

RICHARD KEATING, ME, Patriotic Service - Pvt, Maine Militia, Battle of Penobscot Bay:

Richard Keating was born in Kittery, Maine, in 1752 and helped establish South Thomaston in 1769. He enlisted in the militia in 1779 and served in the disastrous Penobscot Expedition. It was the largest American naval expedition of the war and ended as the worst American naval defeat until Pearl Harbor, 162 years later. An American fleet of 19 ships entered Penobscot Bay to land troops to attack an strategic British fort on an island in the bay. Richard was one of the militiamen who struggled, under heavy musket fire, up a vertical bluff and overran a British outpost. Before they could take the main fort, however, a British fleet arrived and trapped the American ships in the bay. Several vessels were sunk and the remainder scuttled to keep them out of British hands. The survivors escaped overland through the forests to return to their homes. Despite the debacle, Richard continued to serve another two years in the militia and later became a leading citizen and prominent businessman in his town. Richard died in 1839 and is buried alongside his wife Miriam just outside South Thomaston.