

# Military History



In the early days of our town's development, it became apparent to the people that their very existence depended largely on their ability to protect themselves against hostile Indians. They could no longer survive by remaining independent of surrounding settlements, and the need for mutual aid in times of trouble became evident. The first reality came in 1636-7 when the Pequot War broke out in Connecticut and 5 men from Weymouth were sent to assist. Later in 1675, after the death of Chief Massasoit, his son refuted the claims of the treaties with the settlers and proceeded to destroy lives and property at every interval. This "King Philip's War" as it was called, was very costly to the small communities. Weymouth, itself, was the scene of several attacks and it suffered the loss of several houses from their raids. It is estimated that at least 40 men served during this war; perhaps more. The last organized Indian resistance in this area appeared at an end with the death of King Philip in August 1676. In 1679, a Company of Horse was formed and the troop was continued for many years. The following year, the General Court ordered the soldiers of Weymouth to form with other towns into an organized regiment.



Peace was not destined for the colonies, and Weymouth was called upon in 1690 to furnish men to fight against the French in the Canadian Expedition and the ensuing years through 1750 saw an increasing demand on the town for taxes and men to pursue this outbreak of hostilities. By 1754, a full-fledged "French & Indian War" was raging. 41 known men served from Weymouth, with six lost in service. As records are fragmentary of these early Military engagements, it is most probable that we sent, and perhaps lost more, than those recorded.



Weymouth joined other towns in defying the King's levy on tea and the other ever-increasing taxations placed upon them. By 1775, it was apparent that matters were soon to come to a head, and a committee was chosen at a town meeting to make certain that every able-bodied man had a firearm or could purchase one. At the Arnold Tavern in Weymouth Landing, the Town Committee of Correspondence met and it was deemed that a state of emergency was eminent. Powder and supplies in addition to a bounty were raised by the vote of the Town members and the first contingent of able-bodied men were summoned to serve.

Weymouth men served bravely through the long and tenuous War for Independence that followed. Nearly every major engagement saw our boys on the field of battle. At home, the families struggled for existence, strained to their limits financially, and with the loss of their men to provide a means of livelihood; it became soon evident that the battlefield was but one major threat to their existence.

It is believed that over 200 able men served the call from our town although the existing records\* indicate 179 names, 16 of which died in service of their country.



For the next two decades, Weymouth continued its militia activities and the respite from war gave the town a chance to regain some of its financial and commercial posture that had been severely drained by the Revolution. 1812 saw the outbreak of hostilities with Britain again and several Weymouth men served at sea against the English navy. Two companies of men were formed at Weymouth and over the next two years they served at coastal defenses in the Forts of Boston Harbor, and the surrounding area. Over 100 men are known to have served and of the militia none are known to have been killed. However, there is undoubtedly several of our brave seamen that were lost on privateers struggling for freedom on the seas.



From 1815 to the early 1860's, Weymouth was not involved militarily with the sole exception of perhaps only one man who fought in the Mexican War of 1846-7. However, a strong anti-slavery movement was afoot in Weymouth and many resolutions were passed supporting it. Feelings were growing stronger through the next few years until the War of the Rebellion finally broke out in April 1861. Weymouth was among the first towns of the Commonwealth to respond to the President's call for troops and 22 of them were in the Fourth Regt. which entered Washington ahead of all the other State regiments. Throughout 1861-2, there were additional calls by the President and each time, Weymouth sent its boys; being represented in at least 36 different Infantry Regiments, as well as 10 Artillery and 6 Cavalry Regiments. The famed Company H of the 12th Regiment Vol. Infantry was formed by Volunteers from Weymouth who elected Captain James L. Bates as their leader. In the ensuing years of the War, Captain Bates lead his Company, and later the 12th Regiment, through 28 engagements in some of the hardest fighting of the War. He was promoted to brevet brigadier-general and his fame and courage placed him high on Weymouth's roll of distinguished military service. A great patriotic spirit pervaded the town throughout the war, and on several occasions, the Town Meeting voted additional bounties to be paid for enlistments and also small sums to be rendered the families of veterans at home, as an additional inducement for the soldiers to stay in service. It is not known how many served on the seas during this bitter struggle but of over 782 Weymouth soldiers who fought, 202\* were casualties in service. Our town indeed felt the impact of this terrible war.

The Spanish-American War in 1898 saw several enlistments by Weymouth men, both in the Army and the Navy. Of the 46,\* who are known to have served, there were no casualties from Weymouth.

With the outbreak of World War I in Europe in 1914, it became obvious to many that it was just a matter of time before we, ourselves, were engulfed in the conflict. A number of Weymouth men, impatient to enter the War, enlisted in Canada; while others joined the Navy, hoping for early action. When the United States did enter the War in 1917, Weymouth gave a full measure and more, of its stalwart youth . . . We pay tribute to the 670\* men who served, and to the memory of the 23\* who gave their lives in service.

World War II followed after 20 years of a peace, that was hopefully to last forever. Our Country again sent out its call in 1941 and the next four successive years, for its citizen soldiers. Enlistments and draft calls swelled until, even with its greatly increased population, Weymouth felt the drain of its manpower. Men and women serving numbered over 3549,\* and of these, 70 are recorded as having died in service.

Five years; hardly a pause in the standards of time; and we find our Country; indeed our Town, affected by another conflict in Korea. From 1950 to 1953, many of our boys answered the call. Some of our veterans of World War II re-enlisted again while others for their first time. This struggle reflected 11 casualties of the more than 1326\* engaged from Weymouth.

The 1960's brought forth another flare-up in the World peace and at this writing, Weymouth men continue to serve their country on the distant battleground of Southeast Asia.

We cannot, indeed, alter the course of future events, but perhaps in retrospect, the citizens of our Town can reflect upon their proud heritage and the sacrifices of the countless thousands of their men who have helped to perpetuate these past 350 years of our existence.

*\*Statistics taken from Memorial Amphitheater Plaques include Killed in Action, Missing in Action and Died of Wounds.*

