

THE ARMED BOAT COMPANY AND THE GREAT WHALEBOAT BATTLE OF DECEMBER 7, 1782

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December 7 is best known and commemorated as the anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. It is also the anniversary of the “great whaleboat battle” which occurred near the end of the Revolutionary War in 1782 – 241 years ago – in the Long Island Sound, between the shores of Connecticut and Long Island, New York. This little known event – and the “whaleboat wars” on Long Island Sound in general – are virtually unknown pieces of Revolutionary War history. The Rebel¹ (American) side of the events of December 7, 1782 is described as the “spy boat fight” in an article published this week in The Journal of American Revolution.² That article identifies many of the Rebels who were involved, but gives no description of the foe whom the Rebels were fighting: the men and whaleboats of the Armed Boat Company. What was this equally unknown and obscure British unit - which was likely almost entirely comprised of men who were Tories,³ rather than men of the Royal Navy – and what role did it play in the Revolutionary War?

¹ As this paper is intended for publication in Loyalist Trails, the weekly newsletter of the UELAC members, it uses the term “Rebel” rather than “Patriot” (which is the author’s preferred term).

² Philip D. Weaver, Caleb Brewster’s Spy Boat Boys in The Journal of the American Revolution, November 30, 2023; available online at <https://allthingsliberty.com/2023/11/caleb-brewsters-spy-boat-boys/>.

³ Many Boatmen had served the British forces in other capacities earlier during the Revolutionary War. One member of the Boatmen, Philip Huestis (also spelled *Hustis* and *Husted*), was from Westchester County and went as a Loyalist in 1783 to New Brunswick. It is unknown how many other Boatmen then left New York as Loyalists. A review of Loyalist compensation claims and petitions for land grants might identify others.

If Philip Huestis’ ‘priors’ were representative of the men of the Armed Boat Company, they were a fearsome group. He was one of 13 Rebel minutemen who gathered at White Plains in Westchester County on February 14, 1776 to elect the officers of Capt. James Verian’s (Verryan’s) Company of Col. Joseph Drake’s (1st) Regiment of the (Rebel) Westchester County Militia. He later turned coat to the British (an act that was not uncommon in Westchester County, where all men between 16 and 65 had been required in 1775 and 1776 to join the Militia). In October 1778 Huestis, armed and in the company of five or six men, laid siege to the home of Captain Samuel Treadwell [Tredwell], Commander of the Westchester Troop of Horse, at Harrison in Westchester County with the intention to take into custody a sick black soldier. Huestis was caught by the Rebels, charged with attempting to kidnap a negro soldier and being a spy for the British, and tried at a general court-martial in March 1779. (Shubal Merritt, the cousin of Huestis’ second wife Marry Merritt and younger brother of the builder of “Loyalist House” in Sant John, was tried on the same day and place for being a spy for the British; the author’s sense is that he and Huestis were acting in concert. It was said of “Shube” Merritt in the MacDonald Papers that “he was a very bad man and ought to be hanged.”) While there was nothing to indicate that Huestis was employed as a soldier of the Crown during this period, he said at his court-martial that he had acted under the direction of Major Mansfield Baremore, Commandant of the “Loyal Westchester Refugees.” Convicted of kidnapping, Huestis was sentenced to death by hanging. However, General McDougal wrote in a letter to General George Washington that he had not approved the sentence and was reluctant to carry it out. For whatever reason, Huestis was not hung and made his way back to the British. He was rumored to have been involved in an incident in which a prominent Westchester patriot, Samuel Lyon, was overtaken by six or seven armed men, assaulted and robbed. He appears to have served with the British forces on Long Island in 1781 and engaged in what might be regarded as further acts of larceny or extortion. Huestis joined the Armed Boats Company by 1782, participated in the March 23, 1782 attack

The Armed Boat(s) Company was a British seagoing unit based in New York City during the Revolutionary War that manned armed whaleboats. Formed early during the conflict, it was reactivated as a small maritime unit when Governor Clinton – the Royal Governor of New York – issued a Warrant on 2 July 1781 to raise an Armed Boat Company:

“To William LUCE Esqr.

