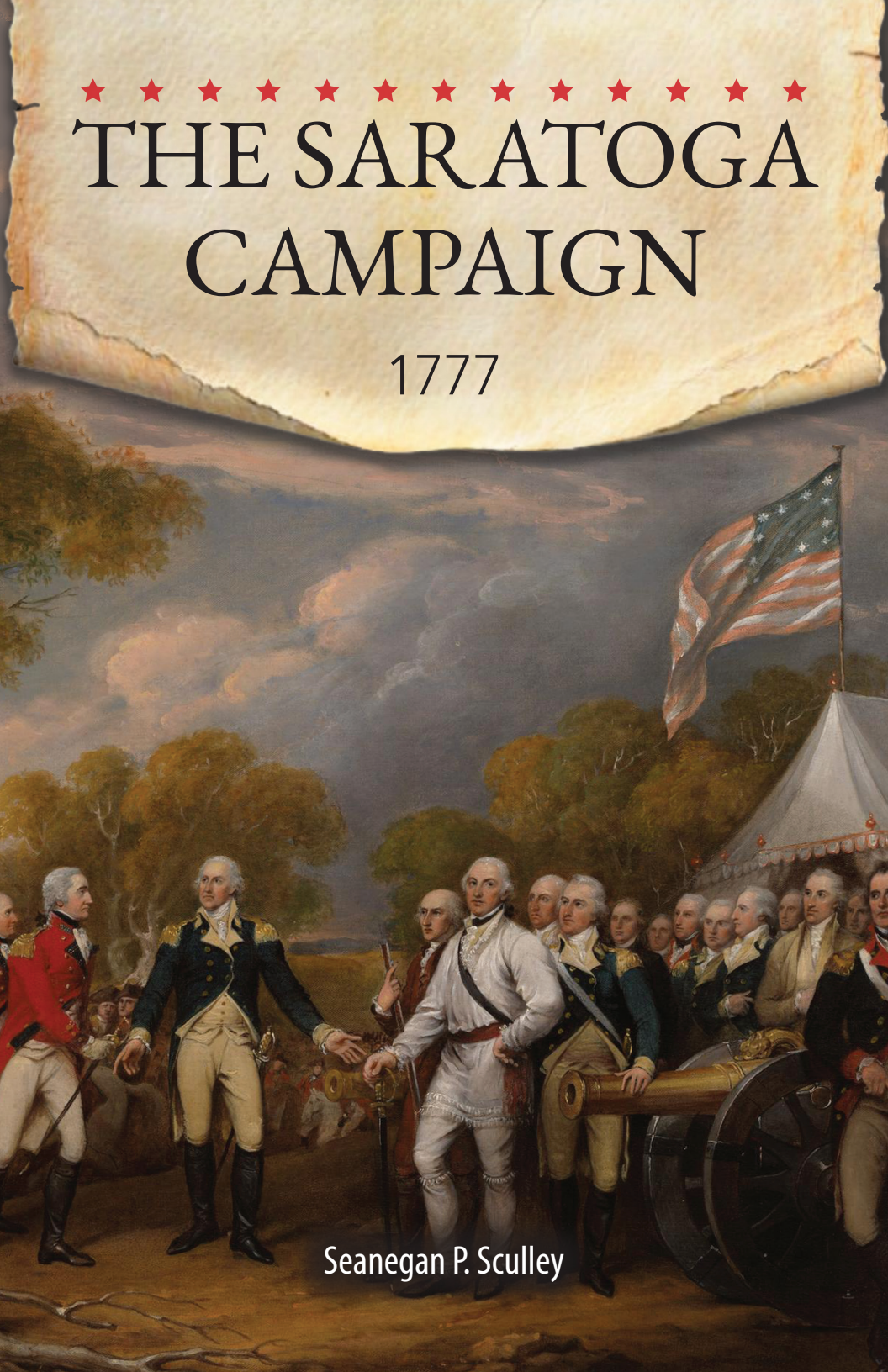
THE SARATOGA CAMPAIGN

1777



Seanegan P. Sculley

The U.S. Army Campaigns of the Revolutionary War

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Cover: Surrender of General Burgoyne, John Trumbull, ca. 1822–1832. General John Burgoyne surrenders to General Horatio Gates on 17 October 1777. Included in the painting are Baron Friedrich Adolf Riedesel, General William Phillips, General John Stark, and Colonel Daniel Morgan. (*Yale University Art Gallery*)

The U.S. Army Campaigns of the Revolutionary War

THE SARATOGA CAMPAIGN, 1777

by
Seanegan P. Sculley

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Note: We have retained the original spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in quoted material.

INTRODUCTION

As America celebrates the 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War, it is a perfect time to reflect on the revolutionary generation. In the two-and-a-half centuries since the war, the United States has grappled with the complexities and paradoxes of its revolution. How could a nation be born from the idea that all men are created equal, and yet deny much of that freedom to many of its citizens? How should a central federal government balance power with state governments? Could those thirteen fractious colonies merge into one nation? The seeds of what would become our country's future political and military conflicts lie in these complexities, as do some of our greatest national accomplishments.

This milestone anniversary is also an appropriate time to reflect on the history of the United States Army. The Army stands as our first truly national institution, having been established by the Continental Congress on 14 June 1775. General George Washington's ability to meld the soldiers of the various colonies together into one national force provided an example to the rest of the country that national unity was possible. If the Army failed to overcome the regional sectionalism prevalent at the time, it would fall to superior British resources and organization. If the Army failed, the nation would fail. Washington gave us the precedent of military subordination to the civil authority, one of the core tenets of our political tradition and way of life. At the end of the war, he resigned his commission and voluntarily gave up all his power to return to civil life. His example has inspired us as a model of military and political leadership for generations.

The Massachusetts militiamen who fired the first shots of the war on 19 April 1775 had no blueprint for creating a nation—nor did many think that the conflict would result in a drive for independence. Deep-seated colonial resentments over their rights as English citizens had been simmering since before the 1750s. As the British Parliament enacted even more restrictive laws, peaceful protests turned to military organization, and finally open violence. As New England formed its Army of Observation in the wake of the battles of Lexington and Concord, the Continental Congress saw the need for a national army.

For eight long years, the Continental Army maintained itself in the field, despite fighting superior odds, starvation, diminished resources, and divided leadership. Setbacks in the New York Campaign of 1776 nearly destroyed Washington's army as the British drove it into Pennsylvania. Yet as 1777 opened, Washington changed the operational situation by seizing the initiative in a series of tactical victories at Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey. That fall, a British invasion into northern New York met with failure and capture at the hands of the Northern Army and militia at Saratoga, ultimately bringing France into war on the side of the United States. At the same time, Washington kept a British army penned up in Philadelphia while he instituted a training regimen for his army at their encampment in Valley Forge that winter. Trained under the tutelage of German-born Frederick von Steuben, the Continentals harried the British out of Philadelphia and back to New York City, fighting like regulars at Monmouth in 1778.

General Washington faced the challenge of countering British victories at Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia, when the British shifted the war south in 1778, while also containing powerful British forces in Canada and New York City. Relying on skilled subordinates such as Anthony Wayne, Nathanael Greene, and the Marquis de Lafayette—all of whom in turn worked closely with state militia—Washington was able to hold the delicate balance of power in both the northern and southern theaters. Seizing the opportunity presented by his French allies, Washington quickly shifted a large portion of his army from New York City to Yorktown,

Virginia. There, the allies laid siege to another British army, forcing it to capitulate in the fall of 1781. Although this victory sounded the death knell for British control of the American colonies, peace talks would last for two more years. During this time, Washington kept an army in the field, maintained the supremacy of civil authority over the military, and presented a credible threat to the remaining British garrisons. When the peace came, the true architects of the revolution's success were the Continental Army, state troops, and the militia.

The Revolutionary War created the model for our modern Army. It set the stage for what eventually would become a three-component force, with the Continentals and militia operating in complementary roles. Today, thirty-three National Guard units can trace their lineage to the Revolutionary War, which is a testament to their role in the formation of this country. Eight army branches also have their beginnings in the revolution. The U.S. Army's very motto, "This We'll Defend," is rooted in the "self-evident" truths enunciated in the Declaration of Independence and American interpretations of Enlightenment traditions, which came together in the seal for the Board of War and Ordnance and became the Department of the Army seal in the twentieth century. Unfortunately, it also would take until the twentieth century for the U.S. Army to be as racially integrated as its Continental Army forebears.

The traditions begun and precedents set by Washington and his soldiers continue to influence the U.S. Army and causes around the world. The seeds of hope shown at Trenton and Princeton have inspired leaders in other dark times, such as Bull Run, Shiloh, and Kasserine Pass. The revolutionary generation taught us that the true strength of our Army is our people; from the frontline soldiers to the camp followers who sustained the regiments. And it is to these individuals, who forged ahead through privation and misery to final victory and who rarely received any greater recognition in their own lifetimes than the simple epitaph "A Soldier of the Revolution," that these volumes are humbly dedicated.

CHARLES R. BOWERY JR.
Executive Director

THE SARATOGA CAMPAIGN, 1777

In the spring of 1777, the American forces striving to attain independence from Great Britain were in a difficult position. General George Washington, commander in chief of the Continental Army, had succeeded in reversing the staggering loss of New York City in the fall of 1776 by stunning his enemies at Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey, in December of that year. Additionally, his commander in the north, Maj. Gen. Philip J. Schuyler, delayed a British advance from Canada by building an ad hoc naval force on Lake Champlain. The British commander, Lt. Gen. Sir Guy Carleton, retreated to Québec before the arrival of winter. The result of these two separate campaigns was a reinvigorated recruiting drive, especially in New England, where citizens felt the British threat keenly. The new recruits swelled the ranks of the Continental Army despite new enlistment terms extending a soldier's service from one year to three years or for the duration of the war. After pushing most of the British forces out of New Jersey, much of the American army was ensconced in the Watchung Mountains of New Jersey. Other parts of the army protected the Hudson Highlands and occupied fortifications guarding vital positions in northern New York. Although anticipating an attack on Philadelphia, General Washington had little information

on British plans for the upcoming campaign season and waited to see what his British counterpart, Lt. Gen. Sir William Howe, was going to attempt with his military and naval forces occupying New York City. In the north, rumors grew of a British military buildup in Canada while Native American raids increased along the frontier. As General Schuyler requested more troops from General Washington and Congress asked New Hampshire and Massachusetts for more support from their state militia, the American commander in chief remained reluctant to commit too many soldiers northward for fear he would soon need them to respond to General Howe's movements. With the support of the *Royal Navy*, the British army in New York City could quickly outmaneuver Washington, and it was anyone's guess whether that move would be to the north in support of a Canadian invasion or south and west, targeting the American capital, Philadelphia.

STRATEGIC SETTING

By 1777, the strategic setting for the upcoming campaigns in both the northern and middle regions of the country was complicated. Both the Americans and the British had won and lost significant battles, the war required more resources, and the conflict began to attract the interests of outside parties. These parties threatened to transform the fighting from an internal imperial conflict to an international war. British strategic focus was evolving from an attempt to isolate New England and bring the Continental Congress to submission into a more comprehensive war bent on the destruction of the Continental Army and the capture of the Congress's leaders. By the winter of 1776, an American strategy for national independence predicated on the military defeat of the British army was no longer

***Philip John Schuyler* (*1733–1804*), John Trumbull, 1792 (*Trumbull Collection, Yale University Art Gallery*)**

viable without support from foreign allies. A defense of its borders and capital would become an operational priority, whereas General Washington's strategic priority remained the effectiveness of the Continental Army. He undoubtedly would have to face the British army on the battlefield in conventional combat operations, but he could at no time risk the destruction of a major portion of his army.

This included those forces defending the northern frontier and its access to the upper reaches of the Hudson River Valley.

Domestic Context or American Strategy

In the eighteenth century, it was much more efficient to transport heavy equipment and large formations of soldiers by water whenever possible. It was possible to travel mostly by water between New York City in the south and Montréal or Québec City in the north along several bodies of water: the Hudson River (196 miles from New York City to Glens Falls, New York); Lake Champlain (125 miles from present-day Whitehall, New York, to Notre-Dame-du-Mont-Carmel, Canada); and the Richelieu River (77 miles from the mouth of Lake Champlain to Sorel, Canada). The Richelieu empties into the St. Lawrence River, providing access to Québec and the Atlantic Ocean eastward or to Lake Ontario to the west. Alternately, armies could move to Lake George, traveling 32 miles down the lake to Ticonderoga before moving over to Lake Champlain. The portage to Lake George from the Hudson River was a few miles shorter and followed easier terrain than the portage to Lake Champlain.

Much of the territory through which these waterways traversed was remote wilderness—sparsely populated, densely forested, and largely controlled by the powerful Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, or Haudenosaunee. It was also without the infrastructure to support the movement of large armies overland. During the French and Indian War, much of the fighting between Great Britain and France over control of North America occurred along these water corridors, resulting in the construction of a myriad of fortifications to protect access to rivers, lakes, and portage sites. By 1775, most of these old forts had been abandoned and were in ruins. Even the largest of these, Fort Ticonderoga, guarding the portage between Lake George and Lake Champlain, was in a state of serious disrepair and neglect.[1]

1. It was for this reason (including its small garrison force of only about fifty British soldiers) that American soldiers under the commands of Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold managed to seize the fort on 10 May 1775.

To protect various key points along the route from the St. Lawrence River to Albany, Americans focused on rebuilding many of the fortifications from the French and Indian War, particularly Fort Edward at the Hudson River portage site north of Albany, Fort George at the south end of Lake George, Fort Ann at the south end of Lake Champlain, and Fort Ticonderoga. Each of these sites was vital to control access to Albany from Québec but the true choke point was at Ticonderoga. This one fort protected access to both routes south to the Hudson and was, therefore, the most important terrain to defend. The fort had a serious flaw from the American perspective: originally built by the French and situated on the southern end of a peninsula jutting into Lake Champlain, it was designed to defend against an invasion *from the south*. As such, it was positioned poorly to defend against an invading force coming from Canada, necessitating the addition of outworks on the northern shore of the peninsula, along with a new fortification on the opposite shore of Lake Champlain. After the 1776 campaign, Fort Ticonderoga became the northernmost defensive position for the American army.

Another water route also led to Albany and bypassed the major north-south route. An army could travel west from Québec, along the St. Lawrence River, past Montréal, and into Lake Ontario. From there, boats could pass south at Oswego to Oneida Lake, Wood Creek, and then onto the Mohawk River, traveling east back to Albany. The Americans could attempt to deny access to the Mohawk River at several key points. Following the retreat of the Continental Army from Québec and Montréal, the northernmost point of defense could have been at Oswego, but the British army controlled that point with Fort Ontario. It was possible the Americans could attempt to control Oneida Lake but the logistics of supporting a force that far into the frontier was too difficult. Instead, to defend this western approach, the Americans occupied another fortification, Fort Schuyler—formerly Fort Stanwix—at the portage site between Wood Creek and the Mohawk River. This was the furthest defensive post for the Americans on the western flank of their northern frontier.

Although this multitude of fortifications covered important sites connected to the movement of military forces between Albany and

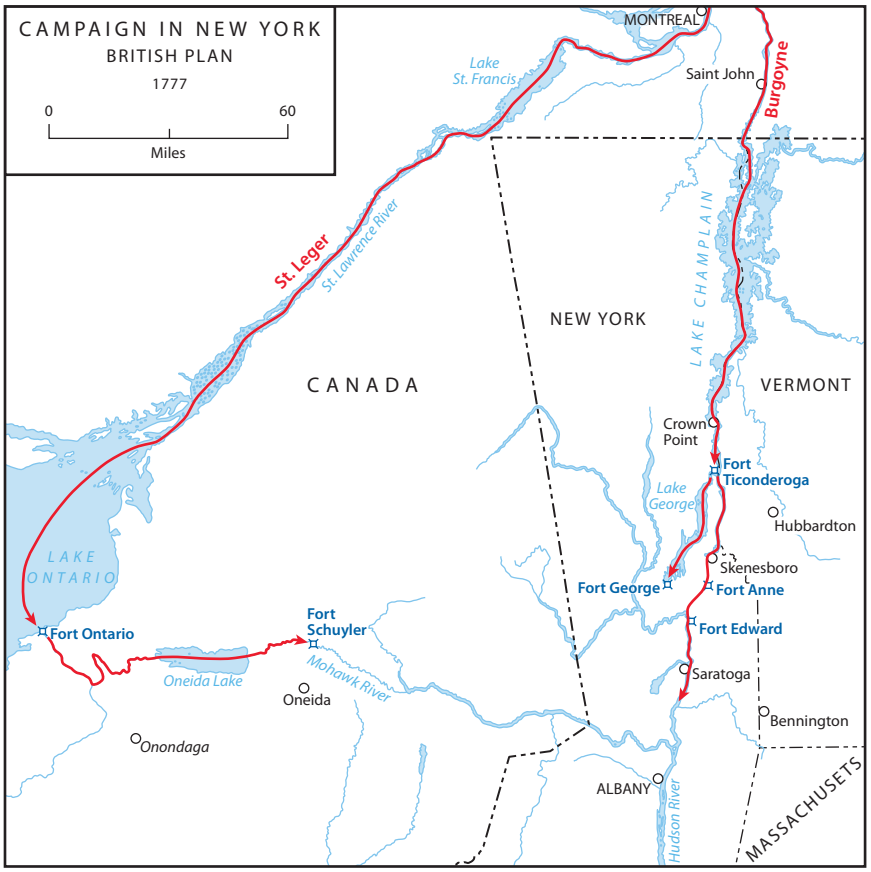
Québec, they were so numerous as to be impossible to fully garrison for the Americans. Along with smaller palisaded positions and blockhouses, the American defenses numbered more than thirty positions across hundreds of square miles, in a frontier setting that made supplying them a logistical nightmare. Because the American army did not have enough soldiers to occupy all of them, American commanders concentrated on defending the more important positions. Still, this decision spread the army much too thin to properly defend against a concerted British invasion.

The American strategy in the Northern Department was to defend all the choke points along the water routes from the north and west and to concentrate the largest number of soldiers at Fort Ticonderoga. Because of the positioning of the old French fort on the south side of the peninsula jutting out into Lake Champlain, Americans built defensive positions of earth and wood forward of the fort to defend northward, while constructing a new fort on the east side of the lake, across from Ticonderoga, on high ground named Mount Independence. A boom and bridge connected the two defensive positions and blocked naval traffic from sailing south past the forts. A fleet of war galleys and bateaux (smaller transport boats with flat bottoms) were built to fight the British warships should they manage to destroy the boom and bridge. They also could transport troops and materiel should the Americans retreat south to Fort Ann up Lake Champlain or to Fort George up Lake George.

The other forts along the American defensive line were lightly manned. General Schuyler chose Fort Edward on the banks of the Hudson River south of Fort Ann as his forward headquarters. Additionally, 750 soldiers from two New York regiments defended Fort Schuyler to resist a British incursion from the west.

International Context or British Strategy

In London, British strategic planning had been ongoing since the end of the 1776 campaign (*Map 1*). The chief architects of British strategy throughout the war were Prime Minister Frederick, Lord North and



Map 1

Secretary of State for the American Colonies Lord George Germain. Lord North formed a government in 1770 and largely selected for his cabinet supporters of stronger imperial policies that exacerbated poor relations between England and her colonies on the North American mainland. Germain was one of three Secretaries of State, each responsible for diplomatic relations in Europe, America, and the rest of the empire, respectively. Germain began his public career as an Army officer who served in Europe during the War of Austrian Succession and the Seven Years' War, a career that ended badly with accusations of cowardice and a court-martial for disobedience to orders following the Battle of Minden in August 1759.

In November and December 1776, support for the war in America was high both among British politicians and the British public, but the situation would soon change. News of the war took months to arrive to Great Britain, as crossing the North Atlantic in sailing ships could take from three to six weeks. Initial reports were very favorable, especially with regard to the capture of New York and the retreat of the American army through New Jersey and across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania. But by February 1777, news arrived of Washington's successes at Trenton and Princeton, dampening hopes that the war would soon end in Britain's favor. Fear was growing of a possible French threat from the European continent, and Germain was looking for a strategy that could squash French support for American independence while bolstering American loyalist support in the colonies. For these reasons, the previous strategy of focusing on the isolation of New England increasingly appeared insufficient; starting with General Howe, British planners saw an opportunity to also target both the American source of political power—the Continental Congress—and military power—the Continental Army.

Determining British strategy required Germain to rely on the advice of his military commanders in America. General Howe, the overall commander in North America, Lt. Gen. Sir Henry Clinton, commander of New York City and Howe's second-in-command, and Lt. Gen. John Burgoyne, second-in-command of Canada, originally had arrived together at Boston in the summer of 1775. Combined with the governor and military commander of Canada, Governor General Carleton, these senior British officers oversaw all operations in North America by 1776 and each had their own ideas for how best to win the war and return the self-styled American states back to their rightful status as British colonies. Howe began the debate over strategy for 1777 by sending two proposals to Germain in November and December 1776, before his army suffered important defeats at Trenton and Princeton. With his stunning successes in New York at the forefront of his thinking, Howe first proposed an ambitious plan to create a diversion near Philadelphia while conducting a

***General John Burgoyne,* Joshua Reynolds, ca. 1766 (*The Frick Collection*)**

split offensive against both Providence and Albany. After driving Washington's army across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania, he opted for a more decisive plan to march in force on Philadelphia with the goals of seizing the revolutionaries' capital and defeating its main army.

However, before his plans could arrive in London, both Burgoyne and Clinton arrived in London with their own ideas for conducting the upcoming campaign. Clinton arrived at the end of February with a desire to earn an independent command and free himself of Howe's immediate supervision. Three weeks before Howe's second proposal could arrive, Burgoyne submitted his own plan for the upcoming operations, providing refinements to Carleton's requests for more resources for a future offensive against Ticonderoga and recommending a detailed plan for an offensive to seize Albany. Burgoyne argued for a main attack up Lake Champlain, the capture of Ticonderoga, and a diversionary attack from the west along the Mohawk River to allow for a combined operation to capture Albany. Key to this plan would be the movement of Howe's forces north from New York City along the Hudson River to support his seizure of Albany.

For the next few weeks, British strategy regarding the upcoming campaign was uncertain. Burgoyne had the support of Germain for both the plan to attack Albany and for his independent command of that offensive. He then convinced King George III in a private audience orchestrated by Germain. However, four days before he could present the plan to Parliament, Germain received Howe's second proposal, focused on Philadelphia, though with no mention of supporting a British offensive from Canada. A third plan from Howe arrived on 3 March 1777, this time still focusing on Philadelphia but now requesting reinforcements of 15,000 soldiers to contend with an American army that had recently proved its combat effectiveness at Trenton and Princeton.

At this point, in early March 1777, Germain faced several distinct plans pursuing two different strategies. Burgoyne's plan continued to place the isolation of New England, considered the center of rebel support and the main source for Washington's military manpower, as the paramount goal. Howe's plans all addressed a shift in strategy to defeating both the political and military centers for the Americans, though Howe would later claim they also indirectly supported an attack from Canada by drawing the main American army away from operations in the north. Germain decided on a hybrid plan of

operations, directing Carleton to effect an alliance with the Iroquois nations and their allies to conduct frontier raids from New York to Virginia while providing military logistics support to Burgoyne. Burgoyne would command a combined British and German force of 7,173 soldiers independently, attacking south to Ticonderoga and then to Albany. Lt. Col. Barry St. Leger would support this operation, leading a mixed regular and provincial force around the western flank of New York to besiege Albany via the Mohawk River. Howe would conduct an offensive against Philadelphia, moving by sea with the *Royal Navy*, under the command of his brother, V. Adm. Richard, 4th Viscount Howe. Once Philadelphia fell, Germain assumed Howe would move his forces north to support Burgoyne. This final piece, the expectation that Howe would support Burgoyne at some point during the campaign, was not ordered explicitly; Germain's letter simply implied Howe would be free to do so. Back in the theater of war, on 5 April, Howe sent a letter to Carleton stating that Howe—having received none of the reinforcements for that year—would have to abandon operations in New Jersey and would not be able to send support north from New York City because he did not have the manpower needed to do anything but attack the American capital.

American Forces in the Northern Department

Serious military failures, including a disastrous defeat on Long Island and the loss of New York City, convinced the American government to adjust the structure of the Continental Army in 1777. In response to Washington's pleas for more military authority, Congress revised its Articles of War, granting the commander in chief the ability to exert more coercive force on American soldiers who failed to act with discipline while serving in the army. It also enacted new standards for enlistment contracts, increasing the terms of service to three years or for the duration of the war. Combined, these institutional changes provided General Washington with soldiers he could count on to remain in the service for an extended period, increasing his ability to both train them and enforce discipline upon them while reducing their ability to use reenlistment as a tool of negotiation. Despite

these changes, more soldiers enlisted to serve in the American cause for 1777 than had done the previous year.

Congress still faced other significant challenges on the political front. The individual states, not Congress, held all the powers necessary to exert political control. Most importantly, states retained the power to tax the American citizenry and although Congress directed international diplomacy, the states controlled the funds necessary to feed, clothe, supply, and pay the military forces fighting the war. For this reason, Congress walked a careful path when appointing general officers to the Continental Army. It divided the country into six military departments—North, East, Middle, West, Highlands, and South—and though General Washington was in overall command of the war, he could not determine who would act as his subordinate commanders in the various departments nor could he say who should be promoted to the rank of brigadier or major general. Although he wanted merit-based appointments, Congress commissioned general officers based on state quotas and so their appointments were more political than military in nature.

This led to a problem in the Northern Department, where political infighting between New York and the New England states led to a dispute in Congress over the appointment of either Maj. Gen. Philip Schuyler or Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates as commander of Continental forces there. Schuyler was an aristocratic landowner from Albany, a veteran of the French and Indian War, and an excellent administrator. Unfortunately, he had a haughty manner, was often in ill-health, and frequently absent from his troops. During the campaign of 1776 when he abandoned Crown Point and barely retained Ticonderoga, New England delegates and soldiers lost confidence in his abilities to lead an army in the field. Gates was a former British officer who had returned to Virginia in 1773, following the conclusion of the French and Indian War. As the Continental Army's first adjutant general, he played a key role in initially organizing the army. He was beloved by the New England soldiers for his more egalitarian leadership style, and his popularity allowed him to mobilize recruiting more effectively in those states. Reluctantly, he had agreed to serve in a subordinate role under Schuyler in the summer of 1776. From January to June

Horatio Gates, **Gilbert Stuart, ca, 1793–1794 (*The Metropolitan Museum of Art*)**

1777, the command question distracted both Schuyler and Gates as they prepared the American defenses throughout the Northern Department. At times Schuyler was in charge while Gates was in Philadelphia discussing his appointment with members of Congress. Then Gates would return to Albany, and Schuyler would leave to repair his reputation and solidify his position. The result was a failure to repair forts, build up supply depots, or focus on raising enough soldiers to oppose the British should they conduct operations in the region.

