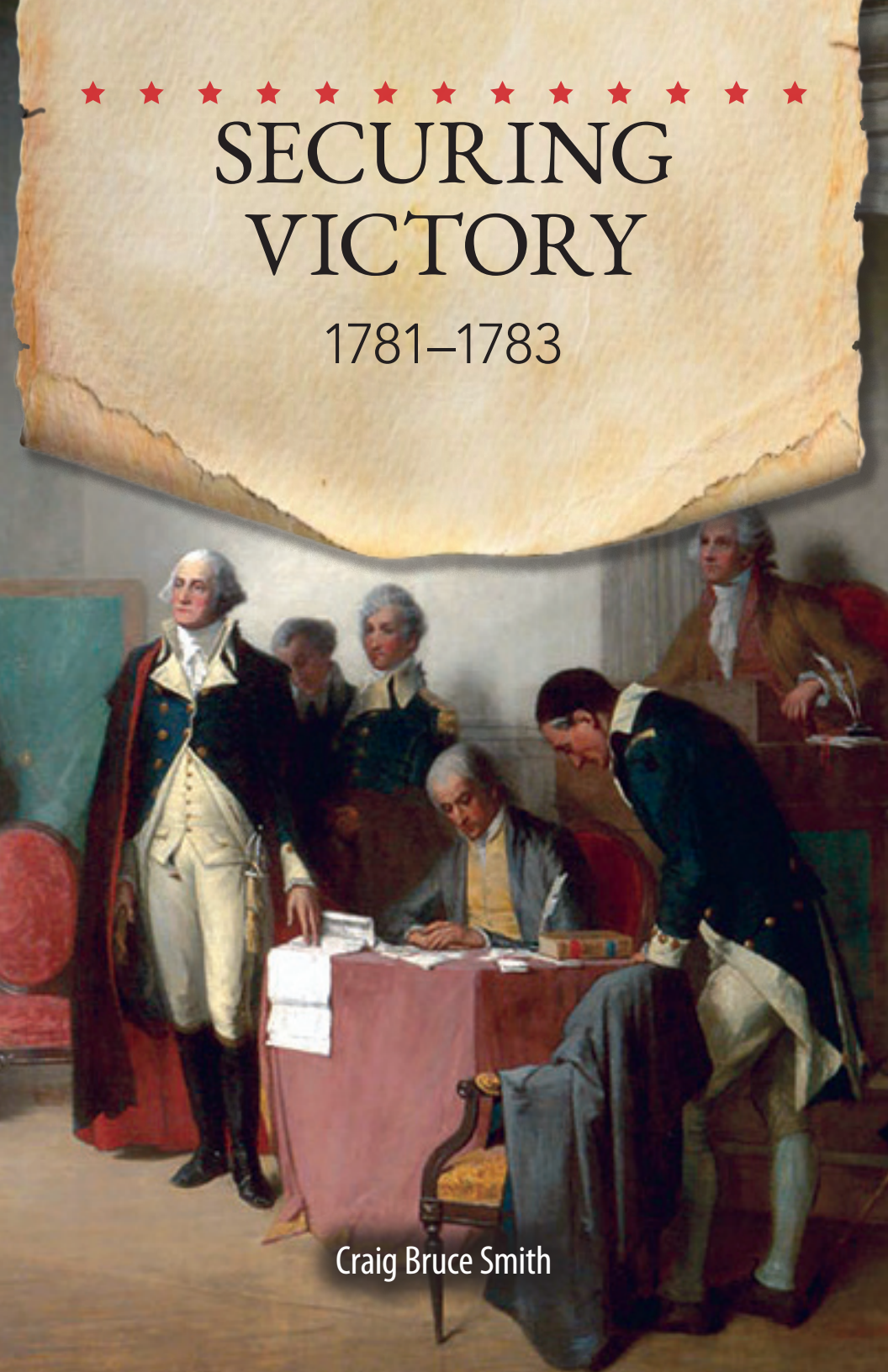
SECURING VICTORY

1781–1783



Craig Bruce Smith

The U.S. Army Campaigns of the Revolutionary War

Series Editors
David W. Hogan Jr.
Joseph A. Seymour
Jonathan D. Bratten

Opening Shots in the Colonies, 1775–1776
The Canadian Campaign, 1775–1776
The New York Campaign, 1776
The New Jersey Campaign, 1776–1777
The Philadelphia Campaign, 1777
The Saratoga Campaign, 1777
Valley Forge to Monmouth, 1778
The War in the North, 1778–1781
The Frontier War, 1775–1783
The War in the South, 1778–1780
The War in the Carolinas and Georgia, 1781–1782
The War in Virginia, 1781
Securing Victory, 1781–1783

To read other titles in this series, visit https://history.army.mil.

ISBN: 978-1-959302-22-3

Cover: *Washington Resigning His Commission,* Edwin White, 1858 (*Maryland State House*)

The U.S. Army Campaigns of the Revolutionary War

SECURING VICTORY, 1781–1783

by
Craig Bruce Smith

Center of Military History
United States Army
Washington, D.C., 2025

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Smith, Craig Bruce author | Center of Military History issuing body
Title: Securing victory, 1781-1783 / by Craig Bruce Smith.
Other titles: U.S. Army campaigns of the Revolutionary War
Description: Washington, D.C. : Center of Military History, United States Army, 2025. | Series: U.S. Army campaigns of the Revolutionary War | In scope of the U.S. Government Publishing Office Cataloging and Indexing Program (C&I); Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) distribution status to be determined upon publication. | Includes bibliographical references.
Identifiers: LCCN 2025025161 (print) | LCCN 2025025162 (ebook) | ISBN 9781959302223 paperback | ISBN 9781959302223 pdf
Subjects: LCSH: United States. Army--History--18th century | United States--History, Military--18th century | United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783
Classification: LCC E230 (print) | LCC E230 (ebook) | DDC 973.33--dc23/eng/20250625
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2025025161
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2025025162

CMH Pub 71–54

CONTENTS

Maps

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

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-four 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

SECURING VICTORY, 1781–1783

On the morning of 17 October 1781, a British officer climbed onto the forward defensive works protecting Yorktown, Virginia. To the sound of a drummer beating "parley," the officer raised his sword. At its point, he had tied a makeshift white flag haphazardly fashioned out of a handkerchief.

It was not a position in which the British army had often found itself during the Revolutionary War—in scale, only their defeat at the Battle of Saratoga rivaled it. After nearly three weeks of besiegement, assault, and bombardment by the Continental Army, the French army, and the French fleet under the allied command of General George Washington, the British had reached their breaking point. Cut off from retreat by the weather, geography, and opposing forces, General Charles, 2nd Earl Cornwallis, begrudgingly conceded that the siege was over—even though he refused to surrender personally. Two days later, after several rounds of negotiations, nearly 8,000 British and German soldiers cased their colors and dropped their weapons in a pile at the feet of the American and French victors. Looking on, General Washington could reflect on the brutal six years

his army had endured: the more than 400-mile secret march from New York to Virginia and the success of his victory at Yorktown. He had known this battle was pivotal. The British army knew it too, and according to legend, as they marched through the ranks of American and French soldiers on either side, its band acknowledged the gravity of the moment by playing "The World Turned Upside Down." The allied victory was indeed the last major battle of the revolution, but no one knew that for certain on 19 October 1781.

Washington hoped the American diplomats in Europe could exploit the news, as they had at the British surrender at Saratoga four years earlier. Uncharacteristically bypassing the usual channel of Congress, the general quickly dashed off urgent letters to America's diplomats in Europe: Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and John Adams. The "recent intelligence of Mility [military] Transactions," he wrote, "must be important to our Ministers in Europe at the present period of Affairs." An overjoyed Franklin received word on 19 November 1781 and wasted no time circulating notices throughout Paris of the "important victory at York[town]." Days after the siege ended, the Continental Army destroyed the remaining fortifications around Yorktown. The army escorted enemy prisoners to their places of confinement in Winchester, Virginia; Frederick, Maryland; and Lancaster, Pennsylvania. As the highest-ranking officer, General Cornwallis was placed on parole and allowed to await his exchange in New York City.

Meanwhile, news of the defeat reached a war-weary London on 25 November—the same day the British declared war on the Netherlands. Understanding the gravity of the situation, a horrified British Prime Minister Frederick, Lord North, gasped, "Oh God! It is all over!"

Peace would come eventually, but it was not a foregone conclusion. Without any traditional campaigns or even significant battles in the United States, the time from late 1781 through 1783 often is banished to the shadows of military history. However, the military actions, diplomacy, and politics all were linked. Strategically, the 1783 Treaty of Paris literally set the borders of the new United States and shaped its place within the international order. Yet even more important

for the American military, these years were crucial to reaffirming its character and ideals. Whether it was debating the morality of partisan fighting in the backcountry, suppressing a potential officers' coup against Congress, or General Washington resigning his commission, these years saw soldiers do more than just win a war—the military built a tradition and established a nation. By reaffirming the principles of the revolution, establishing a standard for ethical leadership, and creating the blueprint for civilian-military relations that still exists today, the two years after Yorktown—and specifically the events of 1783—represent the ideological foundation of the modern U.S. military.

