



Pennsylvania Longrifle



**Johann Adam Stephan**  
**Corporal Pennsylvania Militia**  
**21 May 1777 – 14 May 1778**



1<sup>st</sup> Pennsylvania Rifles  
Regimental Colors

Johann (who went by the name of Adam) was born at home on 8 July 1750 in Macungie Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Adam's parents were **Johann Jacob Stephan Sr.** (30 November 1695 – 1 February 1760) and **Maria Elizabeth Kohl** (died 1763). Both of Adam's parents emigrated from Wolfersweiler, Germany, arriving in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1744 aboard the ship *Phoenix*. The family lived in a log house built by Adam's father at the intersection of Spring Creek and Mill Creek Roads, which became part of Lower Macungie Township, Lehigh County, in 1832. After the American Revolutionary War broke out in 1775, the Pennsylvania Militia (initially called the Pennsylvania Associators) was formed. Adam and his brother, **Johann Jacob Jr.**, joined the Pennsylvania Northampton County Militia on 21 May 1777. Adam became a Corporal in 8<sup>th</sup> Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Pennsylvania Rifle Regiment (also known as the 1<sup>st</sup> Continental Army Regiment). The 8<sup>th</sup> Company consisted of Militiamen from Lower Saucon Township where Adam was living at the time. Captain Jacob Wagner commanded the 8<sup>th</sup> Company, and Colonel George Hubner commanded the Battalion. The Pennsylvania Militia initially was assigned as a mobile reserve with the mission of assisting in the defense of New Jersey from British invasion. After Adam joined the Militia, his company joined up with other Pennsylvania Militia in Chester, Pennsylvania, where they were placed under the command of Major General John Armstrong on 27 August 1777. They then participated in the Battles of Brandywine (10–11 September 1777); Germantown (4 October 1777), and Whitemarsh (5–8 December 1777). At Brandywine, Armstrong's Militia held the far left of the American line at Pyle's Ford. They were also assigned to guard the Continental Army's supplies. After a day's fighting, the American Army was forced to withdraw or face being surrounded. General Armstrong brought his militia and the supplies out under cover of darkness. At Germantown, General Armstrong led the American right. His mission was to skirt the British left flank and attack them there and in their rear. The overall attack was going well until the center of the line was held up at the Benjamin Chew House. The attack then collapsed after a friendly fire incident in the fog, in which Major General Adam Stephen's men fired on Anthony Wayne's troops, causing the Army to withdraw, including Armstrong's Militia which had advanced nearly to the center of Germantown. At Whitemarsh, British General Howe launched a surprise attack on the Americans where they were encamped, but the British plan had been compromised by spies, and the Americans were well prepared. Three days of non-decisive skirmishing followed, after which the British returned to Philadelphia for the winter. George Washington also withdrew the Continental Army, encamping at Valley Forge for the winter. After that, the Pennsylvania Militia's role in the Revolutionary War was essentially over. However, the Pennsylvania Militia remained in existence as an inactive duty organization, and became known as "Rangers on the Frontiers" on 14 May 1778. The responsibility of the Rangers was to protect families living on the Pennsylvania frontier from Native Americans who allied themselves with the British from 1778 to 1783. The Rangers were called to active duty twice for duty on the frontier. Adam was still assigned to 8<sup>th</sup> Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, when the Rangers were established on 14 May 1778, but it is not known whether he remained in the Militia after that date. On 11 June 1783, the Pennsylvania Regiment was furloughed at Philadelphia and was disbanded five months later on 15 November 1783. Adam moved back to Macungie around 1785. Fourteen years later, Adam joined a group of armed rebels who protested a tax being levied on houses and land in what came to be known as the Fries Rebellion during 1799 and 1800. Early in the rebellion, on 21 March 1799, Adam traveled to Philadelphia to turn himself in for participating in the rebellion. He was allowed to return home. The following year, President John Adams granted amnesty to all participants in the rebellion. Adam married **Susanna Reifscheider** (24 December 1749 – 21 September 1819). Adam and Susan had six children: **Maria, Jacob, Susanna, Joseph, John, and Elizabeth**. Adam died on 2 December 1804. He is buried alongside his wife Susanna at St. Paul's Church in Trexlertown, Pennsylvania.