“By Virtue of the Power & Authority in me vested, I do hereby Authorize & empower you to raise for his Majesty's Service, *One Company of Able Bodied Men, to be employed in Whale Boats & other Armed Vessels, to consist of One Capt., four Lieuts., Eight Mates & Ninety two Private Men* who will engage to serve in the above mentioned Capacity for two years, or, if required, during the Continuance of the present Rebellion in North America, to receive the same Pay as the Marines employed in the Armed Vessels in the Qr. Masr. Genls. Depart. to be Cloathed, Armed & be under the same Regulation & Discipline as his Majesty's Provincial Forces.

“The Officers to be appointed by me; & it is to be made known to the Lieuts. that, upon each of them producing Twenty five Men, they will be entitled to their Pay & Commission. All Officers Civil & Military & Others his Majesty's Legal Subjects are hereby required to be Aiding & Assisting to you & all concerned in the Execution of the Above Services, for which this shall be to you & them a Sufficient Warrant & Authority.

“Given under my Hand & Seal at Head Quarters New York the 2nd Day of July 1781.

“H. CLINTON”

The Warrant authorized a 105 men establishment, with each Lieutenant in charge of 25 or more men.

The Company's first commander, Captain William Luce, was almost immediately captured by the Rebels. His successor, Captain Edward Vaughn Dongen, enlisted more than 125 men, mostly from Essex County, New Jersey; a number of blacks are said to have served in the Company. In 1782 the Company was under the command of Captain Nathaniel Hubill.⁴ Based

on Toms River, and was discharged by March 1783. He sailed with his children and his second wife Mary Merritt as a Loyalist to Saint John, New Brunswick in June 1783, and died in 1827.

⁴ Nathaniel (Nathan) Hubbill/Hubbell/Hubble was born c. 1754 in Connecticut, possibly at Fairfield. Before joining the Armed Boat Company, was experienced in maritime attacks on Rebel shore positions.

Hubbill was an officer in the Associated Loyalists, which disbanded in late 1782. He was engaged in the April 1781 attack by British forces on New Haven when, as Captain Nathan Hubbill, he prepared “a rough draft of New Haven fort” the evening before the attack. (University of Michigan Library; see <http://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/collection/data/80226212>); for a report of the attack, carried out by the Associated Loyalists, see letter from Hubbill to Lincoln dated April 21, 1781 in the [Clinton Papers](#).

As Major Hubbill, he was with the Associated Loyalists who were garrisoned at Lloyd's Neck on Long Island during June 1781 when it was attacked by a force of 450 French soldiers (extract of a Letter to his [Excellency Governor Franklin](#), from [Lieut. Col. Upham](#), of the [Associated Loyalists](#), and Commandant at Lloyd's Neck, dated Fort-Franklin, July 13, 1781 in [The New-York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury](#), July 16th, 1781; available online at

in New York, the Company's primary task was to attack and harass American regiments along the shorelines in neighboring New Jersey and Connecticut. This involved the Company in acts of commercial vandalism and the plundering of rebel storehouses.

Whaleboats were narrow vessels thirty to thirty-six feet long, with eight or ten oars manned by eight to ten men, with pointed bows and sterns, and sometimes armed with small cannon. The Armed Boat Company counteracted the Rebel whaleboats which were raiding Long Island (which was occupied by the British between September 1776 and about September 1783) and British garrisons from Connecticut and New Jersey. From early during the Revolutionary War until late 1782, Long Island Sound was in a state of anarchy and at times open warfare, with whaleboat raids back and forth across the Sound by both Rebels and Loyalists, illicit trade in both directions across and up and down the Sound, and attacks by both sides on enemy shipping.⁵ The Continental Congress commissioned privateers. Thirteen whaleboats were commissioned by July 1780 by the State of Connecticut to "cruise the Sound." In addition, there was nothing to prevent a private citizen with a whaleboat and some roughneck friends or relatives from "going Viking" and raiding shipping up and down the Sound or individual farms or communities on Long Island. Atrocities were committed by both sides, with houses being broken into and plundered and their inhabitants being beaten or hung up and tortured until they confessed where their money was hidden, or in some cases murdered.⁶

<http://www.royalprovincial.com/history/battles/aslrep4.shtml>.) During the same month, Hubbill was ill and did not participate in an attack by "a party of about 150 Associated Loyalists and other Volunteers, assisted by Capt. Steele, in the Keppel brig, and some other armed vessels, landed on the coast of Connecticut, and marched some distance into the country, when they met with a severe opposition from a body of rebels, double the number, having a field piece." (See The New-York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury, June 11th, 1781.)