By the late spring of 1777, the military units available in the Northern Department, including New York north of the Hudson Highlands, Vermont, New Hampshire, and the western parts of Massachusetts, changed rapidly as enlistments ended and newly recruited regiments became available. As Washington hedged his bets awaiting Howe's movements out of New York, many of the forces committed to the department's defense did not belong to the Continental Army. They consisted of state regiments raised by state governments and answerable to them and not to Congress. Many of the various units involved in the operations conducted from June to October 1777 were raised after the British attacked Fort Ticonderoga and fought in subsequent battles. For this reason, the initial American forces available by July 1777 were much smaller than those present for the final battles and were spread across the department, concentrated at Forts Ticonderoga, Edward, and Schuyler and in Albany.

The states that raised the regiments for the Continental Army designated and manned them. The army had thirteen state lines, each line composed of all the regiments raised within each state. Other regiments formally raised by the states but not included in the rolls of the Continental Army took their orders from their respective state governments but fell under the jurisdiction of the Continental Army once they entered a theater of war. Units raised for service outside their respective states were either mobilized directly into the service or organized as state regiments from the standing militia, for the duration of their active service. They too fell under the command authority of the Continental Army while they supported regular operations.

Two special units existed in the Northern Department during this campaign, the Rifle Corps and a corps of light infantry. Washington formed the provisional rifle corps in June 1777 from Pennsylvania and Virginia regiments selected for their marksmanship and woodcraft. Col. Daniel Morgan from the 11th Virginia Regiment, a noted frontier fighter who had gained fame in the French and Indian War, commanded them. These soldiers fought with long American rifles that were far more accurate than the regular smoothbore

musket but also took far longer to reload. General Gates created the light infantry in September 1777 as a provisional unit. Maj. Henry Dearborn of New Hampshire, who later became secretary of war from 1801 to 1809, commanded the corps. He chose his soldiers for their fitness and intelligence; they were well trained, and used to fight as skirmishers on the flanks and in close terrain. Combined with the Rifle Corps, these soldiers protected the marksmen and disrupted British attempts to flank American units during battle.

The American army during the revolution represented the broad diversity of early American society. The forces present for the Saratoga campaign were no different, as Continental, state, and militia regiments mostly converged from New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Vermont. Although the field-grade officers overwhelmingly came from the upper levels of society, the captains and lieutenants were usually from the middling classes, selected for their abilities to recruit and lead their fellow soldiers. They were farmers, lawyers, merchants, and artisans respected in their communities but with not much more economic standing then the soldiers they led. The enlisted noncommissioned officers and soldiers were often less affluent than their leadership but not necessarily from lower economic classes. Instead, their economic status was because of their age; they were young—between the ages of 16 and 25—and had not yet reached the maturity to become economically independent. Almost all of them had volunteered to serve in the army, though some were indentured servants or enslaved workers hoping to earn their freedom as substitutes for older, wealthier men. These troops included as many as 400 Black soldiers enlisted primarily in the Massachusetts regiments and fully integrated with White soldiers. Supporting the army were also hundreds of women, many married to soldiers, who served as nurses, seamstresses, cooks, and sutlers.

By May 1777, Schuyler and Gates had approximately 4,500 soldiers fit for duty at Fort Ticonderoga. Under the command of the garrison commander, Maj. Gen. Arthur St. Clair, this force consisted of Continental Army regiments and state militia from Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Brig. Gen. Enoch Poor from New Hampshire

commanded all three Continental regiments from the New Hampshire Line, the 1st, 2d, and 3d New Hampshire Regiments. Brig. Gen. John Paterson from Massachusetts commanded four regiments from the Massachusetts Line, Marshall's, Tupper's, Brewer's, and Bradford's Regiments. A French officer commissioned by Congress, Brig. Gen. Matthias Alexis Roche de Fermoy, commanded the third and final brigade. His brigade was a mix of Continental and militia units, including Warner's Regiment from Massachusetts, Col. Henry Jackson's Regiment, one New Hampshire militia regiment, and two militia regiments from Massachusetts.

Across the rest of the Northern Department, General Schuyler placed small garrisons of troops at the various fortifications defending other key locations along water routes. South of Fort Ticonderoga, at Fort Edward, Brig. Gen. John Fellows had approximately 500 militiamen from Massachusetts and Brig. Gen. Abraham Ten Broeck commanded a contingent of New York militia guarding the portage sites from Lake Champlain and Lake George, ready to move north if necessary. Additionally, Col. Peter Gansevoort defended the western approach to Albany along the Mohawk River at Fort Schuyler with the 3d New York Regiment and Col. James Wesson's Regiment from Massachusetts, totaling 750 soldiers. Local Oneida Indians aided this relatively small garrison by providing intelligence on British movements in the Mohawk River Valley.

Early in 1777, the Oneida and Tuscarora nations decided to join the American cause, against the wishes of their fellow Six Nations Iroquois partners: the Mohawk, Cayuga, Seneca, and Onondaga nations. This decision was the result of a growing schism within the Six Nations Confederacy that had started at the conclusion of the French and Indian War. As thousands of colonists streamed into western counties of New York after 1763, Mohawk leaders relied on a privileged relationship with the British Superintendent for Indian Affairs, Sir William Johnson, for protection and support. The Cayuga, Onondaga, and Seneca nations occupied territories north and west of New York and increasingly allied with British forces located around Fort Niagara. However, the Oneida, who lived in New York farther west of the Mohawk, felt neglected by the British and chose

a strategy of appealing to American leaders to protect their territory and increase their standing within the Iroquois Confederacy.

The combined American forces present and fit for battle under the command of General Schuyler was approximately 6,000 Continental and militia soldiers. Although they were spread thin across a multitude of fortified positions located across hundreds of square miles, the American strategy of concentrating at the key point of Ticonderoga meant the bulk of the force was at one location. However, those defending the old French fort were not enough to blunt the oncoming British offensive, forcing Washington to send reinforcements from the Continental Army and pressuring state governments in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New York to call out more militia units to bolster the defense. In fact, by 19 September 1777, the American forces would number almost 7,000 despite battle losses and, at the end of the campaign, come close to 17,000 present and fit for duty. All of these forces would be located in and around Saratoga and Schuylerville and would include fifteen regiments from the Massachusetts Line, all three regiments of the New Hampshire Line, two regiments from the New York Line, two Continental light horse regiments from Connecticut, the Rifle Corps and corps of light infantry, Maj. Ebenezer Stevens's Provisional Artillery Battalion, and militia regiments and battalions from Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont.

British Forces in Canada

Although the number of American forces continued to increase over the course of the campaign, the reality for British and German units was necessarily the opposite. The very nature of the campaign, and the British strategy that initiated it, meant that the British army would begin its campaign with the most soldiers available in Canada and then march through the North American wilderness all the way to Albany before it could reasonably expect reinforcements. The commander for the campaign, General Burgoyne, was a veteran of the Seven Years' War, a favorite of King George III, and a member of Parliament. He was not, however, as knowledgeable

about warfare on the American frontier, though he had served in Boston in 1775 and with Carleton in Canada in 1776. His plan called for him to link up with his superior, General Howe, but not before a siege of Albany or directly after its capture. Another force of British, Canadian, and Native American fighters marching on Albany from the west would augment Burgoyne's numbers, but only if and when he arrived to besiege the city.

The British army during the eighteenth century was composed of gentlemen officers and lower-class enlisted soldiers. Two-thirds of officer commissions were purchased; officers bought the next higher rank from the officer holding that rank, upon their promotion or retirement. This purchase system applied to all regimental officer ranks, ensign to colonel, though the king retained the prerogative to approve all purchase requests. This system provided a growing sum for use in retirement as officers climbed upward, and ensured that most officers came from means. The other third of the officer corps consisted of soldiers filling vacancies caused by death or removal and allowed for the inclusion of a small number of former enlisted soldiers promoted based on their merit, although they almost never made promotion past captain. The enlisted soldiers were largely volunteers from the lower-class and lower-middle-class, enlisting for twenty years. They usually were unemployed at the time of their recruitment because of economic downturns in both the agricultural and industrial sectors and came from England, Scotland, and Ireland. Accompanying some of these soldiers were their families. Some soldiers' wives were included on the rations for the regiment because they provided laundry and nursing services to soldiers. Though some women traveled with the regiments on campaign, most remained in the regimental encampments.

Accompanying the British army on this campaign were 3,600 German auxiliaries, composed of regiments from the principality of Braunschweig-Lüneberg, augmented by artillery and light infantry from Hesse-Hanau. The entire German contingent was known as the *Braunschweig troops*. Leading these soldiers hired by the British

Crown was the Baron Friedrich Adolf Freiherr von Riedesel. Holding the rank of major general, Riedesel had served with the British in both England and on the European continent during the Seven Years' War and was a consummate military professional.

As Burgoyne gathered his forces outside Québec and began his march toward Fort Ticonderoga, he had a total of 9,500 soldiers ready for battle. He organized his army into three divisions, along with an artillery brigade and his Native American allies. Maj. Gen. William Phillips commanded his right wing and it consisted of most of his British units in two brigades. The first brigade, commanded by Brig. Gen. Henry W. Powell, included the *9th, 47th*, and *53d Regiments of Foot*. Brig. Gen. James Hamilton directed the second brigade with the *20th, 21st*, and *62d Regiments of Foot*. General Riedesel commanded the left wing of the army, formed by the *Braunschweig troops*. The German advance corps was commanded by Lt. Col. Heinrich von Breymann and included the *Hesse-Hanau Artillery Corps*, a grenadier battalion, and a light infantry battalion consisting of grenadier and light infantry companies from the regiments of foot, and the *Jaeger Company*, a rifle-armed light infantry unit. The first brigade, commanded by Brig. Gen. Johann von Specht, included three *Braunschweig regiments* (*von Rhetz*, *von Riedesel*, and *von Specht*). Brig. Gen. Wilhelm von Gall commanded the second brigade, composed of one *Braunschweig regiment*, the *Regiment Prinz Friedrich*, and one from Hesse-Hanau, *Regiment Erbprinz*. The vanguard for Burgoyne's army was known as the *Advanced Corps*, commanded by his most capable junior general officer, Brig. Gen. Simon Fraser. Fraser was another veteran of the Seven Years' War and had commanded a brigade in 1776 during General Carleton's aborted campaign to Ticonderoga. The *Advanced Corps* included the *Company of Select Marksmen*, also known as *Fraser's Rangers*; the *British Light Infantry Battalion*; the *British Grenadier Battalion*; the *24th Regiment of Foot*; and the *7th Company, 3d Battalion, Royal Regiment of Artillery*. Attached to Burgoyne's headquarters was the dragoon regiment *Prinz Ludwig*, commanded by Lt. Col. Friedrich Baum, acting as the army's reserve.

Approximately 500 Native American allies and a corps of loyalist units augmented the British army. Germain had ordered General Carleton to convince American Indian warriors to join the force and provide intelligence about American dispositions, while also waging an irregular war along the frontier. Many British commanders, including Burgoyne, were dubious about this decision. They considered these fighters unreliable, expensive, and a potential liability if they chose to target civilians instead of military objectives. The main proponent for including Native American warriors was Thayendanegea (known as Joseph Brant by his British allies), a Mohawk military leader educated by the British superintendent for Indian affairs. He traveled to England in 1775 and met King George III and had fought with the British in several wars since the 1760s. Brant worked tirelessly to convince the other members of the Six Nations to join the British to stop American expansion into their lands. He used his influence to bring American Indian war parties from as far west as Detroit. From 1775 to 1776, the Six Nations largely had maintained neutrality in the increasing conflict between Great Britain and its colonies but as the fighting grew along the frontier regions that included Haudenosaunee lands, neutrality appeared less possible. Distressingly for many of the Haudenosaunee, the Six Nations Confederacy broke under the strain, as two nations joined the American rebels and the remaining four, including Brant and the Mohawk Nation, joined the British. For the first time, Haudenosaunee would fight Haudenosaunee.

Among the loyalist corps were four ranger companies (the *King's Loyal Americans*, the *Queen's Loyal Rangers*, the *Loyal Volunteers*, and Capt. Samuel Adams's *Company of Rangers*), a company of pioneers for road building and repair, a company of bateaux-men for logistical support, and a detachment of loyalists who had enlisted in the regular army with the *King's Royal Regiment of New York*. Americans loyal to the British empire were key to Burgoyne's plan. In fact, they were key to the British strategy overall. The prevailing view in both Great Britain and among British military leaders in North America was that if British authorities could restore order and provide protection, most Americans would return their allegiance

to the Crown or stop hiding their loyalty in the face of the rebel insurgency. These loyalist units supported this premise, providing the necessary knowledge of the region for both planning attacks and giving intelligence on the Americans. But they were far fewer than Burgoyne had anticipated; he expected 2,000 loyalists and Canadian militia but he had only about 300 loyalists total. When Burgoyne demanded Carleton draft Canadians into service to help build roads and act as teamsters, it led to widespread disaffection and desertion among the local inhabitants.

Although these forces comprised Burgoyne's army as it moved south from Québec to Fort Ticonderoga in June 1777, they could draw on three other sources of support for the campaign. Primarily, Colonel St. Leger took approximately 2,000 soldiers and Native American warriors west, up the St. Lawrence River and into Lake Ontario. St. Leger was an Irish native who had served in America during the French and Indian War, having participated in the seizures of both Louisbourg and Montréal. He was the lieutenant colonel of the *95th Regiment of Foot* but held a local rank of brigadier general during this campaign. His orders were to find the entrance to the Onondaga River on the southeast shore of that great lake, sail south through Oneida Lake to Wood Creek and then transfer war materiel onto the Mohawk River at the 6-mile portage site known as the Oneida Carrying Place. This 60-mile transit would be difficult because of natural obstacles. Once on the Mohawk River, however, St. Leger had a clear water transit to Albany and the Hudson River. The only manufactured obstacle to his movement was Fort Schuyler. Although the fort guarded the portage site, St. Leger hoped it would not be heavily defended. He commanded two regular British regiments (the *34th* and *8th Regiments of Foot*), a Hesse-Hanau jaeger company, the majority of the *King's Royal Regiment of New York*, some loyalist rangers under the command of Col. John Butler, and the majority of the Mohawk and other Haudenosaunee warriors recruited for the campaign, led by Brant. Carleton, as governor of Canada, retained approximately 3,400 British regulars to maintain security in that province, whereas General Clinton protected New York City hundreds of miles south with an additional 3,400 troops.

Though Burgoyne did not control either of those two forces and was outranked by both officers commanding to his north and south, their soldiers represented potential reinforcements should Burgoyne run into trouble as the campaign through the American wilderness developed.

OPERATIONS

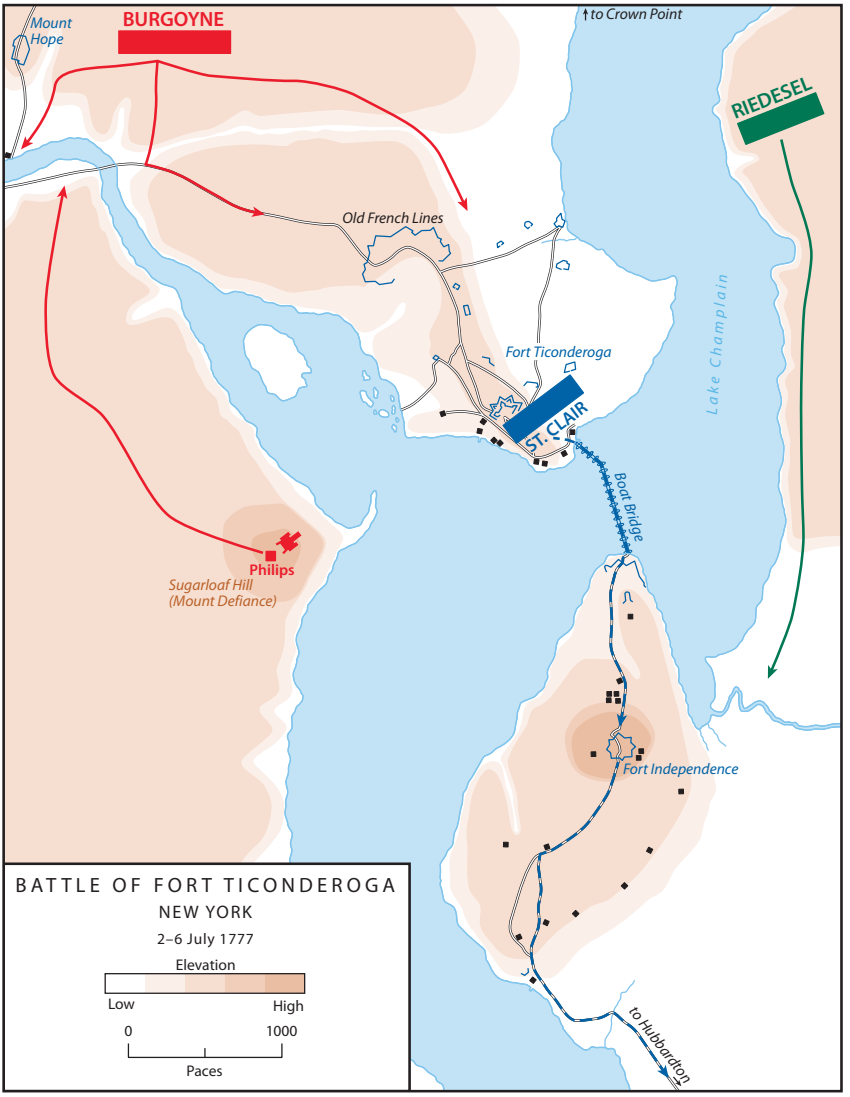
General Schuyler was worried, and he did not hide that fact. It was 20 June 1777, and he had just arrived at Fort Ticonderoga the day before. Intelligence reports made it clear that the British were on the move from Québec, and small parties of warriors had already ambushed American working parties near the fort. Schuyler and the commander of Ticonderoga, General St. Clair, knew that the fort was not ready to withstand a concerted assault from the north. To help decide their course, Schuyler, St. Clair, and the three brigadier generals present—Poor, Paterson, and Fermoy—held a council of war to discuss their options. The garrison was too small to man all the necessary fortifications occupying much of the high ground on the peninsula. Soldiers defended Mount Hope and Mount Independence, but they were spread too thin, and the most dominant terrain, Mount Defiance, remained unoccupied. Some leaders argued for an immediate evacuation, whereas others wanted to consolidate and shrink the defensive ring. The council decided to do the latter while planning for the former. Soldiers would largely abandon fortifications to the west and concentrate their defense on the fort, the new fortifications on Mount Independence, and the water obstacle placed between the two to obstruct transit to the southern end of the lake. Hundreds of bateaux were assembled just below the fort and on the south shore of the peninsula, ready

to transport cannons, weapons, gunpowder, and wounded soldiers south up Lake Champlain to Fort Ann, should the oncoming assault prove too much for the defenders. Just a week after that fateful meeting, Native Americans allied to the British began appearing in numbers in the woods around the fort. On 30 June, the first British warships appeared to the north and the Campaign of 1777 in the Northern Department began.

The Battle of Fort Ticonderoga, 2–6 July 1777

General Burgoyne began the movement of his army south from Québec in late May (*Map 2*). He deployed his forces in three stages, sending his *Advanced Corps* to establish a staging point at Cumberland Head on the north end of Lake Champlain, close to where it emptied into the Richelieu River. Following General Fraser's force was the British right wing under General Phillips's command, including 138 cannons. Then came the *Braunschweig troops* of the left wing. By the third week of June, Burgoyne arrived with his headquarters and assembled his entire force. Before he left Québec, a letter arrived from General Howe informing him of Howe's plans to attack Philadelphia and warning him that no reinforcements would be coming from the south. Burgoyne ignored the troubling news, assuming Germain would countermand that plan from London. He established a supply depot at Cumberland Head before moving south to set up a second one at Crown Point.

Before moving farther south, Burgoyne issued three proclamations. The first proclamation, to his soldiers, aimed to raise morale and give purpose to the invading forces. The second, to his Native American allies, encouraged them to unleash unrestricted warfare on the frontier communities in western New York and Pennsylvania, though he also directed them to show restraint when dealing with noncombatants. This mixed message appeared to encourage indiscriminate killing while paying only lip service to the protection of civilians in the region. Along with these two speeches, the British commander also wrote a third proclamation to the communities of New York and New England threatening "Devastation, Famine, and



Map 2

every concomitant Horror" to those who opposed him. Taken together, and published in newspapers across the Atlantic world, these words suggested Burgoyne was bent on an operation of terror against the former subjects of the British Empire, an operation that soon drew criticism from England and enraged communities in America.

From Cumberland Head, the British and Germans moved south, up Lake Champlain in boats, arriving at Crown Point on 24 June, just 10 miles from the American positions. Crown Point had been the site of a French fortification, Fort St. Frederic, which was demolished in 1759 and rebuilt by the British in 1760. Both the British and Americans had occupied it in the previous two years, but they abandoned it in 1776. Although the old fort was in ruins, the place was perfect for a field hospital and supply depot, both of which the British established as they gathered strength in preparation for the final assault on Ticonderoga.

As the British established their base camp, the Americans at Fort Ticonderoga remained largely in the dark. Burgoyne's Native American allies had arrived in the area in large numbers, attacking small parties of soldiers foraging for wood or attempting to build new earthen works. Their tactics forced St. Clair to provide large security details to protect his workers, and denied the Americans the ability to conduct their own reconnaissance. At the same time, the commander continued to suffer from the lack of a cohesive plan during the months before his arrival. Three pieces of high ground dominated the fort. The stone fort was located on the southside of the peninsula jutting eastward into Lake Champlain, oriented to defend to the south. It sat 193 feet above sea level, whereas Mount Hope, west of the fort and on the same peninsula, rose to 240 feet. Only a small number of soldiers defended this gradual rise in a fortified position. To the east of the fort, across the small channel between the peninsula and the east bank of Lake Champlain, rose Mount Independence. At 306 feet, Americans defended this higher terrain by building a series of small fortifications known collectively as Fort Independence. Connecting this new fort with the old was a bridge and a log boom to obstruct British naval traffic attempting to run through the gap and get to the rear of the American defenses. Forward of the old fort, toward the middle of the peninsula but with a clear view north down Lake Champlain, soldiers constructed several earthworks to stop attackers from surrounding the American main defense.

The chief engineer, Col. Jeduthan Baldwin, fortified much of the high ground, but failed to consider the highest point, Mount Defiance. Between Fort Ticonderoga and Lake George just a few miles away,

Mount Defiance rose 853 feet above sea level and dominated the surrounding area. From the top of that mountain, artillery could fire upon both the old fort and Fort Independence, and occupation of the hilltop controlled access from the fort to Lake George. On 12 May, another military engineer arrived who argued the absence of a fortified position on Mount Defiance was a serious oversight.

Col. Thaddeus Kosciuszko arrived that day at the behest of Congress. A minor aristocrat from Poland, Kosciuszko had trained in Paris and was looking for wartime experience to help free Poland from Russian control. Impressed with his knowledge, Washington sent him to Ticonderoga to help Baldwin prepare for the upcoming campaign.

Kosciuszko almost immediately identified Mount Defiance as key terrain. If the British managed to drag cannons up to the top of the mountain, both Fort Ticonderoga and Fort Independence would become untenable. He suggested the placement of a small redoubt, capable of defending the hilltop from even the most concerted assaults. Baldwin argued that no artillery unit could drag heavy guns up the steep inclines, it would take too long to build a road up to the top, and not enough soldiers were available either to build a new position or to man it once completed. Mount Defiance remained undefended at the end of June.

Fort Ticonderoga's newest commander, General St. Clair, was disappointed at the state of the defenses and at the small number of soldiers he found available. He arrived weeks after the previous commander, Brig. Gen. Anthony Wayne, left to join Washington in New Jersey. During the interval, Brig. Gen. John Paterson of Massachusetts was in charge but he was unable to convince Baldwin to adjust his plans according to Kosciuszko's advice. Although the soldiers were busy building fortifications outside the old stone fort, no new repairs had rectified the deficiencies in the old French fortification created by time, weather, and neglect.

St. Clair was a former British officer who had fought in America during the French and Indian War. He remained in Pennsylvania after the war ended, becoming a successful landowner who joined the Pennsylvania Military Association as a colonel when the revolution

began. He was commissioned in the Continental Army in 1776 with a promotion to brigadier general, fighting with Washington at Trenton and Princeton and earning a promotion to major general for his actions that winter. He was energetic and experienced, but he did not arrive at his new command until a few weeks before the British arrived.

St. Clair soon wrote to Congress and his commanding officer, General Schuyler, about his concerns. The works devised by Baldwin were too extensive, he did not have enough soldiers, he did not have enough food or supplies to support reinforcements, and his work parties increasingly were coming under attack from Native American war parties. The enemy even managed to kill one of his soldiers in sight of the fort. When the muster officer in charge of the Northern Department, Lt. Col. Richard Varick, confirmed these assessments with Schuyler, the overall commander decided it was time to visit the defenses and see for himself. His arrival on 19 June precipitated the council of war on 20 June.

Ten days after that fateful meeting, and less than a week after the British landed at Crown Point, Burgoyne sent Fraser and his *Advanced Corps* forward to Threemile Island, named because it was 3 miles from Fort Ticonderoga. Despite the unseasonably hot weather, with temperatures reaching past 90°F, Fraser's rangers and light infantry began a reconnaissance of the American defenses. As the remainder of the army followed close behind, Fraser captured several American soldiers who confirmed the peninsula was well-defended and that American morale was high. Burgoyne decided to anchor his gunboats within sight of the fort and attempted to establish a landing point on the north side of the peninsula, but the Americans quickly dislodged his 300-soldier detachment. Rather than wait longer and allow the Americans to call in more reinforcements, Burgoyne decided to begin his assault the next day, 1 July 1777.

