

# The Knox Trophy and Medal

## 1924-1940

By Lieutenant Colonel Allen W. Batschelet

The Knox Trophy and Medal, named after the first Chief of Artillery Major General Henry Knox of the Revolutionary War, was presented to the best battery and best enlisted Redleg by the Chief of Field Artillery annually from 1924 to 1940. Here is the history of the award.

Ed.

In 1924, the Chief of Field Artillery established an annual contest to competitively test the leadership and proficiency of artillery batteries Army-wide. Battery D of the 7th Field Artillery in Madison Barracks, New York, won this first award for performance excellence. Each year from then on until 1940 (with the exception of 1933), the Chief of Field Artillery recognized the best FA battery in the Army by awarding it the “Knox Trophy.” (See Figure 1.)

Beginning in 1924, the Knox Trophy was donated by the Society of the Sons of the Revolution in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This patriotic and educational organization, founded in 1883 on the national level, dedicated itself to perpetuating the memory of the men who, in military, naval and civil service of the colonies and of the Continental Congress, by their acts or counsel, achieved the independence of the United States.

Why a state-level association of this national organization began awarding the Knox Trophy to the best FA battery in the Army is unclear. Perhaps it was because Major General Henry Knox, the first Chief

of Artillery for the US Army (Continental Army) after whom the awards were named, was a distinguished Revolutionary War hero and native son of Boston.

Interestingly, 1924 also is the year an annual competition to determine the best small cavalry unit in the Army was established. Named the Draper Combat Leadership Award, this cavalry competition was first held at Fort Riley, Kansas—then the home of the Cavalry School.



CPT Walter D. Webb, Jr., Commander of A/2d FA, Fort Clayton, Panama, holds the unit plaque awarded the battery that won the Knox Trophy in 1939.

Prior to 1924, evidence suggests that the Chief of Field Artillery recognized and made an annual award to the FA battery of the Regular Army that achieved the highest score in firing efficiency. Furthermore, as early as 1922, FA units held their own local and internal contests to recognize their best batteries. 1924 saw the expansion, formalization and institutionalization of the competition, enabled in large part by the generous participation of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Competition in 1924 expanded from testing only firing efficiency to include evaluations in three additional areas: mobility, communications and interior economy. (Interior economy translated to battery administrative requirements.) The Chief of Field Artillery viewed this Army-wide competition as a means for communicating his training priorities to the field.

This expanded version of the test with the formal award of the Knox Trophy also was a means to “level the playing field.” Common wisdom held that testing only firing efficiency gave units equipped with the 75-mm howitzers a distinct advantage.

The design of the test reflected the skills and tasks whose mastery led to a trained and ready FA battery. Clearly, the test attempted to be fair and impartial—no small feat given that the batteries tested were variously equipped with horses, pack mules and light, medium and heavy howitzers and guns.

Units received yearly instructions on the test parameters and conduct early in the calendar year. On their own initiative, local commanders administered the test anytime throughout the year to fit local training schedules and requirements. However, the Chief of Field Artillery required all results be at Fort Sill no later than 20 November.

Chairing and in consultation with the Knox Council, the Chief of Field Artillery determined the winners in January and announced the award of the Trophy in the January-February edition of the *Field Artillery Journal*. On behalf of the unit and his men, the battery commander of the winning unit attended an awards banquet in Boston, Massachusetts, held by the Society of the Sons of the Revolution in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

1926 saw the creation and first presentation of the Knox Medal, an adjunct to the Knox Trophy. The intent of this medal was to annually recognize the top enlisted man for excellence as a student at the Field Artillery School. (See Figure 2.)

Although not official Army awards, today the US Field Artillery Association, a private nonprofit association, honors enlisted students at Fort Sill. The FA Association gives plaques to the top graduates of the Basic and Advanced NCO Courses, Fort Sill Soldier and NCO of the Quarter and Year and Drill Sergeant and Instructor of the Year. In addition, the Association presents framed prints to the top graduates of each officer and warrant officer basic and advanced courses.

The original Knox Trophy resided at Fort Sill in the office of the Chief of Field Artillery. This trophy had a plaque that was engraved annually to add the new winner. Each winning unit received a replica. In 1927, reflecting the growing popularity of the annual contest, the competitions expanded to include separate awards for units of the Coast Artillery Corps, Massachusetts National Guard Coast Artillery and, interestingly, battleships of the Navy.

Winning the Knox Trophy was not easy. The battery had to meet the highest of standards in multiple tests. A 3

May 2002 email from now Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Otto A. Ewaldsen of Port Ludlow, Washington, tells just how rigorous it was for his A Battery, 2d Field Artillery of Fort Clayton, Panama, to win the trophy in 1939.

