

ALARM & MUSTER

THE MODERN-DAY CALL-TREE FOR EMERGENCY PREPARATION

Thomas Michael Fernandez, January 2009

Months before the first shots of the American Revolution were fired; colonials had devised and developed what appeared to be a modern day “call-tree.” Though communication during the 18th Century was limited to pen, paper, and horseback, the network they had set up prior to the night of April 18, 1775 was *almost* as modern as today’s communication abilities of cell phone, email, and video.

On the night of April 18, 1775, William Dawes, a tanner by vocation, and Paul Revere, a messenger and owner of his own silver business, were both contacted by Dr. Joseph Warren (a surgeon by trade). Intelligence had come to Dr. Warren that a British column of soldiers in Boston were to march into the countryside to what he believed at the time was to apprehend Samuel Adams (cousin of John Adams) and John Hancock in Lexington; both of whom were leaders of the Sons of Liberty. Their real intentions however were to obtain, take, and destroy the powder and arms the colonials had stockpiled in the towns of Lexington and Concord.

The communication from Dr. Warren to Revere and Dawes led these two (2) men on what famously became known as the midnight ride. The details of their ride are not important and I don’t necessarily want to focus on what happened to Dawes or Revere that evening. What I do want to focus on is how two (2) men, on horseback nonetheless, were able to gather, through an established network of communication, enough men to repel the British columns in both Lexington and Concord. The end resulted in the British column(s) being driven back to Boston under siege from colonials gathering from all around the countryside on April 19th. The following morning found Boston besieged by a huge militia army numbering over 15,000 which had marched from throughout New England.

How was this possible? How was it possible that a simple communication from a physician given to a tanner and a business owner lead to the eventual siege of all of Boston by an armed body of over 15,000? These weren’t military leaders. These weren’t men trained in military counter-intelligence. This was a physician, a man who performed surgery. This was a tanner, a man who made leather by trade. This was a messenger and an almost failed businessman. I venture to say that the successes against the British in the early morning hours of the 19th and the eventual siege of Boston happened because months in advance, a communication network had already been setup and refined. Months in advance, they were prepared. For what were they preparing, I’m sure they didn’t know exactly, but they knew that some form of preparation had to take place.

The old “Alarm & Muster”¹ was an improved version of an old network of widespread notification and fast deployment of local militia forces in times of emergency. The colonists had periodically used this system all the way back to the early years of Indian wars in the colony, before it fell into disuse in the French & Indian War. In addition to other express riders delivering their message, bells, drums, alarm guns, bonfires and a

trumpet were used for rapid communication from town to town, notifying the rebels in dozens of eastern Massachusetts villages that they should muster their militias because the regulars in numbers greater than 500 were leaving Boston, with possible hostile intentions. This system was so effective that people in towns 25 miles from Boston were aware of the army's movements while they were still unloading boats in Cambridge.² These early warnings played a crucial role in assembling a sufficient number of colonial militia to inflict heavy damage on the British regulars later in the day. Do you see now what happened? A communication network, a call-tree if you will, to gather as many as people as possible as quick as possible in times of emergency was established months in advance, refined, and used to great success.

Now I'm not going to play "politics" by carefully using the word *emergency* in this writing. I will call it how I see it. They mustered to prevent certain rights from being infringed upon. When drafting the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson wrote that, "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed..."³ He wrote these words *after* the thousands of men had already repelled the British at Lexington and Concord. He drafted these words *after* many thousands had already perished in a war between the colonies and the British Crown (which was still ongoing). These words were put to paper after they had already been applied in action.

Men already *knew* that they were endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. They *knew* that they had the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. They *knew* that governments were established among men, among themselves, to secure these rights. And that the government established to secure these rights derives their powers from these same men who already *knew* of the certain unalienable rights they have been endowed with. And they most certainly *knew* that, "whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."⁴ Else why would these men have prepared months in advance if they didn't already *know* these things?