"Major Hubble" was living in New York City on May 28, 1783, when he met Mrs. Sarah Frost, another Loyalist from Stamford, Connecticut who had been evacuated to Lloyd's Neck, Long Island. Mrs. Frost was then on board the ship *Two Sisters* in New York Harbor pending its sailing to New Brunswick. She referred to him as "formerly commanding the Loyalists at Lloyd's Neck." See The Diary of Sarah Frost in Walter Bates, Kingston and the Loyalists of the Spring Fleet, page 28.

At the end of the Revolutionary War, he was a Loyalist to Nova Scotia, landing in October 1783 at Port Mouton. That settlement failed and in June 1784 many of the Port Mouton Loyalists moved to what is now Guysborough on Chedabucto Bay, Nova Scotia, where they were given a land grant. The grant was "to the Associated Department of the Army and the Navy," made out in the name of Captain Nathan Hubbell and 275 others; Hubbill received 750 acres. He married Miss Honor Hierlihy on November 10, 1786 at the Township of Mansfield in Guysborough County, Nova Scotia. He appears on a July 1, 1792 "Assessment List of the Township of Guysborough and Manchester, including Cow Harbour and Canso, in the County of Sydney" with a ten shilling assessment (Commissioner of Public Records Nova Scotia Archives RG 1 vol. no. 444 — Poll Tax 1791-1794 Sheet 046). He later returned to the United States and died on February 23, 1826, likely in Connecticut. He is buried at the Tashua Burial Ground in Trumbull, Fairfield County, Connecticut, where his tombstone reads "formerly Lieut. Col. in the service of his Britanick Majesty, George the third. in the 71 year of his age."

⁵ Ed Hynes, an historian in Fairfield County, Connecticut, has lectured extensively at local historical societies about the 'whaleboat wars,' concentrating on the Rebel activities. His October 2020 lecture before the Weston Historical Society entitled "Whaleboat Wars on Long Island Sound During the American Revolution" is available on Youtube.

⁶ See Jason Kuhl, The Whale-boat Men of Long Island Sound in Journal of the American Revolution, November 1, 2013.

See, as an example of Rebel whaleboat activity, Capt. Ives's Encounter with the Whale Boats in The New-York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury, March 31st, 1781: "Captain David IVES, an Associated Loyalist, with a party of 22 men, going in an unarmed Schooner, belonging to and commanded by Captain Church from City-Island [now in the Bronx, New York] to Lloyd's Neck [on Long Island], in company with two other vessels, armed with

Weaver, citing Rebels' pension applications, refers to the Rebel whaleboats as being "9-oared," suggesting a crew of 9 men – a Mate as the helmsmen and 8 "ordinary men" as oarsmen. They could also carry up to 4 "marines," soldiers who served on land and afloat. He says the Rebel whaleboats were manned by current and former soldiers organized into rotating crews, with more men attached to those crews as marines. If the Armed Boat Company employed similar sized and staffed whaleboats, its 105 man establishment and 8 Mates suggests the Company had between 8 or more whaleboats. The Company was likely almost entirely comprised of men who were Tories from New York and Connecticut, rather than men of the Royal Navy.