The British planned to surround the American position, denying them the ability to retreat before the siege was complete. With excellent reconnaissance provided by his rangers and Native American allies, Burgoyne deployed his right wing, augmented by the *Advanced Corps*, toward Mount Hope, 1,000 yards northwest of

the main fort. Using his gunboats to provide artillery support, his thrust on the west side established positions just outside of American artillery range. His left wing crossed onto the eastern shore of the lake and began their advance on Mount Independence, though Riedesel and his *Braunschweig troops* found the going difficult in the low-lying, swampy terrain. Still, by the end of that first day, the British had established siege positions on both sides of the lake, with strong artillery support on the water, and the Americans had to weather a constant artillery barrage as they sought protection within their fortifications.

The next day, Fraser and Phillips moved the right wing forward to easily capture Mount Hope. As the Americans pulled back from this position, they also abandoned a blockhouse guarding the road from Fort Ticonderoga to Lake George. The British now held the high ground overlooking the American positions on the west side and effectively blocked any retreat to Lake George. As the British artillery set up a battery on Mount Hope, both sides exchanged fire for the next two days while Burgoyne sought to buy more time for his left wing to advance on Mount Independence.

St. Clair had already sent word to Schuyler and Washington that he needed more troops. Washington decided to dispatch a brigade, under the command of Brig. Gen. John Nixon of Massachusetts, at Peekskill, New York. Nixon began the movement of his troops north but without significant ship transports. His journey would take time, but Washington was convinced Ticonderoga could hold for weeks. He needed to retain his own strength for the coming operations in the Middle Department while leaving enough soldiers in the Hudson Valley to oppose any attempts by the British to support Burgoyne from the south. For now, a brigade would have to be enough. On 3 July, St. Clair realized he needed local reinforcements quickly and finally, belatedly, called for militia out of Berkshire County, Massachusetts.

The next day, 4 July, while conducting reconnaissance after seizing Mount Hope and establishing siege lines, Phillips and Fraser made an important discovery. Burgoyne was trying to close the noose around the American defenses before reinforcements could

arrive, but the Germans remained bogged down in the east. Fraser sent his light infantry up Mount Defiance and found that it was unguarded. He and his chief engineer, Lt. William Twiss, advised Burgoyne that soldiers could drag 12- and 24-pound artillery to the top, where they could reach both Fort Ticonderoga and the more distant Fort Independence. Following this recommendation, Burgoyne gave the order to General Phillips. Phillips was a veteran of the French and Indian War and had studied at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, Britain's school for artillery and engineering. He organized a work party that built a road through the night. On 5 July, the British artillery units began leveling the ground toward the top of the mountain, preparing positions for an artillery battery.

Seeing the working party on Mount Defiance, St. Clair quickly gathered his subordinate commanders to make what he believed to be the only decision. All agreed Ticonderoga and its surrounding fortifications were no longer tenable, vulnerable to artillery fire from Mount Hope and cut off from Lake George by British positions on Mount Defiance. Although St. Clair had decided previously not to consolidate his forces, he now decided to abandon the west side of Lake Champlain altogether. That night, 5 July, all soldiers on the peninsula would use the cover of darkness to retreat to Mount Independence across the bridge. Fort Ticonderoga's commandant, Col. Pierse Long of New Hampshire, would load the boats anchored below the fort with cannons, ammunition, gunpowder, food, supplies, wounded soldiers, women, and children, then set sail south to Skenesborough on the southern shore of Lake Champlain. The town was under American control and contained warehouses and shipbuilding capabilities, along with being close to Fort Ann. The entire American force, once combined on Mount Independence, would march south immediately to link up with the boats at Skenesborough before marching farther south to Fort Edward to join the American forces on the Hudson. They were to conduct all this in secrecy, at night, and hopefully would trade space for time—time needed to receive reinforcements coming north from Peekskill and west from New England.

The idea of abandoning the fort after only five days of defensive operations was not one St. Clair was happy to make. In fact, he knew he was risking his reputation as an officer by doing so, but he saw his decision as one of duty over honor. Two of the three most important terrain features were now in the hands of the enemy. The Germans were moving south on the east side and would soon reach Mount Independence. If they succeeded, they would cut off the entire American force from their route of retreat and Washington would lose a large bulk of his troops, gunpowder, and artillery in the Northern Department. St. Clair would probably face a formal military inquiry into his actions and possibly a court-martial, but he thought it better to lose his reputation instead of more than half the American army in the north. So, at 1500 on 5 July, St. Clair gave the order to begin preparations for the retreat.

This would be a difficult maneuver to accomplish. It was late in the afternoon, but they could make no movements before dark, around 2000. Many of the senior leaders did not receive notification of the decision before dark and they did not tell the soldiers until the last moment for fear of a panicked riot. Baldwin did not receive notice until 2100. Kosciusko never got the official word; he had to ask other soldiers what was happening. With British positions able to look directly into the fort, complete darkness was necessary, so no one could use torches or other forms of light. Also, a northwest wind had picked up on the lake, stopping many boats that had moved offshore to avoid artillery fire from getting back to shore. The chief surgeon, James Thacher, did not receive notification to move the sick and wounded to the boats until 2400 and it took him three hours to get them all aboard. In total, the American fleet consisted of five larger single-masted sloops and two-masted schooners, along with about 200 bateaux. Long did not have enough boats to carry all the equipment and people needing a ride, so he ordered the larger cannons spiked and abandoned much of the military stores. He set sail at 0300 on 6 July and St. Clair finally gave his attention to the retreat of his army across the bridge.

When he finally did direct his attention to the retreat, he found bedlam. The darkness hampered the movement of troops and

equipment over the bridge. Soldiers were losing their units. Many did not have all their equipment and were trying desperately to get across to the other side. Officers were trying to remain quiet but could not recognize their own soldiers. To make matters worse, at Mount Independence, General Fermoy accidentally set fire to his own tent, alerting the British to the American retreat. Although the fire provided light that helped soldiers see, it also backlit them to the enemy, adding to the chaos and confusion. St. Clair placed an order that a rearguard destroy the bridge, but this did not happen. British soldiers dispatched to pursue the Americans were able to march across the lake unopposed. As the retreat started on the road south to Skenesborough, St. Clair and his brigade commanders largely lost control. General Poor led the way with his brigade from New Hampshire, followed by the militia, and then the second and third Continental brigades. However, the militia refused to stop and line up in formation for the march, moving on their own as fast as they could to escape the oncoming British. In the darkness, Continental soldiers, mostly from the second brigade directly behind, quickly followed.

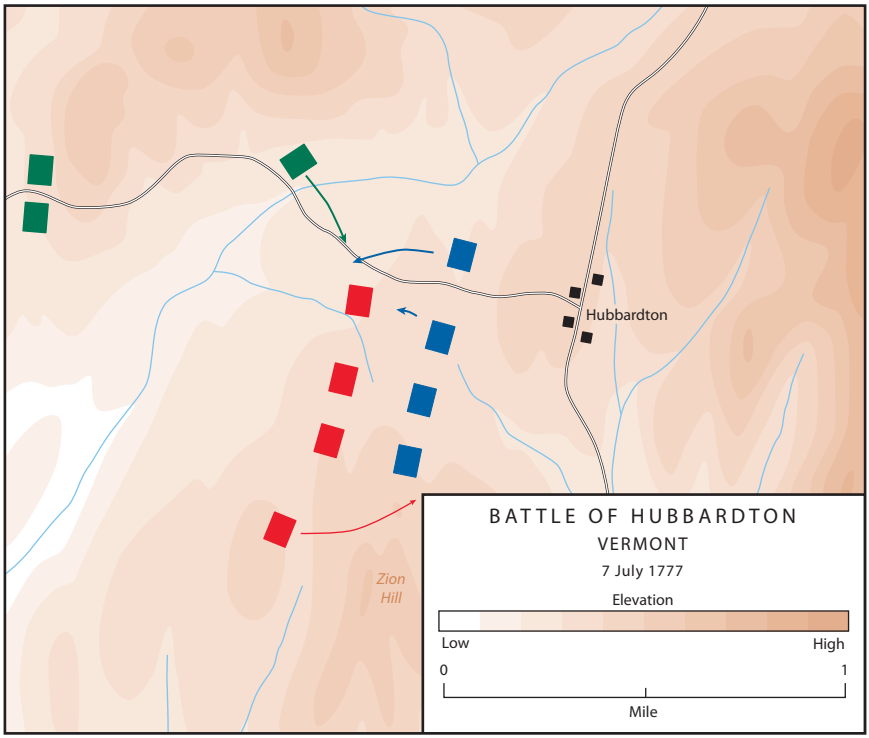
The Battle of Hubbardton, 7 July 1777

At 0300 on 6 July, General Fraser received word that the Americans were abandoning Fort Ticonderoga and Mount Independence. (*See Map 3.*) Fearing a trap, Fraser sent word to Burgoyne and went forward to observe Fort Ticonderoga. To his surprise, the reports were correct; the Americans were retreating across the lake and down the road to Castleton. He also received reports that an American flotilla had left Ticonderoga, heading south for Skenesborough. He immediately called up his light infantry and grenadiers and occupied the old French fort. What he found amazed him. The Americans had left behind stores of ammunition, lightly damaged artillery, and a huge amount of food and military supplies. More surprisingly, the bridge from Ticonderoga to Mount Independence had only been lightly damaged and was unguarded. Not wishing to lose this opportunity to destroy the American army,

Fraser immediately ordered his soldiers to replace missing planks on the bridge and advance to the east side of the lake.

The Americans at Mount Independence had been fortunate to escape when they did. The Germans had advanced steadily around the east side of the mount, reaching a bridge that led to the south road the day before the evacuation. For reasons unknown, these forward units were recalled that night without destroying the bridge. However, when Fraser and elements of his *Advanced Corps* arrived at Mount Independence, Riedesel and much of his *Braunschweig troops* were close by and ready to support his pursuit. At the same time, Burgoyne ordered soldiers to begin dismantling the log and chain boom north of the bridge across Lake Champlain, reducing the obstacle in less than an hour. Preparing his fleet to pursue the Americans to Skenesborough, he received word from Fraser that he was chasing St. Clair and the bulk of the American army as it fled to Castleton. Fraser took 850 soldiers from his *Advanced Corps*, including his *Grenadier Battalion*, *Light Infantry Battalion*, and two companies from the *24th Regiment of Foot*. He requested the remainder of his *Corps* go along to support the pursuit as soon as leaders could release them.

St. Clair pushed hard for Castleton, 30 miles southeast of Mount Independence. Throughout the morning of 6 July, New Hampshire soldiers in the front of the column regained their discipline and marched quickly in the growing heat, arriving at Hubbardton by noon. This small settlement of nine homes was about 20 miles southeast of Mount Independence and sat on the crossroads from both that fortification and Crown Point. Abandoned by its inhabitants when the British offensive began, high ground on five hilltops surrounded it. About a mile north of the town was Sargent Hill. Monument Hill and Pittsford Ridge lay to the east, and Mount Zion, looming 1,000 feet above the town, dominated the south. Unaware of the British pursuit, but fearing a two-pronged attack from both Mount Independence and Crown Point, St. Clair ordered Col. Seth Warner and Col. Nathan Hale to guard the rear and await the arrival of the final regiment, the 11th Massachusetts under the command of Col. Ebenezer Francis, before moving on to Castleton to join the rest of the army. He then marched the main army to Castleton, ignoring a



Map 3

request from General Poor to leave more troops behind to meet a potential British pursuit force.

Both Warner and Hale were experienced commanders. Warner commanded a separate Continental regiment composed of soldiers from Vermont. Previously known as the Green Mountain Boys, Warner's Regiment had a reputation for fighting well. Hale commanded the 2d New Hampshire Regiment, a Continental unit detached from Poor's New Hampshire brigade. While they waited, the American commanders ordered their troops to build hasty defensive positions on the high ground before Colonel Francis and the stragglers from Mount Independence arrived around 1600 that day. After a brief meeting, the three colonels decided the troops were too tired, and it was too late in the day to continue to Castleton. They assumed the British were too far behind to be a cause for serious

concern. With that, they posted sentries on the crossroads and put their soldiers to bed behind their defenses.

Fraser was actually quite a bit closer than the Americans realized. He, too, had been pushing his troops hard all day, and by the time Colonel Francis entered Hubbardton, Fraser and his *Advanced Corps* were only about 6 miles behind. Having stopped to refresh his troops after toiling in the heat all day, Fraser was surprised, and not particularly happy, to see General Riedesel arrive with elements of the *Braunschweig division*. Rather than send the remainder of the *Advanced Corps* forward to reinforce Fraser, Burgoyne chose instead to send the Germans, as they were already on the east side of the lake and ready to move immediately. However, Riedesel had not brought a resupply of food and other provisions desperately needed by Fraser's troops. Fraser feared that the Germans were not up for a spirited pursuit, a worry validated when Riedesel demanded for the soldiers to rest for the night. Fraser reluctantly agreed, though he did insist that he move his soldiers 2 miles farther forward, now only 3 miles from Hubbardton. Having received word from his scouts that an American force had encamped there, he also got Riedesel to agree to an attack the next morning at 0300.

The next morning, 7 July, Fraser marched to Hubbardton, but without any prior reconnaissance. Afraid that he would alert the Americans and lose the element of surprise, he decided instead to use the cover of darkness to overcome what he thought was an overwhelming disparity between his 850 soldiers and an American force of 2,000—an estimation double the real number of Americans at Hubbardton. This decision meant that rather than a coordinated attack, Fraser intentionally began a hasty attack at 0500 when he entered the hamlet. American sentries immediately spotted his advance unit, and the rest of the American force quickly moved to cover and prepared for a spirited defense.

Most of the Americans occupied positions on Monument Hill, overlooking the crossroads, and it was on this key piece of terrain that much of the Battle of Hubbardton took place. After an initial firefight, Fraser organized his assault into two divisions with the two battalion companies from the *24th Regiment of Foot*, under the

command of Maj. Robert Grant, on the British right to the south and the *Light Infantry Battalion*, under the command of Maj. Alexander Lindsay, 6th Earl of Balcarres, on the British left to the north. Maj. John Acland's *Grenadier Battalion* stayed in reserve. Having moved along the road southeast from Mount Independence, Fraser now formed his assault line eastward toward the western flank of Monument Hill; the Hubbardton crossroads lay another 1,000 yards to the southeast along the road. He then ordered the assault of American positions on top of Monument Hill.

Colonel Hale and the 2d New Hampshire bore the brunt of that first assault, mainly fighting directly against the British companies of the *24th Regiment of Foot*. In that first assault, Major Grant was shot and killed leading his soldiers up the hill. Hale fell back briefly while the *Light Infantry*, personally led by Fraser, attacked the American right, held by Colonel Francis and the 11th Massachusetts. Using the natural cover and hastily built defenses, the Americans fought hard, and the contest dragged on as each side strove to take command of the hill. Finally, after Major Acland maneuvered elements of his grenadiers to support the British regulars who had fallen back, the Americans abandoned the top of the hill but only to another, lower hilltop a few hundred yards east. From the cover of a wood fence, Warner set up another defense and directed his troops to pour fire onto the British cresting Monument Hill. As he was doing so, Major Acland moved his grenadiers along the American left flank, south to the crossroads to cut off an American retreat to Castleton. Still, Warner sensed the British were faltering up on the hill and ordered a counterattack.

Francis led the counterattack with his New Englanders, charging the British left flank and managing to turn elements of the *24th Regiment of Foot* and the *Light Infantry*, threatening to drive them from the hilltop. The battle had now been raging for more than three hours when the British, now defenders, heard what must have literally been music to their ears. The Germans, having fallen behind during the two-hour march early that morning, were now appearing on the field, playing martial music at the command of Riedesel. Having heard gunfire all morning, he had detached

180 soldiers from his jaeger corps, light infantry, and grenadiers to move forward and directed them to reinforce the British left, correctly assessing this was where his allies were weakening. With the welcome arrival of the Germans, Fraser ordered his light infantry to join them in a bayonet charge to retake the hill while his grenadiers began their assault on the American left under Warner's command.

Colonel Francis and the 11th Massachusetts held up well for a while, but they could not continue to defend against the growing number of enemy forces charging up the hill. The combined onslaught of German and British soldiers forced the Massachusetts regiment back to the east and as they retreated, Francis was shot and killed trying to keep order. With the collapse on his right, Warner was unable to maintain his defense against the attack by Acland's *Grenadiers* and pulled his forces back to the east as well. By 1000, the battle was over and the cost for the American rearguard was high. Seth Warner was the only American colonel to leave the field. Colonel Francis was dead and the British captured Colonel Hale and 200 other American soldiers. Additionally, 130 American soldiers were killed. Warner managed to retreat with most of what remained of the American rearguard, but he could not travel south. He had to continue east to Manchester after the British grenadiers took control of the road south.

The British also suffered devastating losses. Of the 150 British soldiers who died, Major Grant was among them. Lord Balcarres and Major Acland were both wounded in the fighting, directly leading bayonet charges. The Americans had fought well, forcing their British pursuers to stop in Hubbardton and take care of their dead, wounded, and prisoners. A continued pursuit of St. Clair and the main American army would have to wait. Along with the wounded, General Fraser had suffered the loss of approximately 25 percent of his total *Advanced Corps*, losses he would never be able to replace given the special training required for his soldiers and the distances from both Canada and Great Britain. Although the Americans also took substantial losses, the bulk of the army remained intact, and new American soldiers coming to the fight either from down state

or from among the local communities in the form of militia would soon replace their losses. In other words, although the Americans had gained time to reorganize after a demoralizing defeat at Ticonderoga, the British had sustained losses they could not afford in the face of an ongoing campaign driving deeper and deeper into American territory.

Retreat to Skenesborough and the Jane McCrea Affair

As Fraser's pursuit of St. Clair began in the early hours of 6 July, Colonel Long sailed his American fleet up Lake Champlain, unafraid of a quick British response by water. He sailed with two galleys (*Trumbull* and *Gates*), two sloops (*Liberty* and *Enterprise*), a schooner (*Revenge*), and about 200 bateaux. These ships were what remained of the American naval presence on the lake following the defeat at Valcour Island in 1776. Aboard were all the sick and wounded soldiers from Ticonderoga, the accompanying surgeons, women, and children, and every bit of provisions, food, ammunition, and salvaged artillery from the old fort. However, Long and his troops traveled at a leisurely pace as they made way for Skenesborough. The plan was to land there, on the southern shore of Lake Champlain, link up with St. Clair and the bulk of the army, and then traverse Wood Creek to Fort Ann. From there, they planned to meet reinforcements from Fort Edward and devise a new operation to stop the British advance.

But General Burgoyne had other plans. Having reduced the water obstacles across the lake at Ticonderoga within less than an hour of the American departure, the British general and his fleet of gunships, including the *Royal George*, the *Inflexible*, and bateaux transporting the *9th, 20th*, and *21st Regiments of Foot* pushed hard up the lake in an attempt to catch their enemy before they could disembark. Long's overconfidence led to a serious oversight: the Americans did not post a rearguard to watch for the British pursuit. When the American fleet landed in the town at 1500 that day, they did so unaware that Burgoyne was only 2 miles behind them.

Skenesborough was, for a brief time, a bustling town with shipbuilding equipment, warehouses, and mills. The town had fallen into American hands after the initial capture of Ticonderoga in 1775 and was instrumental in the construction of the navy built and commanded by Benedict Arnold for the defense of Lake Champlain in 1776. Its operational significance lay in its location and its capacity to act as a military supply depot. It was situated near the mouth of Wood Creek, a passable waterway that flowed from Fort Ann into Lake Champlain. A narrow, rugged path parallel to the creek helped facilitate the passage. South of Fort Ann, a portage road took troops and supplies overland for 15 miles to Fort Edward and the Hudson River. Skenesborough's mills and warehouses could process grains and store supplies used for the American defenses. Now all of that was in jeopardy.

As the Americans unloaded troops and materiel from their boats, Burgoyne landed his three infantry regiments, accompanied by a small contingent of Native Americans, north of the settlement undetected. These British soldiers moved south and east, occupying the high ground northeast of the town and moving farther south to cut off access to Wood Creek and the route to Fort Ann. Americans spotted this force just as Burgoyne's fleet came into sight on the lake, causing immediate panic. Native American warriors sprinted down into the village, attacking individuals, and yelling fiercely, while the British soldiers began firing their muskets. Some American troops kept their heads, setting fire to warehouses and attempting to fight back, but most of the American contingent threw down their weapons and equipment before fleeing headlong into the woods toward Fort Ann. The British ships fired upon the American fleet, destroying three of the bigger vessels—the *Liberty*, the *Revenge*, and the *Enterprise*—along with all the supplies, ammunition, and food still aboard. The Americans abandoned the remainder of those supplies and twenty-eight artillery pieces, which the British later captured. What had remained of the American navy on Lake Champlain was either destroyed or captured, along with everything St. Clair had planned to save from his failed defense of Ticonderoga.

Although a few bateaux managed to enter Wood Creek, most of the surviving Americans marched along the small road to Fort Ann. As they fled in panic, the British pursued with the *9th Regiment of Foot*, under the command of Lt. Col. John Hill. The fort lay less than 10 miles south, but the road crossed multiple intermittent streams. Felled trees and dense brush littered the road. The retreat began late in the afternoon of 6 July, and the exhausted and frightened American soldiers, women, and children continued through the remainder of that night and into the early morning hours of 7 July. Those who suffered through it described it as a nightmare, never able to rest without fear of being overcome by Native American fighters moving forward of their British allies. At the end of the journey, which many completed around 0500, was the disappointing site of Fort Ann, nothing more than a blockhouse surrounded by a palisade of wood. As the survivors huddled in and near the small fort, Colonel Hill reported back to Burgoyne that the Americans appeared demoralized and defenseless. Burgoyne gladly dispatched two more regiments that morning to support Colonel Hill.

When St. Clair made the decision to withdraw from Ticonderoga and split his forces, he sent word of the plan to Schuyler, who had been busy moving around the Northern Department, preparing the rest of the American positions for the British offensive. Schuyler had left Ticonderoga on 23 June and from there traveled to Albany, Saratoga, and Fort Edward, forwarding supplies to Ticonderoga and pleading with state governments to send more militia and supplies to his department. He sent the supplies he received not only to the front but also a hundred miles west of Albany to Fort Schuyler, guarding the Mohawk River access to the city; to Fort Ann, 10 miles south of Skenesborough; Fort Edward, 15 miles southwest of Fort Ann and on the east bank of the Hudson River; and Fort Miller, 8 miles south of Fort Edward and also on the east bank of the Hudson. He wrote continuously to Washington asking for reinforcements and warning him that Ticonderoga was not as strong as previously thought. It was for this reason that Washington had sent General Nixon north from Peekskill on 1 July. When Schuyler received news of Ticonderoga's fall, he was at Fort Edward and immediately dispatched militiamen from

New York, commanded by Col. Henry K. Van Rensselaer, to support the American landing at Skenesborough. These reinforcements arrived at Fort Ann shortly after Colonel Long.

Fort Ann proved to be a minor blessing for Long and the remnants of his disorganized force. With fresh reinforcements arriving from Fort Edward, he regrouped his soldiers still capable of fighting, and moved them back down into the woods along the narrow road to Skenesborough. From there, he ambushed the British soldiers advancing on Fort Ann, driving Colonel Hill and the *9th Regiment of Foot* back, killing thirteen soldiers and wounding another fifteen before the British retreated to the southern shores of Lake Champlain. Although these losses were not debilitating, Burgoyne chose not to press his advantage. Without intelligence on the American reinforcements from Fort Edward, he chose to consolidate his gains on Lake Champlain, allowing the exhausted Americans to burn Fort Ann and continue their retreat to the Hudson River unencumbered by a British pursuit.

Over the next week, the British and American commanders reassessed their situations and made strikingly different decisions. General Burgoyne's pursuit of American forces retreating from Ticonderoga had placed his forces out of position in terms of his overall plan. Writing to Germain on 10 July, Burgoyne rightly claimed success beyond what he had planned months earlier while in London. In the span of only two weeks, his offensive had achieved the complete removal of American forces from Lakes Champlain and George. He had reclaimed for the British Empire all lands north of these lakes and removed a major impediment to British control, Fort Ticonderoga. And he had defeated the main American army in the Northern Department, demoralizing patriots in upstate New York in the process. His rapid victories up to now gave him and his political masters cause to be highly optimistic about the operation's overall success before the fall weather closed out the campaign.

Burgoyne also faced a new challenge, one without an obvious solution. His original plan assumed he would capture Fort Ticonderoga and then move his ships, troops, and materiel across

the portage sites to Lake George. From there, he would sail south, besiege and capture Fort George, and then use the relatively good road network to transit over to the Hudson River and down to Albany. However, his forces were now almost all located on the south shore of Lake Champlain, where the transportation of heavy artillery and other war materiel would be more difficult and access to loyalist support less abundant, if only because the region was less populated. Furthermore, he did not have the horses, oxen, and wagons necessary to carry his artillery and supplies along the 25-mile narrow track from Lake Champlain to the Hudson River. He had to choose either to move everyone and everything back onto boats to sail back to Ticonderoga and then over to Lake George or wait for transportation to arrive from Canada and then move from his location on Lake Champlain. Either decision would take time, allowing his American opponents to prepare for his advance and receive reinforcements from the south. As he took that time to readjust his forces, he had a contingent of Native Americans who were an asset when he was on the move but a liability when he paused. His allies had their own objectives and acted with their own understanding of warfare. They fought for captives, for plunder, and for the eradication of American settlements encroaching on their territory. Keeping them from attacking and destroying settlements while killing or capturing civilians was going to be a challenge to Burgoyne's information campaign to encourage loyalist support. It was a challenge he was ill-equipped to meet.