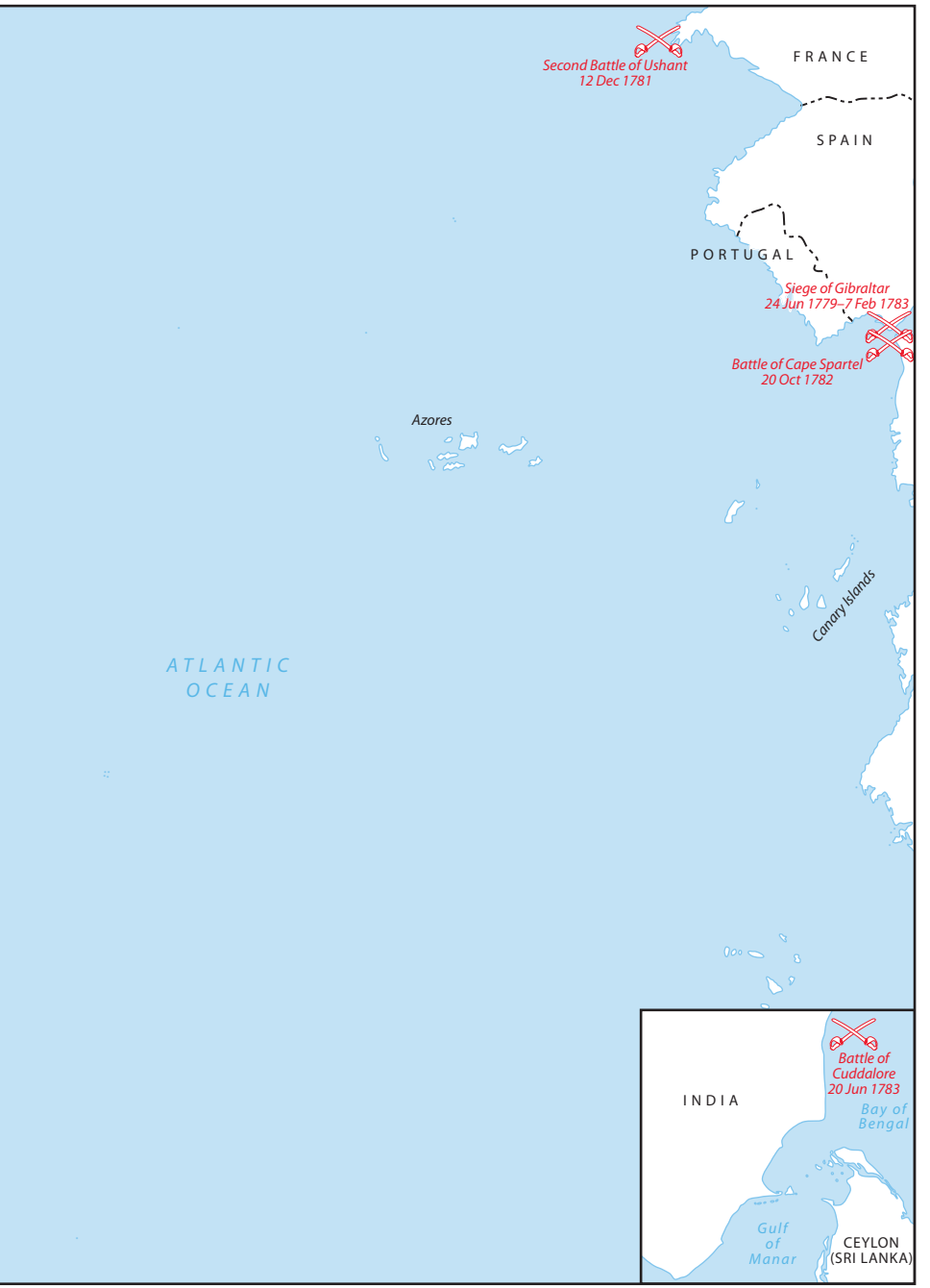
STRATEGIC SETTING

By 1778, the American Revolution had gone global. The colonial conflict that had begun on 19 April 1775 in the small Massachusetts town of Lexington had grown into a world war. Britain found itself battling France, Spain, and the Netherlands on several continents. The war had expanded too far and cost too much for the British. Against the wishes of King George III, the defeat at Yorktown convinced Parliament that retaining the American colonies was not worth it anymore. Still, though diplomats from both sides traveled to Paris to open peace negotiations, the war was not yet over.

Yorktown often is portrayed as the literal end of the Revolutionary War, but military engagements between the British, French, Spanish, and Dutch continued around the globe (*Map 1*). The defeat convinced the British that their focus and troops should be somewhere other than mainland North America. The *Royal Navy* and the British army had only so many ships and men. French, British, and Spanish


MAJOR ENGAGEMENTS
POST-YORKTOWN
1781–1783
Skirmish/Raid
0
800
Miles
Hudson Bay
Hudson Bay Expedition
17 Jul–24 Aug 1782
PROVINCE OF QUÉBEC
Crawford Expedition
25 May–12 Jun 1782
Battle of Chillicothe
29 May 1779
Battle of Blue Licks
19 Aug 1782
Siege of Bryan's Station
15–17 Aug 1782
Louisiana
Province
(Spain)
British Colonies
Battle of Arkansas Post
17 Apr 1783
Siege of Charleston
(Ongoing)
West
Florida
East
Florida
Gulf
of
Mexico
Capture of the Bahamas
May 1782
Bahama Islands
Cuba
Jamaica
Battle of the Mona Passage
19 Apr 1782
Hispaniola
Battle of Roatán
16 Mar 1782
Battle of Saint Kitts
25–26 Jan 1782
Capture of Montserrat
22 Feb 1782
Battle of the Saintes
9–12 Apr 1782
Caribbean Islands
Battle of the Black River
13 Apr–23 Aug 1782
Caribbean Sea

Map 1


Second Battle of Ushant
12 Dec 1781
FRANCE
SPAIN
PORTUGAL
Siege of Gibraltar
24 Jun 1779–7 Feb 1783
Battle of Cape Spartel
20 Oct 1782
Azores
Canary Islands
ATLANTIC
OCEAN
Battle of
Cuddalore
20 Jun 1783
INDIA
Bay of
Bengal
Gulf
of
Manar
CEYLON
(SRI LANKA)

vessels fought in the Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea, the North Sea, the English Channel, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Indian Ocean. They could not protect the entire empire in force.

The thirteen American colonies were not the jewel of the British empire, and with the world at war, even the home islands were at risk. The wealth and importance of the sugar-rich Caribbean islands to the European powers far exceeded anything on the eastern North American seaboard. With the arrival of French admiral François Joseph Paul, comte de Grasse's fleet fresh from the Chesapeake Bay, the French and Spanish joined their naval forces with eyes fixed on capturing British territory. With the spring campaigning season of 1782 approaching, only four islands remained under British control in the West Indies. With French reinforcements under sail, how much longer would Antigua, Barbados, Jamaica, and Saint Lucia stay under George III? Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, a French expeditionary force under V. Adm. Pierre-André de Suffren de Saint-Tropez and the army of Haider Ali, Nawab of Mysore, threatened India and the British East Indies. The British-controlled island of Ceylon seemed just as ripe for the picking as Jamaica. At roughly the same time, the British lost the Mediterranean island of Minorca, and the Franco-Spanish allies could prepare to finish their siege of the strategically valuable Gibraltar.

Despite the British global focus, a credible and lethal enemy fighting force of just under 50,000 British, German, and loyalist soldiers remained on the east coast of North America and threatened American independence and liberty. In addition, the *Royal Navy* continuously patrolled the coast, and fear of British-allied Native Americans and loyalists terrorized patriots far from port cities. After Cornwallis's surrender in Virginia, British armies still menacingly occupied Savannah, Georgia; Wilmington, North Carolina; Charleston, South Carolina; and New York City, not to mention their forces in Canada, the northwest frontier, and the Caribbean. New York and Charleston were the most formidable, with roughly 13,000 and 7,000 men "fit and present," respectively.

***Sir Henry Clinton*, Andrea Soldi, ca. 1762–1765 (*American Museum in Britain*)**

From these hubs, the British could launch attacks or, with its ample coffers, even entice cash-starved Americans toward the Crown. However, by February 1782, the House of Commons publicly opposed "the further prosecution of offensive warfare on the continent of North America, for the purpose of reducing the revolted colonies to obedience by force." Soon, orders arrived from London from Lord George Germain, the secretary of state for the colonies, instructing British Commander in Chief General Sir Henry Clinton to suspend offensive operations in North America. However, that did not mean the war was over. The British policy was to hold what it already controlled. Clinton, who would have loved to win the war with a decisive battle, was recalled to Britain in frustration. His successor, Lt. Gen. Sir Guy Carleton, took over in May 1782, hoping to "see these colonies reconciled to Great Britain." Two months later, he tried to resign after he learned of Parliament's willingness to support American independence. Carleton wanted to be more than


QUÉBEC
MASSACHUSETTS (MAINE)
Montréal
LAKE CHAMPLAIN
Ticonderoga
Falmouth
NEW HAMPSHIRE
PROVINCE OF QUÉBEC
LAKE ONTARIO
NEW YORK
Portsmouth
Albany
Boston
MASSACHUSETTS
Providence
LAKE ERIE
Hartford
Newburgh
New Windsor
West Point
Verplanck's Point
Pompton
Morristown
Newport
RHODE ISLAND
CONNECTICUT
New York
PENNSYLVANIA
Trenton
PRINCETON
Jun–Nov
PHILADELPHIA
Jan–Jun
Baltimore
NEW JERSEY
MARYLAND
Dover
ANNAPOLIS
Nov–Dec
DELAWARE
Oxford
Williamsburg
VIRGINIA
Norfolk
ATLANTIC OCEAN
NORTH CAROLINA
New Bern
SOUTH CAROLINA
Wilmington
Charleston
Savannah
DISTRIBUTION OF FORCES
NORTH AMERICA
1782–1783
Congress
American Military Barracks/Congress
American Garrison
American Encampment
British-controlled City
0
70
Miles

Map 2

"a mere Inspector of embarkations." However, Parliament retained him and left him to manage the British positions throughout the peace process and eventually to organize their evacuation.

Although learning of Britain's "pacific Measures" in August 1782, Washington still feared what the British could do in America well into 1783. Fighting did not stop completely. In addition, the strategic importance of British strongholds was not lost on the patriots. The Americans found different British targets attractive for a variety of reasons, including military, diplomatic, political, and personal considerations. So long as they remained in enemy hands, the British had bases from which they could strike throughout the United States. With theaters spanning from north to south, the terrain, the weather, and the climate all afforded different opportunities and challenges depending on the location (*Map 2*). Yet the Continental Army lacked the necessary strength to dislodge the British forces in New York, Charleston, Wilmington, or Savannah through a direct assault. Waiting out the enemy might not be an option, either. What if the war ended with so much territory under British control? Could the patriots claim these cities in negotiations? Retaking New York, specifically, had been on Washington's mind since his devastating defeat there in 1776. The arrival of the French navy in 1778 to offset Britain's asymmetrical advantage strengthened this obsession. Only Admiral Grasse, sailing to the Chesapeake and avoiding the sandbars of New York Harbor, restrained Washington from returning to the city in 1781. By early November 1781, Washington's troops started their march back north to West Point, New York; New Jersey; and Pennsylvania. Before the following winter, roughly half of the Main Army took up residence in the "log-hut city" of New Windsor, New York, on the Hudson River not far from the garrison at West Point, to check the British army headquartered in New York City. Washington had not given up hope of reclaiming the city by force—even against tremendous odds.

Despite these challenges, the Continental Army had changed immensely since the spring of 1775. The march to and the victory at Yorktown proved that the Continental Army had learned their lessons under the Prussian drillmaster Friedrich Wilhelm Ludolf

Gerhard Augustin von Steuben at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, and later from their interactions with their French allies. Though smaller than the total 1776 numbers, the reorganization of the army in 1781 had increased the combat strength of each regiment by about 20 percent, including providing more commissioned and noncommissioned officers. The Continental Army looked more like a European army, and it spent the winter of 1781–1782 encamped like one. The main body of the Continental Army, consisting of eight brigades of roughly 10,000 or so soldiers, was split between the garrison at West Point; the hut encampments near Morristown and Pompton, New Jersey; and the barracks at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Regardless of the location, the army found some of its finest accommodations of the war. The encampment locations were not focused on just British positions; the areas already had existing structures, centers of supply, training programs, and even hospitals. The soldiers were supplied better than they had been in a long time because of significant reforms over the years.

The following winter of 1783, the army found new homes in New Windsor and Newburgh, New York, as well as at West Point and later tents at Verplanck's Point. By constructing a small city of log huts in New Windsor, the Continental Army exceeded European expectations. The British-trained Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates called this style of encampment something "new in the art of war." The halt in fighting also gave the American army time to improve even more through regular training and inspection. Washington hoped that this "cantonment of repose" would retain the troops' spirit and discipline. Illustrating how all cross sections of America were involved in the war, these numbers grew by another thousand or so, as the camp followers (civilian men, women, and children) who typically trailed the army and provided services from laundering to carpentry—could be found throughout the cantonments. All these factors aligned to make the Continental Army of 1782–1783 the most effective version of itself.

Illustrating that the war was not over, American Lt. Benjamin Gilbert treated a rumor of peace as a "fallacious report propagated by Brittans solely for the purpose of amusing and lulling us into

a State of Security while they gather Strength, recover Breath, recruit their army, and refit their fleet." Washington instructed his troops around New York and New Jersey to be ready for a spring campaign. Still, it was unclear to the lower ranks what the target could even be. Gilbert complained, "I am as much at a loss what the operations of the ensuing Campain will be as I was when I lef Brookfield [Massachusetts]." In the meantime, smaller companies of light troops patrolled the contested areas of Westchester. Among them was a young light infantry soldier, Robert Shurtliff of the 4th Massachusetts Regiment, who engaged in skirmishes with loyalist militia but was a disguised 21-year-old woman named Deborah Sampson.