I can only imagine the fear yet overwhelming duty that must have gripped the father that heard the call that spring night of April 18, 1775 to "muster" because the "regulars were coming out."⁵ I can imagine this same father holding his children close to him, hugging his wife, kissing them each goodbye, and heading out into the dark night to meet other like minded men to gather to their pre-determined locations. Fathers, sons, brothers, uncles, grandfathers, friends, and dearest loved ones, all heeding the call from their *pre-determined point-of-contact* to muster to their *pre-determined location*. I can only imagine the fear that must have gripped these men brethren; but in the same light I can imagine the great sense of patriotism that likely swelled within their breasts.

They traveled into the dark all the night and during the following day to answer the call from their point-of-contact to ensure that their rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness were protected. I find it hard to believe that all 15,000 men that turned out to besiege Boston heard the voices of Dawes or Revere that night. I venture to say that only a small minority heard the physical voices of these two (2) men that evening. But to those who did hear their voices that the British were marching into the countryside, they in turn contacted others amongst them, who contacted others, and so on. A call-tree that was already established was put into use by the simple communication of Dr. Warren to two (2) men who left speedily on horseback into the countryside.

Allow me to present to you a scenario and follow up with a question.

Scenario:

The day comes when *our* current legislation carefully avoids an “all-out” firearms ban by banning only handguns. Citizens who own a handgun are asked to visit a designated “depot” to turn them in for a small amount of money by a certain date. All owners of handguns who do not obey the designated date will be in violation of the law and will face criminal charges, fines, and jail time if not obeyed.

Question:

If this happens, wherein only handguns are banned but you are permitted to keep your rifles and shotguns, what will you do? Will you write letters or emails? Perhaps sign a petition online or even attend a rally? Maybe take a few days off of work, even a full week of work, or plan a weekend road-trip to attend a political march on the capital of your state or nation? Will you tell me what this accomplishes brethren? Will you?

Politicians that stand up for our rights on television, in rallies, in debates, and on the internet; vote for them! Groups like the National Rifle Association that fight for our rights in court and abroad; join them! The words of Wayne LaPierre, Chris Cox, Charlton Heston, and others that resound the words of our Founding Fathers; read them!

Ponder the following:

1. How many of your emails that you sent to your local elected public official have been *personally* answered?
2. If you participated in a rally or protest for your rights, how successful was that rally?
3. In your opinion, how much of a victory was the District of Columbia vs. Heller case? Do you count a 5 to 4 decision a victory, seriously? What of the language, “Like most rights, the Second Amendment right is not unlimited. It is not a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose.”⁶ Is this really a victory?

I want to talk about protests and marches for a second; more specifically with what happened in the United Kingdom. On March 13, 1996, Thomas Hamilton, aged 43, was a disgruntled former scout leader who had been ousted by The Scout Association five years previously. He shot dead sixteen young children and their teacher in Dunblane Primary School's gymnasium with his licensed weapons and ammunition. He then shot himself.⁷ Does any of this sound familiar? Have similar atrocities like this event happened here in America? What usually happens when events like this take place? There's usually an outcry against guns altogether right? It comes from the media, from anti-gun movements, and sadly from currently serving elected officials. Well the type of outcry that took place in the UK went far beyond just an average outcry.

Following what became known as the Dunblane Massacre, the government passed the Firearms Act of 1997⁸ which meant that as of 1997 handguns in the UK have been almost completely banned for private ownership in that nation. So how did the people react to this ban? They organized a quiet peaceful march numbering thousands of supporters and did what? Marched, held signs, and voiced their opinions. How effective was it? It wasn't effective one bit! And even sadder, what has gun rights advocacy groups done? They conformed! For example, these days the UK NRA is primarily concerned with civilian full-bore target rifle shooting.⁹ Are you kidding me?

What if this happens in our nation brethren? All we need is another school shooting from some moronic disgruntled student¹⁰, a mall shooting from some manic depressive adult male¹¹, or the killing of an entire family by an angry ex-spouse who lost his wife in a bitter divorce¹² and the media will take hold. Anti-gun advocacy groups will cling to the atrocity and lobby legislature to push for some type of ban to make our nation "safer." What then will you do? Will you march in like fashion as the defeated people of the UK did? I am here to tell you that I will not!