On 11 July, Burgoyne wrote to both Howe and Carleton, informing Howe of his successes and requesting support from Carleton. From the start of the operation, Burgoyne had been in a predicament. His desire to act as an independent commander while on campaign meant that neither senior military commander on the North American continent could necessarily lay claim to him as their superior. Of course, Burgoyne had always imagined Howe would take that role once British forces combined outside of Albany, but Howe never truly meant to bring his forces north. Additionally, with Howe conducting operations farther south, it was impossible for him to act as the overall commander. Howe's second-

in-command, General Clinton, had approximately 3,000 soldiers in New York City but his orders were to keep them there to defend the harbor and await requests from Howe for support. Carleton had ceased to be Burgoyne's commanding officer the moment Burgoyne crossed from Canada to New York. According to the orders he received from Germain, Carleton was to keep his 3,000 soldiers in Canada for its defense. In his letter requesting reinforcements, Burgoyne tried to convince Carleton that Ticonderoga now lay on the Canadian frontier, giving Carleton an excuse to move 1,000 soldiers down from Québec to Ticonderoga, thus relieving the same number of Burgoyne's forces to continue south. However, Carleton was not convinced by this specious argument. Having been relieved of command of the operation, he had little interest in providing further assistance. Although Carleton would send some support in terms of transportation, Burgoyne was now on his own when it came to troop reinforcements.

Finally, after more than a week of deliberation, Burgoyne decided to take both options available to him. He ordered a portion of his forces and almost all his heavy artillery to board the ships and sail back to Ticonderoga. From there, they were to move across to Lake George, take the better road networks south of that lake, and meet him at Fort Edward. He would lead most of his infantry, dragoons, artillery, and Native American allies down the road south of Lake Champlain to Fort Edward. To do so, he would have to wait for more transportation assets to arrive. The time it took to make this decision and wait for his forces to coordinate their two-pronged advance gave the Americans an opportunity to regroup.

Schuyler and his American army did not squander that opportunity. Schuyler learned of the fall of Ticonderoga on 7 July and was shocked to the core. He immediately sent word to Washington, pleading for more reinforcements. He knew Nixon would soon arrive from Peekskill with his brigade of 600 Continentals, but they would not be enough to stem the tide of the British advance. According to Schuyler, only 700 Continental soldiers and perhaps 1,400 militiamen remained under his command; at this point, he did not know where St. Clair was located with what remained of the Ticonderoga garrison.

Washington read this news with alarm, never imagining Ticonderoga would fall so fast. He reluctantly agreed to dispatch another brigade of 1,300 Continentals from Massachusetts under the command of Brig. Gen. John Glover, along with his most trusted battlefield commander, Maj. Gen. Benedict Arnold. Arnold was renowned in America for his exploits at Ticonderoga in 1775, Québec that winter, and his spirited defense at Valcour Island in 1776. Personally, he was disgruntled by his treatment from Congress, who passed him over for promotion that year and then belatedly promoted him in 1777, without restoring his seniority. Despite Arnold's attempt to resign over the matter, Washington knew his disgruntled general could bolster morale in the north and that his presence would assure the call out of more militia across New York and New England; he ignored Arnold's letter of resignation and ordered him to the Northern Department.

Meanwhile, Schuyler got to work doing everything in his power to obstruct British movements south. He called upon militia brigadier generals Fellows and Ten Broeck to move their brigades north from Fort Edward to Forts Ann and George, salvaging what they could from the sites and then burning the remaining structures. From there, soldiers would fell trees, destroy bridges, and dam creeks to flood lowlands and erase road networks. They would range far and wide, driving away cattle and burning crops in the region to deny them to British foragers, confiscating or dismantling wagons and boats, and damming Wood Creek to make it impassable to British bateaux. From the felled trees, the American militiamen built intricate wooden obstacles, forcing the British to use artillery to clear them instead of simply moving them off the roads. In short, Schuyler created a nightmare scenario for British logistics and maneuver while waiting for reinforcements to arrive at Fort Edward.

Arrive they did. General Nixon's brigade arrived first. New Hampshire answered the call for more militia and reinstated John Stark as brigadier general in charge of all state troops not enlisted in the Continental Army. Stark was another American soldier famed for his participation in the French and Indian War, along with his contributions in the first year of the revolution. However,

when Congress did not promote him in the Continental Army, Stark returned home. Now he only agreed to lead New Hampshire forces once he received a guarantee that he and his soldiers would never fall under the command authority of Congress's army. With that agreement intact, he had no problems raising more than 1,500 troops to his command. They were soon on the march westward.

By 12 July, just a day after Burgoyne sent his letters to Howe and Carleton asking for assistance, Schuyler received another 1,300 Continentals in Glover's brigade, 800 soldiers in Warner's Regiment, and 1,500 Continentals under St. Clair, who had arrived finally from Ticonderoga via Manchester, far to the east. As he received more soldiers, Schuyler sent them further and further afield, continuing his campaign of making the region as inhospitable to the British as he could. He began trading more space for time, pulling his force of more than 6,000 Continentals and militia soldiers from Fort Edward south to Fort Miller and then farther south to better ground of his choosing near Saratoga.

For the next two weeks, Burgoyne and his army struggled to build a major road from Skenesborough to Fort Ann. Unaware whether the Americans still occupied Fort George, the British commander knew he could make that defensive position untenable if he completed the road to Fort Ann, thus positioning the majority of his infantry regiments *behind* Fort George, and forcing the withdrawal of its defenders. He needed to force the evacuation of that fort to allow his artillery support traveling south down Lake George to avoid a long and costly siege at the south end of that lake before they could join Burgoyne and the rest of the expedition. So British and German soldiers and pioneers toiled day and night through bogs and brush and forests, sometimes only making a single mile in a day, until they finally reached Fort Ann on 25 July.

Guarding Burgoyne's eastern flank was Riedesel and most of the *Braunschweig troops*. Headquartered at Castleton, the German commander was having a difficult time raiding and foraging in Vermont because Colonel Warner had returned. Warner managed to reorganize his regiment following its defeat at Hubbardton and was now harassing the German foraging parties while driving away

all draft animals, supplies, and wagons in the region. He wrote to Schuyler, giving him intelligence on German dispositions and notifying him that Warner's soldiers were either in Manchester, ready to fight, or on their way to Fort Edward. Schuyler confirmed that Warner had taken the correct initiatives by ordering him to continue his campaign of harassment and to drive not only cattle and horses away, but any loyalists willing to support the invasion. His operations worked so well that a frustrated Riedesel asked Burgoyne for permission to conduct a regular offensive into Vermont to punish the rebels. Burgoyne denied him the opportunity. The entire army was almost ready to move; it was now 21 July and Burgoyne wanted his troops back.

Six days before he gave that order, Burgoyne received fresh reinforcements from an unexpected and somewhat dubious source. Between 400 and 1,800 new Native American warriors, nominally under the command of two French officers, arrived from the west. The large war party consisted of Fox, Seneca, Chippewa, Tuscarora, and Mohawk warriors. They came from as far west as Lake Superior and two of the most feared officers in New England and on the New York frontier commanded them. The chevalier Luc de La Corne was 66 years old, a very successful fur trader, and had become famous for fighting with Native Americans against the British and Americans during the French and Indian War. Now he fought for the British against the Americans. The other French officer was following in La Corne's footsteps. Charles Langlade was younger than La Corne but also renowned for his exploits in the late war. Burgoyne was both happy and apprehensive about their arrival.

While waiting for the completion of the road to Fort Ann, the rest of the Native Americans allied with Burgoyne had become restive and harder to control. It was certainly the case that they provided excellent intelligence for the British on American positions, but they had also failed to stop Schuyler from completing his obstruction of British movements. Burgoyne was finding it increasingly difficult to stop them from targeting civilians. On 19 July, he personally held a council with the newly arrived Frenchmen and their Native American leaders, directing them to treat the civilians they found mercifully,

only scalping soldiers they had killed in battle, and leaving prisoners and the wounded alive. The Indians appeared to accept his demand for constraint, claiming they were ready to follow him into war.

With the road nearing completion, Burgoyne was ready to renew his march southward. He started on 23 July, moving his *Advanced Corps* forward to screen his movements and guard against ambushes along the way. He had received another ninety-eight horses from Canada, but he was still woefully short of the transportation assets he required. Hundreds of wagon wheels, thousands of hooves, and many more boots from his soldiers tramped on the newly built dirt road, turning it into a muddy mess. Because of the wet summer and the obstructions placed in front of his army during the nights, his army made slow progress, taking two days to travel less than 15 miles to Fort Ann. Fraser and his *Advanced Corps* continued to fight off small parties of American fighters, killing and wounding nineteen Americans during one skirmish.

After reaching Fort Ann on 25 July, Fraser moved his forces forward toward Fort Edward. The Americans continued to contest the departure and it took another five days before he could safely reach Fort Edward, only to find it abandoned by Schuyler. Burgoyne's main force emerged from the wilderness onto the banks of the Hudson River a mile north of the fort that same day and the morale of the British immediately rose at the sight of small settlements, farm fields filled with ripening corn, and a renewed faith that success was near at hand. Bolstering this sense of elation was the appearance of General Phillips who also arrived at Fort Edward with the heavy artillery that had traveled by way of Lake George. Using the better road networks from that lake, Phillips had made good time, aided by the lack of American defenses at Fort George.

If Burgoyne had cause for elation, Schuyler appeared to become more pessimistic. At least, that was the tone of the letters he continued to send to his commander, George Washington. Unhappy with his generals in the Northern Department, Washington ignored St. Clair's letters attempting to defend his decision to evacuate Ticonderoga without a fight. The letters he received from Schuyler seemed focused more on what he could not achieve than on what he

was able to accomplish. In fact, Schuyler had done well anticipating Burgoyne's plans, removing his forces from Fort Edward, destroying Fort George, obstructing Wood Creek, and giving Colonel Kosciusko two brigades to further obstruct all roads leading south from Fort Edward. However, his habit of updating Washington by describing the situation in the direst of terms while constantly asking for more troops, more supplies, and more support eroded Washington's confidence in his abilities as a theater commander.

Congress was also losing confidence in Schuyler. After receiving Schuyler's letter from 22 July, bemoaning the loss of militia from New Hampshire and claiming his lack of confidence to stop the British without significant help, the delegates from New England mounted a concerted effort to relieve both St. Clair and Schuyler. Washington decided to send Maj. Gen. Benjamin Lincoln of Massachusetts north to coordinate with the militia, giving Schuyler another commander popular with the New Englanders, but it was not enough. After heated debates between New York and the New England delegates, Congress began a formal investigation into the events at Ticonderoga on 29 July. It then relieved St. Clair of command on 1 August and Schuyler as commander of the Northern Department on 3 August.

On 4 August, Congress ordered Washington to send General Gates forward to take command, believing correctly that he was the right person to convince New England militia to join the campaign in the necessary numbers to aid the defense. The news crushed Schuyler, but he promised to stay in command at his new headquarters in Stillwater—along the road north of Albany and near Saratoga—until relieved in person by Gates. He would then move south to Albany to continue supporting the defenses until he was able to travel to Philadelphia to face Congress and try to regain his reputation. Gates was exuberant and soon departed for Stillwater, making the long journey in fifteen days.

As this political drama played out in the south, Burgoyne had problems of his own. General Howe was not coming north, and Carleton would not send reinforcements south. To overcome the reality of campaigning in enemy territory with increasingly

extended supply lines, the British commander decided again to pause and transport his supplies forward to the new bases he had captured along the way. He moved about 1,400 soldiers from Fort Ticonderoga to Fort Edward and Fort Miller, along with much of his supplies. While he waited to consolidate his positions, one of the most famous atrocities of the war occurred, an act that would haunt him for the remainder of his career.

Before arriving at Fort Edward, on 27 July a group of Native Americans approached a farm near Fort Edward, encountering two women. Sara McNeil owned the farm, and she had a young guest, 17-year-old Jane McCrea. McCrea's brother served in the militia attached to General Schuyler's forces, but her fiancé was a loyalist serving with Burgoyne. The Indian warriors captured the two women and marched north toward Burgoyne's camp. As the Native Americans moved north, McNeil fell behind, becoming separated from McCrea. American militiamen soon caught up with McNeil's captors, but the party escaped to Burgoyne's camp. Soon thereafter, the rest of the group arrived, and a warrior named Panther was holding a fresh scalp with long blonde hair. McNeil fainted, and news traveled quickly through the camp that the fiancée of a loyalist officer had been killed and many clamored for an inquiry.

Panther claimed the American militia had ambushed his party and accidentally killed McCrea. Because she was already dead, Panther took her scalp as a war trophy. Burgoyne and many others concluded that Panther and another Native American had fought over McCrea, killing her during the dispute. Although some officers did believe Panther, including General Fraser, Burgoyne's official account that Panther killed McCrea became the one accepted across the Atlantic world. Burgoyne admonished his allies to obey his demands to treat civilians with mercy and let the matter drop. He could not afford to lose his protection against American reconnaissance efforts, and he needed Indian war parties to continue sowing terror to his front while gathering intelligence. However, he created a situation in which he was bound to lose. Now, his allies were angry he had questioned the actions of their warriors, whereas his decision not to punish Panther left him open to criticism both in America and back home.

The Murder of Jane McCrea, **John Vanderlyn, 1804 (*Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art*)**

For two weeks following the incident, few paid it much attention. This was one of many such events occurring across the frontier in New York, symbolic of the violence this war was wreaking across the theater. However, the American press saw an opportunity to excite further opposition to the British invasion. They published

lurid accounts of Jane McCrea's death in Philadelphia and Boston, fueled by Burgoyne's own reports. The articles painted a picture of a virtuous White woman torn to pieces between two brutes fighting over their possession of her. Gates, realizing the public relations coup this story offered him and his recruiting efforts, capitalized on the story, using it against Burgoyne when the British general complained of the American treatment of British prisoners. All major American newspapers and London papers published the reports, causing a dip in public support for the British war effort.

The fallout from this incident was wide-ranging but probably not the most important cause for the outcome of the campaign. Although American militiamen turned out across New York and New England and Burgoyne never found the loyalist support he expected to receive, the timing of the news reports was simultaneous to the American militia turnout, not ahead of it. The McCrea fiasco added to the support already growing across the region but was not solely responsible for it. Loyalist support could never reach Burgoyne's expectations. The British invasion was not the clarion call he hoped it would be. Instead, it had the opposite effect, helping to push those trying to maintain neutrality over into the American camp. Nevertheless, the public relations nightmare was a glaring blemish on Burgoyne's career, later becoming a defining example of his failures as a commander during the campaign.

The Siege of Fort Schuyler and the Battle of Oriskany

A key element of Burgoyne's campaign plan was a diversionary attack on Albany from the west. The plan called for a mixed force of British regulars, Canadian militia, New York loyalists, and Native Americans to trek from Montréal to Lake Ontario, sail south to Oswego, and enter the Onondaga River. From there, the army would continue sailing into Oneida Lake before traveling east along Wood Creek. At the point that Wood Creek became shallow and impassable by boat, a portage called the Oneida Carrying Place led to the Mohawk River. Once soldiers transferred the boats and supplies to the Mohawk River, it was clear sailing all the way to Albany, thus threatening

the American defense system in the Northern Department on its western flank.

Two American forts protected this western approach. The first was Fort Schuyler, located at the Oneida Carrying Place, and the second was Fort Dayton found near German Flatts along the Mohawk River. Fort Schuyler, originally Fort Stanwix during the French and Indian War, was a star-shaped fort of earth and wood with four bastions, and walls approximately 100 yards long, 9 feet high, and up to 20 feet thick. A ditch 18 feet deep and lined with fraises and abatis encircled the fort to stop an infantry assault. Although robust for a frontier fort, its construction of earth and wood meant it needed constant repairs to fix damage caused by wind, rain, and snow that rotted timbers and turned earth to mud. The Americans reconstructed the second fort, Fort Dayton, in the fall of 1776 and used it as a supply depot.

The British force assembled for this arduous mission was composed of 1,600 soldiers, militia, and Native American warriors. Two British regular regiments—the *8th* and *34th Regiments of Foot*—would provide firepower and artillery for potential sieges and the discipline necessary for conventional battles. Supporting them was a company of Hesse-Hanau jaegers to act as marksmen and skirmishers. A detachment of the *King's Royal Regiment of New York*, known as *Johnson's Greens* for their commander and their green jacketed uniforms, augmented the conventional forces. Another loyalist unit, *Butler's Rangers*, would provide reconnaissance, while the Canadian militia would provide manpower for moving supplies, digging siege trenches, and performing flank security when on the move. Finally, the largest portion of the force consisted of 600 Native American warriors, from various western tribes, though the Haudenosaunee Mohawk and Seneca fighters constituted the largest contingent, approximately 300 fighters.

Leading such a diverse group was a challenge, but three of the key leaders certainly were qualified to do so. Lt. Col. Barry St. Leger, as the overall commander, had a reputation for working well with Canadian militia and Native Americans. Still, as a regular officer, he needed subordinate commanders who could work better

***Joseph Brant,* Charles Willson Peale, 1797 (*National Park Service*)**

with unconventional forces. One was Col. Sir John Johnson, the illegitimate son of Sir William Johnson, the superintendent for Indian affairs until his death in 1774. Like his father, John was a resident of the Mohawk Valley and fluent in the Mohawk language. John was the commander of the *King's Royal Regiment of New York*. Lastly, to direct his Native American allies, St. Leger could ask for no better leader than Joseph Brant.

Nominally in charge of the Native American contingent (to claim anyone commanded Native American war parties would be a stretch given their more egalitarian form of decision-making), Brant was probably the most famous Native American in the world by 1777. Brant had fought with General Howe in New York in 1776 before heading west to drum up support from tribes living in the west. He worked his way as far west as Fort Niagara when he discovered the Six Nations had promised George Washington their neutrality during the war. The Americans had been working to keep the Haudenosaunee out of the war and away from American frontier settlements. Washington had ordered Schuyler to speak with Haudenosaunee leaders as early as 19 April 1776, though the New Yorker had only made relations worse when he restricted trade to protect merchants. Gates also tried to negotiate with the Iroquois League, in May 1777, but the Indian leadership could only direct the American general to negotiate directly with Brant and his Mohawk followers fighting for the British. Washington met with Seneca leaders in June 1777 to impress them into remaining neutral, but this had the opposite effect; the Seneca openly joined the British war effort six weeks later.

In reality, the Americans were fighting an uphill battle to gain Indian support, and the British had more to offer. It was American settlement on the frontier that drove the Haudenosaunee farther and farther west after 1763. Tension between American frontiersmen and Iroquoian peoples resulted in internecine warfare along the east-west border between the two groups in the 1770s. If the Haudenosaunee wanted anything, it was reliable access to firearms, gunpowder, and ammunition to continue their domination of Native American groups farther west in the Great Lakes region, something Americans could not yet promise but the British could, through their mercantile companies. By mid-July 1777, another loyalist, Col. John Butler, joined Brant in convening a meeting of the Six Nations at Three Rivers, near Oswego. They wanted to convince the Haudenosaunee to abandon neutrality and enter the war on the side of the British. News of a British victory at Ticonderoga had already arrived and Brant convinced four of the six nations to join him with a promise

from Germain that the British would return Native American lands at the end of the war. The Oneida and Tuscarora split with the rest, deciding to join the Americans because many of them had converted to Christianity and lived in mixed frontier towns with their American neighbors. Brant then took his recruited loyalist and Indian followers from that meeting to join St. Leger on his movement to the Mohawk River.

Because of difficulties communicating across distant wilderness terrain, St. Leger was unaware he had less time to create a diversion than previously planned. He spent most of June gathering supplies, transports, and troops at Lachine, 5 miles southwest of Montréal. Wishing to coordinate his offensive with Burgoyne's movements, St. Leger did not depart for Lake Ontario until 26 June. Not anticipating the rapid reduction of Ticonderoga, he moved deliberately to the mouth of Lake Ontario along the St. Lawrence River, stopping at Buck Island for more than a week while he sent a reconnaissance party forward to Fort Schuyler. According to the British scouts, soldiers occupied Fort Schuyler and the soldiers were repairing the fort and preparing for a siege. On 17 July, St. Leger received news that Ticonderoga had fallen two weeks earlier; he now needed to hurry forward, or his diversion would not succeed. The British commander and his army left on 19 July and now hurried on to Lake Ontario and south to Oswego and the Onondaga River.

St. Leger failed to grasp that, although Schuyler and Gates had focused on Ticonderoga's defense as the priority, they had not ignored Fort Schuyler or the importance of guarding their western approaches. At the insistence of Congress, Schuyler sent Col. Elias Dayton and his 3d New Jersey Regiment in the summer of 1776 to repair Forts Schuyler and Dayton in preparation for a possible British offensive. When the 3d New York Regiment arrived on 3 May 1777, the new commander, Col. Peter Gansevoort, saw room for more improvements. Gansevoort was young, only 27 years old when he took command of the fort, but experienced. A member of a wealthy Dutch family in New York, Gansevoort served as a major in the 2d New York Regiment during the invasion of Québec and received command of the 3d New York Regiment. When he and half of his

regiment arrived, they immediately went to work strengthening the fort's defenses in preparation for the coming British assault.

His second-in-command, Lt. Col. Marinus Willett, arrived at the end of May with the remainder of the regiment. Willett was ten years older than Gansevoort and was a veteran of the French and Indian War. He was a resident of Long Island and although he had to work hard to gain the respect of the people living in the west, his experience and knowledge of war fighting made him an excellent second to Gansevoort. Both leaders quickly saw that the French engineer placed in charge of fort maintenance, Capt. Bernard De Lamarquise, was wasting time trying to redesign rather than repair the fort's fortifications. Without the time, resources, or troops needed for such an ambitious plan, Gansevoort followed Willett's advice, sent Lamarquise back to Albany, and put Maj. Nathaniel Hubbell in charge of engineering. The 3d New York Regiment moved quickly to prepare for a siege and focused on providing reliable water sources, clearing fields of fire, storing food, enforcing field sanitation, and protecting gun powder.

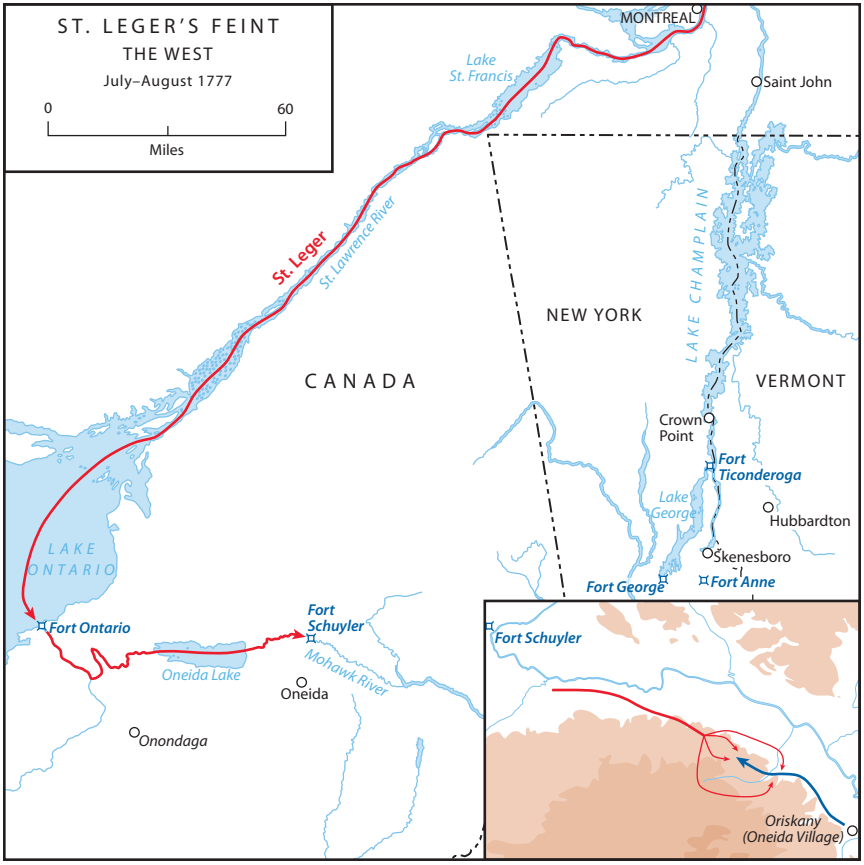
Despite regional tensions between those loyal to Great Britain and those fighting for independence, Gansevoort's intelligence network kept him well-informed on the movements of St. Leger. By July, he felt confident enough in the repairs of Fort Schuyler to begin sending work parties to obstruct Wood Creek to slow the British as they approached the fort. He was operating in a complex environment in the Mohawk Valley, with a population that was originally close-knit but now torn by divided loyalties. As he received more news of a British offensive from the west, he appealed to General Schuyler for more troops. The commander of the local Tryon County militia, Brig. Gen. Nicholas Herkimer, attempted to raise 200 soldiers to send to Gansevoort but could not encourage the local population to do so by mid-July. Herkimer wrote to Schuyler of his difficulties, prompting Schuyler to reluctantly send 200 soldiers from the 9th Massachusetts Regiment westward from Fort Edward, but it would take time for them to arrive.

While Gansevoort waited for reinforcements and Herkimer tried to excite the local populace to join the militia, St. Leger's Native

American allies began appearing near the fort, ambushing American work parties on 3 and 4 July. Then, the Americans learned of the fall of Ticonderoga, followed by intelligence that St. Leger had landed at Oswego. Determined not to allow Fort Schuyler to follow the poor example set at Ticonderoga, Gansevoort sent a quarter of his troops to continue obstructing Wood Creek. Then, on 27 July, an event like the McCrea murder occurred in the valley. Indians attacked three young girls while they were picking berries; two were killed and scalped and the third, though seriously injured, managed to escape to the fort. The attack galvanized the inhabitants of the Mohawk Valley against the British and Herkimer soon had almost 1,000 soldiers ready to serve in the militia. Additionally, Gansevoort's primary source of intelligence, Thomas Spencer, helped use the incident to convince the local Oneida warriors to join Herkimer and his Tryon County militia.

On 1 August, St. Leger crossed Oneida Lake and traveled along Wood Creek, just a day away from the fort (*Map 4*). He knew of Schuyler's reinforcements traveling by flotilla up the Mohawk River and needed to seal off the southern and eastern approaches to the American defenses before the soldiers from the 9th Massachusetts could arrive. He sent a raiding party, under the command of Lt. Henry Bird, forward to intercept the flotilla. The obstructions in Wood Creek slowed down the raiding party and the reinforcements managed to enter the fort with resupplies of food, ammunition, and troops before Bird could place his unit between the Mohawk River and the fort. Still, he decided to remain there, initiating a blocking position both at the landing site on the river and at the entrance to the military road leading back to Albany. Fort Schuyler was reinforced and resupplied but cut off from further support.