Washington had prepared to retake New York City by force during the spring and summer of 1782. The "whole army" was "ready to move at an hours warning." That August, Washington's army had practiced amphibious assaults at Verplanck's Point in anticipation of a New York invasion. Conducted with five brigades, the Continental Army was now professional enough to complete the landings and spring into a line of battle straight from their boats. However, Washington never had the opportunity to put his plan into action and the training only paved the way for the army to move to a new encampment.

Although the Continental Army had reached its peak in terms of professionalism and combat effectiveness in the months and years after Yorktown, it was also facing domestic and internal issues perhaps more challenging than anything the British could produce. Washington was considering the future of the army after peace arrived—at the same time, some members of Congress were pushing for it to disband immediately. In the meantime, continued partisan fighting threatened to reignite hostilities and damage regional stability. Brutal frontier violence continued in the western and northern borderlands and the Carolina backcountry. However, most dangerously of all, the Continental Army had not been paid. The uncertainty after Yorktown offered two years for the nation to come together—or for it to split apart entirely.

OPERATIONS

Partisan Fighting and Frontier Warfare

Although the regular armies of both sides settled into a pattern of watching and waiting, that did not mean the drums of war had gone completely silent. Warring irregular and state forces for both sides remained active in the field, as did Native Americans who had to navigate the shifting political and physical landscape and an uncertain future between the British Empire and the rising United States. Almost immediately after Yorktown, smaller engagements, raids, and skirmishes broke out on land and sea in surprising numbers. Fighting raged in upstate New York, New Jersey, the Carolinas, Georgia, the Ohio country, Kentucky, and the Caribbean. But the scale was different. The siege of Yorktown featured nearly 29,000 regular troops and sailors on both sides, which was an anomaly; the fighting that occurred afterward usually saw only small numbers of irregular forces. With the notable exception of the Continental Army's drive toward Charleston, which included patriot and loyalist militia action, these events were limited in size and impact—they mostly have been relegated to local memory at best.

However, certain notable themes emerged from this partisan and Native American fighting. Though the numbers engaged were considerably lower than conventional battles, the violence was not necessarily more limited. The personal and localized nature of the action built upon old prejudices and agendas. Most of all, vengeance drove many actors. The results were often brutal and inconsistent with traditional rules of war. Noncombatants were targeted regularly and intentionally. Atrocities were committed on all sides. However,

***Nathanael Greene*, Charles Wilson Peale, 1783 (*National Park Service*)**

the risks for the patriots were greater. In trying to establish a new nation, any deviation from their ideological principles jeopardized the revolution and postwar stability.

Before the smoke from Yorktown had even cleared, Maj. Gen. Nathanael Greene, the commander of the Southern Department, wrestled with these very issues in North Carolina. Greene had been part of the war since almost the beginning. Only weeks after Lexington and Concord, he was named a brigadier general of the Rhode Island militia. Despite limited militia service, Greene was well-read on warfare. Soon, he became the youngest general in the Continental Army, and before long he was one of the commander in chief's most trusted and loyal officers. In the crucial but thankless

position of quartermaster general, Greene kept the army running and learned crucial lessons on the importance of logistics. After General Gates's humiliating retreat after the battle of Camden in August 1780, Greene took over the Southern Department in December 1780. Greene had served with Washington since the early days of the war, including during the New Jersey campaign, and had observed firsthand the commander in chief's approach that combined a defensive "war of posts," opportunistic battle, and a hybrid combination of regular and irregular forces. Learning from Washington, Greene conducted a nontraditional campaign focused on maintaining his army while coordinating with militia forces. Although he was light on victories, Greene's foresight and ability to "fight[,] get beat" and "fight again" to achieve his objectives caused Cornwallis to withdraw to the Carolinas and ultimately make his way to Yorktown. However, the British and loyalists still controlled major southern hubs. Greene's objective was to displace the British from Wilmington, Savannah, and Charleston. With the divided allegiances among the population, Greene had been dealing with partisan warfare for nearly a year already. He feared what could result.

In the winter of 1780–1781, Wilmington had fallen to British forces under Maj. James Henry Craig and the *82d Foot*. Unfortunately for the patriot population, Craig was no benevolent authority—he hated the rebels. He wasted no time using "fire and sword" to sow a "state of disorder" and rile the local loyalists into an "insurrection" against their patriot neighbors. Craig commissioned and empowered loyalist Col. David Fanning, whom Craig said "*beheaded the country*." By the summer, Craig and Fanning were slashing, pillaging, and burning their way across the state. In Hillsborough, Fanning captured North Carolina Governor Thomas Burke and his council, disrupting the state's patriot government. Their brutality drew the attention of Brig. Gen. Griffith Rutherford and his Salisbury District militia—with an eye toward revenge.

By October 1781, reports circulated that Rutherford and his militia were engaged in "cruel and barbarous" conduct against

loyalists. Rutherford, who had been party to similar atrocities against the Cherokee in 1776, was said to have allowed the "burning" of loyalist homes and the "laying of waste" to their lands. Such actions were not altogether unique, as the British provincial units and loyalist levies had engaged in similar behavior. British officers like Major Craig, Maj. James Wemyss, and the infamous Lt. Col. Banastre "Bloody Ban" Tarleton, as well as loyalists such as Fanning and Christian Huck, who threatened to burn a church and its parishioners, were all reputed to have ordered similar assaults in North and South Carolina. They drew widespread vilification for these acts.

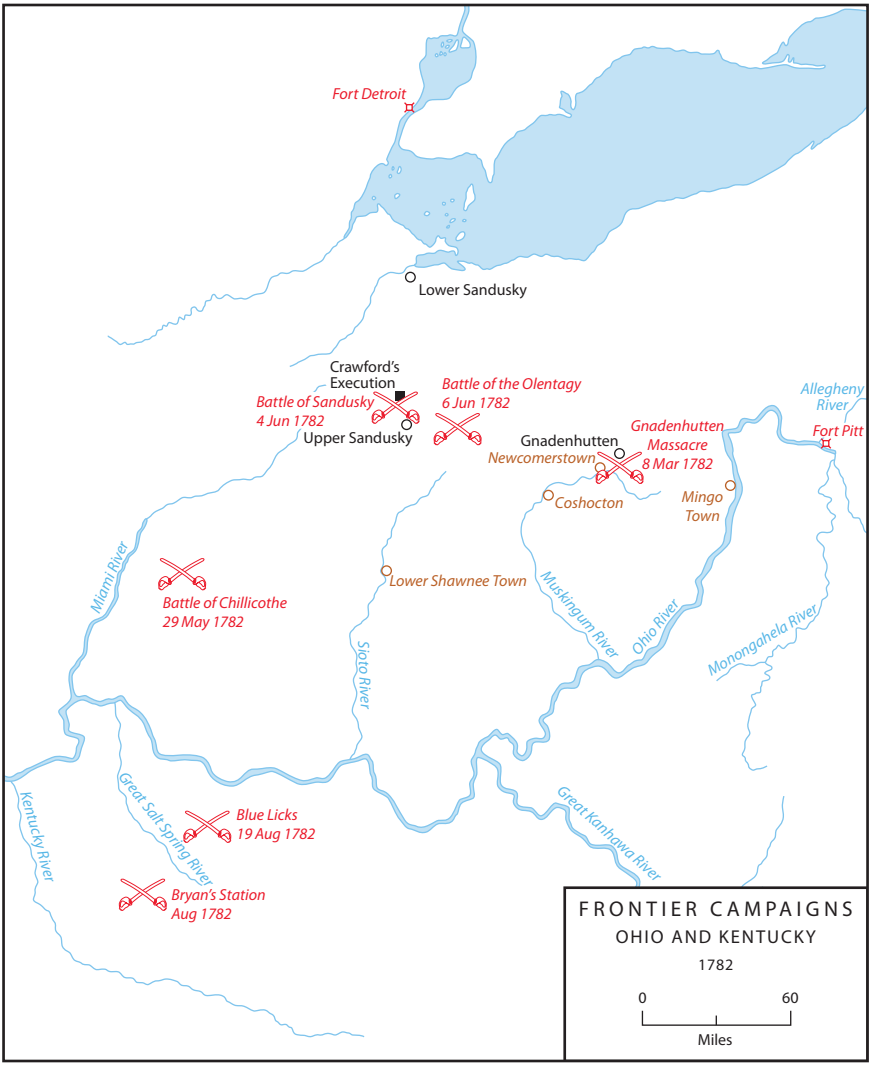
In Greene's estimation, personal resentment and passions likely drove Rutherford and others' responses, but they risked long-term national consequences. Greene worried that such barbarities foreign to the "laws of humanity" from the patriot side could overturn "the honor of our cause" and "the dignity of Government and the safety of the people." His focus on the bigger picture was on display at this moment. Attempting to bridge any gap between civilians and the military, Greene relayed his thoughts to Governor Alexander Martin of North Carolina and Rutherford, who denied the accusations. Greene understood the visceral reactions to the loyalists' infidelity but still urged American officers to practice moderation by affording the "rules of common justice" and humanity to their enemies. Humanity was required not out of any love for the loyalists but for "our own sakes."

This ethical focus on the laws of war reflected Washington's guidance since 1775 and Greene's own concerns about preserving the "Character of Soldiers." Although the Continental Army's guns were mostly quiet, Greene's warnings often were ignored by those west of the Appalachian Mountains. There, irregular frontier warfare pitted American settlers against each other and against Native American adversaries, who also fought other tribes. British Sgt. Roger Lamb described "such a system of warfare" as "shocking to humanity," especially because he considered it "at best but problematical." Regardless of whether they were effective

or not, punitive expeditions and revenge campaigns became the norm—inspiring more fear and reprisals than operational or strategic results.

On the western frontier, 1782 was nicknamed the "Bloody Year" because of the fighting's "increased vigor and fury." Given the comparatively low casualties, the title was mostly an exaggeration. However, the violence at times did become brutal, and atrocities did occur. The geographically significant Detroit and Fort Pitt (modern-day Pittsburgh) functioned as western strategic points for the British and the Americans, much as they had during prior conflicts with the French and would again during the War of 1812. They were centers of trade, bases, and essential supply depots that allowed both sides to conduct military operations. Despite being advantageous targets, the fighting never reached these modest hubs and instead took place in the lands in between—primarily modern-day Ohio and Kentucky (*Map 3*). To White settlers, the region appeared to be mostly wilderness, with only a small Anglo-American population, but it was home to the Delaware, Mingo, Wyandotte, Huron, Shawnee, Miami, and other tribes. Native Americans in this region had been locked in a long-standing and complex sociocultural, military, diplomatic, and economic struggle that had forced them to navigate other tribes, the powers of Britain, France, and Spain, and now the United States. As tribes debated their positions, the war exacerbated the ever-present concerns of loyalty, sovereignty, and dominance in this contested terrain.

The roots of the Ohio Campaign of 1782 were grounded in mistrust, misinformation, revenge, and leadership failures between the Americans and Native tribes and among the tribal nations themselves. Missionaries had converted the Moravian tribes, primarily Delaware and Lenape, to Christianity years earlier. When war came, they attempted to remain neutral because of their pacifist beliefs. This group had been under suspicion from White settlers since the French and Indian War. As pacifism conflicted with British, American, and Indian interests, the Moravians' loyalty could not be assured, and persecution against them was standard practice. The Delaware's protection of the Christian villages had dissipated. Some



Map 3

Americans believed that the Native Americans used the Moravian tribal missions to launch raids, and certain Native American nations conducted attacks from the region to implicate the converts. The British-allied Wyandotte were particularly concerned about reports that Moravian tribal missionaries were aiding the Continental Army. The Moravian tribes "were sitting between two powerful,

angry gods, who, with their mouths wide open, were most furiously looking at each other," said a Wyandotte leader. In the fall of 1781, the Wyandotte and the British Indian Department acted proactively and forced all Moravian tribes and Moravian tribal missionaries from lands along the Tuscarawas River so that they would be closer to British Detroit and farther from American Fort Pitt. However, the removal to the upper Sandusky River separated the Moravian tribes from their crops.