“As a trooper in A Battery at the time we earned that award, the memories come roaring back about the effort we put in to receive it. We were told at the time that we were the first and only pack [mule] artillery battery to be given the

Year	Unit	Commander	Duty Station
1924	D/7th FA	Unknown	Madison Barracks, NY
1925	A/8th FA	1LT Ernest A. Bixby	Schofield Barracks, HI
1926	C/4th FA	CPT John D. Key	Fort Davis, Canal Zone (Panama)
1927	B/82d FA	CPT John M. Reynolds	Fort Bliss, TX
1928	F/16th FA	CPT H.E. Tisdale	Fort Bragg, NC
1929	A/83d FA	CPT Solomon F. Clark	Fort Benning, GA
1930	A/13th FA	CPT LeCount H. Slocum	Schofield Barracks, HI
1931	D/3d FA	CPT Ernest T. Hayes	Fort Sheridan, IL
1932	B/11th FA	CPT William R. Philp	Schofield Barracks, HI
1933	Not Conducted *		
1934	B/13th FA	CPT John W. Faulconer	Schofield Barracks, HI
1935	B/14th FA	CPT Maylon E. Scott	Fort Riley, KS
1936	D/14th FA	CPT John M. Works	Fort Sam Houston, TX
1937	B/76th FA	CPT John C. Cook	Fort Francis E. Warren, WY
1938	B/83d FA	CPT E.T. Williams	Fort Benning, GA
1939	A/2d FA	CPT Walter D. Webb, Jr.	Fort Clayton, Panama
1940	C/11th FA	CPT C. Wesner	Schofield Barracks, HI

\* The 1933 Knox Trophy competition was not conducted due to lack of ammunition and the demands of Civilian Conservation Corps duty.

Figure 1: Knox Trophy Winners, 1924-1940

Year	Unit	Winner	Duty Station
1926	1-18 FA	CPL L.J. Arnold	Fort Sill, OK
1927	HHB & CBT Trains, 1-10 FA	CPL John P. Olszewski	Fort Lewis, WA
1928	D/1st FA	SGT Ray B. Maynard	Fort Sill, OK
1929	HHB & CBT Trains, 2-18 FA	CPL Ergo Losbaker	Fort Des Moines, IO
1930	HHB, 1st FA	CPL Harvey R. Griffith	Fort Sill, OK
1931	HHB, 2-3 FA	SGT Clifton J. Pierce	Fort Sheridan, IL
1932	HHB, 1st FA	SGT Clarence Scott	Fort Sill, OK
1933	HHB & CBT Trains, 1-18 FA	CPL Woodrow W. Anderson	Fort Sill, OK
1934	HHB, 2-15 FA	CPL Roy L. Albright	Fort Sam Houston, TX
1935	HHB, 1st FA	SGT George P. Sampson	Fort Sill, OK
1936	HHB, 77th FA	SSG Hugh R. Bedford	Fort D.A. Russell, Marfa, TX
1937	HHB, 6th FA Brigade	SGT Glen L. Foote	Fort Sheridan, IL
1938	HHB, 10th FA	SSG Wayne H. Lewis	Fort Lewis, WA
1939	HHB, 2-83 FA	SGT Vernon O. Moore	Fort Bragg, NC

Figure 2 : Knox Medal Recipients, 1926-1939

plaque. The inspectors went over everything with a 'fine tooth comb'—or curry, that is. When we came from the road march portion of the tests, the animals were really gone over in inspections—[the judges] did not miss a thing.

"I was an instrument operator in the detail section at the time and had two animals: a horse named Tony for me

and a pack mule named Andy for the instrument loads. Before we left the picket line, those animals were groomed 'dry,' and that's pretty tough in the humidity of the canal zone after a rigorous road march on a jungle trail. [The competition was] Quite an experience."

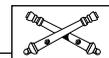
Sadly, time and the effects of history took their toll on the Knox competi-

tions. Two factors conspired to cause the suspension of the 1933 competition: lack of ammunition to test firing efficiency and the Army's participation and support of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Both factors were the results of the Great Depression. As the interwar years progressed and the Field Artillery, along with the rest of the Army, transformed in anticipation of World War I, support for the Knox competitions eroded.

Finally, in 1940, as announced in the March 1941 *Field Artillery Journal*, Battery C of the 11th Field Artillery, commanded by Captain C. Wesner, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, received the last recorded award of the original Knox Trophy.

The Knox Awards—both Trophy and Medal—recognized hard work, talent and determination that resulted in performance up to the highest of standards.

