

# The Battle for Bunker Hill

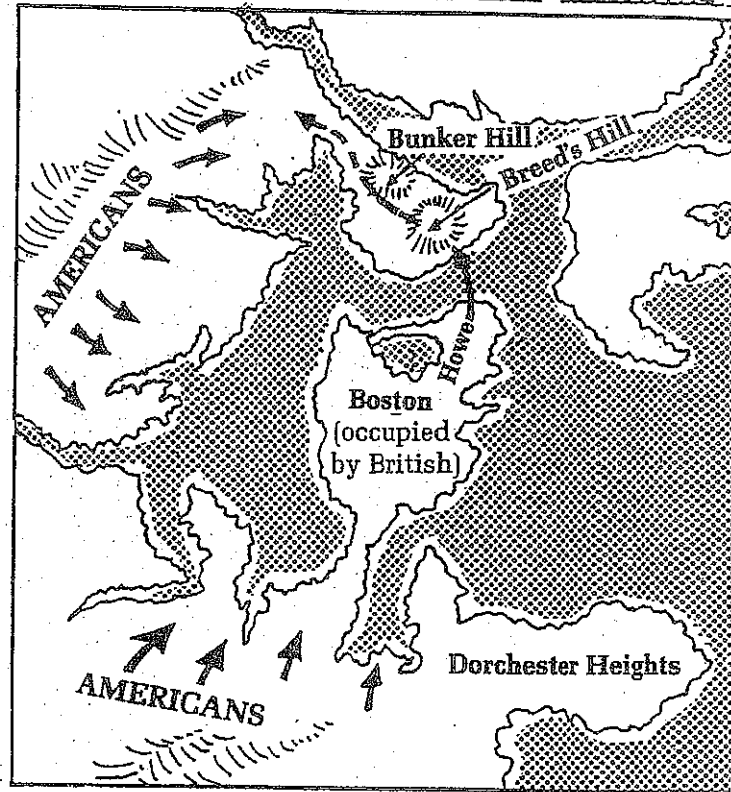
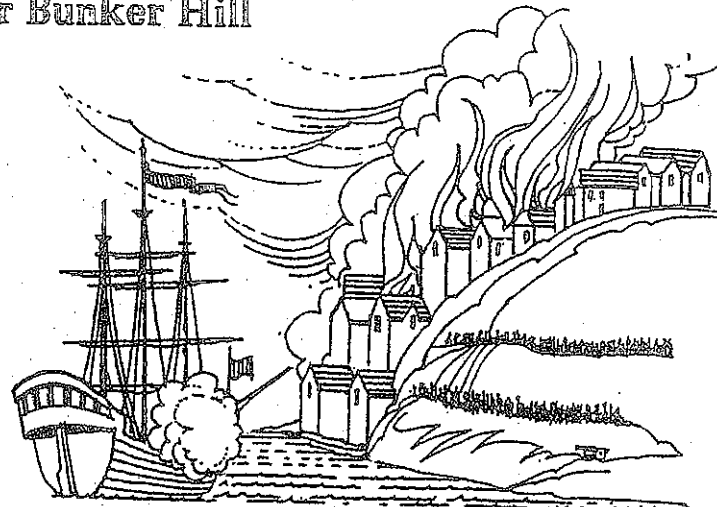
What happened at Lexington and Concord shocked Englishmen in Britain as well as in America. Events moved swiftly ahead during the spring and early summer of 1775, pushing the two sides deeper into war.

A group of Vermont patriots led by Ethan Allen and called the Green Mountain Boys, made a surprise pre-dawn attack on the British at Ft. Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain. The surrender of the British was important because the fort had more than fifty artillery pieces, or cannon. These heavy guns were used later in the war effort by the patriots.

Back in Massachusetts, the patriot army was growing. Thousands of rebels poured into New England ready to drive the British out of the colonies, and more specifically, out of Boston.