If and when that time comes when our "certain unalienable rights" are interpreted by those who *we* elected to mean something altogether different from what our Founding Fathers intended, and infringed upon, the time for protests, letters, petitions, and advocacy groups have passed. Wayne LaPierre wrote, "Whether it's politicians, bureaucrats, the big media or judges, let's stand together to remind the elite ruling class, it is "we the people" who govern, not them."¹³ And if a day comes when your rights are infringed upon, just how do you suppose we remind the "elite ruling class" that it is "we the people" who govern?

With these questions before us, what shall we do? I propose that we continue to join advocacy groups as we are; support them in any fashion you can. I have been a member of the NRA for several years and will continue to pledge my support; I encourage you to do the same. Send your letters and emails to your elected public officials seeking redress for any wrongs you believe may have been committed. Support your elected officials that stand firm for your Second Amendment rights. And attend rallies and if necessary a peaceful protest for your Second Amendment rights.

Educate yourselves and become a voice of influence in your place of employment, religious congregation, and in your communities. For ten-years I have worked in Information Technology but have now ventured to return to school and seek a Law Degree; thus far it has been a beneficial venture for me. And though I someday wish to practice law and eventually seek a political career, it is my ultimate goal to use my education and vocational stature to become a voice of influence in my local community. Seek to better yourself so you may in-turn better your fellow-man. Finally, in all that we can do today join with me in creating a modern-day “Alarm & Muster List” for emergency preparation. Remember, I use “emergency preparation” loosely.

I have voiced with others on and offline what I would be doing if a gun ban would be enacted by our government. I will not be visiting a designated depot to turn in my firearms for an exchange of money only to watch my freedoms get catalogued in an Excel Workbook, and watch them get tossed into a large plastic bin only later to be cut in half, crushed, or melted down. I will not wait for the local county sheriff or municipal police department to knock on my door to remove my weapons. I will not take a day off of work or plan a weekend road-trip to join your protest and march holding a sign asserting my rights. And I definitely will not be writing letters asking for redress! The moment a law is passed removing my rights is the moment I do not return to my place of employment and make it my full-time job to start knocking on doors.

I will knock on doors in my neighborhood and community and gather like minded men. Men who do not wish to give up their rights but do not know what else to do otherwise. I will speak with these men and families and tell them that the time for a different kind of action is required. What kind of action I know not of but I know I will find many who will also refuse to turn in their firearms. I will find those who feel the same and will ask those I find to find others along with me. I will not be the only one spreading the word and I will definitely not be alone in my venture. I will seek the help of others to *communicate to others* not to turn in their firearms and if necessary set a time and location for gathering. If we were to refuse the confiscation of our rights, then it would be done so en masse. And we would protect others from having their rights violated as well.

Some of you may be reading at this point and now may call me a radical. If my desires to preserve my freedoms, by force if necessary, make me a radical, then it is a label that I will proudly wear. I will raise my banner and I will stand by it and I will not be alone. I will be afraid and I will not know what will come next, but I will not falter! We do not require pen, paper, and horseback any longer. We have cell phones, video cameras, and the internet. Modern cell phones today encompass all of these technologies into one. We have trucks, SUV’s, vans, motorbikes, and cars. And most importantly, we have our faith.

I strongly believe that we have been endowed with unalienable rights; endowed by whom though? Our Founding Fathers meant what they wrote when they said that we were endowed by our Creator with these rights. Charlton Heston said, “Our founders refused

to ratify a Constitution that didn't protect individual liberties... they meant what they said. The Second Amendment... is about law-abiding, private U.S. citizens. Period!"¹⁴

I will beseech my Father in Heaven for His divine assistance if and when this day comes. I will fall to my knees in prayer and will cry out to Him for His forgiveness for my sins and for His providence in our success and safe-keeping. I will pray for the safe-keeping of our people and our liberties, my family and my children, for my sweetheart wife whom I love, and for the preservation of those laws that keep us free. Most people believe in a Supreme Being, though they may call Him by different names; as for me, I will kneel before Heavenly Father and appeal to Him for His divine interventions' for our success. And I will refuse to allow others take away from me and from my kin, my friends, and those whom I love, those things that keep us free.

I pray that I will not be alone in this measure. I know I will not. Starting today, I am creating a network of communication; an "Alarm & Muster List." The list will contain names, phone numbers, email addresses, and locations (county and city). We will not be alone in this venture; it will contain thousands, tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of like minded men who will not give up their freedoms for any man. People from all walks of life will enjoin themselves; citizens, law enforcement, and military personnel alike for the defense of our freedoms. The establishment and mobilization of this group would be rapid and astounding.