The Armed Boat Company was involved in engagements on the Hudson River at Tappan Zee, New York on August 21, 1781; at Woodbridge, New Jersey on December 21, 1781; and off of Elizabethtown Point, New Jersey on March 10, 1782. On January 8, 1782, the Armed Boat Company joined about 300 British regulars in attacking rebel whaleboats at New Brunswick, New Jersey.⁷ The Armed Boat Company was also involved in the attack on Toms River, New Jersey on March 23, 1782, an engagement in which Philip Huestis, a Loyalist to New Brunswick in 1783, is known to have participated.⁸ The latter was a bloody affair in which the Armed Boat Company, joined by 40 Associated Loyalists, attacked the Rebel blockhouse at Tom's River. Several men were wounded and captured on both sides, the blockhouse was taken, and the bulk of the Rebel garrison was captured. These events were described several days later as follows in a New York newspaper:⁹

swivels, were attacked by four whale-boats full of men from Stamford, which he engaged and beat off with musketry only, altho' the Rebels took the armed vessels and turned the swivels against Captain IVES's party. In the midst of the firing two Rebels were seen to fall over board, and three others appeared to be disabled, and two of the boats which afterwards drifted on shore, were bespattered with blood, and shot through in several places, one of them having a dead man, four muskets, and several coats in it."

⁷ See New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury, Monday, February 4, 1782, Issue: 1581 Page: 2.

⁸ See <http://www.royalprovincial.com/history/chronology/chron81.shtml#chron81>, <http://www.royalprovincial.com/history/chronology/chron82.shtml#chron82>, Pennsylvania Evening Post, Friday, March 29, 1782, VIII Issue: 811, Page: 28, and Independent Ledger, Monday, April 22, 1782 (Boston, Massachusetts), Vol: IV, Issue: 207, Page: 2.

⁹ New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury, Monday, April 1, 1782 New York, N.Y., Issue 1589, Page 2.

NEW-YORK, March 25.
An authentic account of the Expedition against the Rebel Post on Tom's River, New-Jersey, under the orders of the Honourable Board of Directors of Associated Loyalists.
ON Wednesday the 20th inst. Lieutenant Blanchard of the **armed** whale boats, and about 80 men belonging to them, with Capt. Thomas and Lieut Roberts, both of the late Buck's county Volunteers, and between 30 and 40 other refugee loyalists, the whole under the command of Lieut. Blanchard, proceeded to Sandy Hook, under convoy of Capt. Stewart Ross, in the **armed** brig Arrogant, where they were detained by unfavourable winds until the 23d; about 12 o'clock on that night the party landed near the mouth of Tom's River, and marched to the Block House at the town of Dover, and reached it just at day light. On the way they were challenged and fired upon, and when they came to the works they found the rebels, consisting of 25 or 26 12 months men and militia, apprised of their coming, and prepared for defence. The post into which they had thrown themselves was about 6 or 7 feet high, made of large logs, with loop holes between, and a number of **b. asi** swivels on the top, which was entire-

The Rebels captured at Toms River included Captain Joshua Huddy, who was notorious in New Jersey for attacking Loyalists.¹⁰ Several weeks later, the Associated Loyalists procured his release from the Sugar House prison in New York, transported him across the Hudson River to New Jersey, and executed him in an extra-judicial hanging in retaliation for the Rebels' murder of a captured Loyalist. The so-called "Huddy Affair" was one of the last brutalities of the Revolutionary War and caused a major diplomatic row which threatened to undermine the peace treaty that was then being negotiated in Paris between Great Britain and the United States.

On June 5, 1782, 40 blacks and 40 whites of the Armed Boat Company landed at Fork River, New Jersey, where they plundered Rebel homes and burned the saltworks.¹¹

When the Associated Loyalists were disbanded in 1782, a number of its men volunteered for service in the Armed Boat Company. One of these, Thomas Concklin, became a private in the Armed Boat Company on October 12, 1782 and was involved in a naval engagement in Long Island Sound on December 7, 1782 in which he was killed.¹²

¹⁰ See Joshua Huddy: The Scourge of the New Jersey Loyalists by Matthew H. Ward in Journal of the American Revolution, October 8, 2018; available at <https://allthingsliberty.com/2018/10/joshua-huddy-the-scourge-of-new-jersey-loyalists/>.

¹¹ Pennsylvania Gazette, Wednesday, June 12, 1782, Page: 3.

¹² National Archives Canada, Chipman Papers, MG 23, D1, Series I, Volume 27, Pages 368-371.

