

Jason Russell (1716-1775) age 59, mass grave
Old Burial Ground, Pleasant St., Arlington, MA

And

Captain John Parker (1729-17 Sep 1775) age 46,
Old Burying Ground,
1690 Massachusetts Ave., Lexington
Middlesex County, MA

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This story is submitted for speech material(s) that might benefit any NSSAR Compatriot to speak publically and factually about *Boston's Seat of Revolution*. Much writing and publishing surrounds the Nov., 1774 rebel band, 'Boston, Sons of Liberty' organization including Patriot underground –Joseph Warren, M.D., Benj. Church, M.D., and craftsmen Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Paul Revere, William Dawes and William Prescott from Pepperell, MA and Elbridge Gerry from Marblehead. However, separately interesting are two, above captioned Massachusetts militia Patriots who both died during 1775 after voluntarily defending their neighbors, towns and colonial Mass. from several hundred British Army Regulars, ordered by Governor Gen. Thomas Gage to march from Boston on the night of Apr 18, 1775 to rendezvous at Concord.

Among the American honor that should be shown our 1st known veterans, consider rightfully -captain John *Parker*, Lexington and (MA) militiamen Jason Russell, Menotomy (now, Arlington, MA) buried in a mass grave with John Bacon, Amos Mills, Jonathan Parker, Nathan Chamberlain of Needham Twsp, William Flint, Thos. Hadley, Abednego Ramsdell of Lynn, Massachusetts, Elias Haven of Dedham and Benj. Pierce of Salem. All died the same year, 1775, as heroes and our 1st veterans ...wrote, Rob't. H. Nylander (1964) in his book, "Jason Russell and His House in Menotomy," *Old Time New England*, LV(2).

Writer -Samuel A. Forman (2012) in his book, *Dr. Joseph Warren: The Boston Tea party, Bunker Hill, and the Birth of American Liberty*, Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., pointedly stated that British gen. Gage used his most influential Boston 'mole' Dr. Benjamin Church for military intelligence purposes during the Apr 18, 1775, *Lexington Alarm* to help him stave off the patriot underground moves to raid the arsenal at Concord.

Less effective utilization by gen. Gage was the assignment to gain useful military intelligence by posting Benjamin Thompson, and later Count Rumsford to compromise and partner with the Patriot newspaper publisher & printer Isaiah Thomas (1749-1831) of the newspaper, *Massachusetts Spy*. Engraver Paul Revere's engraving skills were utilized within (1774-75) magazine & newspaper publications as well as other patriot publicists printing at New Hampshire and New York.

Forman wrote in his 2012 book, that Joseph Warren, John Hancock and Benj. Church were among fifty members of the Massachusetts Provincial Committee of Safety appointed on Oct 27, 1774. Hancock was most frequently *in absentia*, tied up as he was associated with work at the bequest of the Continental Congress. Joseph Warren called the *Lexington Alarm* on the evening of Apr 18, 1775 from his Boston medical practice.

Affected directly by Joseph Warren's calling-out of the town of *Lexington (Company) Middlesex County Bgde., (MA) militia*, was John Parker, age 45, born at Lexington on 13 Jul 1729. He received Warren's alert to mobilize a detachment of the Lexington Company and assemble with 77 militiamen in anticipation of receiving a British force of 700 regulars ordered by gen. Gage to Concord for the purpose of capturing a Massachusetts arsenal. Before, 2 o'clock on the morning on Apr 19, 1775 captain Parker's detachment of Lexington Company formed, exchanged powder, lead and loaded their flintlocks. Stand your ground, Parker ordered his company! "Don't fire unless fired upon. But if they want a war let it began here." Soon, the 1st British advance guard, led by maj. John Pitcairn appeared out of the faint darkness and there was an order given for the town militia to lay down arms! Realizing the Patriot (MA) militia was outnumbered, Patriot captain John Parker countered with an order for militia to disperse across the Lexington Green. Upon doing so, a British officer fired his pistol and, so began Patriot return fire at the British advancing with arms loaded and positioned for the order: make *ready-fire*! Then without any apparent orders, there were muzzle flashes, sounds of firing rounds from each side with billowing smoke adding to the confusion of night firing. During the actual firing exchange that lasted over several minutes, one British regular was shot and eight Americans were killed; and nine were found wounded.

The British advance guard continued to march at a greater hurry, now, north on Concord Road (today, Massachusetts Avenue at Arlington,) with the Lexington Company trailing along and sniping shots. After day light, there were sounds of alarm bells and even cannon fire periodically, during the British Army's retreat from Concord, over the Lexington Bridge back to Boston upon the Concord Road, reaching Arlington, MA, by afternoon. British regulars now, trailing and exhausted were harassed in a *running battle* by Patriot militiamen sniping from fieldstone walls and fences at houses in Arlington, (then Menotomy) particularly Jason Russell's farm house.

Today, the remodeled farmhouse & a U.S. Nat'l. Historic Place represents the *bloodiest hand to hand* fighting that day, while the physical site brought into combat service, additional (MA) militiamen from surrounding Essex County, towns of Danvers, originally known as Salem Village; Lynn; Beverly; and the county seat of Norfolk County, Dedham and nearby, Needham by late afternoon. As patriot sniping increased, British brig. gen. Hugh Percy ordered an assault of the Russell family farmhouse, where a company of Patriot militia huddled loading powder, paper and shot. Jason Russell was outside his house and was joined by running militiamen seeking cover toward his farm house's entranceway. He was shot twice as he reached his own doorway, stumbling inside from a severe stabbing by British bayonets! British regulars rushed the dwelling, killing everyone that appeared upon the 1st floor and stairway toward the root cellar. Eight, (MA) militia survived by reaching the basement and directing their gun barrels up the stairs, according to Samuel A. Smith's book (1864) *West Cambridge on the Nineteenth of Apr., 1775*. Boston: Alfred Mudge & Son.

Captain John Parker's Lexington Company (MA) militia participated within other skirmishes with the British Army regulars until his death from Tuberculosis at age 46 and one might view his service record recorded in print within the *Massachusetts Soldiers & Sailors of the Revolutionary War, Vol. 11, pg 872*. His name, followed by the word, "Lexington" is listed as Captain in command on Apr 18th (1775) of a

detachment from "Lexington militia" company with service, 5 days; reported on command at Cambridge from May 6 to May 10th, 1775 by order of the (MA) Committee of Safety; also, Captain, same detachment; service 2 days; detachment reported on command at Cambridge from June 17 to 18th, 1775 by order of the Committee of Safety; also, Council warrant dated Jul 9, 1776 for Thirteen Pounds, eleven Shillings and Sixpence (colonial American/British coin) drawn in favor of said Parker, Captain, for wages in full of officers and men under his command.

Finally, one can loudly exclaim, HUZDAH! [But for a moment, silently consider the unusually high costs that year (1775) paid by all above, 1st known Veterans, when compared to the survival rate and Revolutionary War measured compensation received over a lifetime by veteran Revolutionary survivors and tradesmen from Boston!?!]