In doing this I do not seek to make myself a leader of men or a man of like fashion as men like Dr. Warren, Paul Revere, or William Dawes were. Nor do I think myself to be as Samuel Adams or John Hancock. These men are prophets to me and were endowed with the blessings of Heaven in doing the things that they had done. Neither I, nor any other man in my opinion will reach the stature that these great men reached; nor will I ever aspire to do so. We can however follow in their footsteps and learn from the examples they left for us.

As I prepare to close this letter, my eyes begin to fill with tears. I have been overwhelmed with emotion while typing this; emotions of joy, anger, pride, fear, and sorrow. I know I am not alone when I cry over the love of our freedoms, and I know I am not alone in the things I have written. Tears fill my eyes when I hear the singing of our National Anthem. I have cried when participating in the Pledge of Allegiance. And I have cried simply by looking at our Nation's Flag wave on top of a local retail store. I love this nation and her freedoms and I will not allow them to be trampled underneath the feet of those who we elected.

If you wish to join with me in creating this call-tree, this "Alarm & Muster List", then please contact me and we will get a list started. It requires no money; it requires no participation other than the commitment to add your name with me to a list of contacts containing names, phone numbers, email addresses, and your locality. The list of names will not be used for any other purpose. If you wish to start your own independent list, then by all means do so. The more names that are added to this and other lists, a hierarchal-tree of contacts will be created. One person over another in the hierarchal-tree

does not give that one authority over those under him or her, it gives them only a responsibility to contact those underneath them.

Dr. Joseph Warren was just *one voice* to Paul Revere and William Dawes. His one voice however became many and quickly multiplied throughout the night. They had prepared months in advance a vast communication network. For what they did not know at the time but knew that it was necessary to have one in place. For what purpose we create this “Alarm & Muster List” today we know not. It is my prayer that it becomes nothing more than that, some list that will sit in a Word document and will never be used. But if it does, we will, in like fashion as in the days of old, gather a group that cannot be ignored.

Regarding Paul Revere’s communication on the night of April 18th and 19th, William Munroe, a sergeant in command at the Lexington parsonage said, “About midnight, Paul Revere rode up and requested admittance. I told him the family had just retired, and had requested, that they might not be disturbed by any noise about the house. “Noise!” said he, “you’ll have noise enough before long. The regulars are coming out.”¹⁵ I echo Revere’s words that he delivered to Munroe. Should our elected officials decide to infringe upon any of our freedoms, they too will have noise enough before long!

In humility,



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¹ Battles of Lexington and Concord, [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battles_of_Lexington_and_Concord#Successful_Colonial_intelligence),

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battles_of_Lexington_and_Concord#Successful_Colonial_intelligence

² Fischer, David Hackett (1994). *Paul Revere's Ride*. Oxford University Press US. ISBN 0-19-508847-6.

³ United States Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776

⁴ United States Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776

⁵ Phinney, Elias (1825) Testimony of William Munroe about the night of April 18th and 19th, 1775, [History of the Battle of Lexington](#)

⁶ *District of Columbia vs. Heller*, Syllabus, Paragraph 2, Argued March 18, 2008—Decided June 26, 2008

⁷ Dunblane Massacre, [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunblane_massacre), http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunblane_massacre

⁸ Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997, http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1997/ukpga_19970005_en_1

⁹ National Rifle Association of United Kingdom, <http://www.nra.org.uk/>

¹⁰ Virginia Tech Massacre, [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Tech_massacre),

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Tech_massacre

¹¹ Trolley Square Shooting, [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trolley_Square_shooting),

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trolley_Square_shooting

¹² Covina, California Massacre, [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce_Pardo),

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce_Pardo

¹³ LaPierre, Wayne, Disdain For Freedom, [American Rifleman](#), Volume 157, No. 1, January 2009

¹⁴ Heston, Charlton, [125th Annual NRA Members Banquet](#), April 20, 1996

¹⁵ Phinney, Elias (1825) Testimony of William Munroe about the night of April 18th and 19th, 1775, [History of the Battle of Lexington](#)