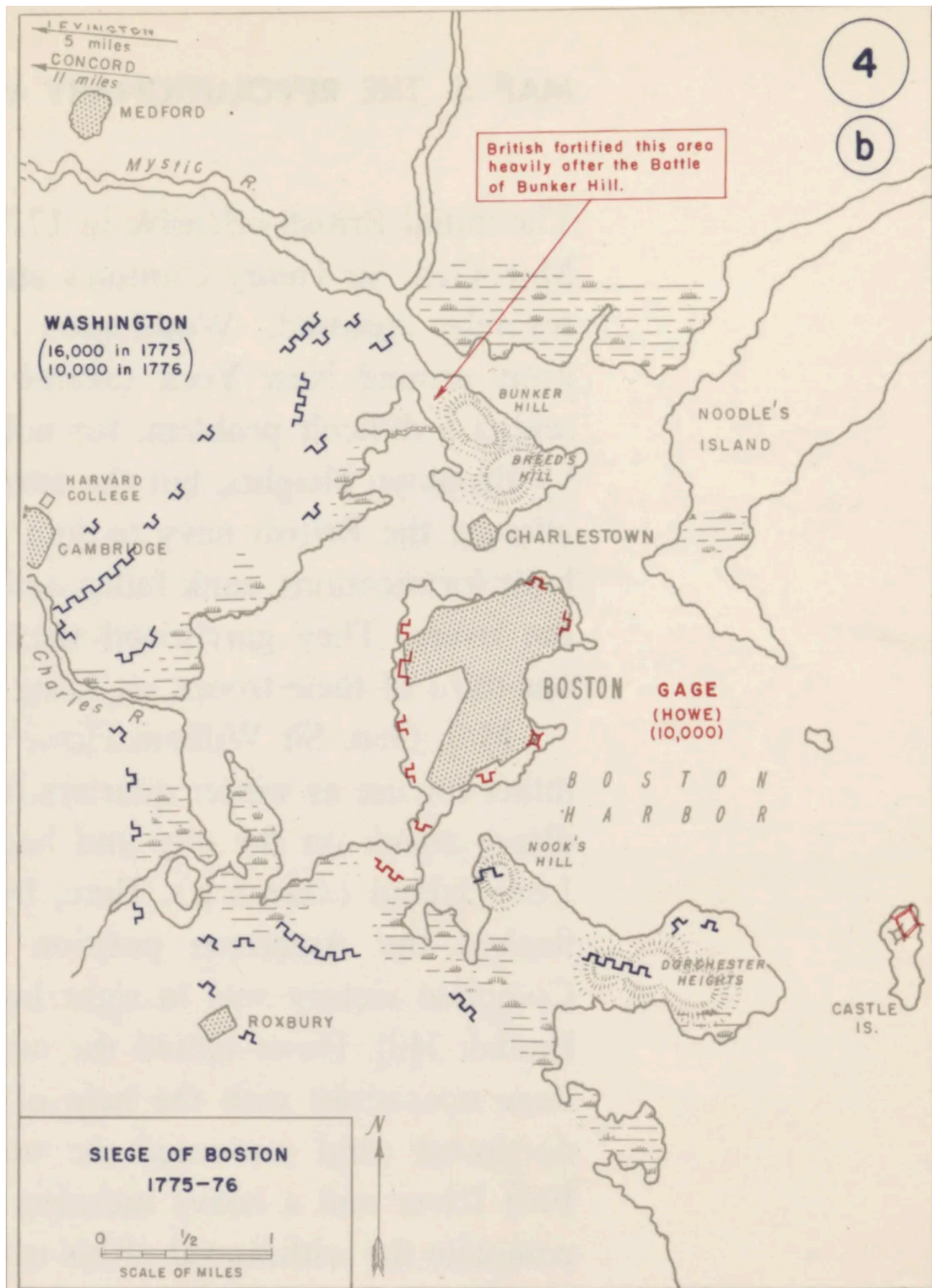


# EVACUATION DAY MARCH 17, 1776





Map - American Battlefield Trust

# THE SIEGE OF BOSTON

On April 19, 1775, the first shots of the American Revolution were fired at Lexington and Concord. The British would retreat to Boston after the colonists defended their towns. General Thomas Gage and his British troops knew the importance of Boston. Along with the New England Colonial Militia, both groups set their eyes on the hills of Boston and the Siege of Boston began. The British troops would be held to the city of Boston while the colonial militia surrounded them on three sides over the following months.

The colonial militia would fortify Breed's Hill in June of 1775. When the British saw this, they attacked and the Battle of Bunker Hill would end with the British seizing the hills. Though the land was lost, more damage was done to the British Army than the colonial militia. That afternoon, Charlestown burned to the ground in a vicious attack by the British.

Just a few weeks later, George Washington would officially accept the commission as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army and he set his own eyes on the happenings in Boston. Washington knew that as the siege dragged on that he had to come up with a plan to end it. First, he sent Henry Knox to Fort Ticonderoga in order to retrieve 59 cannons and mortars. This long journey would take Knox almost two months.

Knox headed to Fort Ticonderoga in mid-November and battled the harshness of winter for two months. The 60 tons of weaponry would be moved 300 miles through snow and ice. Only one cannon was almost lost after it plunged through the ice. Knox and his men were able to recover it and all 59 pieces were brought into Boston. Knox would arrive in Boston in late January.

While waiting on Knox's return, harsh winter conditions and skirmishes over the following months would lead Washington and his generals to make an exit plan. They were already battling limited supplies, enlist issues, disciplinary action, sickness, and so much more. Dorchester Heights became the answer they were all looking for. The British woke up on March 5, 1776 to find that Dorchester Heights had been fortified by the Continental Army and they had planned to respond. However, winters in Boston are harsh and an incoming storm caused them to hesitate. With the Continental Army now surrounding most of Boston and the shipping routes, the British were running out of options. On March 17, 1776, British General William Howe evacuated over 8,000 troops and many Loyalists living in Boston. Some British naval ships stayed in Boston Harbor, but they wouldn't be around for much longer. The siege had ended.

# THE SIEGE OF BOSTON

What important event happened on April 19, 1775, at Lexington and Concord?

Why was the city of Boston important to both the British army and the colonial militia?

How did the colonial militia surround the British troops during the Siege of Boston?

What did the colonial militia build on Breed's Hill in June 1775, and why was it important?

What was the result of the Battle of Bunker Hill, and why was it considered costly for the British?

What happened to the town of Charlestown after the battle?

What role did George Washington take in the Continental Army, and why was his leadership important during the siege?

Why did Washington send Henry Knox to Fort Ticonderoga?

What challenges did Knox and his men face while transporting the cannons to Boston?

How did fortifying Dorchester Heights help force the British to leave Boston in March 1776?

# RESOURCES FOR EVACUATION DAY

- Read Aloud Video of *Henry and the Cannons*: [Click here](#)
  - Comprehension Questions to go along with text
    - Where were the cannons located?
    - What effect do you think it would have if Washington had the cannons?
    - What did Henry Knox do? Do you think all of the soldiers had backgrounds like him?
    - What kinds of animals were used to haul the cannons?
    - How do you think the cold affected Knox and his men?
    - Did all of the cannons make the trip? What happened along the way?
    - What effect did the cannons have on the war?
- Videos on the Siege of Boston:
  - National Battlefield Trust: Rev War in 4: [Click here](#)
  - Mount Vernon: [Click here](#)
  - Liberty Kids - Bunker Hill: [Click here](#)