The exile would be short. Driven by hunger, the peaceful Moravian tribes returned east months later to harvest corn from their fields. At roughly the same time, the Wyandotte and Shawnee launched raids in the region that killed and captured a small number of American men, women, and children. These attacks drew out a party of 160 Pennsylvania militiamen from Fort Pitt under the command of Col. David Williamson. The long-established whispers that these Moravian villages were the staging points for Indian raids shaped the thinking of many fearful Pennsylvanians, and Washington County Militia commander James Marshel did nothing to dissuade them. Brig. Gen. William Irvine of the Continental Army, who was busy lamenting the difficulties of planning a campaign against Detroit and the poor state of Fort Pitt, was not informed. As has been the case throughout American history since King Philip's War in the seventeenth century, American forces exacted their revenge not necessarily on the perpetrators but on nonhostile Native Americans.

On 6 March 1782, some 90 miles from Fort Pitt, the Pennsylvania militia approached the mission town of Gnadenhutten and found the Moravian tribes harvesting crops. At first, the Native Americans were unafraid; after all, they had not attacked anyone. The militia, who already had killed tribespeople in the surrounding area, greeted them as "friends and brothers." So the Moravian tribes willingly went with the soldiers back into town. They told the Moravian tribes they could move closer to Fort Pitt, a reversal of what the British had done. The Moravian tribes did not resist. Before long, however, the soldiers accused the Native Americans of theft, aiding the raiding parties, and even participating in the settlement attacks. The Wyandotte and Shawnee had indeed passed close to the town,

but the Moravian Native Americans professed their innocence. Unfortunately, the militia was unwilling to accept their claim or their pacifist beliefs. The militia called them "enemies and warriors." Some of the militiamen's families had suffered harm under tribal raids or had their homes plundered. During the Wyandotte and Shawnee raid, militiaman Robert Wallace's wife and three children had been taken. Soon, skeptical militiamen separated the men of the tribes from the women and children and tied up all the villagers. At first, Colonel Williamson "promised protection" to the Moravian Native tribes as prisoners. However, other frontier militiamen "reason[ed] very differently on the subject of killing the Moravians, to what people who live in the interior part of the country in perfect safety do."

The previous fall, Williamson had brought Moravian tribes suspected of hostilities to General Irvine at Fort Pitt—who subsequently freed them. Williamson's troops resented that decision and thought their commander and undoubtedly Irvine were too soft, grumbling that the captives "ought to have been killed." Militia officers' positions were more tenuous than those of Continental officers. Williamson had been elected to his rank by his troops and probably feared his popularity—and in turn his status—would suffer. The colonel deferred his authority and left the matter to his hot-tempered troops. It was a failure of command and leadership.

It took three days of deliberation before Colonel Williamson called for a public vote on the fate of the captives. This delay suggests that a sizeable portion of the militia opposed execution, or at least had considered their options and the moral issues. The militia knew that some of the Moravians were innocent, even if they believed that others in the tribe had been involved in the raids. Still, only eighteen or so soldiers were willing to step forward and vote to spare the Moravians. Rev. Joseph Doddridge, then a teenage settler, later asserted that the bulk of the troops opposed executing the prisoners but were pressured by other soldiers and failed to act out of "the fear of public indignation." The rules of war were clear, and the militia ignored them. Whatever the reasoning, the sentence was the same: death.

It would be called the Gnadenhutten Massacre. While the Moravians sang hymns, militiamen executed ninety-six people, thirty-four of them children, using spears, axes, or mallets. Some reports suggest that as few as two soldiers did the killing. Yet the dissenters stepped aside. Few of the soldiers could even bear to watch. Doddridge wrote that "the justice and humanity of the majority" was "silenced by the clamor and violence of a lawless minority." Despite any personal misgivings, Williamson and the bulk of the militiamen allowed the murder of nearly a hundred people and a town to be turned to ash.

No official body ordered or even condoned the actions of the Pennsylvania militia—they represented individuals' choices, actions, and inactions. Popular sentiment among Western settlers was divided, with "some condemning, others applauding." Within two months, Congress and the Pennsylvania state government launched an investigation into the massacre. The burden of the investigation fell to General Irvine and Dorsey Pentecost, a land speculator and Pennsylvania Supreme Executive Council member. Irvine previously had been sympathetic to the Moravian tribes, freeing Williamson's prisoners and court-martialing soldiers for attempted murder, which he called "destitute of humanity or the manly virtues necessary to stamp the profession." Irvine and Pentecost suggested that to prevent a repetition of this horrific event, the Pennsylvanian government should explicitly "forbid that, in future excursions that women, children, and infirm persons, should not be killed,–so contrary to the law of arms." Yet the two investigators concluded that pursuing this case would "produce a Confusion, and Ilwill amongst the people." Furthermore, Irvine complained to Pennsylvania Assembly President William Moore that any further inquiry would "not only be fruitless, but, in the end, may be attended with disagreeable consequences." The "disagreeable consequence" for Irvine was clearly American public unrest. Irvine was concerned that citizens considered him and other Continental Army officers "too fond of Indians." In another failure of leadership, no one was ever punished for the Gnadenhutten Massacre.

The Pennsylvania Assembly also worried about "disagreeable consequences," but their rationale differed from Irvine's. Like General Greene in North Carolina, they thought more about the long term and feared the results of "an act disgraceful to humanity" that could be "productive of the most disagreeable consequences," whether it led to an internal moral failing, worsening of diplomatic relations with neutral Native Americans, or the spark for renewed hostilities. Almost immediately, the Gnadenhutten Massacre did exactly what the Pennsylvania Assembly feared: it incited more violence, ethical violations, and reprisals. Even in Paris, Benjamin Franklin worried that such moral lapses would have strategic implications and prolong or undo the peace process. The frontier and its "most disorderly people, who being far removed from the Eye & Control of their respective Governments," as Franklin complained to British peace negotiator Richard Oswald, "are more bold in committing Offenses against Neighbors, and are forever occasioning Complaints and furnishing Matter for fresh Differences between their States." Marshel and Williamson, unmoved by admonishment and having missed their intended targets, now turned their attention to a larger-scale militia attack to exterminate the whole Wyandotte tribe at Sandusky, Ohio, about 100 miles from Detroit and 200 miles from Fort Pitt. However, after Gnadenhutten, General Irvine distrusted Williamson's leadership and maneuvered to have Col. William Crawford command a volunteer expedition to Sandusky. Crawford came out of retirement for this mission. He had served in the Continental Army during the Philadelphia Campaign against the British and Washington considered him "a very good officer."

Irvine gave explicit orders to Crawford that he should follow the rules of war, specifically that he must take any British or Indian combatants prisoner even if it was inconvenient for them to be transported back to Fort Pitt. He needed to take "special care" to ensure the well-being of prisoners and even to "liberate them on parole" if necessary, a provision usually reserved for officers. Interestingly, although this latitude could be applied to Native Americans, it did not extend to loyalists. All "must from the moment

they marched," Crawford reiterated to his officers, "be in all respects subject to the rules and articles of war for the regular troops." There was a clear disconnect between officers and soldiers, a portion of which still craved revenge for the initial raids. The latter vowed: "No quarters to be given to an Indian, whether man, woman, or child." While Crawford was trying to calm his troops, Benjamin Franklin was inflaming tempers with fictional tales of native atrocities. From Paris, Franklin published that the British-allied Seneca had sent 954 scalps to General Frederick Haldimand, Royal British Governor of Québec. Although based loosely on real events, Franklin's story was a hoax designed to shame the British into more favorable terms. However, Franklin's words spoke more to the existing prejudices on the American frontier.

As the nearly 500 troops (some of whom had participated in the Gnadenhutten Massacre) headed for Sandusky in late May 1782, word spread that they were out "to exterminate the whole Wyandot Tribe." However, Wyandotte scouts provided an early warning. By early June, the Americans quickly lost any element of surprise. The Wyandotte emptied their town, and a British–Native American force planned an ambush. After a battle in a grove (later named Battle Island) at Upper Sandusky that saw about five deaths per side, the Americans retreated, and a group of Delaware captured Crawford and others.

In direct retaliation for the Gnadenhutten Massacre, the Delaware tortured Crawford and ten others for hours. They branded and scalped Crawford and cut off his ears before burning him at the stake—for the crime of "joining yourself to that execrable man, Williamson and his party." The tribespeople chopped Crawford's son-in-law, Col. William Harrison, into quarters and tomahawked nearly all of the remaining prisoners to death, except for one who managed to escape. Though women and children were noncombatants, they played a significant role in the regulation of prisoners and rituals of torture. Women traditionally decided the fate of prisoners, and they deemed these soldiers unacceptable for adoption or enslavement. The Delaware believed "that examples must take place" and called it "justice and according to our custom." "Blood vengeance" was

demanded. Upon learning of the event, British leadership was shocked and expressed their "utter abhorrence." General Haldimand and Col. Arent Schuyler DePeyster, the New York–born commander of Detroit, worried about repercussions. The chiefs of the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy (Haudenosaunee) defended the Delaware's torture and execution by purposely and falsely labeling Crawford "the principal agent in the murder of the Moravians." The Americans were naturally "enraged and determined on having ample satisfaction." However, no immediate American military plans were created. Fear, rage, and rumors mixed as the British became convinced that the Americans would strike Detroit, advancing from Kentucky and moving northward.

The consequences of Yorktown could also be felt on the frontier. At a grand council of Native American nations in Chillicothe in Ohio territory, Mingo chief Simon Girty (a Pennsylvania-born pioneer taken prisoner by the tribe and later adopted) gave an impassioned speech denouncing the Americans who "have overrun your country." With peace negotiations already in progress between Britain and America, Girty, who had been at Crawford's torture and execution (and refused him a mercy killing), feared that the upcoming end of the war would bring ruin upon the Native American nations. The British hoped to negotiate sovereign lands for the tribes and position themselves as a buffer from the Americans. It was a scenario Franklin tried to avoid with his deceptive newspaper article claiming that the tribes expected such a British consideration and were scalping Americans to seal the deal. Girty concluded that when peace came, the tribes no longer would be able to leverage the might of two greater powers over the contested ground. In response, he pushed for a new strategy. "Unless you rise in the majesty of your might and exterminate their whole race," Girty proclaimed, "you may bid adieu to the hunting grounds of your fathers."

In August 1782, the Ohio Campaigns spread into Kentucky. Each side was convinced of a pending offensive from their enemy. Like in Ohio, the scale of the fighting was small, but often brutal and involved entire settlements, including American and tribal women and children in supporting roles. Americans continued to demand

a "Day of retaliation" out of "revenge for the Injury" they suffered at the hands of tribespeople and loyalists, even as military leadership tried to restrain the worst impulses of their troops. Cut off from quick communications out of Philadelphia, New York, or London, the frontier lingered in uncertainty much longer than the East Coast in the days before peace. Informal skirmishes and Native American versus settler violence had existed for more than a century before and would continue for more than a century after.

