

Ensign Jeremy Lister

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“On the 18th of April in the evening there was a detachment ordered under arms to go on a secret expedition, under the command of Lt. Col. Smith of our Reg’t, the detachment consisted of the Light Infantry and the Grenadiers of the Army...being anxious to know the reason of this order with the destiny of this Armament, I went...down to the parade, when I met Capt. Parsons of our Company of Light Infantry who seem’d rather uneasy at Lt. Hamilton’s not coming after being repeatedly sent for, who sent word at last he was sick. I immediately offered myself a Volunteer in the room of Hamilton and was [ac]cepted of when I immediately returned to my lodgings to equip myself for a march, and met the Company on their way through the town in order to embark in boats to cross the bay above Charlestown, when we was just embarking, Lt. Col. Smith wish’d me to return to town again and not go into danger for others, particularly Hamilton whose illness was suppos’d by everybody to be feign’d which ‘twas clearly proved to be the case afterwards, but wishing much to go, for the Honor of the Reg’t thinking it would be rather a disgrace for the Company to March on an Expedition, more especially it being the first, without its compliment of Officers, therefore my offer was [ac]cepted. We got all over the bay and landed on the opposite shore betwixt twelve and one o’clock and was at first through some swamps and slips of the sea till we got into the road leading to Lexington soon after which the Country people begun to fire their alarm guns, light their Beacons, to raise the Country, however to the best of my recollection about 4 o’clock in the morning being the 19th of April the 5 front companies was ordered to load which we did, about half an hour after we found that precaution had been necessary, for we had to unload again and then was the first Blood drawn in this American Rebellion. It was at Lexington when we saw one of their Companies drawn up in regular order Major Pitcairn, of the Marines second in Command call’d to them to disperse, but their not seeming willing he desired us to mind our space which we did when they gave a fire then run off to get behind a wall. We had one man wounded of our Company in the leg his name was Johnson also Major Pitcairn’s horse was shot in the flank, we returned their salute, and before we proceeded on our march from Lexington I believe we kill’d and wounded either 7 or 8 men. We marched forward without further interruption till we arriv’d at Concord, the large bodies of men was collected together and with armes yet as we approached they retired, Lt. Col. Smith remained at Concord to destroy military stores collected there but detached Capt. Parsons forwards with 5 Companies of Light Infantry in order to do the same business at another place the name I don’t now recollect. Capt. Parsons left one company, the 43rd at Concord Bridge, two companies viz 4th and 10th upon two hills to command the road he had to go, then proceeded with the other two Companies viz 23rd and 52nd to execute the purpose of his detachment. We had not been long in this situation when we saw a large body of men drawn up with the greatest regularity and approached us seemingly with an intent to attack, when Lt. Kelly...thought it most proper to retire from our situation and join the 4th Company which we did, they still approached and in that force, that it was thought proper...to join the 43rd company at Concord Bridge commanded by Capt. Laurey. Capt. Laurey of the 43rd then commanded the three companies. He sent Lt. Robertson...to Lt. Col. Smith to beg a reinforcement might be sent immediately. The answer brought back was Lt. Col. Smith thought 3 companies must be equal to the defense of the Bridge, but would see this message had no

sooner arrived than the rebels began their march from the hill we before had retired, with as much order as the best disciplined troops, I proposed destroying the bridge. But before we got one plank off, they got so near as to begin their fire which was a very heavy one. Our companies were drawn up in order to fire street firing, yet the weight of their firing was such that we was obliged to give way and run with the greatest precipitance. At this place there was 4 men of the 4th company killed who [were] afterwards scalped, their eyes goug'd, their noses and ears cut off, such barbarity exercised upon the corpse could scarcely be paralleled by the most uncivilized savages. There was a good number wounded amongst which was a Lt. Hull [shot] through the right breast, of which with other wounds received that day he died three or four days after, Lt. Gould... and Lt. Kelly...also Lt. Sunderland, a volunteer, wounded. Fortunately for us in consequence of the message sent to Lt. Col. Smith he had considered to send the 47th company of Grenadiers to our assistance, tho' too late to be of any service at the Bridge yet they served as a cover for us to draw up our scattered company again, we then retired in regular order to Concord...After we had got to Concord again my situation with the remains of the company was a most fatiguing one, being detached to watch the motions of the Rebels, we was kept continually running from hill to hill as they changed their position, but however after some hours Capt. Parsons returned, after executing the purpose of his command and though there was a large body of Rebels drawn up upon ...they let him pass without firing a single shot, though they might undoubtedly have cut his 2 companies off to a man. On Capt. Parsons joining us [we] begun our march toward Boston again from Concord. The Light Infantry marched over a hill above the town, the Grenadiers through the town, immediately as we descended the hill into the Road the Rebels begun a brisk for but at so great a distance it was without effect, but as they kept marching nearer when the Grenadiers found them within shot they returned their fire. Just about that time I received a shot through my right elbow joint which effectually disabled that arm. It then became a general firing upon us from all quarters, from behind hedges and walls..."