It took St. Leger another two days to work his way up Wood Creek, and when he finally arrived outside the fort on 3 August, he was greatly disappointed see a well-repaired defensive system, manned by 750 well-trained soldiers, all prepared to withstand a siege. To make matters worse, St. Leger did not have enough heavy artillery to reduce the fort's walls. Faced with the possibility of a prolonged siege, St. Leger tried to bluff his way through the American defenses. Parading



Map 4

his forces in front of the fort after surrounding it, he sent forward a loyalist officer under a white flag demanding the fort's surrender. Gansevoort refused, believing the demonstration was proof that the British commander did not have enough troops to invest the fort for long and that American reinforcements would arrive before the British could bring their artillery close enough to destroy the fort's walls.

Failing to bluff his way to victory, St. Leger prepared his forces for a siege. He began constructing three artillery batteries 600 yards from the fort on its eastern side. He encamped his regular forces 400 yards behind the guns, built three redoubts to protect them,

and encamped his loyalists and Indians around the fort to prevent messengers from getting word to Schuyler.

As news spread throughout the Mohawk Valley of the British siege, Herkimer found his recruiting efforts easier. The 1,000 militiamen who agreed to support the American defense mustered at Fort Dayton, 32 miles southeast of Fort Schuyler on the south bank of the Mohawk River. Preparing to march on the fort, Herkimer gathered the soldiers into four regiments organized by locale to provide the soldiers with leaders that they knew and comrades who were their neighbors, family, and friends. He also managed to obtain about 400 transportation vehicles, including boats, wagons, horses, and oxen. On 4 August, with 800 soldiers ready to move, Herkimer left Fort Dayton on his way to assault the British siege lines.

Although many of the loyalists and Mohawk Indians had left the valley, Molly Brant (Degonwadonti in the Mohawk language) was still in the area. Watching Herkimer's preparations, she quickly sent word to her brother, Joseph Brant, that a large relief force was on its way to his location. Joseph received this news on 5 August and immediately reported to St. Leger. The British general was not prepared to meet the force with his regular units. Most of those soldiers were still on Wood Creek, clearing the obstructions to allow the remaining British supplies of ammunition and provisions to arrive. Instead, he ordered Colonel Johnson to take command of his unit, *Butler's Rangers*, and all the Mohawk and Seneca warriors under Brant to intercept the relief column. Johnson advised negotiating with Herkimer, hoping to avoid the repercussions of fellow residents of the valley killing one another, but Brant was adamant that they ambush the column, avoiding the loss of surprise. Brant's plan won out, and they prepared their forces to leave early on the morning of 6 August.

Herkimer's force made excellent time, despite the rain and muddy conditions, arriving in Utica at the end of the first day and making it to Oriskany, an Oneida settlement, on the evening of 5 August, a total of 28 miles in two days. However, all was not well among the Tryon County militia. A large component of the officers, led by Col. Ebenezer Cox, wanted to rush headlong toward the fort. These officers were also from the regiments that did not have settlements

close to the Oneida and were not friendly with the Native Americans in the region. When sixty Oneida warriors at Oriskany volunteered to join the small army and provide a screen against possible ambush, Cox and his supporters demanded Herkimer either refuse their help or place them under the control of the 4th Regiment of Tryon County militia who were friendly with their neighboring Oneida residents. Choosing the latter option, Herkimer sent three messengers forward to notify Gansevoort of the militia's approach, requesting that the fort's commander fire three cannon shots when he received the message, then send forth a party from the fort to join the relief column and bring them into the defenses. Pressure from Cox and the other officers led Herkimer to start his remaining 4-mile march on the morning of 6 August without hearing the requested artillery report and without using the Oneida fighters on a screen. He placed them in the middle of the column.

Back at the fort, Colonel Willett observed two enemy detachments moving out of their camps and south along the military road. At 1100, three messengers from Herkimer finally entered the fort, after being forced to move south and west to avoid detection. Gansevoort immediately began preparing a large force to fight their way through the blockade and meet the relief force. Willett would oversee approximately 250 soldiers, fully one third of the entire garrison, but it was too late. Herkimer and the Tryon County militia were already in a fight for their lives.

Brant's planned ambush took advantage of the terrain and the capabilities of his forces. A few miles from Oriskany, the road crossed three ravines. The first was 50 feet deep and 300 yards long, and the road crossing the low, swampy terrain was constructed of logs. After rising back up onto high ground, the road skirted the second ravine that led north down to the Mohawk River and then dipped down into the third ravine. The Mohawk River flowed east-west on the northside of the road, and both sides were confined by thick woodlands. Brant placed the bulk of his force in the woods on the south side of the road between the first and third ravines. He then emplaced another team within the first ravine, ready to attack the wagon trains once the column stopped to react to the ambush

further to its front. Finally, he placed fifty soldiers from *Johnson's Greens*, *Butler's Rangers*, and the German jaegers with rifles in a blocking position within the third ravine. Johnson would initiate the ambush in the front, followed immediately by another ambush along the column's southern flank, cutting off the American retreat in the rear.

However, the ambush did not begin as planned. The loyalists hidden to the American front in the third ravine fired prematurely into the screening force, which had stopped to drink some water. Their firing initiated a premature attack by the Seneca warriors hidden in the woods to Herkimer's south, and the Battle of Oriskany began—without the ambush fully in place—at 1000 on 6 August.

The initial discharges from the loyalists and Native Americans shocked the Tryon County militia into either inaction or panic. The screening detachment was destroyed completely, Colonel Cox was killed almost instantly, and Herkimer was shot in the leg as his horse fell on him. Militiamen up and down the American column fought hand-to-hand, having traveled with their muskets unloaded to avoid accidental discharges. Brant, surprised that the fighting had already commenced, attacked with his own contingent of Mohawk fighters in the column's rear before it became fully trapped in the first ravine. While he was able to target the wagon trains and much of the rear element, the 3d Regiment of the Tryon County Militia, under the command of Col. Frederick Visscher, was able to escape east, running for Fort Dayton.

While much of the column was engaged in vicious close combat along the road, some of the militiamen managed to move north into the cover of the woods. Seeing their commander fall on the road, a few soldiers returned, recovered Herkimer, and moved him to a tree for cover. Herkimer refused removal to Fort Dayton and began giving orders to regain control of his forces and develop a hasty defense. Where the fighting was thickest, on the road, visibility became difficult as the air filled with gray smoke from musket fire. Mohawk and Seneca warriors charged in close to kill and scalp their enemies, giving no quarter. The militiamen fought back with hatchets, knives, and musket butts, as did the Oneida warriors

that accompanied them. Herkimer gathered as many troops as he could find on the high ground to the north, rallying the remaining 200–300 soldiers not wounded or killed into a defensive perimeter. Colonel Johnson tried to overwhelm this defense with a bayonet charge from the loyalist forces, but Herkimer's troops repulsed the attack.

As the battle entered its second hour, the Indians with Brant and Johnson demanded that either they quickly overrun the American defensive position or return to the fort. Those Mohawk and Seneca warriors were now taking too many losses, which their small clans could no longer sustain. Even on the American side, the Oneida warriors, having fought bravely and well, were melting away back to Oriskany, unwilling to sustain more casualties. Johnson, realizing he was about to lose control of most of his forces, quickly ran back to Fort Schuyler to request reinforcements from St. Leger's regular troops. He arrived after noon, and as St. Leger approved the deployment of another seventy-five soldiers, a thunderstorm slammed into the region at 1300, delaying their movement back down the road and halting the battle, as soldiers on both sides attempted to keep their gunpowder dry.

As Johnson hurried back down the road with fresh forces, Gansevoort fired three artillery rounds to notify Herkimer he had received his messages, then ordered Colonel Willett out of the fort with his detachment. The storm also delayed Willett. He did not leave until 1400. When he did sally forth toward the road, he found Indian and loyalist camps empty of men, occupied only by a few warriors, women, and children. Seizing the initiative, Willett ordered his troops to pillage and destroy the encampments, taking possessions, papers, and captives. Still unaware of the battle raging to his east, he took possession of Johnson's personal baggage and papers, killed a few warriors, and captured several other prisoners before returning to the fort to avoid a possible ambush. In the fort, Gansevoort learned of the battle from the prisoners but decided he could not risk a third of his defenders rushing to rescue Herkimer's relief column. Still, the destruction of the camps and the capture of vital intelligence was a success that would have an important impact on the battle a few miles away.

As the storm subsided, the loyalists and Indians began creeping back toward the American defensive perimeter, reinforced by the new detachment brought by Johnson. However, before their attack could begin, the Native Americans received word of the raid on their camps. Concerned about the possible destruction, they began leaving the battlefield. Johnson tried one last gambit to destroy what remained of the Tryon County militia. Ordering his soldiers from the *King's Royal Regiment of New York* to reverse their green coats to show the white lining, he ordered them to march in front of the Americans as if they were a Continental relief force. A few Americans fell for the ruse, rushing forward to greet their rescuers, but most of the soldiers realized the trap and yelled "Tories!" While the loyalists quickly shot down the militiamen who ran forward, those remaining in the defensive perimeter opened fire on the loyalist formation, taking a fearsome toll before Johnson could recall them and admit that the battle was over.

The Battle of Oriskany lasted a little more than five hours and was the bloodiest battle of the revolution in percentages of soldiers killed and wounded. On the American side, 500 soldiers and Oneida warriors were killed, wounded, captured, or declared missing, a 62 percent casualty rate. Among the dead was General Herkimer, who expired ten days after the battle from gangrene after a botched amputation of his leg. The British forces lost seventy loyalist and Indian warriors. Although their casualty rate of 15 percent was much lower than that of the Americans, when combined with the raid on their encampments, the battle served to greatly demoralize the Mohawk and Seneca fighters now back at the fort. The Tryon County militia losses were so great they would not be able to reconstitute a fighting force for months. For St. Leger, he had defeated the American relief force, granting him the time he needed to conduct a conventional siege, but the relations between him and his Native American allies were becoming strained; he would have to take the fort soon or most of his forces were going home.

The Americans defending Fort Schuyler were not ready to surrender. A few days after the battle, on 8 August, Gansevoort

learned of the results of the battle from a British messenger. St. Leger sent news of the American defeat, telling Gansevoort that no new relief force was coming, and that Burgoyne had already taken Albany. Refusing to believe all that he heard, Gansevoort refused to surrender. The next day, St. Leger sent a written demand that the fort surrender, threatening to release the British-allied Indians on the communities throughout the Mohawk Valley. Gansevoort quickly sent out Willett with a written message of his own, rebuking the British officer for making such a threat, against the recognized laws of war, and again refusing to surrender. The British commander tried one last ruse, burning haystacks to make the Americans believe he was retreating, but Gansevoort again refused to be deceived. Starting the next day, 11 August, St. Leger began his artillery barrage on the fort's walls, firing day and night, though with little effect. The British guns were too far away to do much damage, and the mortars could not yet fire over the walls.

Knowing he could not hold indefinitely, Gansevoort decided to send two messengers to Albany to request another relief force. They made it to Fort Dayton in two days, covering 50 miles in forty-eight hours. There, they learned Schuyler, having received news of the previous battle, had already dispatched a small relief force of Massachusetts Continentals under the command of Brig. Gen. Ebenezer Learned. They quickly commandeered horses and raced to meet the Continentals in Albany.

St. Leger intensified his efforts to reduce the fort before he lost control of his Native American contingent. He wrote to Burgoyne, asking for reinforcements but receiving a negative reply; the British commander was having troubles of his own on the Hudson River. St. Leger then tried to divert the stream providing fresh water to the fort, but Gansevoort had foreseen this move, having ordered his troops to dig two wells within the walls of the fort. To force support from the surrounding communities, the British commander dispatched Captain Butler and his *Rangers* to intimidate the locals into providing men and supplies, but Americans at Fort Dayton captured them. Still, Gansevoort's soldiers were becoming fatigued as the British siege lines zigzagged closer to the walls. What neither

St. Leger nor Gansevoort knew was that an American relief force was also coming closer to the fort.

On 13 August, Schuyler decided to place General Arnold in charge of the fort's relief. Arnold was perfect for the job, aggressive and motivated. He rushed headlong to Albany, met up with Gansevoort's messengers, then rode quickly to Fort Dayton. By 17 August, Arnold was consolidating his Massachusetts troops and was ready to move on to Fort Schuyler. Without much support from the local citizens who were still reeling from their losses a few weeks earlier, Arnold decided to try a ruse of his own. On 21 August, using a captured loyalist, Han Yost Schuyler, he sent news to St. Leger that he was moving forward with 3,000 Continental soldiers. Arriving on 22 August, Han Yost Schuyler claimed to have evaded capture and warned of a very large American relief force at Fort Dayton.

St. Leger had been busy that last week, doubling his work efforts to breech the fort walls as quickly as possible. However, Gansevoort, knowing his time was running out, set soldiers on the walls to fire into the siege trenches during the day, killing the engineers and forcing St. Leger to only work at night. Then, on 21 and 22 August, St. Leger received two bits of bad news. The first was that Burgoyne had suffered a terrible defeat in Vermont, and the second was that a large American force was headed his way. At a council of war, the British commander tried to convince his Native American allies to repeat their ambush, but they refused. The American force was too large, and 200 Haudenosaunee warriors had already left for home, with more ready to leave. St. Leger had no choice. On that very day, he ordered his forces to pack up and retreat to Montréal, leaving large stocks of food, supplies, and ammunition behind.

Seven British deserters came to the fort to give Gansevoort the news. Not sure if he could believe them, the American commander sent out a patrol that confirmed the report. He quickly sent word to Arnold, who rushed forward to bring the garrison much-needed food and supplies. Arnold also sent a scouting party along the British route to ensure they were truly leaving for Canada, the scouts arriving on the shores of Oneida Lake just in time to see the last of the British bateaux sailing out of sight. Arnold rested his troops

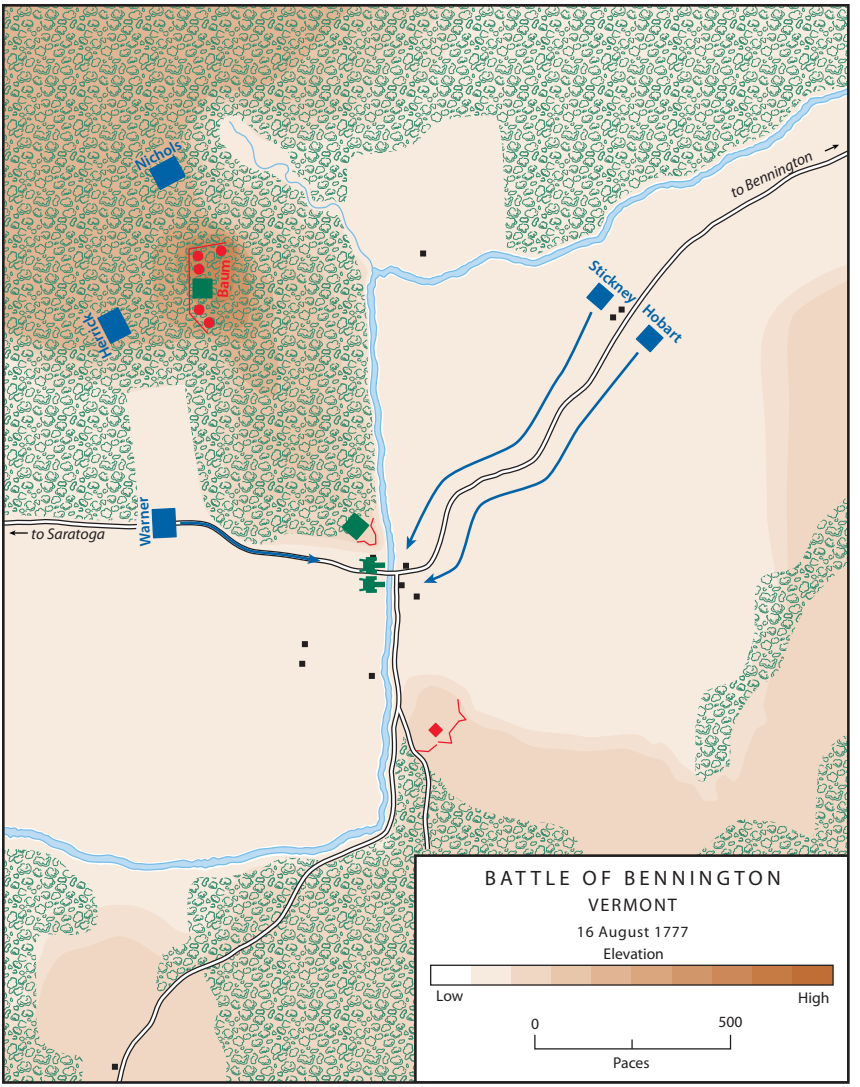
Colonel Arnold: who commanded the Provincial Troops sent against Quebec, through the wilderness of Canada and was wounded in that city, under General Montgomery, **Thomas Hart, 1776 (*Brown University Library*)**

for two days, returning to Fort Dayton on 28 August. From there, he sent word to his new commander, General Gates, of the victory and of his return to the main American camp at Saratoga with 1,200 soldiers and a few friendly Oneida warriors. Burgoyne ordered St. Leger to join the main army, via Lake Champlain, to Fort Edward, but he never made it past Ticonderoga before the campaign ended.

The Battle of Bennington

While St. Leger struggled in the west, Burgoyne had troubles of his own (*Map 5*). On 3 August, the same day British forces arrived at Fort Schuyler, Burgoyne received a letter from General Howe. Written on 17 July, it congratulated Burgoyne on his success at Ticonderoga and notified him plainly that the British forces in New York City were leaving to capture Philadelphia and attempt a decisive victory over Washington and the main army. If Washington failed to follow Howe south and chose instead to support the Northern Department, Howe would turn around and pursue. Otherwise, Burgoyne was on his own. General Clinton remained in New York City with enough soldiers to defend that all-important port but might be able to send some help up the Hudson, if necessary. Finally, Howe ordered Burgoyne to clear the state of New York of all American resistance, once he had captured Albany.

However, Burgoyne's situation had changed drastically since Howe wrote his letter. Having left Canada with almost 12,000 troops, including St. Leger's diversionary expedition, British and German regulars, loyalists, Canadian militia, and Native American allies, he was now down to about half that number. The summer of 1777 was hot and humid, with frequent thunderstorms. The sick rate among his soldiers was up to 15 percent and he had to relegate fully 30 percent of his soldiers to garrison duty along his ever-extending supply lines. Very few loyalists came to support Burgoyne's campaign, despite the assurances of local loyalists like Philip Skene, and his Native American allies were beginning to abandon him. The contingent of Ottawa warriors left in early August, claiming they had promised only to stay until then and needed to begin their journey home,



Map 5

hundreds of miles away. Other native allies sought to renegotiate the terms of their service in light of related concerns. In other words, the British expeditionary force was no longer large enough to do more than assault Albany, and Burgoyne was beginning to think that would not happen before the end of August.

The British commander was running out of time and supplies, as well. He spent far too long at both Skenesborough and Fort Edward. Over the course of thirty-nine days, his army had moved only 31 miles and was still 40 miles from Albany. This incredibly slow movement was not solely because of American opposition. Schuyler had consistently given ground as Burgoyne slowly advanced, first to Fort Miller on the east side of the Hudson, then across the Hudson River to Saratoga, and then to Stillwater, 24 miles south of Fort Edward. Burgoyne's supply lines were now more than 50 miles long, over primitive, poorly constructed, and muddy roads. To transport those supplies, his quartermaster commanded only 180 wagons and carts, all that had arrived from the 500 wagons Burgoyne contracted in Canada at the beginning of the offensive. His large artillery train required 400 horses to move along the roads, horses not available for supply and transport and that actually increased his need for supplies, mostly fodder. All these factors required him to take more time at each encampment to build up his supplies before moving forward; he finally advanced his army from Fort Edward to Fort Miller, 8 miles south, on 7 August.

To make his situation worse, the American force to his front was growing as his forces shrank. Schuyler encamped his army at Stillwater on 4 August, a day after his removal as commander of the Northern Department. Unaware of the change in his position, Schuyler continued to call for more militia from New England, though without much response. Still, he now probably outnumbered his enemy to the north, having welcomed another 1,200 soldiers from General Glover's brigade. To his east, General Lincoln reported the arrival of 500–600 militiamen from Vermont, with more coming in every day. He believed he would soon have as many as 2,000 soldiers. In addition, a change in American command was about to occur that would increase popular militia support from other New England states. Schuyler moved his army one last time, down to Van Schaick Island, just 10 miles north of Albany, on 13 August when he learned of his relief. General Gates took command when he arrived on 19 August, a move that pleased Massachusetts and Connecticut and changed their responses to calls for more support.

Although Burgoyne could not know all the political and military changes occurring within the American command structure, he was aware time was running short. The news that St. Leger was now attacking Fort Schuyler encouraged him, but he needed to gather more supplies quickly and make a fast move for Albany before the Americans could further prepare their defenses. As he moved into the area of Fort Miller, he sent Fraser and the *Advance Corps* across the Hudson River to secure a landing site. He built a boat bridge in preparation for a rapid move down the river's west bank but delayed crossing as long as he could, because that move would place the river between his army and their supply lines. He decided, two weeks after the fact, to heed the advice of General Riedesel who, in mid-July, had recommended a raid into Vermont. He had intelligence that the region to their east contained American supply depots, horses, cattle, and wagons. On 7 August, Burgoyne ordered that raid to begin.

Rather than give the mission to Fraser's *Advance Corps*, which was tailor-made for a large-scale raid, Burgoyne chose the German commander, Lt. Col. Friedrich Baum. Baum was a veteran of the Seven Years' War who had not served in North America. He was an accomplished leader but had never led an independent command. His forces were a mixed lot of German and British regulars, American loyalists, Canadian militia, and Native American warriors, but he only spoke German, whereas they spoke German, English, French, and several Native American dialects. None of the various units had ever worked together in combat, unlike Fraser's *Corps*. However, Riedesel had proposed the raid originally and the German officers were complaining about their lack of combat opportunities. On paper, the diversity of elements made sense. The Native Americans would provide a screen and reconnaissance, the loyalists would offer expert knowledge of the terrain and settlements and help persuade other loyalists to join, Capt. Alexander Fraser would command a company of marksmen, and a few other British officers could translate for Baum. Simon Fraser opposed the use of this ad hoc unit instead of his own *Corps* but declined to raise his objections directly to his commander.

Baum's initial objective was to seize supplies and transportation animals en route to Manchester, Vermont, but Burgoyne gave him several other tasks. He would encourage loyalists in settlements along the way to join the British invasion and, if he could not, intimidate the locals into providing support. He was also to spread disinformation about his intent, possibly fooling the Americans that he was the vanguard of the main army, heading for the Connecticut River Valley. In addition, he was to keep a sharp eye out for militia movement around him, avoiding potential ambushes. Baum commanded of a total of 762 men; this was a large list of tasks for such a relatively small force. General Riedesel certainly saw it that way but when he complained to Burgoyne and demanded a quick out-and-back raid, Burgoyne refused to change the mission.

As Baum and his troops prepared to leave on 11 August, Burgoyne rode up personally to see them off and gave Baum one last order: the objective had changed from Manchester to Bennington. Intelligence obtained by the British confirmed a large supply depot at Bennington, along with the wagons, horses, cattle, and oxen they so desperately needed. Neither Baum nor Burgoyne were worried much about American militia opposition in the area. These same soldiers had harassed the British supply lines for the last few weeks and always were driven off easily.

While Baum started his units forward, first to the Batten Kill across the Hudson River from Saratoga, and then east toward Cambridge, New York, the Americans in Vermont were gathering in ever-increasing numbers in Manchester. The Vermont Council of Safety, in mid-July, wrote to New Hampshire and Massachusetts for assistance. Following the Battle of Hubbardton, Colonel Warner moved his headquarters to Manchester and conducted hit-and-run operations against the British supply lines into August. General Stark quickly enlisted three full battalions of militiamen in New Hampshire and set off for Manchester to link up with his longtime friend, Warner. Both Warner and Stark conferred with General Lincoln and although Stark refused to follow Lincoln's orders, as he was a Continental officer, he agreed to go with Warner to combine

their soldiers in the defense of Vermont at Bennington. They arrived there on 11 August.

Colonel Baum initially had a slow start, turning around on 12 August when he received false news that a large American force was to his front. Once he realized his mistake, he began anew on 13 August and made good time that day, traveling 20 miles to Cambridge. Along the way, American militia detachments harassed him. That did not slow him down but did much to spread the word of his advance. When he arrived at Cambridge, he received both good and bad news. The good news was that St. Leger had defeated a large militia force at Oriskany. The bad news was that another large militia force was gathering on his objective, approximately 1,800 militiamen in and around Bennington—only 12 miles away. Confident of loyalist support that should materialize as word of his incursion grew, Baum prepared to move into Bennington the next day.

Loyalist support did appear the next day—at least Phillip Skene assured Baum they were true loyalists. Actually, most of them were spies and scouts sent there by Stark. As Baum moved closer to Bennington, the American commander received word of his every move and accurate intelligence on his unit's composition. Determined to delay Baum as long as he could to prepare for an upcoming battle, Stark sent forward Col. William Gregg and 200 New Hampshire militia to Sancoick, a small settlement 7 miles west of Bennington on a creek with a mill and a bridge. Gregg's unit fired on Baum as his soldiers entered the hamlet, destroyed the bridge, then retired back to Bennington. As Baum's troops repaired the bridge, loyalists and prisoners gave him word that 1,500–1,800 American militia were up ahead but planned to retreat should Baum's forces enter Bennington.

Having met resistance earlier and in greater numbers than expected, Baum looked for guidance. While repairing the bridge, the German commander sent word to Burgoyne, updating him on the progress of the raid and the disposition of the forces to his front. Burgoyne told him to make the best decision he could when he arrived at Bennington: either drive off the Americans or, if he did not have the numbers to do so, dig in, defend in place, and await reinforcements that would arrive soon.

Later that morning, Baum marched his forces forward to Bennington, where Stark and Warner waited for the opportunity to deal a damaging blow to the British offensive. They traveled along the Walloomsac River that meandered eastward toward the town. When the raiding force arrived at a small hamlet—present-day Hoosick, New York—4 miles from Bennington, Baum was shocked to see Stark's entire brigade arrayed on the ridgeline across the river, blocking his approach to Bennington.