Still, bloodshed and partisan fighting were not just on the western frontier or the Carolina backcountry—and neither were atrocities and reprisals. With the British army ensconced in Manhattan and the Continental Army in the surrounding hinterlands, the greater New York area became a hot spot of conflict between loyalists, state militia, and irregulars. In fact, when including neighboring New Jersey and Connecticut, this region experienced upward of fifty or more separate skirmishes and raids from 1782 until the end of the war. Just like on the frontier, partisan fighting, though typically small in scale, was often personal and categorized by brutality and revenge.

Two bands of irregulars were particularly incendiary and waged their own private war along the New York–New Jersey border. In the spring of 1782, the actions of New York's *Board of Associated Loyalists* and New Jersey's patriot Association for Retaliation (also known as the Monmouth Retaliators) managed to draw in the American and British regular armies, and placed national honor at stake. The *Board of Associated Loyalists* under the command of New Jersey's former royal governor William Franklin, son of Benjamin Franklin, was known to conduct raids into the now patriot state. The Association for Retaliation supposedly was founded to defend the state from such loyalist incursions, but its name and the killing of neutrals suggested something else. The *Board of Associated Loyalists*, slightly newer than its patriot counterparts, consisted of refugees from the greater New York area who dealt out "just vengeance" on patriots who committed "excesses, barbarities or irregularities" against loyalists. In essence, both groups were mirror images of each other. They also were well-acquainted personally, as opposing members

often hailed from nearby towns and sometimes were even prewar neighbors. There was one major difference: the British army officially recognized the *Board of Associated Loyalists*. The Retaliators were not part of the organized militia of any state—even though Brig. Gen. David Forman, also of the New Jersey militia, commanded them and conveniently did not advertise his involvement. Forman was not alone; members of both groups frequently divided their time between the militia and irregular actions.

Most of the skirmishes and raids around New York lacked any far-reaching implications. However, two minor incursions in late March 1782 set off a shocking chain of events that enraged audiences in America, Britain, and elsewhere in Europe. They probably would have been forgotten, as so many others were, if a death on each side had not revealed the web of loyalties, affiliations, and questionable legitimacy of irregular warfare.

On 23 March 1783, Capt. Evan Thomas, under orders from the *Board of Associated Loyalists*, led displaced Pennsylvania loyalists on a raid from New York against coastal New Jersey. Spotting a patriot blockhouse in Toms River, New Jersey, the loyalists attacked the next morning. The twenty-five patriots in the blockhouse, commanded by Capt. Joshua Huddy of the Monmouth County militia, attempted a defense but were outnumbered five to one. The loyalists swarmed over the top of the outer stockade fence. With half of his force dead, Huddy surrendered. The loyalists took Huddy and his twelve remaining troops over the border and threw them in a prison hulk—a decommissioned ship used to hold captives—off the coast of Brooklyn, New York. Although a commissioned officer in the New Jersey militia, Huddy had multiple allegiances, as he had killed loyalists as a leader of the Association for Retaliation. His imprisonment was consistent with that afforded to other prisoners of war, but the news of his capture put the Association for Retaliation in the mood for revenge.

Four days later, Monmouth Retaliators captured Philip White, a sailor from the loyalist privateer *Wasp*, during a raiding mission on the shore of Long Branch, New Jersey. Despite being offered quarter, White, who previously had killed the father of one of his captors,

was unwilling to leave his fate in the hands of this infamous patriot band. He broke from his guards and dashed from the road toward the forest. The Retaliators opened fire and shot White in the back. The bullets only slowed him. A mounted Retaliator galloped off in pursuit, shouting, "Give up, you shall have good quarters yet." White kept running, and so the cavalryman rode him down. The escape and White's life both ended with a saber slash. Reports of exactly what happened varied greatly depending on which side delivered the account. The Retaliators exacerbated the worst rumors when they displayed White's corpse in front of Monmouth Court House. It was now the *Board of Associated Loyalists* turn to seek retaliation.

Driven to a frenzy by the "public warning" and accounts of the body's mutilation, White's brother-in-law, loyalist militia Capt. Richard Lippincott of the *Board of Associated Loyalists*, demanded vengeance. About two weeks later, Lippincott and his band of loyalists, accompanied by Commissary of Prisoners Walter Challoner, had Captain Huddy released from the prison ship into their custody under the guise of prisoner exchange. On 12 April, three days after the handover, Huddy was brought back to New Jersey and "in cold blood hanged." Although Lippincott did not perform the execution personally, he was there and it happened under his command. Huddy's body was left dangling at Middletown Point, adorned with a sign that read: "UP GOES HUDDY FOR PHILIP WHITE." The loyalists would later claim that Huddy had killed White, which was impossible. Despite the lie, Huddy's selection was not random. In addition to being a Retaliators leader, Huddy had been White's neighbor and was known for bragging about hanging a loyalist. It was a public and personal message that "denounc[ed] a like fate to others."

In the wake of the shocking execution, General Forman rushed to report the incident to General Washington in Newburgh. Fourteen prominent Monmouth citizens also wrote to Washington and labeled it an "almost unparalleled murder." Furthermore, they insinuated that it was committed with the "approbation, if not by the express command" of General Clinton. It was a barbarous act not permitted by civilized people, and the people of Monmouth

demanded "Retalliation, as the only measure which can in such cases give any degree of security that the [practice] shall not become general" and commonplace. All manner of witness reports pointed the finger, or rather the noose, at Lippincott.

Following his typical pattern when faced with a difficult decision, Washington called a war council of his generals and regimental commanders. The Americans and the British generally deemed the right of retaliation, *lex talionis*, acceptable, but it risked escalation. The officers unanimously agreed that "retaliation [was] justifiable and expedient," but most advised sending a petition to the British seeking redress first. In the event their demands were not satisfied, a prisoner of equal rank should be sacrificed. Washington wrote to Clinton demanding Captain Lippincott, whom he declared guilty of "the most wanton, unprecedented, & inhuman Murder that ever disgraced the arms of civilized People." If the loyalist was not turned over, the American general wrote, "I shall hold myself justifiable in the Eyes of God & Man for the measure to which I shall resort." In other words, another British captain would be executed in Lippincott's place. Washington pleaded, "To save the innocent, I demand the guilty."

Clinton professed himself "greatly surprised and shocked" by the murder and vilified the loyalists for this "audacious breach of humanity." All the same, he lectured his American counterpart on his "very improper Language" and reminded him that "the Mildness of the British Government does not admit of Acts of Cruelty or persecuting Violence." Clinton promised to investigate and prosecute those involved in this "barbarous outrage against Humanity," but refused Washington's demand. Furthermore, Clinton warned Washington that "to Sacrifice Innocence under the Notion of preventing Guilt, in Place of suppressing, would be adopting Barbarity and raising it to the greatest height." The British arrested Lippincott and court-martialed him for the murder of Captain Huddy. He would face British justice, but Clinton refused to comply any further. Additionally, Clinton outright suggested that Washington risked personal and American dishonor if he took reprisals.

General Washington raged against "the Enemy" and their "persisting in that barbarous line of Conduct they have pursued during the course of this war." He was forced into "the disagreeable necessity of Retaliating." On the same day Lippincott's trial began, Washington ordered Brig. Gen. Moses Hazen to randomly select an unconditionally captured British captain from among the prisoners held in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The problem was that the terms of General Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown legally protected the only prisoners Hazen held of that rank from reprisal. Only unconditional prisoners—those who had been captured during battle, not those who had surrendered formally—could face retaliation. Nevertheless, Washington, out of what he called "disagreeable necessity," knowingly ordered Hazen to move forward anyway. On 27 May, Hazen's thirteen prisoners drew lots to determine which of them would face execution in place of Captain Lippincott. The 19-year-old Capt. Charles Asgill was left holding a slip of paper that read "unfortunate."

The dreadful situation and the selection of this "young Gentleman" of the "most amiable Character" infuriated the British and Americans alike. Maj. James Gordon, the highest-ranking British prisoner, labeled the loyalists as nothing more than "Lawless Banditti." Why should British army officers suffer for the independent actions of a loyalist militia captain? Furthermore, Gordon reminded Washington that he was acting in "Direct Violation" of the terms agreed to at Yorktown. Appealing to Washington directly, Asgill wrote much the same, "I claim protection under the 4th Article of the Capitulation & from your Excellencys known Character I have every Right and Reason to expect it." The other captive British officers were also "highly enraged at the Conduct of Sir Henry Clinton" and "openly declare[d] to have been deserted by their General, and given up to suffer for the Sins of the Guilty." Though the officers meant it figuratively, they were also literally correct about Clinton. Three weeks earlier, General Clinton had turned his command over to General Carleton, leaving his replacement to sort out the mess.

The unrest went beyond the British military. Even the recently retired Col. Alexander Hamilton denounced the impending execution

of Captain Asgill: "A sacrifice of this sort is entirely repugnant to the genius of the age we live in and is without example in modern history nor can it fail to be considered in Europe as wanton and unnecessary." Hamilton's fears were correct. News quickly reached Britain, France, and the Netherlands. While an emissary to the Netherlands, John Adams remarked, "All Europe Seems to take a lively Interest in this Affair. All deplore the melancholly Fate of Asgil." News of the Asgill Affair even complicated the peace negotiations being conducted in Paris. Beyond the reprisal itself, outrage went international because the doomed youth was the son and heir of the well-connected Sir Charles Asgill. He had risen from the merchant class to the aristocracy, having received the title of baronet and served as the Lord Mayor of London. The Asgill family had connections, and the young captain's mother, Sarah Theresa Pratviel, Lady Asgill, used them in Britain and beyond. With her husband overcome by illness, Lady Asgill contacted other British and French aristocrats. Because French general Marshal Jean-Baptiste-Donatien de Vimeur, comte de Rochambeau, and French admiral Jacques-Melchior, comte de Barras, had also signed the surrender at Yorktown, the honor of France also was implicated. She begged the French foreign minister, Charles Gravier, comte de Vergennes, to provide comfort to her son. "I am well informed General Washington reveres your character," Lady Asgill implored Vergennes, "say but to him that you wish my Son to be relieved and he will restore him to his distracted family, and render him to happiness." Her pleas even "extremely affected" King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette. The Asgill Affair was an international scandal.

Meanwhile, the Lippincott trial dragged on for a month and a half, from early May into late June 1782. Illustrating the blurred nature of the irregulars, Lippincott argued that military justice did not apply to him, because he was "not an enlisted Soldier, nor paid nor Mustered as a Soldier, nor is he an Officer in pay and with Rank, and therefore he saith, that he is not liable by any Court Martial for the said supposed Crime." The military tribunal of fifteen officers disagreed. Naturally, Lippincott pleaded not guilty. He did not deny his role in Huddy's death, but he claimed that he had not committed

murder because he personally had not carried out the killing. He stated that the execution was simply "to effect the public end of humanity by preventing a repetition of the like barbarities." After all, Lippincott continued, "Huddy being represented as a Man who had himself executed several Loyalists in Monmouth County, was therefore Considered, on the great Scale of humanity, as the fittest object for Retaliation." Furthermore, Huddy was "disposed of" based on verbal "lawful Orders" from William Franklin and the Associated Loyalist Board of Directors. This act of retaliation was therefore a necessity based on the actions of the patriots, Lippencott argued. Even though the execution occurred "without proper Authority," the tribunal acquitted the loyalist captain because "what the Prisoner did in the Matter was not the Effect of Malice or Ill-will, but proceeded from a Conviction that it was his Duty to obey the Orders of the Board of Directors of Associated Loyalists, and his not doubting their having a full Authority to give such Orders." The British concluded Lippincott was following orders.