That engagement – sometimes referred to “the great whaleboat battle”- is the subject of Philip D. Weaver’s article, Caleb Brewster’s Spy Boat Boys. The battle occurred when the Rebel Captain Caleb Brewster¹³ had assembled whaleboats and troops at Shippan Point in Stamford, Connecticut for a raid on British occupied Long Island – less than ten miles across Long Island Sound from Stamford. Brewster, who commanded the Rebel “spy boats” (whaleboats), learned that “that three of the Enemies armed Boats” – boats of the Armed Boat Company - were sheltering from the wind on an island “a little to the east” of Brewster’s force. Brewster manned six of the Rebel boats and set off to capture the Company’s boats, which were commanded by Captains Hoyt and Hart and Lieutenant Johnson. The Company’s boats set sail for Huntington on the north shore of Long Island, with the Rebel whaleboats in pursuit. Brewster split his force into two groups of three whaleboats each; with three whaleboats (including his own), he came up on two of the Company’s boats before they reached Long Island, and captured them “after a severe Conflict.” The third Company boat was faster and escaped capture, reaching Long Island. Benjamin Tallmadge said that of the men on the two captured whaleboats, six were killed and about ten wounded; one Captain (Hart), one Lieutenant (Johnson) and 13 “Men” were captured, suggesting there were 21 men on the two captured British whaleboats. These events were described in length in a letter from Benjamin Tallmadge to General George Washington dated December 8, 1782:¹⁴

“Agreeable to orders, the Troops detached for my Command, assembled in rear of this place [Stamford, Connecticut] on the Evening of the 5th inst., & from thence were moved on to Shiphand point [Shippan Point in Stamford, Connecticut], where the boats were Collected to receive them. The Evening promising a favorable Time, the Troops were upon the point of embarking when a very sudden Squall of Wind from the West, & a heavy rain came on, which prevented the execution of my Design. As we were upon a peninsula, a Guard was formed on the Isthmus, which cut off all Communication between us & the Country, intending to pursue the Enterprise the next night—The Wind continued very high at N. West thro’ the night—The Next Day & the night following it did not abate. I still hoped the Wind had been too severe to admit of any boats crossing to give Information of our intention. *On the morning of the 7th I was informed that three of the Enemies armed Boats which had been sent over by Col. Thompson the Evening all arrived, were then on an Island a little to the East of us, detained by the Wind. As soon as the Weather moderated a little, six of our Boats were manned, under the Orders of Capt. Brewster, to take them. The Enemy immediately embarked & stood for Long Island. Our Boats pursued them, & before they reached Long Island, Capt. Brewster with three boats came up with two of the Enemy’s, & after a severe Conflict, in which six of the Enemy were killed & about ten wounded, he Captured them. On board one of the Enemy’s Boats every man was either killed or wounded; One of their Boats escaped—Their loss is six men killed, & 1 Capt. 1 Lieut. & 13 Men prisoners—I am very sorry to add that Capt.*

¹³ Caleb Brewster was played a significant role in events along Long Island Sound during the Revolutionary War. A whaleboat man from Long Island, he was part of the Culpeper spy ring. The Culpepper Ring carried messages across Long Island Sound from Long Island to Connecticut, en route to General George Washington. The activities of Brewster, Tallmadge and the Culpepper ring were the basis of the television series Turn.

¹⁴ George Washington Papers, available online at <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-print-01-02-02-4153>.

Brewster is very dangerously wounded by a Ball thro' his body—He had Several Men Wounded but not a Man killed.

Two weeks later, while recovering from his wounds, Brewster described the battle as follows:¹⁵