When the American forces did not retreat, Baum realized he was outnumbered. He followed his orders and built a defensive position to await reinforcements. On the west side of the Walloomsac River, near the bridge that connected to the road to Bennington, he ordered the construction of a redoubt on top of a 300-foot hill to house his German dragoons and British sharpshooters. He placed another, smaller redoubt at the foot of the hill guarding the bridge with more dragoons and his two small artillery pieces, and then spread his loyalists and Canadians in hasty defensive positions along the riverbank. Just across the river and south of the hill, he built another redoubt, known as the Tories Redoubt. As construction began, Baum sent word back to Fort Miller requesting reinforcements, while Stark detached small teams of American skirmishers to harass those building the defenses, killing thirty defenders throughout the night.

While Baum dug in, his commanders farther west worked to reinforce his position. Burgoyne received Baum's message at 0500 on 15 August and immediately dispatched another 650 soldiers—a battalion of German grenadiers and another of jaegers—under the command of Lt. Col. Heinrich Breymann. Assembled quickly, they departed at 0900 but a thunderstorm erupted over the battlefield to the east, ending any chance for a military engagement that day.

Stark and Warner were not idle. Throughout the day they concocted a plan to assault the German and British defenses in a three-pronged attack. Maneuvering from east to west, the northern column, with 250 soldiers under the command of Col. Moses Nichols, would move north and west to assault the main redoubt's northern flank. The southern column consisting of 300 soldiers under the command of Col. Samuel Herrick, would wade across

the Walloomsac River far west of the Tories Redoubt, circle north than back east and attack the main redoubt on its west flank. In the middle, another 200-soldier column commanded by Col. David Hobart and Col. Thomas Stickney would attack the Tories Redoubt and the bridge. Stark would lead the remaining New Hampshire militia to support the middle while Warner held his Vermonters in reserve. The American force now totaled close to 2,000 soldiers.

When the rain subsided on the morning of 16 August, Stark prepared to attack, while Baum remained in his defenses. Some of his officers had advised him to retreat to Sancoick during the night but having received word from Burgoyne that Colonel Breymann was on his way with a relief force, he chose to remain. Around noon, the Americans began their assault, and although the defenders noticed their movements in the woods around the river, Baum assumed they were loyalist forces repositioning. Three hours later, Herrick initiated the attack by firing on the main redoubt from its rear. Then all the American columns began firing into the various defensive positions, which did not support one another mutually, and overwhelmed each of them piecemeal. Herrick's troops joined Nichols, and once all the artillerymen were killed and the officer in charge of the left rear surrendered, the encirclement of the main redoubt was complete. Demoralized, the Indian warriors fled and although the Germans fought bravely, Baum was wounded mortally as the Americans overran all his positions. Fighting devolved into hand-to-hand combat, and the Americans killed, wounded, or captured almost every soldier of the raiding force.

Though the American militia had, up to this point, shown excellent discipline under fire, their officers soon lost control as the troops began looting the German and loyalist positions. Meanwhile, Colonel Breymann had arrived finally with another two battalions to snatch away the American victory. However, it had taken him too long to get there. Fort Miller was only 24 miles away, but Breymann did not arrive until thirty-two hours after he started his march. Later, he would claim in his defense that the muddy roads and two artillery pieces he dragged along with him slowed down his force but it was still hard to understand how it could have taken him so long

***The Battle of Bennington* (*National Guard Heritage Painting by Don Troiani, courtesy of the National Guard Bureau*)**

to travel to the battlefield when he knew speed was of the essence. When he marched into Sancoick, loyalist Phillip Skene greeted him. Skene had evaded capture and urged the German commander to press on the 2 miles to Hoosick. However, Stark had learned of Breymann's approach and sent four detachments forward to delay his advance until the American commanders could regain control of their soldiers. Those detachments began firing down on Breymann's soldiers, forcing him to deploy to defend at Sancoick, while Stickney marched his troops forward and the battle began anew.

For three more hours the Americans and Germans fought, Stark bringing up reinforcements as Stickney's troops fatigued and began to falter. At some point toward the end, the German grenadiers began to gain the upper hand when Warner arrived with his regiment and the Germans finally retreated. What began as an orderly withdrawal soon turned into a rout, American soldiers pursuing the fleeing Germans until darkness fell. Breymann and what remained of his

command managed to cover the 24-mile distance back to Fort Miller in a little over twelve hours this time. They encountered Burgoyne at the head of the *20th Regiment of Foot*, advancing to support the raid. But one look at Breymann and Burgoyne knew he was too late. Without a word, he turned around and returned to his headquarters.

As the remaining stragglers drifted into camp over the next few days, the British commander counted his losses at fully 1,000 soldiers and allies killed, wounded, or captured from the 1,400 soldiers he had sent to Vermont. With the loss of 70 percent of his raiders, he had sustained a full 15 percent loss of his entire force. Now with less than 5,000 soldiers for the remainder of the campaign, he had gained nothing more than a few horses and cattle, resources that made no appreciative difference to his ongoing supply issues. Furthermore, he achieved no more success recruiting loyalists and no new intelligence. His campaign was now in question. To make matters worse, the Hudson River had swollen from rain runoff, destroying his boat bridge, and he had done little to damage his enemy's ability to defend the Northern Department.

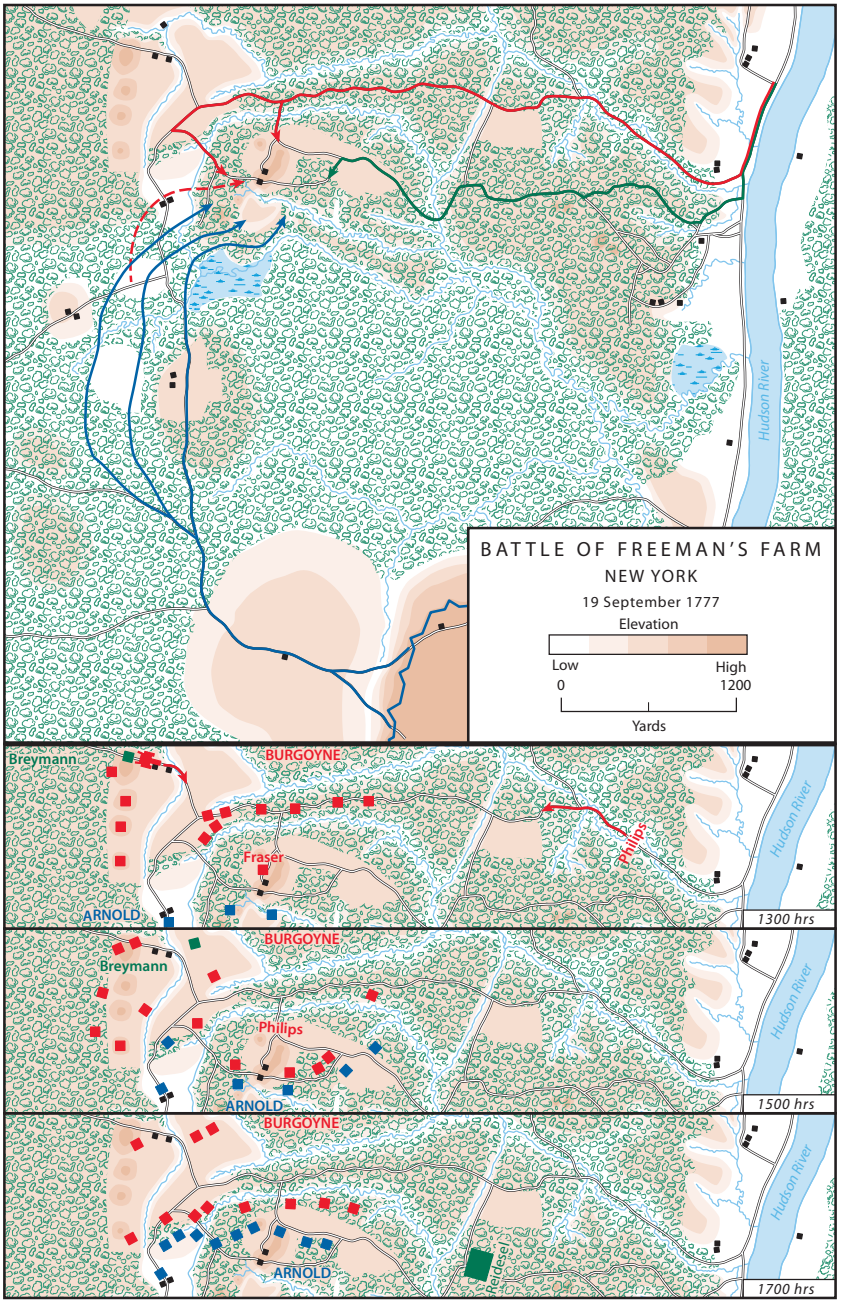
The American militia under Stark's command had only lost thirty soldiers killed and forty wounded. The success at Bennington, combined with the coming news of an American victory at Fort Schuyler, encouraged New Yorkers and New Englanders to join the growing militia units in droves, reversing the force ratio between the Americans and British. To make matters worse for Burgoyne, Bennington was the last straw for his Indian allies. They left his army en masse, leaving him with less than fifty warriors by the time Joseph Brant arrived at Fort Miller on 28 August. Despite Brant's attempts to keep even that small number with the army, they too left soon thereafter, leaving only the loyalists in Fraser's *Advance Corps* to provide reconnaissance. For the next few weeks, the British commander could do little more than remain in place, stockpiling supplies coming in from Ticonderoga and Skenesborough as he planned his next move.

The Battle of Freeman's Farm (The First Battle of Saratoga)

Just three days after the Battle of Bennington, Gates arrived at Van Schaick Island to relieve Schuyler (*Map 6*). Schuyler was understandably upset at his removal but decided to move to Albany and continue to get supplies to the American army. Using his expert knowledge of the local area and his merchant connections, he kept provisions and transportation assets moving north to facilitate the campaign. He also held a meeting with Oneida and Tuscarora leaders, convincing 150 Oneida warriors to join Gates and provide additional reconnaissance capabilities. Gates was well-received by the soldiers of the army, but despite an overwhelming show of support, he was not respected universally by those serving on his staff. Some senior officers remained loyal to their previous commander, working at times to undermine Gates's authority, a point that would become important as the campaign ended.

Over the next ten days, the American army continued to grow. On 16 August, Washington dispatched the Rifle Corps to Peekskill to load barges for Albany. Its commander, Colonel Morgan, had served on the Virginia frontier as a teamster in the French and Indian War, though his experiences left him with a lifelong hatred of the British military. After living on the frontier in the interwar years, he joined one of ten rifle companies at Boston as a captain, traveled with Benedict Arnold to Québec in December of 1775, was captured, and exchanged back to the Continental Army in August 1776. Promoted to colonel, Morgan commanded the Rifle Corps. He and his soldiers arrived in the army's camp on 29 August.

Other reinforcements arrived, as well. Arnold returned from Fort Schuyler with 1,200 Continentals from Massachusetts, whereas Connecticut and Massachusetts sent thousands of newly enlisted militiamen from their states. To protect the Rifle Corps, Gates placed Major Dearborn in command of a Light Infantry Corps to act as skirmishers and scouts, and to protect the riflemen when engaged in combat. To the east, Gates kept General Lincoln in command of approximately 2,000 militiamen, including Stark's New Hampshire


BATTLE OF FREEMAN'S FARM
NEW YORK
19 September 1777
Elevation
Low
High
0
1200
Yards
Hudson River
Breymann
BURGOYNE
Fraser
Philips
ARNOLD
1300 hrs
1500 hrs
1700 hrs
Reidesel

Map 6

Militia brigade at Bennington, to harass Burgoyne's supply lines to the north at Ticonderoga, Fort George, and Skenesborough. By the beginning of September, Gates commanded more than 7,000 soldiers on the west side of the Hudson, and he decided to move north while Burgoyne remained encamped at Fort Miller. On 8 September, the American army left Van Schaick Island and marched back toward Stillwater, intent on finding good terrain to establish a defense to meet the anticipated British attack.

Arriving at Stillwater the next day, Gates instructed his deputy quartermaster, Col. Morgan Lewis, to begin setting up positions for the various brigades. The chief engineer, Colonel Kosciusko, became adamant that Stillwater was not the best place to build a defensive position, dominated as it was by high ground on all sides. Instead, Kosciusko requested that he and a small party scout farther north for a better position—one he found on 12 September after an exhaustive search. Named for a local tavern, Bemis Heights was a bluff towering 100 feet above the road to Albany skirting along the west bank of the Hudson River. As this high plateau jutted eastward toward the river, it forced the low-lying flood plain along the west bank to narrow to only a few hundred yards, canalizing any forces marching south. Atop the heights, the meadows and cleared fields flattened out toward the west, rising slowly and providing excellent terrain upon which to construct entrenchments and fortifications. To the west of this region, hills and dense woodlands made the movements of large military formations difficult. To the north, deep gullies and ravines made cross-country travel arduous, even impossible for heavy artillery and cavalry. Kosciusko was convinced this was the best place to defend, and Gates ordered his units forward to begin constructing their defenses as they awaited the arrival of their enemy.

Back at Fort Miller on 10 September, General Burgoyne finally made the decision to continue his march south. Having managed to procure five weeks of supplies, he moved his army, still on the east side of the Hudson, down to Batten Kill where they remained for two days as another storm raged through the valley. On 13 September, more than two months after capturing Fort Ticonderoga, the British and German army finally crossed the Hudson on a floating bridge

of boats and moved into the town of Saratoga. Burgoyne was now in a precarious situation. His army was reduced greatly by sickness and combat losses. In addition, he needed to secure his lines of communications. He dismantled the floating bridge to allow his boats to transport supplies while he marched farther south but also cut his supply lines to the north. He no longer had an effective force to provide either intelligence of the American forces to his front or to screen his movements from the enemy. His soldiers did not travel with winter uniforms, having left them at Skenesborough to make forced marches possible, and the arrival of the fall season made the lengthening nights colder. Time was running out for Burgoyne to reach his objective before winter arrived and his troops fell victim to exposure.

Having now arrived in a region of more settlement and farmlands, ostensibly providing the army with excellent opportunities to renew their supplies, the British and German soldiers found it increasingly difficult and dangerous to forage as they moved south. The American forces acting as a screen for Gates's defensive positions on Bemis Heights harassed Burgoyne's soldiers at every turn. Without their Indian allies, they were exposed to these skirmishers and scouts, day and night. With little hope of resupply, officers extolled the men to reserve their ammunition, only firing if they were certain about their targets. Under these fatiguing conditions and forced to repair every bridge that the Americans had destroyed, the army made only 3 miles to Dovegate, New York, by 15 September. The next day, Burgoyne personally led a detachment of 2,000 soldiers to Swords House, still more than 3 miles from Bemis Heights, attempting to use force to protect his troops toiling to repair bridges.

The British commander still had no idea where the Americans were located. Fraser's *Advance Corps* could not penetrate the American screen. Then, on 18 September, while soldiers from the *Braunschweig troops* attempted to repair yet another bridge, hundreds of American soldiers began appearing on the ridgeline to the south. The *Regiment von Specht* came forward with about 100 soldiers to disperse them, but the Americans kept arriving, flying flags from several regiments. Afraid this might be a large reconnaissance force,

the Germans brought forward artillery and several more regiments. After a tense standoff, the Americans melted back into the woods, but it was clear that the American main positions were close. Still, they could not know that the American force they had just faced was 1,500 soldiers strong, led by General Arnold with orders to ambush a major portion of the German forces. They were also unaware that they were about 3 miles from a strengthening American defensive system ready to block any farther movement south. Although the enemy forces to the Germans' south were of major concern, they also were having troubles to their rear.

To the east, General Lincoln followed the guidance from Washington, Schuyler, and Gates to attempt to sever the British supply lines. As the British and Germans slowly ground their way forward, Lincoln sent three detachments of 500 militiamen apiece to attack Skenesborough, Fort George, and Ticonderoga. Col. Benjamin Woodbridge and his force attacked and recaptured both Fort Ann and Skenesborough on 14–15 September. Col. John Brown marched his unit to Fort George, retaking it on 15 September, before continuing his march north to the other end of Lake George. Overrunning the portage site between that lake and Ticonderoga, he captured hundreds of British soldiers. He also freed about 100 American soldiers captured in July and seized tons of provisions, ammunition, supplies, and 200 bateaux. Col. Samuel Johnson marched his detachment directly to Fort Ticonderoga, demanding its surrender on 18 September. That same day, the *Braunschweig soldiers* faced off with Arnold, but the British garrison commander, General Powell, refused to comply. He still had about 1,000 British soldiers in the fort, and the American militia arrived without the artillery to conduct a siege. Even, though the fort was still in British hands, the American militiamen had managed to sever all communication and supply lines to the south. Burgoyne now was cut off from Canada. Although his decision to cross the Hudson made resupplying his army much more difficult, the presence of American militia in control of the forts between his army and Ticonderoga meant communicating with Canada was now fraught with danger, and the choice to retreat would entail fighting back to Québec.

The Americans at Bemis Heights, under the direction of Colonel Kosciusko, spent the week between 12 and 19 September building their fortifications. The defensive plan was a good one. On the far right of the American defenses, entrenchments and walls guarded the Hudson River and the Albany road, built across the road and floodplain below the bluffs. Three artillery batteries placed along the eastern edge of the heights, known as the North Redan, Bemis Heights Redoubt, and South Redan, watched over these defenses. From those batteries, entrenchments snaked their way northwest for a mile, anchored on the extreme left by a farmhouse, Nielson's Farm, which sat on high ground. From there, the trench line angled back to the south for another half mile, guarding the army's western flank. Gates commanded the right wing of the army, occupying the long leg of the defensive line and the artillery, while Arnold commanded the left wing, defending the western flank and including both the Rifle Corps and the Light Infantry Corps. About a quarter of a mile in front of the trenches was a deep gully, protecting the defenders from both an artillery barrage or a cavalry charge. The shape of the defensive works allowed the Americans to use interior lines to quickly reinforce positions under attack while forcing the British to contend with exterior lines that would slow their ability to respond to similar emergencies. However, the defenses were not without a weakness. To the far west, but not out of artillery range, was another piece of high ground that, if seized by the British, could allow them to flank the Americans and attack them from their rear.

On the same day that the *Regiment von Specht* faced Arnold's force, Burgoyne decided to lead another reconnaissance force forward of Swords House to gain intelligence about the disposition of the American defense. With that knowledge, Burgoyne hoped to outflank the Americans to the west and force them to abandon their defenses, clearing the way to Albany. Delayed by fog, his army prepared to move across the difficult terrain. As his troops loaded supplies onto the boats to float down the river alongside his advancing army, the British commander organized his forces into three columns. To the west, he placed General Fraser in command of 2,400 soldiers in the *Advance Corps* and an additional 550 *Braunschweig troops* in

Breymann's corps. Accompanied by two 6-pounder cannons, this column would travel west then south, skirting another gully known as the Great Ravine, locate the American left flank, and seize the high ground in the west to flank the defensive positions. Burgoyne would accompany the center column, commanded by General Hamilton and comprised of the *9th, 20th, 21st*, and *62d Regiments of Foot*. Four 6-pounders would move with them. This main effort, 1,700 soldiers strong, would find and assault the American defensive line by crossing the Great Ravine well west of the Albany road and Hudson River. The third column, commanded by General Riedesel and accompanied by General Phillips, included the remaining three regiments from the *Braunschweig Corps*, what remained of the *Braunschweig dragoons*, and the *Hesse-Hanau artillery*, a total of 1,600 soldiers. Acting as the left column, the German force would move along the Albany road, secure the eastern flank of the army, control the road, and attempt to fix Gates in place to facilitate the main attack. The *Hesse-Hanau infantry regiment*, numbering 590 soldiers, would guard the army's rear at Swords House while what remained of the Native American allies, loyalists, and Canadian militia would move as a screen ahead of all three columns. The hospital, artillery train, and baggage wagons would follow Riedesel.

Moving out at 0900 on 19 September, the center column made good time, despite crossing the Great Ravine. The Americans had failed to destroy the bridge across the stream at the bottom of the ravine or to contest the crossing. By noon, Burgoyne and Hamilton's force was approaching the wood line north of a clearing known as Freeman's Farm. Named for its owner, a loyalist traveling with Burgoyne on campaign, the farm was an L-shaped clearing with the long leg of the *L* running east-west toward the Hudson River. It was cultivated with wheat and rye for 66 acres. The short leg also was clear, though dotted with trees and fallow. It ran south toward the American defenses that were only a mile and a quarter from the southern boundary of the farm. Surrounding the perimeter of the farm were fences and dense woodlands, providing cover for soldiers before entering the clearing. A few small buildings occupied the right angle made by the two legs of the *L* on the small rise that formed the

high ground in the clearing. The other two columns moved more slowly, Fraser having to travel much farther west and along rough woodland tracks, while Riedesel repaired numerous bridges along the Albany road. All three columns came roughly on line and were set to move forward again by noon.

The Americans were not unprepared. Gates had moved a detachment of soldiers from New Hampshire, under the command of Lt. Col. Andrew Colburn, to the east side of the Hudson and across from Swords House to monitor Burgoyne's movements. Following Arnold's advice, Gates ordered Morgan and Dearborn to move northward to find the British center column. The Rifle Corps arrived at the southern edge of Freeman's Farm just as Hamilton ordered Capt. Alexander Fraser and 100 British soldiers into the clearing to scatter American sentries in the buildings there. Taking time to place his sharpshooters in position, Morgan ordered them to fire on Fraser's soldiers after the American sentries had pulled back, inflicting heavy casualties and forcing the British to fall back into the woods to the north. During the retreat, other British soldiers in the woods mistook Fraser and his soldiers for Americans and fired on them, inflicting more casualties. Most of those wounded and killed were officers, including Major Fraser, who was wounded. At this point, exulting over their success, the American riflemen lost their discipline and rushed into the clearing to pursue the British when another force charging them from the west hammered them. Simon Fraser had positioned his *24th Regiment of Foot* to support the British advance into the clearing and now ordered them to attack. The American riflemen, along with Dearborn's light infantry in support, fled back into the cover of the woods to their south, while Dearborn seized some high ground to the southwest.

As the battle began, Gates and Arnold were arguing over the best plan to meet the British assault. Gates wanted to keep his forces in their defensive positions, reasoning that his forces fought better behind a wall and believing Kosciusko's plan provided the best opportunity to defeat Burgoyne. Arnold, always the champion of the offensive, argued that the British were now vulnerable while on the move. If he could bring his left wing out to meet the British

forward of the defenses, he could inflict heavy casualties and deny the enemy the high ground to his west. Gates initially agreed only to allow Morgan and Dearborn to scout ahead and determine the British plan of attack but with the sounds of gunfire increasing to his north and west, he again followed Arnold's advice and allowed him to move more of his left wing forward to support the riflemen and light infantry. Arnold quickly dispatched the 1st New Hampshire Regiment under the command of Col. Joseph Cilley, while he prepared the remainder of Poor's brigade.

While Morgan and Dearborn regrouped and Cilley marched northward, Burgoyne ordered the center column forward to seize the clearing. After firing a few artillery rounds into the farm buildings, he formed a line of advance, the *9th Regiment of Foot* on the far right (west) to anchor the right flank and join with Fraser's column, the *62d Regiment of Foot* next, accompanied by two 6-pounders, then the *21st Regiment of Foot* on the left, on the line running east of the farm buildings and facing south. From 1400 to 1500, both sides prepared for battle and when the *62d* and *21st Regiments of Foot* moved forward to dislodge Dearborn and the light infantry from their position, Cilley marched up from Bemis Heights and met them head on. For the next 20 minutes, the fighting was fierce but soon the single American regiment, though aided by the light infantry, fell back toward Bemis Heights. On the way, they met two more regiments from Poor's brigade, Col. Alexander Scammell's 3d New Hampshire Regiment and Col. Thaddeus Cook's regiment of Connecticut militia. Unwilling to return to their defensive positions in the presence of their compatriots, the 1st New Hampshire regrouped, turned around, and marched back toward the battlefield.

Now the woods to the south of the farm were teeming with American soldiers. Morgan directed his marksmen to continue pouring accurate fires into the British formations, targeting officers, noncommissioned officers, and artillerymen. Arnold constantly rode back and forth from the battlefield to Bemis Heights, feeding more of his forces into the battle. He soon committed all of Poor's brigade, ordering forward the 2d New Hampshire, the 2d New York, the 4th New York, and Col. Jonathan Latimer's Connecticut militia

regiment. Dearborn anchored the American left, to the west, on high ground in the woods. To his right, and running southeast, the 3d New Hampshire and the 2d New Hampshire formed a line of battle. Right of the 2d New Hampshire, angling now to the northeast, the 1st New Hampshire formed up with Cook's regiment anchoring the American right alongside Morgan's Corps. Farther to the west, the 2d and 4th New York Regiments, along with Latimer's Regiment of Connecticut Militia, opposed Fraser's advances by angling back to the southwest, a maneuver known as refusing the flank.

By 1500, the fighting was heavy all along the battle lines. In the east, the New Hampshire regiments and Connecticut militia pressed hard into the *62d* and *21st Regiments of Foot*, attempting to outflank them. The British repulsed the Americans twice when they counterattacked with bayonet charges. British Lt. Thomas Hadden, in charge of the artillery in the clearing, requested more infantry support as rifle fire had killed thirty-six of his forty-eight artillerymen. Twice the Americans seized his guns, but without horses to move them, those soldiers abandoned the guns as the British charged to recapture them. The British generals were constantly on the field, exposing themselves to enemy fire and sometimes personally leading charges. Phillips, having heard the gunfire from his position on the Albany road, moved his artillery to the north edge of the clearing, under the cover of the woods, to fire on the Americans. Still the battle raged.