After much delay, Carleton broke the news to Washington in mid-August. He knew the outcome would not be received well but chose to focus on what he deemed most important regarding British honor. "This Event was so far from being authorised by Government," he wrote to Washington, "that my Predecessor in the Command was wholly unacquainted with the Fact." The British military never ordered Huddy's death and therefore reprisals should not fall upon a British officer. Although somewhat contradicting the results of the trial, Carleton continued, both sides were guilty of excesses because "the same Spirit of Revenge has mutually animated the People of New Jersey and the Refugees under our Command, equally criminal and deserving of Punishment in all." However, he promised to continue to investigate the matter "to shew my thorough Disapprobation of the Execution of Huddy." Given that Lippencott was acquitted, it is unsurprising that months later, the British commander reported that "nothing . . . could, in the way of prosecution, be further effectually done." Still, Carleton left "the whole general Question into [Washington's] own Hands."

Washington was stuck. He did not want to execute the innocent Asgill. He even wrote to the young officer that he wished for "your Liberation from your disagreeable Duresse." However, the general did not see a way out. He feared backing down would lead to further British abuses, stating: "the Enemy ought to have learnt before this, that my Resolutions are not to be trifled with." Hamilton, his former aide-de-camp, recognized that "the Commander in Chief has pledged himself for it and cannot recede" because honor was at stake. Washington felt caught between his sense of honor and "a sense of my duty, which loudly called upon me to take measures however disagreable, to prevent a repetition of those enermities which have been the subject of discussion." Hamilton desired that "pretexts may be found and will be readily admitted in favour of humanity." He hoped that a mother's tears and the allies' sympathy and concerns for their own honor would do the trick.

As at Yorktown, the French helped turn the tide again. French officers and officials used indirect and direct influence to save Asgill. Rochambeau believed Washington must have forgotten about the terms of the surrender; to prevent the execution would be to "prevent them from soiling this honourable capitualtion by a deed of reprisal that they have absolutely no right to commit." Admiral Grasse, via Benjamin Franklin, asked the Continental Congress to spare Asgill as payment for his own "*foibles services*"—"weak services"—in the war, which naturally included his decisive naval role at Yorktown. Yet it was Lady Asgill who did the most to save her son. Moved by her story, Vergennes wrote to Washington "not in quality of Minister of a King, the friend and Ally of the United States" but "as a man of sensibility and as a tender father who feels all the force of Paternal love." Unlike Rochambeau, the minister did not deny that Washington had a right to retaliation and even affirmed that the terms of the surrender were not an absolute "Safe Guard." However, Vergennes asked the general to spare Asgill out of courtesy for "what is agreeable to their Majesties" and out of "homage to your Virtue." The French gave Washington a way out.

Vergennes's letter caused Washington to do what he had done countless times before: refer the matter to Congress. He forwarded the Frenchman's "affectionate Interposition in Favor of the Life of Capt. Asgill" in October. Washington hoped "that Congress will not hesitate to give an early and decisive Determination respecting the future Treatment of that unfortunate Young Officer." The request was part respect for his French allies, part deference to civilian supremacy, and part Washington wanting to distance himself from the eventual decision. Congress assigned a five-person committee to consider the matter. On 7 November, Congress "resolved, that the commander in chief be, and he is, hereby directed to set captain Asgill at liberty." Congress had shown deference for their French ally and let Washington claim he was bending to a congressional order and civilian supremacy. Asgill was saved and returned to Britain, much to the relief of all sides. The decision avoided a stain on the honor of General Washington and the United States.

However, Asgill's freedom did not mean that irregular violence stopped or was tolerated. In the same order that freed the British captain, Congress made it clear that the right to reprisal was still valid and needed. The commander in chief should seek means of redress first, but Congress "fully authorized and empowered" him "whenever the enemy shall commit any act of cruelty . . . to cause suitable retaliation."

The Asgill Affair, like the actions of Griffith Rutherford in the Carolinas or the Gnadenhutten Massacre on the frontier, illustrated how personal and national honor was constantly at stake. The unrestrained actions of irregular forces, even if responding to enemy hostilities, could threaten to escalate violence and have wide-ranging repercussions. In the days after Yorktown, General Greene had worried that animosity would result from breaching proper ethical conduct. Doing so could sacrifice the ideals of the American Revolution for revenge or personal prejudices. The chance at peace or the nation's honor could be lost by the actions of a single person or band of citizens.

The Preliminary Peace

Far from the frontier and under the shadow of the Asgill Affair, peace commissioners conducted a different sort of campaign in Paris. By the fall of 1781, the United States had been fighting a war at home for seven years—they wanted independence. Only months earlier, King George III wrote that "this long contest will end as it ought by the Colonies returning to the Mother Country." He vowed, "I will never put my hand to any other conclusion." Essentially without allies, Britain was simultaneously at war with the United States, France, Spain, and the Netherlands in North America, the Caribbean, Europe, and India. Facing a nearly doubling national debt, the newly appointed peace-supporting prime minister, William Petty, 2nd Earl of Shelburne, was ready to seek terms. Across the English Channel, a nearly bankrupt France was also eager to end the whole affair; its national strategy of revenge against Britain proved too costly.

Although the American peace commission had been created optimistically in 1779, the victory at Yorktown in 1781 made peace a real possibility. Benjamin Franklin, who had served as an ambassador to France since December 1776 and whose fame as a polymath caused him to become an international sensation, led the American delegation. His successful negotiation of the 1778 Treaty of Alliance between the United States and France was perhaps any individual's single most important contribution to the war. Lawyers-turned-statesmen John Adams of Massachusetts and John Jay of New York, respectively named as peace commissioners in April and May 1782, joined Franklin in Paris. Since 1779, Jay had served as the U.S. minister to Spain, where he had secured assistance and a sizeable war loan but had failed to achieve Spanish recognition of American independence. That same year, Adams arrived in France, where he formed a bitter rivalry with Franklin over their conflicting diplomatic methods. Franklin behaved more like a European and relied on charm; Adams acted like an American and was blunt to the point of rudeness. Congress decided Franklin should remain in

***American Commissioners of the Preliminary Peace Agreement with Great Britain, 1783–1784, London, England* (unfinished), Benjamin West, ca. 1783 (*Winterthur Museum*)**

France and sent Adams to the Netherlands, where he successfully secured Dutch recognition of the United States.

Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown had another direct effect on the American peace commission. It allowed for the addition of a fourth member: the former president of the Continental Congress, Henry Laurens. Since 1780, Laurens, who was supposed to be in the Netherlands instead of Adams, had been imprisoned in the Tower of London after the British had captured his ship. The British had been unwilling to trade Laurens for any military prisoners, as they initially had charged him with high treason. Unlike the Americans, Britain was still in a global war, and it wanted the paroled Cornwallis for a command in India. Because of his prisoner status, Cornwallis (who had made his way back home after Yorktown) was honor bound to refuse such a post. As a result, the United States and Britain negotiated an exchange, and Laurens joined the other diplomats in Paris. Laurens was a high-profile prisoner, and his release was a diplomatic win—especially as a trade for a paroled senior officer being dispatched to the other side of the world. However, he played only a minor role in the peace commission. The inclusion of Franklin's

grandson, William Temple Franklin, as secretary rounded out the committee several months later.

With the participants in place, serious peace discussions started in July 1782. Each nation had its own interests and agendas. During the next five months, the U.S. delegation negotiated necessary conditions with their British counterpart, the Scottish-born Richard Oswald, who was an adviser to Prime Minister Shelburne and a client of Henry Laurens. For the Americans, guaranteed U.S. independence was the nonnegotiable basis for further discussions. Certain progressive members of Parliament were willing to recognize independence as early as 1778; others, like Shelburne, would concede it happily for peace. However, George III opposed independence from the start. It threatened his rule and the whole institution of monarchy. Although other details like borders, fishing rights off Newfoundland, the possession of Canada, the treatment of loyalists, and the status of escaped enslaved persons were bargaining chips, the question of independence was always the central point for the United States.

The French and Americans benefited in their negotiating positions from the long-standing relationship between Franklin and Foreign Minister Vergennes. As part of the Franco-American Alliance of 1778, both nations had agreed to seek a joint peace with Britain. However, behind the scenes, the constant communication between Franklin and Vergennes allowed the French and Americans to maintain independent positions against the British without fear of alienating their ally. Congress also had instructed the commission to cooperate with the French, and Vergennes believed that this arrangement required the Americans and French to confer mutually in the peace negotiations. Nonetheless, Franklin knew the British feared a joint peace with the two countries. His network of relationships enabled him to make his own deals and provide the United States with leverage, allowing the Americans to play within the gray of the terms of the alliance. In Franklin's interpretation of the situation, the United States could work out a peace deal independently—though the Americans could not formally sign such a deal without consulting their French allies.

Franklin was not the only one who played diplomatic chess. The British intended to drive a wedge between the Americans and their European allies by dangling the prospect of independence. Although the loss of America would injure British honor and prestige, the war with the French, Spanish, and Dutch was perceived as a more immediate and profound threat to the empire. French and Spanish navies sat in the English Channel and maneuvered globally for economic and strategic positions in the Caribbean, at the mouth of the Mediterranean Sea, and at the trade ports of India. A British naval victory over the French fleet at the Battle of the Saintes in April 1782 alleviated the stakes and protected Jamaica, but France and Spain still besieged Gibraltar. A faster peace with the Americans meant Great Britain could focus on more dangerous enemies closer to home.

By August 1782, Oswald reported that according to his instructions, "it appeared, Independence, unconditional in every sense, would be granted," but in "the first Article of the Settlement or Treaty," not as a prerequisite. Having failed to gain recognition from Spain, Jay was not won over by the vague promise and demanded confirmation from the British before any peace was concluded.

Ever the lawyer, Jay proposed a fine-print solution. Oswald's diplomatic commission could be altered to refer to the "Thirteen United States of America" rather than "the Thirteen United Colonies." The British victory at the Battle of the Saintes, and the relief in Gibraltar in September 1782, eased the decision. Though the siege of the island fortress would technically continue until February 1783, it was still under British control, so Shelburne conceded. Technically, the commission was not "a final acknowledgment of independence"—at least not to the British—but its receipt on 27 September satisfied Jay, who believed the change "would set the whole machine in motion."

Negotiations sped up with this ambiguous recognition. Putting American interests over that of their French allies, Franklin and the American commission, in direct contrast to the orders given by Congress, negotiated privately with the British. These actions hindered France's own negotiations. Independence was worth the

risk, Franklin thought. Besides, he technically had followed the letter of the alliance, because nothing would be signed officially until the French had worked out their own treaty.

Although King George III continued to drag his feet in the process, the peace commissions drew up drafts of a preliminary treaty guaranteeing U.S. independence within the next two months. On 30 November, the United States and Britain signed a tentative agreement in Paris. Franklin only notified a shocked Vergennes with a brief note the day before. In the agreement, Great Britain recognized the United States, and hostilities ended. The other preliminary provisions set the boundaries of the new United States along the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes; granted Americans free navigation rights along these waterways and fishing rights in the ocean off of eastern Canada; settled debt; ordered the release of prisoners; and—most controversially—recommended "the restitution of all estates, rights and properties, which have been confiscated" from British loyalists.