"Fairfield 21st Decr 1782, Sir, Your being commanding officer of the Corps to which I have the honor of being annexed. I take the liberty of addressing a few times to you containing the particulars of a late action. I had with a Capt. Hart in the Sound, [least] it may be misrepresented by other hands: Being at Stamford [Connecticut] on a Command with May or Tallmadge on the Seventh instt. I was inform'd that Hart with three armed Boats were on this Shore; I sollicited and obtain'd leave of the Major to go in Search of them with Six boats; Three of my Boats I directed to go on the North Side of an Island where I heard the Enemy Were, while with the other three boats I took my Course on the South Side; effectually to prevent their escape, in a Short time I spied the Enemy Standing across the Sound for [Huntington, Long Island] and immediately shared them with my division of boats, making a signal for the other to follow, to which they paid no attention, in about an hours chase. We got close up with two of the Enemy, with two of my boats; (the other sailing [heavily];) they proved to be Capt. Hart & Lieut. Johnson; their other boat sailing faster or by being [far] ahead of them at the first of the Chase, escaped; being to windward, I bore down on the largest boat, and in passing Johnson received a full [fire] from him at the distance of about [eight Rods], which wounded me through the body, and one man in the Head, who is since dead, of the wound; I reserved my [fire] untill close alongside the boat. I designed the attack, (leaving Capt. Rider to contend with Johnson) with a view of having time only [its] charge again, and board him; but the briskness of the wind and the quick way of the boat prevented. [2] our loading before we Grappled. and having but three bayonets. we were obliged to make use of the butts of our Muskets, which decided the business in a short time; when we found but one man but what was either killed or wounded; five in boat were wounded (including the one who died a few days afterwards.) two of us with balls, the other with bayonets; the Enemy being much better fitted, had the advantage of us, Hart having three large wall pieces, and a compleat sett of Kings Muskets with long bayonets, I received Several blows from Hart with the Iron [Rammer] of a wall piece which fortunately did not prevent me doing my duty though it caused a pulsing of Blood; Johnson in the mean time surrendred to Capt. Rider without much resistance having had two killed by the [fire] of a Swivel Gun from Rider, Seven of the Enemy are buried two more lie at Norwalk badly wounded the rest am inform[e]d are prisoners at West point: myself and the other wounded [inserted: with me] are in way of a speedy recovery. *expecting to have another trial with their boats [shortly as they infest this] Coast daily;* Thus sir I have given you as minute an account as my memory will serve: being with the greatest Respect, Sir, Your Most Obedt. Hum. Sert., Caleb Brewster, , , Major Genl. Knox"

¹⁵ Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, Collection #: GLC02437.01755, available online at https://www.gilderlehrman.org/collections/ccb90087-e3e1-46cf-9f2a-449715639207?back=/mweb/search?page%3D3%2526needle%3Dspying%2526fields%3D_t301001410%2526era3%3DAmerican%2520Revolution.

The Muster Roll for the Armed Boat Company after this sea battle lists only five men killed and 1 officer and 9 men captured, differing from the higher casualties that Tallmadge and Brewster claimed.¹⁶

241 years later, it difficult to imagine three Rebel and two Loyalist-crewed whaleboats with fifty to sixty men on board, doing brutal battle in the middle of Long Island Sound - in December.¹⁷ While the whaleboats of the Armed Boat Company were apparently better armed than the Rebel boats, the Rebels had the numerical advantage in both boats (3 to 2) and men. Both sides' whaleboats fired on each other with swivel guns and volleys of musket fire at close range (said to be 8 to 10 rods, or 132 to 165 feet), before grappling the other's whaleboats. The Rebels boarded the Company's boats, with the crews engaging in up close and personal, hand-to-hand combat with bayonets, ramrods, musket butts and broad swords. Men on both sides died, and most men were wounded. Some suffered grievous wounds, details of which are described by Weaver, citing pension applications by Rebels who had served with and under Brewster.¹⁸ Brewster was shot through-and-through the breast by a volley of musket fire from a distance of about 8 rods (132 feet) and was then struck by Captain Hoyt on the back several times with the steel rammer of a gun. One of the Boatmen died when his throat was cut from ear to ear with a broad sword which he had been brandishing. A Boatman stabbed Joseph Lyon through the arm with a bayonet, pinning the Rebel to the boat which he had boarded. Another Rebel, Benjamin Sturges, received a bayonet wound through the body on the left side just above the hip which affected him for the rest of his life.

It is equally hard to contemplate these events taking place more than 14 months after the British surrender at Yorktown, when large-scale hostilities had come to a close. It does, however, reflect the very personal nature of the conflict in Westchester County, Long Island and coastal Connecticut in 1782 and 1783: thousands of refugees – both Rebel and Loyalist – who had fled from their homes earlier during the Revolutionary War and had joined “their” military forces; all had scores to settle. And settle them they did in 1782 and 1783, as the Revolutionary War in that area had been – and was - a very personal and brutal civil war, which pitted relatives and neighbors against one another.

