

Lt. Col. Francis Smith to Governor Thomas Gage, April 22, 1775 (abridged)

22 April, Boston

Sir, In obedience to your Excellency's commands I marched on the evening of the 18th inst. with the corps of grenadiers and light infantry for Concord to execute your Excellency's orders with respect to destroying all ammunition, artillery, tents etc. collected there, which was effected; having knocked off the trunnions of three pieces of iron ordnance; some new gun-carriages, a great number of carriage wheels burnt; a considerable quantity of flour, some gunpowder and musket ball with other small articles thrown into the river. Notwithstanding we marched with the utmost expedition and secrecy we found the country had intelligence or strong suspicion of our coming, had fired many signal guns and rung the alarm bells repeatedly, and were informed when at Concord, that some cannon had been taken out of the town that day, that others with some stores had been carried three days before. . . .

I think it proper to observe that when I had got some miles on the march from Boston I detached six light infantry companies to march with all expedition to seize the two bridges on different roads beyond Concord. On these companies' arrival at Lexington I understand from the report of Major Pitcairn who was with them and from many officers that they found on a green close to the road a body of the country people drawn up in military order with arms and accoutrements and, as appeared after, loaded; and that they had posted some men in a dwelling and meeting-house.

As our troops advanced towards them without any intention of injuring them further than to inquire the reason of their being thus assembled, and if not satisfactory to have secured their arms, but they in confusion went off principally to the left. Only one of them fired before he went off and three or four more jumped over a wall and fired from behind it among the soldiers, on which the troops returned it and killed several of them.

They likewise fired on the soldiers from the meeting and dwelling-house: we had one man wounded and Major Pitcairn's horse shot in two places. Rather earlier than this on the road a countryman from behind a wall had snapped his piece at Lieutenants Adair and Sutherland but it flashed and did not go off. After this we saw some in the woods but marched on to Concord without anything further happening . . .

I have the honor, etc.

F. Smith, Lt-Col. 10th Foot.