The soldiers who earned these awards, either collectively in a battery or singly in a course in the Field Artillery School, are the unsung heroes of our branch. Their consistent, excellent performance set the standard held steadfastly through two world wars and set the pace for those who would follow in Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm and countless deployments to defend US interests abroad. We honor them by reestablishing the Knox Award this year and recognizing today's unsung heroes.



Lieutenant Colonel Allen W. Batschelet is an Action Officer in J3, Deputy Director of Information Operations, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon. Prior to that he was the Commander of 3d Battalion, 82d Field Artillery, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas. He commanded A Battery, 3d Battalion, 82d Field Artillery and A Battery, 21st Field Artillery, 1st Cavalry Division, during Operations Desert Shield and Storm in the Persian Gulf; and in 1996, he deployed as the S3 and then Executive Officer of the 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized) out of Germany in support of Operations Joint Endeavor and Joint Guard in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He holds a Master of Military Arts and Science (MMAS) from the Command and General Staff College and an MMAS from the School of Advanced Military Studies, both at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and a Master of Strategic Arts from the War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

**M**ajor General Henry Knox was born 25 July 1750 in Boston, Massachusetts, as the seventh of 10 children to Scotch-Irish immigrants. His father, a shipmaster, died when Henry was 12, forcing him to leave public school and sign on as an apprentice bookseller.

In 1771, he opened his own bookstore in Boston. It became a meeting place for British officers who were unaware of Knox's role as an intelligence agent for patriot leaders.

Knox studied artillery and military engineering by reading from the large stock of military books in his store. This gave him the expertise to be second-in-command of the artillery company when he first joined the militia.

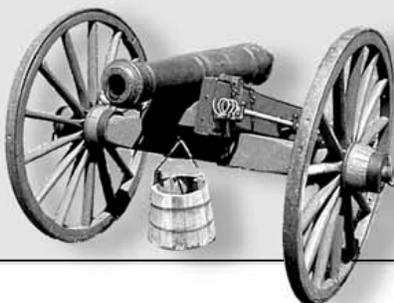
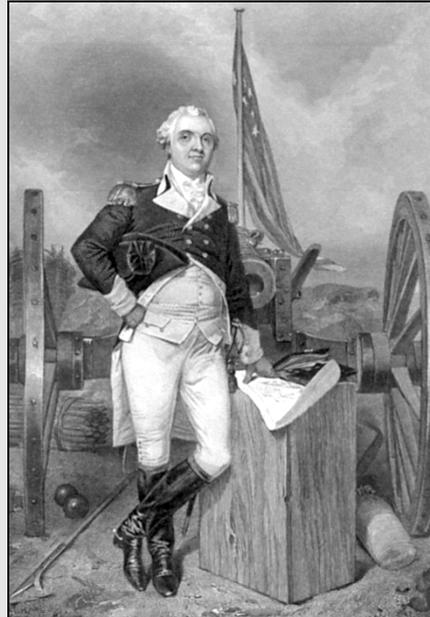
In 1775, Knox became a colonel in charge of the Continental Artillery and began his brilliant expedition to capture 59 cannons and mortars from Fort Ticonderoga and bring them 300 miles in the snow to General George Washington's headquarters at Cambridge. These indirect fire weapons were instrumental in forcing the British to evacuate Boston and made the difference between victory and defeat in the Battle of Trenton in 1776. Knox was General Washington's trusted advisor and participated with him in all of Washington's campaigns.

In 1785, Knox was appointed Secretary of War by the Confederation Congress, and when the Constitution went into effect, he was the only Confederation official carried over on a permanent basis, becoming the first American Secretary of War.

Henry Knox was an incisive observer of the Revolution and Federal period, writing many letters and reports that proved politically influential; was a brilliant artilleryman as judged by his French counterparts; was an able administrator of the War Department; was well-liked by his colleagues; and had less disaffection in his artillery regiments than other units in the service.

He and Alexander Hamilton are known for influencing President Thomas Jefferson to establish the US Military Academy at West Point, New York, on 16 March 1802. The USMA originally was established to train Artillerists and Engineers.

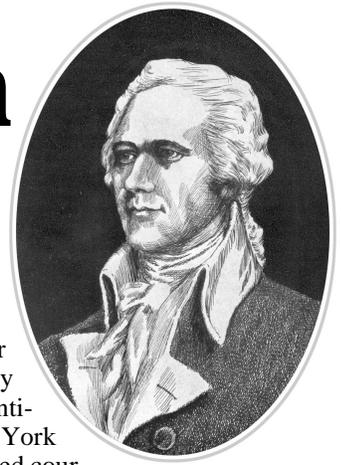
In 1806 at the age of 56, Henry Knox died of an infection from a chicken bone lodged in his intestines (or appendicitis) at Thomaston, Maine.