At times, the fighting was close enough for hand-to-hand combat. The *62d Regiment of Foot*, now supported by *Breymann's German light infantry*, pressed the attack on the Connecticut militia, who fought back hard but were in danger of collapsing. Arnold, seeing the danger, brought up an ad hoc detachment from Jackson's Regiment, placing them under command of Maj. William Hull. They weathered a terrible artillery barrage to move along the line, repulse the *62d Regiment of Foot*, and reinforce Cook's Regiment. In the west, Fraser attempted to outflank the American left but found it impossible to do so. The 2d and 4th New York Regiments and Latimer's regiment not only stopped his advance but counterattacked, trying to dislodge Fraser's forces from nearby Marshall Farm, though the British eventually repulsed them, too. In the center, splitting the two British

columns, Dearborn's light infantry stubbornly held on to the high ground, refusing to retreat despite continuous assaults from the *24th Regiment of Foot*. Worried about his left flank, as the afternoon turned to evening, Arnold committed his second brigade, commanded by General Learned, to reinforce the New York and Connecticut regiments. Col. John Bailey's, Jackson's, and Wesson's Regiments from Massachusetts, reinforced with Marshall's Regiment from the American right wing, marched north into the gathering darkness. It was approaching 1830.

On the Albany road, Riedesel and the British left column of *Braunschweig troops* had toiled all day repairing bridges and searching for the American defensive positions. Having determined that those positions were too strong to assault, the German general held his position on the road to protect the supply trains and sent patrols toward the sound of the guns, scouting for the best route westward and asking for orders from Burgoyne. Finding the going difficult, his patrols finally returned at 1700 with orders to dispatch reinforcements to Freeman's Farm as quickly as he could. Having anticipated such an order, Riedesel was ready to move immediately with his personal regiment of infantry and two companies from the *Regiment von Rhetz*. Taking two 6-pounders with him, he left Brig. Gen. Johann Specht in charge of the forces along the river road and marched along the route scouted by his patrols. Just as the sun was setting, Riedesel arrived on the field and spotted American Major Hull reinforcing the American right and about to force the retreat of the *62d* and *20th Regiments of Foot* on the British left flank. He immediately ordered a charge into the exposed American right flank, throwing his enemy into confusion and forcing their retreat. This timely and unexpected assault encouraged the two British regiments, with General Phillips personally leading the *20th Regiment of Foot*, to attack again, forcing the American units to retreat even further, eventually all the way to Bemis Heights. However, nightfall had finally arrived, forcing an end to the fighting there. To the west, Fraser was still pushing hard on the American left flank, but the arrival of both Learned's Brigade and nightfall stopped his advance, and the Battle of Freeman's Farm concluded.

As evening darkened into full night, the temperature dropped to below freezing and the British and German units held their positions in the clearing, fearing another American attack. No further assault would occur, as the Americans withdrew to their fortified positions. Soon, soldiers began collecting their dead and wounded as the officers tallied their losses. Casualties were high on both sides. The Americans had lost a total of 465 soldiers out of the 3,500 committed to the battle. Of these, 100 were killed, 325 wounded, and 40 missing in action, most captured. On the British side, the totals were slightly higher, with 160 killed, 364 wounded, and 42 missing, a total of 566 casualties from Burgoyne's total force of 6,530 soldiers fit for duty as of 15 September. Although the Americans failed to hold the field after the battle, technically making this a British victory, it was a pyrrhic victory Burgoyne could not sustain. He had lost about 10 percent of his forces and would not receive replacements before the campaign ended. Furthermore, the wounded would now use up much of his limited supplies, supplies he could not replace. Considering another attack the next day, Burgoyne decided against it as he struggled to care for his wounded soldiers. Instead, he ordered his expedition to dig in, building fortifications from Freeman's Farm toward the Hudson River and sending messengers south toward New York City to request reinforcements from his fellow officer, Lt. Gen. Sir Henry Clinton.

The Battle of Fort Montgomery and Fort Clinton

Clinton had arrived at New York City from London on 5 July, and he was surprised at what he discovered when he arrived. Believing that King George III and Germain wanted their commander in chief, General Howe, to prioritize the capture of Albany, Clinton instead found that his commander was preparing to attack the American capital at Philadelphia. For the next few weeks, Clinton tried to persuade Howe to change course but to no avail. Howe was committed to his plan, had received permission from Germain to carry it out, and already was loading troops, horses, equipment, and supplies onto the *Royal Navy* vessels commanded by his brother, V. Adm. Richard, 4th Viscount Howe.

General Howe left Clinton in New York City with 7,000 soldiers, a force large enough to defend the strategically important harbor and possibly support Burgoyne. Having departed so late in the campaign season, Howe knew he could not march north to Albany after capturing Philadelphia, but he gave his second-in-command the option to use his initiative and send forces north should he deem it necessary and prudent. Clinton's mission was to secure New York City but if Burgoyne ran into trouble and Clinton felt he had enough forces to do so, he could engage in operations that might relieve some pressure from his fellow commander. For the next few weeks, Burgoyne and Clinton exchanged several letters that kept Clinton abreast of the operations on the northern portion of the Hudson. In mid-August, Clinton received news about the defeat at Bennington and began preparing for a possible diversion into the Hudson Highlands.

Burgoyne, for his part, was in a serious dilemma following the Battle of Freeman's Farm. His choices were dwindling to two options: fight his way through the American defenses to Albany or fight his way back north to Ticonderoga. Neither option held much appeal. If he managed to outflank Gates and race to Albany, he would face a cold winter in enemy-held territory and in a town too small to house all his soldiers. Furthermore, enemy forces would cut his supply lines both north and south. This option would only work if Clinton could open a supply line from New York City to sustain the army until the spring. The other possibility, retreating to Ticonderoga, would require his depleted army to fight off American militia units swarming between Saratoga and Ticonderoga, not to mention the strong American army that would pursue him from the south. Deliberating over these choices on September 21, Burgoyne received word giving him hope that the first choice was tenable.

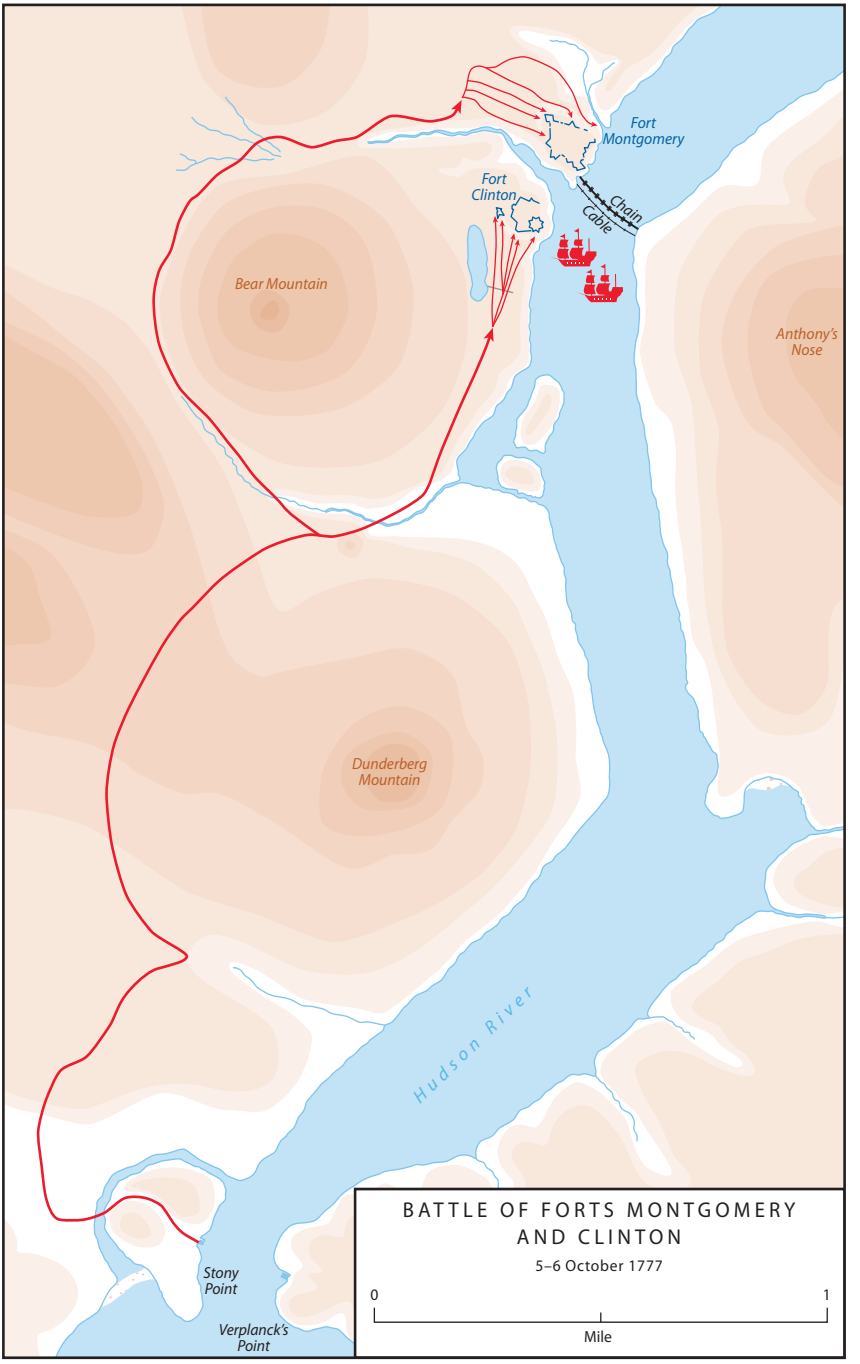
Clinton knew he did not have enough soldiers to both defend New York City and conduct an offensive all the way to Albany, but he could send a diversionary expedition into the American-held Hudson Highlands, 40 miles north of the city, in the hopes of causing Gates to abandon his defenses and march to meet the new threat. Clinton sent a letter to Burgoyne, outlining this plan and convincing Burgoyne to

dig in and await reinforcements. Writing on 11 September, Clinton claimed he would begin the operation in ten days, after receiving both his own reinforcements from England and Burgoyne's response to the plan. Out of desperation, Burgoyne read the letter on 21 September as an assurance that the operation would begin that very day, and that Clinton intended to fight his way to Albany. He immediately sent messengers two days apart to the south, hoping at least one would get through the American lines, and ordered his army to construct defenses from Freeman's Farm eastward toward the river.

However, Clinton had not left New York on 21 September. He was still waiting for his reinforcement of an additional 2,000 soldiers who did not arrive until 24 September. Once he received news of General Howe's victory over Washington at Brandywine on 11 September and the letters from Burgoyne pleading for help on 26 September, Clinton organized his diversionary force and set sail up the Hudson on 3 October. His goal was to dislodge the small American force guarding the Hudson Highlands, reduce the forts there, and force Gates to contend with a serious British threat to his south.

The Hudson Highlands are a formidable group of steep mountains that hug both sides of the Hudson River for 12 miles, starting 40 miles north of New York City and running northward to Newburgh Bay. Along its route, the Highlands drop sharply into the river, providing little in the way of land routes along the shorelines, and the river narrows in some places to as little as 500 yards across with deep water, strong currents, and capricious winds channeled by the mountainsides. At two points along this difficult water route, the river takes sharp turns, the first just past Verplanck's Point where it turns to the east before twisting sharply back west at Peekskill and then heading north again to West Point. Here the river forms an S-curve to the west and then northward again. General Putnam, American commander of the Highlands, headquartered at Peekskill but most of his forces were located between Peekskill and West Point, at Forts Clinton and Montgomery. (*See Map 7.*)

The two forts were built 100 feet above the river on the west side, only a few hundred yards apart from one another and separated by a deep ravine through which the Popolopen Creek flowed into


Fort Montgomery
Fort Clinton
Chain
Cable
Bear Mountain
Anthony's Nose
Dunderberg Mountain
Hudson River
Stony Point
Verplanck's Point
BATTLE OF FORTS MONTGOMERY AND CLINTON
5–6 October 1777
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1
Mile

Map 7

the Hudson River. Anthony's Nose, a 900-foot rounded peak that drops precipitously into the river, dominated the eastern shore. Fort Montgomery was on the north side of the ravine and held a garrison of 500 soldiers with the purpose of maintaining an iron chain, floating on rafts, and a log boom across the river to impede river traffic. Fort Clinton, housing another 300 soldiers, was on the south side of the Popolopen Creek, occupying the higher ground overlooking Fort Montgomery. Both forts were relatively small and still largely incomplete in their construction but together they commanded sixty-seven cannons of various sizes from 3- to 32-pounders. Just south of Fort Clinton was Dunderberg Mountain, rising 1,000 feet high, and behind it was an oblong lake between it and its neighboring peak, Bear Mountain, standing 1,300 feet tall. Convinced that the terrain guarded their rear, the soldiers had constructed the forts to face east toward the river and the chain obstacle. Across the river, on the eastern terminus of the chain and log boom, was another small fortification with fifty soldiers, named Fort Independence, and a final small redoubt and battery sat a few miles north, on Constitution Island across from West Point.

Accomplishing an amphibious operation in such difficult terrain would not be easy but Clinton was determined to succeed. Working with his *Royal Navy* counterpart, Commodore William Hotham, he sailed north with 2,100 soldiers on transports with an accompaniment of warships. On 5 October, Hotham sailed his ships past Peekskill to stop American reinforcements to the highland forts while Clinton disembarked a contingent to run Putnam and his remaining force of approximately 400 soldiers off to the east. Having accomplished that, the British commander then landed his main force at Stony Point, on the west side of the Hudson across from Peekskill and began a march overland to Forts Clinton and Montgomery. He organized his units into three columns. Lt. Col. Mungo Campbell commanded the advance guard with 950 soldiers from the *52d* and *57th Regiments of Foot*, the *Loyal American Regiment, New York Volunteers*, and a company of *Andreas Emmerich's Chasseurs*. The main force, commanded by Maj. Gen. John Vaughan, consisted of the *26th* and *63d Regiments of Foot*, separate companies from the *7th*

***General Sir Henry Clinton in General Officers' undress uniform,* John Smart, 1777 (*National Army Museum, UK*)**

Regiment of Foot and *17th Light Dragoons*, and a grenadier company from the *1st Ansbach Battalion*, totaling 1,200 soldiers. The rear guard, commanded by Maj. Gen. William Tryon, also the royal governor of New York, had 700 loyalist and Hessian soldiers. The plan was to march around Dunderberg and Bear Mountains, establish the advance guard

behind Fort Montgomery and the main force behind Fort Clinton, then attack both forts simultaneously.

Hearing of the British landing at Stony Point, American Brig. Gen. George Clinton rushed to join his brother Col. James Clinton at the forts while sending an urgent request for reinforcements to Putnam. However, British warships cut off Putnam; General George Clinton and the 800 American soldiers would have to defend on their own. Meanwhile, General Henry Clinton marched his troops into the rugged terrain on the morning of 6 October. Stony Point was only 2 miles from Fort Clinton by water but the land route was much longer and more treacherous, forcing his soldiers to march throughout the day to get around Dunderberg Mountain and then for his advance guard to continue their move around Bear Mountain. General George Clinton attempted to delay their advances, sending patrols to harass the British as they marched, but to little effect.

By 1700, both British columns were set and Colonel Campbell sent a demand for the Americans to surrender before beginning his assault. As he did so, Hotham ordered his warships to fire on both forts from the river while Vaughan ordered his attack on Fort Clinton. General Henry Clinton demanded Vaughan take the fort with bayonets only, to which Vaughan complied, quickly overrunning the two redoubts in the fort and subduing the American defenders. The British also seized Fort Montgomery in less than an hour, though Colonel Campbell was killed in the initial assault. In fact, casualties were high on both sides. The Americans lost 70 killed, 40 wounded, and 240 soldiers captured, though both American Clintons escaped with the rest of their retreating soldiers. For the British, along with Colonel Campbell, they lost 40 killed and 150 wounded. Still, General Henry Clinton was excited by his success and quickly prepared to destroy the chain obstacle and continue north to Esopus—present-day Kingston—New York.

Before Clinton's attack, while disembarking his soldiers at Stony Point, two British captains from Burgoyne's staff met with him. Alexander Campbell and Thomas Scott had left Saratoga on 28 September and brought dire news from their commander. The British and German forces were outnumbered now two to one by a growing American army in the north, and Burgoyne needed Clinton to open

lines of communications all the way to Albany if the army was to survive the winter. If Clinton was unable to manage that, Burgoyne would retreat to Ticonderoga. Burgoyne was looking for orders from Clinton: continue the assault or retreat. Clinton was shocked at this new tone from his adjacent commander, whose previous missives had given a more optimistic picture of the situation. He was suspicious of the request for orders. Clinton and Burgoyne were of the same rank and Burgoyne fell under the direct command of Howe. Clinton quickly dispatched the two staff officers back to Saratoga with word that Clinton did not have the necessary forces to fight his way to Albany nor did he have the authority to give Burgoyne orders. He would continue his diversion in the hopes of distracting the American command and forcing them to withdraw to the south. That was all he could do. Burgoyne would have to shoulder the responsibility of deciding how best to exploit any opportunity that might arise from the operation.

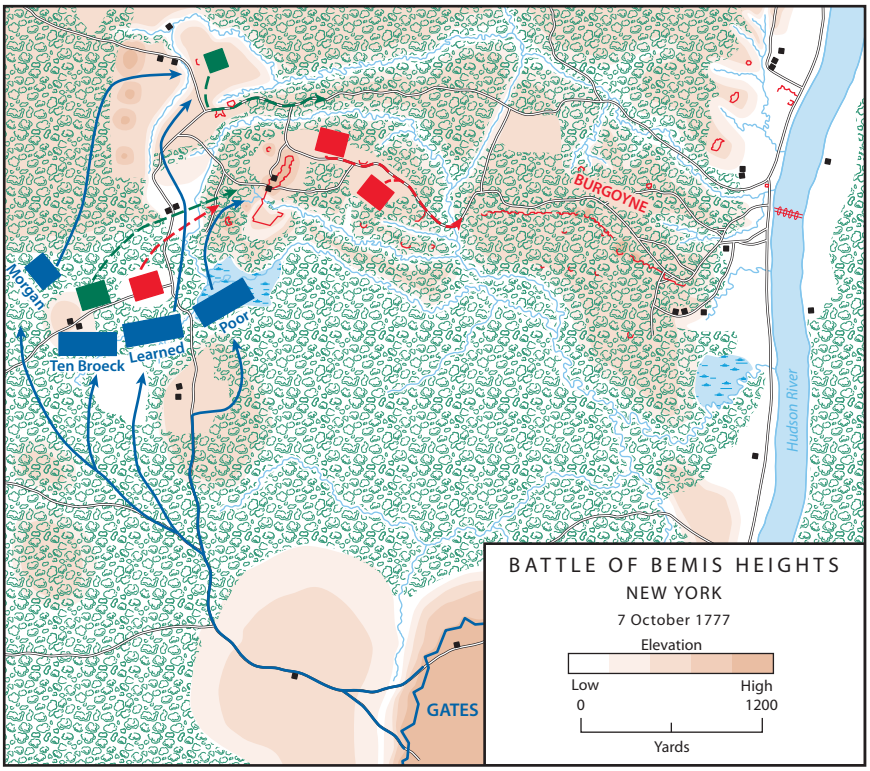
Now, with an easy, if costly, success behind him, Clinton wrote to Burgoyne again, sending another two messengers north with news of his victory and the hope that his success might produce some opportunities for Burgoyne. However, none of the missives sent north ever reached Burgoyne. One such, carried by Pvt. Daniel Taylor, was intercepted and published in local newspapers after Taylor had been forced to regurgitate the silver ball he had ingested containing the message. He later was hanged as a spy. Clinton decided to return to New York City because one of the two generals he left in charge had fallen ill. He placed General Vaughan in charge of the 1,700 remaining soldiers still traveling with the British flotilla. They arrived at Esopus on 16 October. Vaughan targeted Esopus as the American capital for the state of New York and, after running the militia out of the town, burned it to the ground. He then continued another 20 miles north to Livingston's Manor, just 45 miles south of Albany before deciding to turn around. With so few soldiers, now deep in enemy territory, and separated from New York City by hundreds of miles, Vaughan risked becoming cut off, surrounded, and captured. At Livingston's Manor, Campbell and Scott, who had not been able to get through the American lines, met him. They informed him of the strong

enemy to his front. Additionally, his commander, General Henry Clinton, had just received news of Howe's capture of Philadelphia and narrow victory at Germantown, which now required Clinton to send Howe an additional 4,000 soldiers to ensure the American capital remained under British occupation throughout the winter. For this reason, Vaughan hurriedly sailed back south.

The Battle of Bemis Heights (The Second Battle of Saratoga)

Beginning on 21 September, as news of General Henry Clinton's planned assault on the Hudson Highlands circulated among the British and German troops, morale improved (*Map 8*). Burgoyne directed the construction of field fortifications from Freeman's Farm eastward to the Hudson River. North of the Great Ravine, on high ground overlooking the flood plain and west bank of the Hudson, his soldiers constructed a large, fully enclosed fortification called the Great Redoubt. Built of wood and earth, it defended southward while providing protection for the hospital and artillery park. The *Hesse-Hanau Regiment Erbprinz* manned it. South of the Great Ravine was a line of entrenchments and a moat of fraises stretching westward to Freeman's Farm. At the farm, the British constructed a second small fort called the Light Infantry Redoubt, or Balcarres Redoubt. It faced to the west and ran for 1,200 feet southward from the farm, pointing toward the American defenses at Bemis Heights. On high ground 500 yards to the northwest, a third fortified position incorporated two wooden walls and a small redoubt. The first wall zigzagged for 100 yards, facing to the northwest. The second wall was 100 yards farther north, 85 yards long and at a right angle to the first wall, facing north. The small redoubt was about 70 yards to the west of the walls. Importantly, each of these three defensive positions, known collectively as Breymann's Fortified Camp, did not mutually support one another, which gave the enemy the ability to attack each position in detail.

Lord Balcarres commanded the Light Infantry Redoubt and his light infantry battalion defended it. Within the fort were eight artillery



Map 8

pieces, most of them located on high ground at the south end of the fort. Outside of this fortification were two outworks, strong points just to the north and south ends, protecting the fort's flanks. Colonel Breymann oversaw Breymann's Fortified Camp, which German grenadiers, light infantry, and jaeger riflemen defended. In the 500-yard gap between these two positions were two cabins, manned by Canadian militia and therefore named the Canadian Cabins. The orientation of the forts illustrated the lack of intelligence about the American defenses to their south and the preoccupation Burgoyne had with flanking the Americans to the west. The objective was to refuse the British west (or right) flank while positioning forces to allow for a quick move to the west, should the opportunity arise to flank the Americans. Yet neither position could support the other; 500 yards separation provided a large gap that the Americans could

possibly exploit, and the occupation of the two cabins in the gap was not sufficient to stop a concerted effort to isolate the Fortified Camp on the extreme right.

As September slipped into October, the weather grew increasingly wet and cold, damaging tents and exhausting the soldiers trying desperately to improve their positions. Supplies were running low, forcing Burgoyne to limit rations, and American patrols constantly harassed foraging parties attempting to find food for the soldiers and fodder for their horses. As the days dragged on, British and German soldiers deserted in increasing numbers, draining the expedition of needed troops and providing the Americans with valuable intelligence. In fact, Gates knew almost everything about his enemy by this point, including the problem with rations, the disposition of the enemy's defenses, and the expectation that Clinton would attack Albany from the south. While Burgoyne was losing soldiers to battle wounds, illness, and desertion, Gates was increasing his numbers with the arrival of militia units from across New England and New York. Two weeks after the Battle of Freeman's Farm, his army totaled more than 11,000 soldiers and would continue to grow to 17,000 by the last week of October. These were the soldiers Gates kept busy patrolling to his front, screening his defensive positions, and ambushing British foragers. Unlike his adversary, Gates kept all his troops well-fed and clothed with supplies constantly sent forward from Albany by Schuyler.

Although Gates preferred to wait for Burgoyne, despite worries about Clinton's intentions down south, Burgoyne was growing increasingly apprehensive. With no word from Clinton and desertion rates climbing, he needed to decide either to retreat or attack. At a council of war held on 5 October, he heard advice in favor of both decisions and chose a middle ground between the two. He rejected plans to march far to the west to outflank the enemy positions, lacking both the knowledge of their location and the reconnaissance assets necessary to find them. Nor would he move forward to assault the American positions, believing that he did not have enough soldiers to effectively defeat the American defenses. He chose instead to lead a large reconnaissance force to the southwest of his position,

with the goals of finding food and forage for his army while probing the American positions to find a weakness he could exploit. If this operation succeeded, he would either attack those weaknesses or, failing that, retreat to the Batten Kill on the east side of the Hudson on 11 October.

Arriving at Fraser's tent near the Light Infantry Redoubt early in the morning on 7 October, Burgoyne gathered Riedesel, Phillips, and Fraser to finalize the plan while 1,700 soldiers from across the army prepared to march. The reconnaissance force was comprised mainly of Fraser's *Advance Corps* and Breymann's *Reserve Corps*, all soldiers defending the British right at the Light Infantry Redoubt and Breymann's Fortified Camp. Maj. Alexander Fraser's *Rangers* would scout in front of the force and protect its right flank while the main force would move in three columns through the heavily wooded terrain. To provide fire support, Burgoyne brought ten artillery pieces, including two 12-pound cannons and six 6-pounders. Although many of these troops had seen action during the campaign, none of them had fought together in any single battle, complicating command and control. Still, the force quickly assembled and began its march by 0900 that morning.

The terrain was difficult to traverse, especially for the cannons, and the contingent made less than a mile in the first half-hour. Receiving word of two small and abandoned farms to his front, Burgoyne ordered the force to stop while he surveyed the ground. He found two fields of ripening wheat separated by some woods: Weisser Farm to the west and Barber's Farm to the east. He immediately ordered his units to prepare a hasty defense of the fields, moving the light infantry to his right, defending Weisser Farm at the base of a wooded hill, and Fraser's *Rangers* to their right to protect the flank. Without knowing it, these rangers took a position only a quarter of a mile west from the American defenses. The *24th Regiment of Foot* lined up to the left of the light infantry, defending the east side of Weisser Farm and deploying into the woods between the two fields. The various German units set up a defensive line to protect Barber's Farm while Major Acland and the British grenadiers extended that line to the end of the field and into the woods on the northeastern edge. The

remaining British units refused the left flank, angling back to the northeast most of the way back toward the Light Infantry Redoubt. Burgoyne then sent word to his camp to move more soldiers forward to harvest the wheat as quickly as possible.