George III blamed the whole affair on Parliament, which "to my astonishment come into ideas of granting a separation to North America." In the king's telling, his ministers prevented and "disabled" him "from defending the just rights of this kingdom." Vergennes was amazed at the terms and furious at Franklin for not including him. However, even he had to recognize that the Americans probably received a better deal with the solo effort. "The English were not so much making a peace as buying it," Vergennes scoffed. Waiting on French and Spanish agreements with the British, all four nations did not sign the Preliminary Treaty of Paris until 20 January 1783. Still, hostilities between Britain and America essentially had ceased by late November. Three months later, on 14 and 20 February 1783, King George III and the American peace commissioners both issued proclamations declaring "the Cessation of Arms, as well by Sea, as Land, agreed upon between His Majesty the King of Great Britain and the United States of America." Unfortunately, news would not reach the Congress in Philadelphia and the British army headquarters in New York until late March and early April, respectively. Diplomatically, some details still needed to be finalized,

but the British evacuation of their former American colonies had already begun.

The Southern Exodus

The South was always a tantalizing theater for the British. Since the early days of the war, faulty intelligence inspired British strategic thinking that Southerners were predominantly loyalists. Despite bitter partisan fighting and several major campaigns, the search for loyalism had proved ineffective. Despite General Greene's campaigning, British troops still controlled Savannah, Wilmington, and Charleston in late October 1781. With whispers of peace, the strategically minded General Washington considered the military and political implications of failing to seize upon their momentum and oust the British from those strongholds. He tasked Greene with forcing the British from these urban centers and quelling the partisan civil war.

Savannah originally had fallen on 29 December 1778, when a British army under the command of Lt. Col. Archibald Campbell overcame the city's modest defenses and defeated Maj. Gen. Robert Howe's combined Continental and militia force. The following fall, American and French forces conducted one of the first allied efforts of the war when they unsuccessfully besieged the city for nearly a month. Using Charleston as the staging ground, Wilmington fell to the British the following winter on 29 January 1781. In addition to functioning as supply depots, these occupations increased local loyalism, exacerbated partisan warfare, and created strongholds from which the British launched backcountry attacks.

Cornwallis's defeat in Virginia sparked change. The occupation of Wilmington had been conducted initially in large part to support Cornwallis's campaign in the Carolinas. With the mission now irrelevant and patriot militia under the controversial General Rutherford cutting off supply lines, the recently promoted Lt. Col. James Henry Craig was ordered almost immediately after the Yorktown siege to evacuate Wilmington. He expressed his reluctance to leave behind the loyalists who had flocked to the British banner.

Still, on 18 November 1781, just under a month after the surrender at Yorktown, Craig and his regulars, with some loyalists, boarded ships and sailed for Charleston.

Rutherford and his militia marched into Wilmington the following day. The patriot authorities sought revenge against the remaining loyalists. The patriots made charges against them. They confiscated some loyalists' property and (consistent with the brutality of the partisan war) executed others. The other Southern cities would not change hands so easily.

With peace negotiations anticipated but still pending, Washington and Greene believed that regaining control of occupied territory would give them an advantage at the bargaining table in Paris. Greene's immediate goals had major strategic significance: maintain his army, subdue loyalist militia, and "drive the enemy from their strongholds." As Greene and his army slowly inched toward the major southern British stronghold of Charleston, he sent Brig. Gen. Anthony Wayne south to Georgia. Charleston was the bigger prize with a larger enemy force, so Greene could not spare enough soldiers to besiege Savannah properly, let alone storm it. Roughly 1,200 regulars, 600 loyalists, and 150 American Indians, under the command of British Col. Alured Clarke, garrisoned Savannah. Arriving in January 1782, Wayne took an indirect approach. He employed his approximately 600 Continental and militia dragoons, infantry, and artillery as raiders to cut off Savannah from the countryside. He wrote to Greene, "I have long adopted the opinion of those military writers, who lay it down as a maxim, that an officer never ought to hazard a battle, where a defeat would render his situation much worse." A lack of numbers, combined with more restraint, saw the Americans avoid unnecessary battles, splinter Native American–British alliances, encourage enemy desertions, and "make Whigs of Tories." Along with engaging British regulars, loyalists, Hessians, and Indians in small battles, Wayne complained to Greene, "the duty we have performed in Georgia was much more difficult than that of the Children of Israel who only had to make brick without straw."

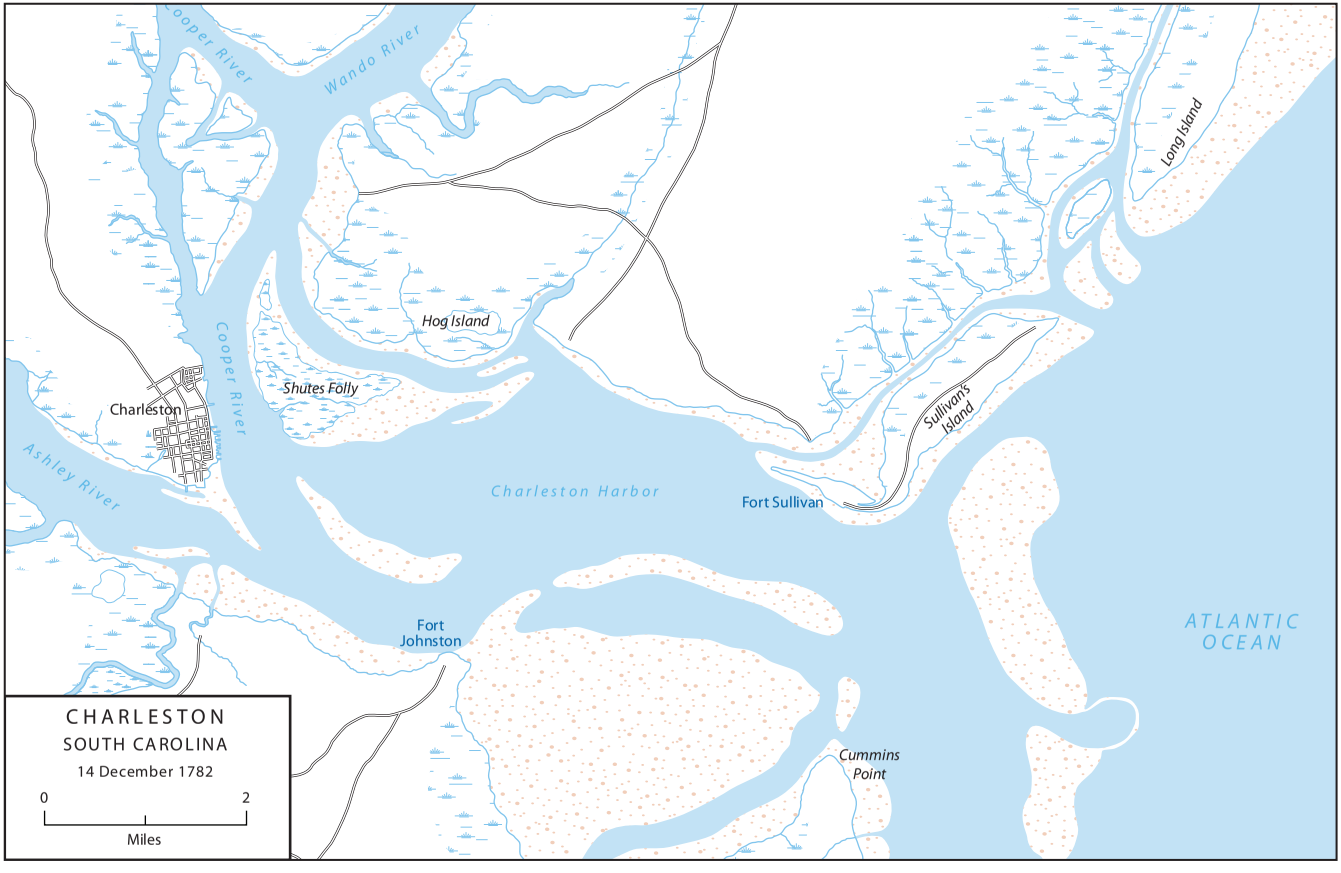
Despite all the hardships, Wayne kept the British stuck in Savannah. However, Parliament's resolution promising the end to

offensive operations in February 1782 and its willingness to consider independence in the summer of 1782 obviously played a defining role. In June, Savannah resident John Simpson recalled, "unexpected orders arrived for the King's Troops to Evacuate Georgia." The new British commander in chief, General Carleton, based in New York, declared it "not a matter of choice." Savannah merchants helped broker a peaceful evacuation between Wayne and Clarke. However, physically emptying a city was no small endeavor. Surrounded by patriot-controlled territory, only a sea route would do. British logisticians needed to account for not just the troops and materiel but also the civilian loyalists who feared "great risk to their persons and loss of their property." Wayne had offered loyalists six months to settle their affairs before giving them a "passport" to travel to the British lines. Two hundred loyalists also accepted an additional offer to stay in Savannah in exchange for two years of service in the Continental Army. Still, in just under two weeks, the British fleet mustered 11,000 tons of shipping. On 11 July 1782, British regulars sailed to now-overflowing Charleston, while 2,500 loyalists fled to St. Augustine, Florida, or Jamaica with 4,000 enslaved people. Even in victory, Greene worried that these growing British numbers in Charleston would tip the scales against him. With Georgia now securely under patriot control, Greene ordered Wayne north to Charleston (*Map 4*).

By the time Wayne rejoined Greene, the Southern Department's beleaguered Continental Army of some 2,000 soldiers had been fighting the British and the mosquitoes around Charleston for nearly a year. Short on funds and supplies, Greene complained that his malaria-afflicted troops had been left to "live on air." In addition to more money and more food, Greene needed thousands more troops if he hoped to force the British from the city.

Col. John Laurens, one of Greene's subordinates, a former aide-de-camp to General Washington and diplomat Henry Laurens's son, renewed an ambitious plan to raise a new South Carolina regiment of enslaved soldiers, who in exchange for their service would be granted freedom. The Continental Army was integrated and offers of freedom for military service had been instituted by

Map 4


Cooper River
Wando River
Long Island
Hog Island
Cooper River
Shutes Folly
Charleston
Ashley River
Charleston Harbor
Fort Sullivan
Sullivan's Island
Fort Johnston
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Cummins Point
CHARLESTON
SOUTH CAROLINA
14 December 1782
0
2
Miles

1778. The South Carolina–born Laurens initially had proposed this option in 1778 to his father and Washington, who encouraged him. However, South Carolina Governor John Rutledge, a member of the First Continental Congress, rejected it. With the reclamation of Charleston within the patriot's grasp and rumors of the British raising their own contingents of enslaved soldiers, Laurens decided to try again with Greene's support. This time, the socially and politically connected Laurens had a seat in the South Carolina legislature to bolster his case before pitching his proposal to the governor and the rest of the representatives in the spring of 1782. Although Laurens had negotiated Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown, he found an even stiffer opposition from his own compatriots. Despite about a dozen votes of support, nearly one hundred others voted down the proposition. Rutledge wished the matter would "rest for ever & a day." The plan went too far for the slaveholding South Carolina Assembly because of long-standing Southern fears that its enslaved population would rebel. In Laurens's telling, his proposal was defeated by "the howlings of a triple-headed monster in which Prejudice Avarice & Pusillanimity were united."

With no help coming from the South Carolina Assembly for his dream of Black soldiers, Laurens returned to the field. Small numbers made Greene live in constant fear that the British force in Charleston, under Maj. Gen. Alexander Leslie, would launch an offensive or simply plunder the countryside. Leslie first had proposed a truce informally in late May, which Greene rejected because he declared such an action was outside his authority. Greene feared it was some British trick to hinder the Franco-American relationship by offering a false peace and not a jointly negotiated one, an agreed-upon provision of the alliance. Greene had a stricter interpretation than Franklin. The arrival of British troops from Savannah only worried Greene more, but he had no direct military options.