*Most of the information in this sidebar was taken from the "Henry Knox" biography by Harry M. Ward, Dictionary of American Military Biography, Volume II, Roger J. Spiller, Editor (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 569-572.*

# Alexander Hamilton

## An American Statesman and Artilleryman



**T**he new Hamilton Award for the Best Army National Guard (ARNG) Battery, created in 2002, is named after American Statesman and Continental Army Artilleryman Alexander Hamilton. (See the related stories “Best Battery Awards: Knox Award Reinstated and Hamilton Award Created in 2002” and “B/1-147 FA Wins 2002 Hamilton Award for Best ARNG Battery” in this edition.)

Alexander Hamilton was an outstanding artillery battery commander and a skilled cohort of General George Washington during the Revolutionary War, helped frame the US Constitution and served as the nation’s first Secretary of the Treasury.

Alexander Hamilton was born in 1757 to an impoverished Scottish family in the West Indies. At the age of 15, he came to New York to be educated, and although many of his instructors and friends at King’s College (now Columbia University) were Loyalist, he promptly espoused the Colonists’ cause. Foreseeing the conflict ahead, he studied artillery tactics and military maneuvers and joined a volunteer corps called “Hearts of Oak” that may be one of the earliest officer training camps.

In 1776, the New York Provincial Congress raised an artillery company to defend the colony. Because he was only 19, the congress gave Hamilton an examination to determine if he could command the company, which he passed, taking command of the Provincial Company of the Artillery of New York that same year. A nephew of General George Washington saw Hamilton’s attention to drilling his men in the field and commended him to Washington.

Hamilton’s Battery became the first to fire at the British during the Revolutionary War on 12 July 1776 at Fort George on Manhattan Island. After a series of serious engagements in which Hamilton repeatedly demonstrated his leadership and artillery skills, he distinguished himself by protecting Washington’s Army in a desperate retreat. On 1 December, he

placed his guns to guard the rear of Washington’s sick and poorly armed 3,000 soldiers as the Continental Army retreated from New York into New Jersey. Hamilton showed courage and skill at directing his fire to stop the enemy’s advance.

Washington, after receiving reinforcements, crossed the Delaware River on Christmas night and attacked General William Howe’s Hessian troops at Trenton, New Jersey. In spite of the 10-hour river crossing followed by a nine-hour march in a snowstorm, General Washington took the Hessians by surprise and, with the help of the deadly effects of Hamilton’s Battery, defeated them, attaining his first victory in the Revolutionary War.

Noted for his bravery at the Battle of Trenton, Captain Alexander Hamilton again came to the attention of General George Washington. General Washington ended Hamilton’s artillery career in March 1777, making Hamilton his aide-de-camp, beginning the long association of the two American patriots and leaders. Alexander Hamilton was 20 years old.

Hamilton was not happy as a staff officer and was determined to return to command of troops. During the last campaign of the war, General Washington acquiesced and gave Hamilton command of a corps of light infantry, which he ably led in the last assault at the Siege of Yorktown.

After the Battle of Yorktown, Alexander Hamilton resigned from the Army to turn his skills to serving the new nation. He went on to be appointed a member of Congress and help frame and ratify the US Constitution. In 1789, he was appointed the first Secretary of the Treasury, establishing national fiscal policies and instituting the Bank of the US.

Some 20 years after the Battle of Yorktown, he appears on the rolls of the Army as a major general during the war with France and briefly served as the Commander-in-Chief after Washington’s death in December 1799. Hamilton resigned the position in June of 1800.

Alexander Hamilton and Henry A. Knox influenced President Thomas Jefferson to establish the US Military Academy at West Point, New York, in 1802. The USMA originally was created to train Artillerists and Engineers.

After Hamilton had supported Thomas Jefferson for president instead of Aaron Burr, opposed Burr’s candidacy for governor of New York and allegedly made disparaging remarks about Burr’s character, Aaron Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel. In 1804, Burr mortally wounded Alexander Hamilton.

The “Hamilton Battery,” D Battery, 5th Artillery Battalion (D/5th Artillery) is still in the US Army Field Artillery today as part of the 1st Battalion, 5th Field Artillery, 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized) at Fort Riley, Kansas. It follows a proud tradition.

*(Information in this article came from the article “Alexander Hamilton, Artilleryman” by Lieutenant Colonel Walter H. Smith, FA, in the 1929 Field Artillery Journal, Pages 610-623.)*



General Washington crossed the Delaware River and took the Hessians by surprise and, with the help of the deadly effects of Hamilton’s Battery, defeated them, attaining his first victory in the Revolutionary War. *Courtesy of the US Army Center of Military History*