This long, thin line of defenders along the southern edges of the wheat fields did not remain undetected for long. American pickets stationed in the farmhouses near the fields scattered when the recon force arrived. They ran straight back to Gates's headquarters while the British officers tried unsuccessfully to spot the nearby American fortifications less than a mile away. Despite a rather public dispute between Generals Gates and Arnold following the previous battle, Arnold was at Gates's headquarters when the sentries arrived with news of the British advance. Gates ordered Arnold forward to confirm the information and then moved both Morgan and Dearborn forward with riflemen and light infantry to probe the British right flank.[2] They moved out at 1400 with the objective of occupying the hill just west of Weisser Farm before attacking the enemy's right flank. Soon thereafter, Gates allowed Arnold to move forward three regiments from Poor's brigade, the same regiments that had fought so well in the previous battle. They took the shorter route straight north of their positions with the mission to attack the British left flank.

At 1430, just as German soldiers began reporting increased enemy movement in the woods to their south, Poor and two of his three regiments attacked before Morgan and Dearborn were ready to do the same. The British artillery commander, Maj. Griffith Williams, fired his two cannons but to little effect, as the woods made sighting the guns difficult and largely impeded the effects of the artillery rounds. The Americans charged forward, out of the woods and into the field to assault their enemy. The Battle of Bemis Heights had begun.

The 1st and 2d New Hampshire Regiments concentrated on Major Acland's grenadiers, overwhelming them with a ferocious

2. No general orders from 25 September 1777 mention Arnold's removal as commander of the left wing. They only declare General Lincoln's instatement as the commander of the right wing.

fire and sheer numbers, causing them to fall back after a brief and vicious fight. Acland was shot in the legs and captured, and all the horses and most of the crews for the cannons were killed. Finding himself alone and in danger of being captured, Major Williams left his guns, which Colonel Cilley, commander of the 1st New Hampshire, turned around and used against the retreating British. This action collapsed the British left flank, making all the remaining German units at Barber's Farm vulnerable. They too were forced to pull back by 1500. Now all British and German units at Barber's Farm and eastward were retreating to their defensive positions at the Light Infantry Redoubt.

At that time, as the Germans began to fold, Morgan and Dearborn attacked the British right with their 700 soldiers. Morgan had moved his riflemen all the way round to the rear and right rear flank of the *Advance Corps* units, while Dearborn hugged his right side. They attacked simultaneously, pushing hard into the rear and right flanks of the British line to devastating effect. The British right quickly collapsed in confusion, allowing the Americans to advance through the western field and into the eastern one, catching the German units at Barber's Farm in a withering crossfire. The Germans were routed, and Lord Balcarres's attempt to form a new line to protect the retreat failed as more American forces poured onto the battlefield. Burgoyne, seeing the confusion and recognizing he was vastly outnumbered, tried to send orders to his other generals to pull their forces back in an orderly retreat. However, his messenger was killed in the crossfire, and Burgoyne himself had musket balls pass through his coat and into his horse. The reconnaissance was over.

Arnold, watching the situation from the southern edge, met Gates as the commander moved forward to gain situational awareness. Arnold briefed his commander and asked for the remainder of the American left wing to pursue the British and Germans. Having seen the disarray of the enemy, Arnold believed he could exact even more punishment on the enemy without endangering the American defenses or opening a route to Albany. Gates agreed and Arnold ordered forward the rest of Poor's brigade and all Learned's brigade, including not only the three Massachusetts regiments but also the two Connecticut militia

regiments, two Continental regiments from New York, a militia brigade from New York, and another from Massachusetts. Arnold pushed Learned, along with Morgan and Dearborn, farther west while he led Poor and the assorted militia units forward to pursue the retreating enemy.[3]

Without hope of an orderly retreat and outnumbered at least two to one, the British commanders tried to form a rear guard to delay the American assaults. German artillerymen valiantly tried to slow their enemy but quickly were overwhelmed. Burgoyne's most experienced and competent field commander, Simon Fraser, formed a protective line with his *24th Regiment of Foot* but was shot in the stomach and fell from his horse. Balcarres took up command of the rear guard, pulling them back into the Light Infantry Redoubt, along with the dying Fraser. Poor's New Hampshire soldiers assaulted the fortifications, seizing the two outworks and charging the walls of the main fort. Most of the retreating forces from the wheat fields ran into the redoubt and, with the help of grapeshot from the fort's cannons, managed to repel the Americans. The American forces moved back to the outworks and continued to pour harassing fires into the fort.

Unable to penetrate the defenses there, Arnold moved his attention to the northwest and Breymann's Fortified Camp. Because almost all the Germans had been routed and retreated into the Light Infantry Redoubt, Breymann had only 200 soldiers to defend against the combined forces of Learned, Morgan, and Dearborn. In between Poor and Learned, in the spaces between the Light Infantry Redoubt and Breymann's Fortified Camp, Brig. Gen. Abraham Ten Broeck and his New York militia brigade linked the two Continental brigades. They quickly seized the Canadian Cabins, isolating Breymann's position from the rest of the British defensive line. Identifying the weakness, as the daylight began to fade, Arnold immediately attacked the fortified camp from the cabins and into the rear of the position. As he charged forward, followed by a small contingent of soldiers from

3. The letter by Nathaniel Bacheller was found on eBay, bought by the Saratoga National Historical Park, and discussed by Eric Schnitzer in several talks and interviews, including in Stephen Williams, "Letters Change View of Benedict Arnold, Gen. Gates."

the light infantry and Rifle Corps, Learned, Morgan and Dearborn assaulted the positions from the front, with soldiers climbing over walls and through embrasures for cannons. As Arnold entered the camp from the rear, soldiers shot him in the left leg. His horse also was shot, falling on Arnold's wounded leg and crushing it. As the Americans overwhelmed the Germans from both the front and the rear, Breymann was killed, and his soldiers fled into the woods to the northeast. With American soldiers now swarming the battlefield and his right flank completely exposed by the loss of Breymann's position, Burgoyne counted himself lucky at least that darkness was falling and he could use that cover to remove all of his remaining forces back to the other side of the Great Ravine and into the Great Redoubt.

Thus ended the second battle of Saratoga. It was an unmitigated American success and a major defeat for the British Army. Forced to quit the field overnight, Burgoyne suffered crippling casualties, as many as 894 soldiers killed, wounded, or captured. This number represented more than 15 percent of his remaining forces and ended any possibility of moving onward to Albany. He had also lost every piece of artillery he brought with him on the reconnaissance, along with many important leaders, including his quartermaster, Capt. John Money, his grenadier commander, Major Acland, and his artillery commander, Major Williams, all captured during the fighting. Although Breymann's death was difficult for the Germans, the eventual death of Simon Fraser, beloved by both the officers and the soldiers of the expedition, was hardest for Burgoyne. Fraser was brought to a cabin the night of 7 October and lay in agony as the army's surgeon gave him the bad news that his wound was mortal. He finally died the next day and was buried, at his request, within the Great Redoubt.

The Americans continued to press their advantage. As Burgoyne and his officers gathered to bury Fraser, American artillery pulled close to the British encampment and, on 8 October, began cannonading both the Great Redoubt and the artillery park below on the flood plain. The British abandoned their positions under the cover of darkness and rainstorms, retreating 7 miles to Dovegate on 9 October. Burgoyne had little choice but to remain there for the

***The Burial of Gen. Simon Fraser after the Battle of Saratoga, 1777,* John Graham, ca. 1800 (*National Army Museum, UK*)**

entire day, allowing Gates to move more American units both west of Dovegate and onto the east side of the river, attempting to surround the British and cut off their avenue of retreat. The entire American force of close to 17,000 soldiers was now pursuing the British. General Fellows moved to the east side of the Hudson with his militia brigade from Massachusetts to stop the British from crossing the river, while Stark marched his brigade westward from Bennington to seize the road to Fort Edward. By the time Burgoyne reached Saratoga on 11 October, Stark controlled the bridge crossing north of Saratoga, Fellows controlled the east bank of the river across from the town, and the entire right wing of the American army was just south of Fishkill Creek facing the main British army. Poor's brigade moved to the northwest, and both Morgan and Dearborn set up positions just to the north. Burgoyne was caught in a noose.

For the next few days, British and German soldiers suffered in the continued rain and cold, without food or the tents they had burned before the flight from the Great Redoubt. The British commander had his troops build earthworks, hoping that Gates would send American forces to assault the prepared defenses even at the risk of incurring heavy casualties. Instead, the American general was prepared to wait for Burgoyne to make the first move while he cannonaded the enemy positions continuously and sent another 2,000 militiamen north to recapture Fort Edward. By 13 October, Burgoyne had run out of options. He held another council of war, this time including all his officers with a rank of captain or above, to decide if it was time to surrender. All the officers agreed that it was, and a messenger approached the American lines under a flag of truce to discuss terms. Gates agreed to a ceasefire, allowing time for negotiations which took another four days. He initially demanded an unconditional surrender that would have all enemy combatants ground their weapons in camp and relinquish all their unit colors. Burgoyne was incensed, demanding that Gates allow his army to keep their regimental colors while they returned to Great Britain with the promise not to return to the American theater of war. Of course, Burgoyne did not believe Gates would agree to such terms as this would allow the British government to send these returning soldiers to other theaters and swap them out for new troops. But on 15 October, Gates sent a message accepting the terms, making the British commander suspicious.

Burgoyne was right to be dubious. He had not heard from Clinton since September, but he now suspected Gates was rushing the surrender negotiations because he needed to move south to meet a new threat. He was not wrong. Gates knew Clinton had destroyed the forts in the Hudson Valley and that his subordinate, Vaughan, was in Kingston. Burgoyne caught one last glimmer of hope and tried for the next few days to delay his surrender in case Clinton could come to his rescue. His ploy failed. Gates became impatient as the days wore on, Burgoyne claiming he needed time to go over every detail, and he threatened to begin the artillery barrage if the British did not surrender by 17 October. Unable to delay any longer,

Burgoyne agreed and the remaining soldiers of the expedition from Canada filed forth from their defensive positions, marching between two lines of American soldiers, to stack their arms on the flood plain in front of the victorious American army. Gates treated the defeated generals to a supper in his tent before ordering the captured army—known to history as the Convention Army because Burgoyne had insisted the surrender terms be called a "convention" and not a "capitulation"—to begin its march to Boston before loading ships for England. Congress dissolved the convention, and this force would not reach England until 1783.

ANALYSIS

The success of the American Army at Saratoga was important to the overall success of the Revolutionary War in many ways. Tactically, the surrender of an enemy army numbering over 7,000 soldiers provided the Continental Army with a much-needed victory and also 4,500 small arms, 37 artillery pieces, and tons of stores and ammunition. Operationally, the victory secured the northern flank of the American theater from future British military operations coming from Canada, removing the need to keep a large conventional force in the Northern Department. Strategically, the victory convinced more Americans to support the cause, initiated a radical change in British strategy that would focus more on prosecuting the war in the south, and helped convince the French to support the American cause more actively by declaring war on Great Britain, committing to battle the British in North America and across the globe.

The defeat of the British and German army on the northern frontier of New York was, by all accounts, a major tactical victory for

the American army in a year of decidedly mixed outcomes. Farther south in the Hudson Valley just north of New York City, British forces struck stunning blows against the Americans defending that strategically important region. General Clinton's assaults on Peekskill, Fort Montgomery, and Kingston routed all American forces, leveled their defenses along the Hudson River, and burned the state's temporary capital, whereas the cost to British forces was minimal. To put it bluntly, the American defensive system proved ineffectual and incapable of protecting this key region.

Even farther south, in the other major campaign of the season in Pennsylvania, the American commander in chief George Washington also failed to succeed tactically against his British enemy. At the battles of Brandywine, Paoli, and Germantown, the American army suffered a series of losses, often under the direct command of General Washington. At Brandywine, Washington's retreat left the roads to Philadelphia vulnerable to capture. Ten days later, British forces attacking with edged weapons in the dark of night surprised General Wayne at Paoli, resulting in major casualties to the American forces. Two weeks before Gates and Arnold attacked Burgoyne in the Second Battle of Saratoga, Washington led an assault to drive the British from Philadelphia but overestimated the capabilities of his forces. In the end, Washington marched his army into Valley Forge to endure the upcoming winter overwatching Philadelphia and their enemy, housed within that city's confines.

Only in the far north, in and around Saratoga, were the Americans tactically successful. Although suffering a setback at Fort Ticonderoga in July, for the remainder of the campaign season they experienced multiple victories. At Bennington, Fort Schuyler, Freeman's Farm, and Bemis Heights, American soldiers fighting either as Continentals or in the states' militia performed admirably, refusing to surrender, attacking with courage, and inflicting heavy damage to British and German soldiers and equipment. Much of their success was because of excellent battlefield leadership, with Stark's plan to defeat the Germans at Bennington, Gansevoort's stubborn defense of Fort Schuyler, and Arnold's aggressive tactics at both battles of Saratoga ranking among the most important examples.

Yet British failures also made American success possible. Burgoyne made a series of tactical mistakes following his stunning victory at Ticonderoga. The success of the larger operation required a relatively rapid achievement of its stated objective, the capture of Albany. However, the British commander decided not to take advantage of his swift advance toward Fort Edward, instead remaining in Skenesborough for weeks while he maneuvered his artillery back down Lake Champlain and then over to Lake George. Although it was important for him to build up his supplies and secure his lines of communications back to Québec, his incredibly slow movement first to Fort Edward and then to Fort Miller allowed the American commanders time to obstruct his movements while building up their own forces before the final confrontation around Saratoga. By the time Burgoyne decided whether to cross over to the west bank of the Hudson River, time was running short, supplies and soldiers were becoming overtaxed, and it was increasingly clear that Howe was not going to support the operation from the south. His subordinate commander, General Riedesel, recommended a retreat to Ticonderoga, but Burgoyne was desperate to move toward Albany. That final decision was to be his ultimate downfall. Following the campaign, upon his return to London, Burgoyne would face a parliamentary inquiry to defend his actions.

From the operational perspective, American successes during the Saratoga Campaign were the result of excellent logistical planning, the ability to seize the initiative after a major defeat, and the willingness of Americans across the region to volunteer for a limited time to serve in state militia. Schuyler was the chief architect of this operational success. His decisions to build up troops and supplies across a system of forts from Ticonderoga to Albany and farther west, set the foundation for a flexible American response to British movements. He anticipated British moves east toward Bennington, and, after the fall of Ticonderoga, made the decision to trade space for time as he moved his forces southward while constantly impeding British attempts to follow him. His actions gave the Americans the time needed to prepare for the final battles in September and October. Following Schuyler's removal as commander of the Northern

Department, Gates and Arnold deserve their share of the acclaim for having encouraged the outpouring of militia support from the New England states, developing a strong defense outside of Albany, and severing Burgoyne's supply lines before the final battles. As a campaign meant to defeat British advances from Canada, Saratoga succeeded beyond what many had hoped. The objective for the Americans was to block the British from moving south and seizing Albany; the result was the removal of an entire British and German army from North America.

The campaign resulted in the removal of Canada as a source of serious concern for George Washington. Although the British continued to maintain a sizeable force in Canada and Congress even considered one final invasion of the territory, no further large-scale operations took place in the region for the remainder of the war. The area was remote, the distances between belligerents vast, and the difficulties transporting armies and their supplies almost insurmountable, all points proven by Burgoyne's failures.

The Battle of Oriskany would forever poison relations between settlers and the Iroquois League and sunder the League itself, as the Oneida and Tuscarora remained allied with the Americans against their Mohawk, Seneca, and Onondaga compatriots. This bad blood would keep the northern and western frontiers alight with irregular warfare for the rest of the war and into the early national period, but Washington would only once give that area serious operational consideration—with Sullivan's Expedition in 1779. Instead, leaving a smaller contingent of Continental and militia soldiers to guard the Northern Department under the command of Stark, Washington could maintain his focus on New York City, Philadelphia, and points farther south.

Strategically, the campaign in the north in 1777 was momentous, both for the Americans and the British. From the onset of the war, American diplomats led by Benjamin Franklin had attempted with little success to secure France's open allegiance to fight Great Britain. Following major defeats and concessions to Britain during the Seven Years' War, France was reluctant to openly declare war against its long-time foe, preferring instead to supply

the Americans with arms and money while building its navy back to a semblance of its former strength. By the winter of 1777–1778, France saw its opportunity to reclaim some of what it had lost in the Treaty of Paris in 1763. The British army of Canada was no more, and Howe's forces had captured the American capital but to little effect. Washington's army was still intact and preparing for another campaign season, whereas the British government debated the need to approach the Continental Congress with favorable terms for an end to hostilities. The Carlisle Commission, created out of fear that the Americans and French would soon join in an open alliance, tried to negotiate with Congress in the summer of 1778 but was rebuffed immediately. Although the Commission provided terms that would suspend all British acts since 1763, Congress already had resolved that anyone treating with the British was an enemy of the United States. Congress would only negotiate after the removal of all British forces and the recognition of American independence. Besides, French and American diplomats had already signed French-American accords in Paris on 6 February 1778. For the remainder of the war, the French army and, more importantly, the French navy, would aid the Americans. The French navy would provide naval power to threaten the British not only in North America but in the Caribbean, Africa, India, the Mediterranean, and the English Channel.

With its new alliance solidified, the American strategy would be the protection of its most important military asset, the Continental Army. From Washington's perspective, much else could be risked but the Army was the soul of the revolution. He would not risk a major engagement with the British unless he was sure he could retire to fight another day. Instead, he used the winter at Valley Forge to train what would become a more professional force, with long-term enlistments, stricter military laws, and a more stable officer and noncommissioned officer corps. He then tested his new training program at the Battle of Monmouth in June 1778, and waited for the British to make mistakes and lose what popular will they still retained for the war back in Great Britain. Over the next year, few engagements occurred as the British left Philadelphia and

considered their next moves, while Washington fortified West Point and relations with his French counterparts.

For the British, following a disastrous campaign year of 1777, their strategy took a radical turn. After losing one army and watching a second army win what appeared to be a meaningless victory, along with failing to find the support of loyalist Americans and facing the entrance of a peer competitor in France, Lord North and Lord George Germain shifted course. King George III commissioned a military review from December 1777 to February 1778 which concluded that Great Britain would need 80,000 soldiers to retake all thirteen colonies. Because that was not feasible, it recommended a new strategy focused on blockading the American states, protecting British holdings in the Caribbean, and enlisting the aid of American loyalists in the southern colonies to end the war with honor and a few bargaining chips for the inevitable negotiations. The war was turning south and would remain largely a war fought there until its dramatic final battle in 1781.

APPENDIX

"Order, Regularity, & Discipline": Waging War in the Eighteenth Century

by Joseph A. Seymour

By 1775, armies in Europe and North America had developed into complex forces organized around the infantry regiment. Artillery provided fire support. Mounted units performed reconnaissance, screened attacks and retreats, and added shock. Engineers and pioneers built and demolished fortifications and other works. Artificers repaired and maintained weapons and ordnance. Surgeons treated the sick and wounded. Civilian commissaries made, procured, and transported supplies and rations. All of them supported the foot soldiers, who usually dominated the battlefield.

Composition

The Continental Army and state militia generally organized their infantry regiments using the British model, with a colonel in command, aided by a lieutenant colonel, major, and regimental staff. A regiment had ten companies, including one light and one grenadier company. The light company consisted of the best shots, the cleverest, and the most agile in the regiment. These soldiers specialized in screening, skirmishing, patrolling, and scouting. Congress dispensed early on with the grenadier company, with its brawny shock troops who often formed the vanguard of assaults, and usually authorized

nine companies. Each company carried equipment and additional ammunition in one or two wagons. When the situation called for the infantry to operate away from its baggage train, soldiers placed extra ammunition and essential items in their knapsacks. Most companies had a few women on their rolls. Although not officially in the army, they could draw rations, and sometimes pay, by performing various essential duties, including nursing the sick and wounded and laundering the soldiers' clothing. Captains and lieutenants directed the maneuver and fire of the platoons in their companies. Sergeants and corporals maintained unit cohesion in battle, assisted officers, and enforced discipline in the sections under their charge. Drummers, who ranked between corporals and sergeants, communicated orders in camp and battle.

Equipment

A soldier's basic fighting equipment was known as a stand of arms, which commonly consisted of a musket; a bayonet; a cartridge box of wood, leather, or tin containing between twenty-three and twenty-nine paper cartridges; and cleaning tools. A standard firearm of the period was the British Land Pattern musket. It fired a powerful load consisting of a 1-ounce lead ball propelled by nearly a half ounce of gunpowder. Its oversized barrel of about 0.76- to 0.80-inch diameter made it easier to load. A ball fired from a musket of this type could reach massed troops out to 300 yards. At 100 yards, it was accurate enough to hit an individual and powerful enough to penetrate a two-inch elm plank. Continental, state, and militia forces augmented existing musket stores with locally made copies of the Land Pattern and imported French, German, Dutch, and Spanish arms of similar bore sizes and ballistics. Soldiers also shouldered sporting (nonmilitary issue) arms of different calibers, sometimes retrofitted to mount bayonets. The lack of serviceable arms slowed augmentation and the integration of reinforcements. Furthermore, companies equipped with a mix of arms could not easily sustain fire, let alone mount effective bayonet assaults.

Both armies also issued rifles to light troops or recruited experienced riflemen who brought their own. The rifles usually followed two patterns: the short-barreled, large-bore Germanic or *Jäger* (hunter) rifle, and the long-barreled, small-bore Pennsylvania rifle. Less powerful than muskets, both were accurate to about 300 yards and took about one minute to load. Neither could mount a bayonet. In 1777, British Maj. Patrick Ferguson fielded an innovative breech-loading rifle that mounted a bayonet, but it saw limited service.

Tactics

The musket's capabilities shaped tactics. A trained soldier could fire three rounds per minute. After twenty-five shots, the piece became too hot to handle, and the accumulation of residual gunpowder (known as powder-fouling) required cleaning and slowed reloading. Regiments formed in line at close order, presenting a continuous front of muskets and bayonets to concentrate their fire and mass to maximum effect. Close ranks also enabled company commanders to keep their troops together and thus better control them. The soldiers easily could hear orders communicated by drumbeat and could support each other using linear tactics described in tactical publications such as the *Manual Exercise, As Ordered by His Majesty in 1764*. In 1778, the Continental Army introduced a system spelled out in the *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, nicknamed the Blue Book. Well-drilled companies could execute a variety of maneuvers to bring their firepower or bayonets to bear, unleashing simultaneous volleys with devastating effect, or firing alternately by platoon to sustain a running fire. Infantry usually closed to the optimal range of 40 yards for a killing volley before a bayonet assault. While battalions also could extend their intervals to optimize individual fire, volume rather than accuracy usually decided a battle's outcome.

Artillery on both sides organized as separate regiments and battalions but fought as detachments as needed. With a range of several hundred yards, 3-, 4-, and 6-pounder guns supported

battalions in battle. With their slightly longer range, 8- and 12-pounders supported brigades, while larger guns with greater range operated from fortifications. Mortars fired exploding shells in a high arc to get over walls or other obstacles. Howitzers fired shells either directly at troops or in an arc. Artillerists and wagon teams were valuable assets. Commanders therefore often ordered crews that were about to be overrun by the enemy to disable their guns with spikes and mallets and abandon the weapons to save themselves and their teams.

Both forces also employed light dragoons, a type of mounted infantry. The scarcity of large horse breeds in America, the cost of transporting such mounts, and the uneven topography challenged the use of cavalry. Organized as regiments or separate troops, dragoons fought both mounted and dismounted and were armed with sabers, carbines, and, occasionally, pistols. Depending on time and terrain, both armies frequently detached light infantry, riflemen, artillery, and dragoons into separate battalions or combined them into corps or legions.

Fortifications

European and colonial governments constructed dozens of forts before and during the war to defend important cities, towns, and key points. Field fortifications included fort-like redoubts, arrow-shaped flèches, and crescent-shaped lunettes. These structures were built of large wicker cylinders, called gabions, which were filled with soil or rubble, and then reinforced by bundles of sticks called fascines, covered with soil and sod, and surrounded by moats. As time permitted, soldiers erected palisades (walls of vertical wooden stakes), placed fraises (sharpened stakes) at a slant on the inner surface of the moat, and laid an abatis (a network of felled trees with sharpened branches) to slow infantry assaults. For a portable obstacle, artificers would use a cheval-de-frise, which typically consisted of sharpened stakes projecting from a log or beam. To fortify harbor defenses and block rivers, engineers employed log booms connected

with heavy chains and created the naval version of a cheval-de-frise by constructing rock-filled timber boxes bearing sharpened logs.

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Technology dictated tactics, which in turn influenced formations. The contending forces frequently deviated from the standards prescribed by regulations or government allocations as they dealt with issues of personnel, materiel, and authority. Necessity and mission spurred the evolution of regulations, tactics, and equipment during the war. That was particularly the case for the new army of the United States. As the war progressed, American soldiers attained a high level of proficiency that earned the confidence of those they served and the respect of both allies and enemies.

"The Course of human Affairs forbids an Expectation, that Troops formed under such Circumstances, should at once posses the Order, Regularity & Discipline of Veterans— Whatever Deficiencies there may be, will I doubt not, soon be made up by the Activity & Zeal of the Officers, and the Docility & Obedience of the Men. These Quali[ties,] united with their native Bravery, & Spirit will afford a happy Presage of Success, & put a final Period to those Distresses which now overwhelm this once happy Country."

—George Washington, in an address to the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, 4 July 1775

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MAP SYMBOLS


Route of march/attack


Retreat

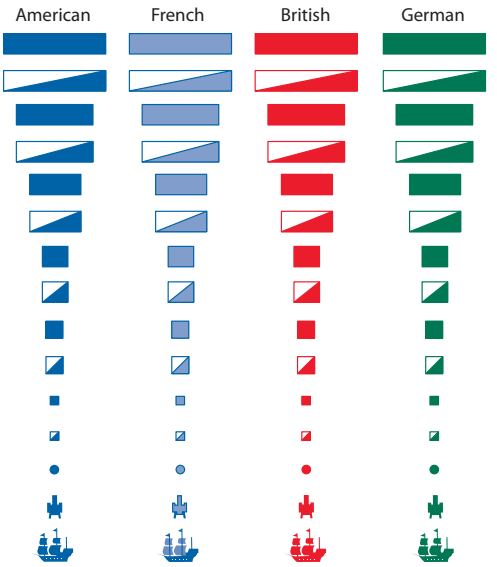

Fortifications/Redoubts


Boat Bridge


Battle/Engagement


Abatis

MILITARY UNITS



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