A March 20, 1783 “Return of Armed Boat Company and Where Located” indicated 81 officers and men (1 Captain, 1 Lieutenant, 8 Mates and 71 Privates), of whom 57 were at the boatyard in

¹⁶ Muster Roll of Captain Nathan Hubbill's Company of armed boatmen, National Library and Archives of Canada, Volume: 27, Page 374, Microfilm Reel Number: C-9818, Reference: MG 23 D1, Series 1, Item Number:18263.

¹⁷ The author is writing this article about 10 miles inland from Long Island Sound on a day with temperatures of 20 degrees Fahrenheit and wind gusts to 25 miles per hour – not uncommon conditions in coastal Connecticut in early December. Given that Brewster's whaleboats had been waiting two days to cross Long Island Sound, and that the Armed Boat Company's whaleboats were sheltering on the north side of Long Island Sound, in each case due to wind conditions, sea and weather and conditions on Long Island Sound during the battle must have been very unpleasant.

¹⁸ Sadly, there are no analogous documents for Loyalists which provide the wealth of detail and information provided by Rebels in applications for Revolutionary War pensions. Post-War Loyalist claims for compensation from the Crown for their losses generally provide the barest of outlines of an individual's military experience during the War.

New York¹⁹ and 14 were at Fort Knipphausen;²⁰ 9 were sick in hospital at the boatyard and 2 were unfit for duty at the Fort.²¹ The Company seems to have been winding down its operations; Philip Husted was said to have been discharged from the Armed Boatmen on or before this date and sailed to Saint John in June 1783.

A “Muster Roll of Capt. Nathan Hubbill’s Company Armed Boatmen” for the period from June 25, 1783 to August 14, 1783 shows on its first page, 35 officers and men, including some at Fort Knipphausen, the General Hospital (in New York) and Newtown Creek²²; there may be additional pages.²³

On August 17, 1783, Sir Guy Carleton issued orders for the evacuation of the remaining British and Loyalist regiments from New York. About a dozen named Loyalist regiments, and the men of those regiments who wished to be discharged in America, were to hold themselves in readiness to embark for Nova Scotia where, on their arrival, those corps would be discharged. There is no mention in Carleton’s order of the Armed Boat Company,²⁴ which was in existence three days earlier; and is unknown when the Company disbanded.

Over the course of its existence, the Armed Boat Company had only a fleet of small schooners and whaling vessels, and mustered perhaps 240 men at most. Many of Captain Hubbill’s company were killed. Others died of disease, were captured by the Rebels, or deserted. Despite their limited resources, the Company had some degree of success in raiding Rebel shore positions. It also played a role in the defence of British and Loyalist troops and refugees on Long Island: it acted as a counterforce to the Rebel whaleboatmen, limiting the number and success of Rebel raids across Long Island Sound from Connecticut to Long Island.

¹⁹ The location of this “boatyard” is unclear. It may have been on Newtown Creek, where a number of its men were based during the period between June 25 and August 14, 1783. See Footnote 22, below.

²⁰ Fort Knipphausen was originally known as Fort Washington. It is located in what is now known as Washington Heights in northern Manhattan, several blocks south of the George Washington Bridge. It occupied a strategic location between the road to Kings Bridge and the Hudson River, overlooking the Hudson River on the highest point in Manhattan.

²¹ See <http://www.royalprovincial.com/military/rhist/abc/abcretn.htm>.

²² Newtown Creek was located on the east side of the East River in what is now Queens, New York. About a mile south of Roosevelt Island, this location was firmly under British control during the Revolutionary War. It would have provided access upriver to the Hudson River and Long Island Sound, and downriver to New York Harbor and New Jersey.

²³ Chipman Papers, National Archives and Library of Canada, MG 23 D1, Series 1, volume 27, pages 368-381.

²⁴ There is also no explicit mention in Carleton’s order of DeLancey’s Westchester Refugees.