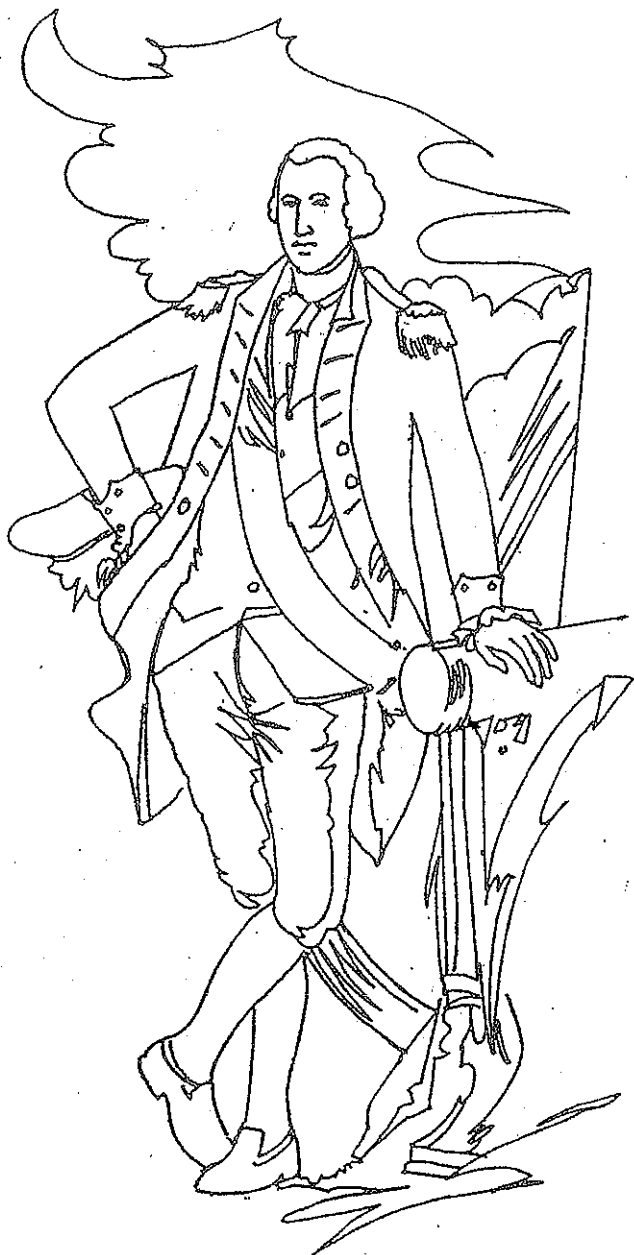
The rebel army took position on Breed's Hill near Boston on June 16, 1775. They also intended to take neighboring Bunker Hill. The British, however, attacked on June 17 before these plans were completed. Although the resulting battle was for Bunker Hill, the fighting took place on Breed's Hill. The name of the battle has come down to us as the Battle of Bunker Hill.

The British attacked the hilltop on three separate charges, with one coming as close as forty yards before the patriots opened fire. The rebels did not flee the hill until they had run out of bullets. Though the British won, they paid a high price for the day's victory: approximately 1,000 redcoats were killed. The war was proving a costly business for both sides.



1. Who captured Ft. Ticonderoga? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why was the victory significant? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Why did the patriots set up lines of defense on Breed's Hill? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Why is a hill a good place to defend? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Explain how the name the "Battle of Bunker Hill" is misleading. \_\_\_\_\_
6. What circumstance forced the rebels to flee the battlefield? \_\_\_\_\_

# Washington Takes Command



On June 15, 1775, General George Washington was voted commander-in-chief of the Continental army by the American Congress. Two days later, the Battle of Bunker Hill, the first true battle of the American Revolution, took place. The battle occurred before Washington took command, as he did not arrive in Massachusetts to assume his duties until July 3, 1775.

The army which Washington met at Cambridge (near Boston) was largely an untrained and undisciplined lot. Consisting mostly of local farmers, a few artisans, and skilled workers, they basically knew little of military discipline and the expectations of a real military leader such as Washington. The soldiers lived in tents and other makeshift shelters. Supplies came in sporadically, but there never seemed to be enough guns, ammunition, clothes, food, or back pay.

As undisciplined soldiers, the nature of their encampment was different from that of a modern army of today. In such armies, women used to accompany the men serving as cooks, water bearers, and nurses. Some would even serve in battle taking the places of fallen soldiers.

Over 5,000 blacks served in the revolutionary army, both as volunteers and as the slaves of volunteers. In addition, Indians sometimes joined the patriot forces.

## *Review and Write*

1. What battle had patriot soldiers fought before Washington took command of the Continental Army?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. When did he take command of the army? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Describe the nature of the revolutionary army, that is, the type of men, military skill, etc. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. From what kinds of problems and deficiencies did these soldiers suffer? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What minorities could be found in the ranks of the Continental Army? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_