

"The men being blown we halted and formed to a fence, and were immediately joined by the 2nd grenadiers to our right His own battalion left away more to the left; as soon as the men were fit to go on, out of gratitude to Major Stuart we desired to elect him our chief and meant to have gone on under his command, but before we could move C^o Abercromby galloped to us, and we joined the battalion.-

"A british brigade got into action with the enemys reserve, which terminated the battle on the left.- The column on the right as soon as soon as [sic] our fire was heard, crossed the river and drove the enemy from their works.-"

This document, known colloquially as Feinstone 111, gives a remarkable view of battle; the original spelling and punctuation has been preserved to the greatest extent that modern typeface will allow. A few references are ambiguous - the American general could not have been Lincoln, and it is not certain if the author refers to the 4th Regiment of Foot when he mentions "His won battalion". Other than that, the details recounted correlate very well with other sources; particularly recommended is a comparison with the journal of Captain Johann Ewald, which has been published. The author of Feinstone 111 is unknown; many writers attribute the document to an officer of the 17th Regiment of Foot's Light Company. This is a logical supposition, since the author was obviously with that company during the battle, but it could also have been written by a "gentleman volunteer" (referred to in the British army as gentlemen or volunteers, but seldom as both in period documents; they usually served with the Light Infantry), or perhaps another officer who also "attended the army as a spectator".

The degree of independence of the individual companies worth noting, although one must bear in mind that some were part of the advance guard, and as such probably expected to act with initiative. All of the Light companies mentioned were part of the 1st Battalion of Light Infantry, which was comprised of 13 companies altogether. Notice that they do not appear to have been acting as a coordinated entity, and in fact incited an individual company of another battalion to come to their assistance - without much regard for the established chain of command. Note also the initiative taken in establishing a pro tem command structure. Finally, a bit more germane to us reenactors, notice the extent to which the terrain was used by the combatants, influencing every action and always used to advantage.

The reverse side of Feinstone 111 contains even more remarkable information, for here we have not only a discussion of how Light Infantry work was handled within a company, but also a comparison of two Light Infantry disciplines. Called "Examination of the Dundass System", it compares that system to "the practice of 1st Battⁿ Light Infantry." Unfortunately, the fact that the writing is undated makes this comparison quite ambiguous.

One would logically assume that the Brandywine account was written soon after the battle, and that the information on the reverse was penned around the same time. David Dundas' "XVIII Manoeuvres" and his "Principles of Military Movements" were not published until ten years later. It is possible that the author of Feinstone 111 did his writing in the late 1780s, or perhaps even wrote only the comparison then, on an old sheet of paper. More likely, the system developed by Dundas was referred to as the "Dundas System" long before its publication. The fact that many of the regiments serving at Brandywine went on to the West Indies, serving with Dundas, supports this possibility (British officers did, in fact, move between regiments frequently, so even though the 17th did not go south, our author could have). Careful work with orderly books could confirm this. A final possibility is that the 1st Battalion referred to in Feinstone 111 was in fact a battalion which went to the Indies during hostilities during the 1790s, when Dundas' work was in fashion.

"- Examination of the Dundass System. -

Dundass

Company changes its name to Platoon. on peace establishment it is one in war it is two Platoons.-

When the battalion is on a war establishment each company will be divided into Two Platoons.-

Company to be sized from flanks to center.

Number of ranks

Company to form three deep-

Distance of Files

Files lightly to touch-

Divisions of company

Company divided into two subdivisions four sections.

Companies in battalion

Companies in battalion to draw up according to seniority, from flanks to center.-

- Answered, according to the practice of the 1st Battⁿ Light Inf^y

A company is a company;- weak or strong a company.

Upon service the front rank man to be permitted to chuse his comrade and always to cover him; this will prevent the exact sizing of the men, which certainly adds to the appearance of the company. The front rank may be sized.-

Usual order two men. Men instructed to form single rank or four deep.

Files by day always loose;- usual order 11 inches; open order arms length extended order from five yards to fifty. In danger men like all animals crowd together.

-There seems an error to begin by subdividing - before there can be a subdivision there must be a division.- The company to be divided in plain familiar language.- in Half, Quarters and if this is not sufficient, into eights; or subdivisions.-

The precedency of companies being well understood to be established as the parade order.- but in formation of line from column conveniency, or rapidity of movement to supersede seniority.-"

The tone here is that of a rebuttal - an evaluation of Dundas' system compared to an already practiced discipline. While it does not give a complete picture of either system (few sources do), it gives us some of the kind of information that we need to accurately present Howe's Light Infantry maneuvers (assuming that those are the maneuvers Feinstone 111 refers to). Notice that, on campaign, niceties such as sizing and order of battle are secondary to efficiency. Notice also that, besides being trained in a "usual order", contingencies are also taught; and that simplicity has a degree of importance.

Feinstone 111 continues:

"Memorandums.

Powder horn and shot bag -
and paper cut for loading.-

saves cartridges, a broken cartridge
for priming or accident is lost. men
going on duty to load with powder.

Hammer caps preserve the hammer from rust, and prevent the piece going off by
accident-

Sixty rounds for service.-

Light infantry Soldiers necessaries.- West Indies:
Sleeves of the jacket sewed to the waistcoat; shell laid aside.-
One or two pockets in the waistcoat below the breast.-
Linen trowser and socks.- one p^r trowsers died uniform; two, or three p^r socks:-
2 flannel shirts; 1 p^r drawers d^o - 1 p^r shoes off 1 on in a bag rolled in
blanket, carried up and down: if across men cannot get through thickets.-
Haversack for provisions; Tomahawk;- Camp kettle for each Mess.

Movement. as a general rule.-

To advance form the center; To retreat from the flanks.

On coming to a position

The army having come to its ground, before the whole is posted, each
corps to take charge of what is most contiguous, until pickets are posted.-

Turning out before day.

All Guards and Pickets to get under arms an hour before day break, and
Patroles to be sent out.- At sunrise, or after the day is well broke and
patroles returned"

It is not clear whether this last sentence is not complete or is syntactically
incorrect. The statement concerning shoes appears to mean, one pair of shoes worn
and a second pair carried (similar recommendation is made in the writings of
Bennett Cuthbertson); the spare pair was put in a bag to protect the blanket from
the blacking on the shoes.

Most significant here is the reference to the use of hammer caps, which we
generally call hammerstalls or frizzen covers. Use of these items is alluded to
in a number of references, but this is one of the clearest indications of their use
in America. It is possible that the mention of hammer caps in this context means
that that they were not, in fact, in general use; however, because they are a nec-
essary safety item for us moderns, this reference to their intended use is sufficient.
The fact that they "preserve the hammer from rust" implies that they cover the entire
hammer, rather than wrapping around the striking surface as many reproduction ones
do.

Sixty rounds was the standard amount per man during the American war; the
figure appears in many orderly books, and is seldom different. Interestingly,
in 1784, general orders for the British directed the Light Infantry's powder horns
to be laid aside, having been of no use during this war.

The above documents and extracts illustrate clearly that we cannot judge every-
thing from one example. The practice often did not follow the regulation; only by
continuous and diligent research - of all documents. not just the likely ones - can
we acquire a sense of the individuality of the regiments, companies, and soldiers
whom we work so hard to portray.