ships were commissioned and on 25th July 1779 the expeditionary force arrived off the 'far from complete' fort.

On July 28, under heavy covering fire from the *Tyrannicide*, *Hunter*, and *Sky Rocket*, Brigadier General Peleg Wadsworth led an assault force of 400 (200 marines and 200 militia) ashore with orders to capture the now named Fort George. They landed on the narrow beach and advanced up the steep bluff leading to the fort. The British pickets, who included Lieutenant John Moore put up a determined resistance but received no reinforcements from the fort and were forced to retire, leaving the Americans in possession of the heights. At this point, Lovell ordered the attackers to halt and

entrench where they were. Instead of assaulting the fort, Lovell had decided to build a battery within "a hundred rods" of the British lines and bombard them into surrender. The American casualties in the assault had been severe: "one hundred out of four hundred men on the shore and bank", with the Continental Marines suffering more heavily than the militia. Commodore Saltonstall was so appalled by the losses incurred by his marines that he refused to land any more and even threatened to recall those already on shore. In addition his flagship, the Continental frigate *Warren*, suffered considerable damage during the engagement. For well over a fortnight thereafter the British held out against the besieging force whose guns maintained a constant bombardment against the incomplete earthworks of Fort George.

Although possessing significant naval superiority over the British, over the next two weeks the excessively cautious Saltonstall dawdled despite the repeated requests by General Lovell that he attack the British ships at the entrance to the harbor. Instead he largely maneuvered the American fleet around the mouth of the Penobscot River beyond the range of the British guns with only occasional ineffective attempts to engage. As long as the British warships continued to hold the harbor they were able to pin down the American forces on the ground with concentrated fire and prevent them from taking Fort George. The Americans were seriously hampered by disagreements over control of the expedition between land forces commander Brigadier General Solomon Lovell and the expedition's overall commander, Commodore Dudley Saltonstall.

Realizing that time was running out, on August 11 General Lovell again wrote to Saltonstall pleading for him to attack saying: "I mean not to determine on your mode of attack; but it appears to me so very practicable, that any farther delay must be infamous; and I have it this moment by a deserter from one of their ships, that the moment you enter the harbor they will destroy them." Saltonstall's ineptitude at Penobscot would lead to his being dismissed from the Navy as being "ever after incompetent to hold a government office or state post" the following October by the "Committee for Enquiring into the Failure of the Penobscot Expedition" of the Massachusetts General Court which determined that failure of the expedition was primarily the result of the "want of proper Spirit and Energy on the part of the Commodore", that he "discouraged any Enterprizes or offensive Measures on the part of our Fleet", and that the total destruction of the fleet was occasioned "principally by the Commodore's not exerting himself at all at the time of the Retreat in opposing the Enemies' foremost Ships in pursuit.

During this time, the British had been able to send word of their condition, and request reinforcements and on August 3 Captain (later Vice Admiral) Sir George Collier led a fleet of ten warships out of New York. Collier's British relief fleet arrived and attacked the American ships. The American fleet cannot even manage an organized retreat. The warships flee first, instead of staying behind to protect the backs of larger, fleeing transport ships. The mess of ships eventually makes it upriver, only to discover they're trapped by a larger British fleet. Only one American ship out of 42 escapes as their crews burned their vessels and took to the woods, but without shelter and provisions they quarreled over the blame for the disaster. Arguments developed into fights, fights into a general affray in which about fifty men were killed. The survivors then wandered away in search of sustenance, but most died in the wilderness without encountering the least sign of civilization

Another fascinating wrinkle to this battle is the American who was branded partially responsible for the stunning defeat. He was the man in charge of the American artillery forces: Paul Revere. Revere had made his fabled ride years before. But after Penobscot, Revere was put under house arrest and court-martialed on charges of cowardice and incompetence during the expedition. He was eventually exonerated and then largely forgotten by history, Until 1860. That's when Henry Wadsworth Longfellow published his poem "Paul Revere's Ride" — and this long-dead, relatively minor character of the American Revolution got elevated to the big leagues.