Throughout 1782 in South Carolina, some forty skirmishes occurred between American and British regulars and patriot militia and loyalists, with mixed results. Like the rest of the Continental Army outside of Charleston, Laurens's mission as a unit commander, and later as an intelligence collector, was to prevent breakouts from

the city and to cut off supplies to the British. On 27 August 1782, Laurens was killed while leading a bayonet charge to stop a British foraging party near the Stock Plantation on the Combahee River. Most engagements were small, with combined casualties numbering only in the double digits. The last was a British victory at the Battle of James Island on 14 November 1782. Nonetheless, each tactical fight helped support a broader operational purpose: pinning down the British in Charleston.

The British headquarters in New York had had enough. Although skirmishing continued into the fall, Leslie received General Carleton's orders in early August to prepare for Charleston's evacuation. Carleton described the decision, along with the fall of Savannah, as a "deplorable necessity in consequence of an unsuccessful war." Skirmishes still occurred on the peripheries as the British military prepared to sail to New York, and it left "unhappy loyalists" in an uncertain position. The British, who recently had "most solemnly pledged its faith to protect their persons and property," were now abandoning the city. As in Savannah, loyalists were aware of the brutality of partisan war and the prospect of patriot justice terrified them. Even though Wayne had offered gracious terms in Georgia, and Greene consistently had exhibited humanity toward the opposition, loyalists still desired a way out. Carleton was "not unmindful of the distresses of Loyalists"; however, he wanted to get the military to New York and placed "the safety of the province" as the "first importance."

It would take four and half months of planning and 130 ships to orchestrate the surrender of Charleston; loyalists and the enslaved began leaving the city in October. The evacuations of Wilmington and Savannah had both taken place in under a month. Still, Charleston had inherited the displaced populations of these two cities, giving it a different scale. The military's departure was a two-day affair. On 13 December, some troops, approximately 4,000 loyalists, and more than 5,000 enslaved people departed the city. (The British, however, still left some enslaved people to starve on the outer islands.) The next day, 14 December, was coordinated carefully between Leslie and Greene to allow for an orderly transfer of power.

Mutual mistrust remained. Leslie worried about an American attack during his retreat; Greene feared that his counterpart or loyalists would set fire to the city or bombard it from the sea. Neither side wanted chaos, so Greene and Leslie made a deal that allowed the British to "embark without molestation, they agreeing not to fire upon the Town after getting on board." Greene instructed Wayne to make "the safety of the Town the first object," just as Leslie saw to the safety of the army. Both sides also attempted to prevent any partisan sparks. Leslie ordered all remaining inhabitants to stay inside, and new South Carolina Governor John Mathews banned patriot militia from entering the city. For his part, Wayne had the honor of retaking the city that morning with 400 troops and followed the British rearguard's retreat to the wharf at 200 yards. More than 4,000 redcoats embarked the ships at Gadsden's Wharf. Leslie was the last to board.

The planning worked. Watching from a ship moored in the harbor, one British officer called it "the most liberal of any transaction that has taken place since the commencement of the war" and "conducted with the utmost decency and decorum." At 1100, thirteen cannon shots were fired from the State House, signaling that Charleston was once again under patriot control. Wayne ordered all the houses and doors opened, and soon "the balconies, the doors and windows crowded with patriotic fair." Greene naturally realized the importance of the moment when he rode into the city later that afternoon. Not only did the evacuation grant "us compleat possession of all the Southern States," Greene wrote, but more than that, "the people are once more free."

The scene of the patriots of Charleston tearfully embracing the Continental Army with elated greetings of "God bless you gentlemen" and "welcome home, gentlemen!" summed up all that had gone right for the Americans and wrong for the British in the Southern theater. Despite frequent defeats, the Americans prevailed because of a few key battles, and their ability to combine traditional tactics with guerrilla fighting in a war of attrition had frustrated and exhausted their enemies into retreat. Fundamentally, the victory revealed the utter failure of the British Southern strategy

and its dependence on loyalists. Britain's initial intelligence, dating back to 1774, that most Americans were and would remain loyal to the Crown, repeatedly proved to be wrong. The British exodus paid immediate dividends for Southern patriots, granting them, in the words of Continental Maj. Gen. William Moultrie, "their deliverance and independence." More broadly, it had major strategic implications. American diplomats gained greater bargaining power in Paris as the final peace negotiations continued.

Yet victory in the South also exacerbated internal civil-military tensions. Almost from the start, the Continental Army complained about having to wage a war without enough troops, civilian support, or provisions. Similarly, Greene, as quartermaster general and commander of the Southern Department, had pleaded with Congress for more of everything. Despite these shortcomings, the Continental Army prevailed. On 19 December 1782, with Charleston now under his control, Greene wrote to Congress once again, reminding them of the "patience and dignity" with which the Continental Army "bore their sufferings." "Perhaps no Army," he continued, "ever exhibited greater proofs of patriotism and public virtue." His words were only slightly couched; Greene wanted the army to receive "the approbation of Congress through every stage of its operations."

With the British gone, the people of Charleston deemed the Continental Army unnecessary and too expensive essentially overnight. Tensions between the military and civilians were common throughout the United States after the initial exhilaration at the start of the war faded. However, they took on renewed fervor as the war ended. The war was over, and some saw the Continental Army was an unnecessary expense whose presence undermined civilian sovereignty. For the Continental Army, the provisions they lacked during the war were just as scarce in the reclaimed city. The recognition that Greene sought for his army did not arrive, and he began to question Americans' "great blindness."

A legitimate lack of funds and squabbling among local, state, and continental governments often impeded the ability to fulfill the military's many needs. Even so, it created a dangerous situation in

which Congress had not paid military officers for years. Congress offered promises of half pay for life but no ready coin.

The complications extended far beyond Charleston; Greene was not the only one grumbling. Soldiers 800 miles to the north along the Hudson River wondered about their provisions, despite having better and more ample supplies than at any other time during the war. At these New York encampments, soldiers were threatened with a troop beating to dissuade them from scandalously marauding. At almost the exact same moment, Greene's friend Maj. Gen. Henry Knox and other officers voiced the same worries. The complaints were not new, but the duration and timing had changed things—the nation did not yet understand how "great and dangerous" the situation had become.

Somewhere between War and Peace

By the time Charleston came back under American control, 7,500 troops of the Continental Army's main body under Washington had just moved into their freshly built timber cabins at New Windsor, New York, on the banks of the Hudson. Washington took up residence in the Hasbrouck farmhouse in nearby Newburgh and set it up as his headquarters. The war was still on, but they were not fighting—except among themselves. Despite the new location, the Continental Army's mission was the same as before: watching and waiting. The British army, headquartered some 60 miles south in Manhattan, had been Washington's focus since his devastating defeat there in August 1776. As before, the French shifting their naval focus to the Caribbean and elsewhere made such a mission only a dream. The British and American armies essentially kept one another in check. The British evacuation of Charleston made New York even more strategically important. Not only was it the last British stronghold within the American states, but also the city's troop strength was about double that of Washington's army; with an additional 4,000 soldiers freshly arrived from South Carolina. The *Royal Navy* protected the city. The British still represented a credible and capable fighting force, which left the Continental

Army even more concerned by its shortages of food and supplies. Numbers aside, the pending signing of the preliminary peace treaty in Paris made any actual combat less and less likely by the day. As peace drew closer, American officers' concern over the British army shifted to worries over their own empty pockets and their personal honor. Washington was worried and believed his army was "more irritable" in December 1782 "than at any period since the commencement of the War." During the next four months, things only got worse.

Just ten days after Greene wrote to Congress pleading for more attention to the Continental Army, Maj. Gen. Alexander McDougall and Cols. Matthias Ogden and John Brooks from the northern army arrived in Philadelphia "on a matter of a pecuniary nature"—but more than money was at stake. The trio rode from New Windsor, New York, to hand deliver to Congress a petition signed by Knox and thirteen other officers "on behalf of ourselves and our brethren the soldiers." Their timing was not random. In November, Rhode Island delegates to the Continental Congress blocked an attempt by Congress to establish federal taxes rather than state taxation; the petitioners feared this would prevent Congress from gaining the funds to pay them. The officers believed the financial situation would only worsen as peace drew closer. Passed to Congress on 6 January 1783, the letter contained a list of grievances dating back to 1777 and lamented "that shadows have been offered to us while the substance has been gleaned by others." It was a common military gripe that civilians profited from the safety of the home front while the army did the fighting. The officers complained of the army's "extreme poverty"—their soldiers going without clothes and rations, and receiving late pay in depreciated Continental dollars. Most of all, they focused on their retirement pension of half pay for life that Congress had promised in 1780 (upgraded from seven years in 1778). More than a few officers had depleted their personal wealth during the war. However, their honor also was implicated. These financial considerations also were considered a stamp of public approval and an "honorable and just recompense for several years hard service." If Congress did not pay them, it was a sign of disrespect. Without

their pay, the officers would "owe the miserable remnant of life to charity" after it had "been spent in honor." Though even Washington believed their words were "couched in very respectful terms," the officers suggested that not offering payment in some form "may have fatal effects."

Over the course of the revolution, fifty-six soldier mutinies had erupted: soldiers had disobeyed orders, rioted, or even took up arms. The fear of another mutiny was real. However, the stakes were raised this time because the officers were complaining, too. Sensing the seriousness of the request, Congress created a Grand Committee featuring one congressman per state to handle the matter. On 13 January 1783, McDougall, Ogden, and Brooks personally reiterated to the committee much of what was in their letter and added a personal touch to "the seeming approach of peace." The officers were willing to negotiate and even take a lesser lump sum—the original letter presented a variety of acceptable payment plans. Although Knox and the signers left the unidentified "fatal effects" to the imagination, the three soldiers before the congressional committee were more straightforward. They declared that the "irritable state" of the soldiers and officers would spark "at least a mutiny." The "at least" left open the possibility for something much worse. "The army was verging to that state which we are told will make a wise man mad," offered McDougall. Brooks believed the army's ability to "deliberate cooly" was no longer possible. Pay, and the honor it denoted, would fix all. If not, Ogden was afraid to "return to the army" as "the messenger of disappointment."

The officers "made a deep and solemn impression" in Philadelphia. Congressman James Madison genuinely was moved by the plight of the Continental Army. On a subcommittee, he and fellow delegates John Rutledge and Alexander Hamilton agreed that Congress should pay the army "as soon as the State of the public finances permit." Naturally sympathetic to the army as a former officer, Hamilton suggested a compromise of six years of full pay instead of half pay. However, funds were genuinely scarce, and the states were split on the issue. Madison, Hamilton, Superintendent of Finance Robert Morris, and former Continental Congressman Gouverneur

Morris believed they could use the army's legitimate grievances to help garner support for the nationalization of public debt and the creation of federal taxes. Other politicians, like Virginia's Arthur Lee and representatives from smaller states, feared federal power and resisted states assuming additional costs. Hamilton did not help matters when he suggested that the army collect the money from the states on behalf of Congress. To Lee, it reeked of a new form of tyranny. It was a natural and obvious reaction, considering that the patriots rebelled against military occupation and the abuses of military authority and taxation. This sentiment did not ease the growing tensions. The intrigue of politicians and military officers created a volatile environment. Congress pulled the army into the middle of a broader financial debate, but some officers were willing to embrace politicization if it served their purposes.

Because of its secretive nature, what happened next is unclear. Historians have been and are still debating the so-called Newburgh Conspiracy's intentions. At worst, the Continental Army officers intended a coup that would have destroyed the new republic. At best, a dangerous misunderstanding tested the strength of the ideals of the American Revolution and civilian supremacy. Either way, what transpired from mid-February to mid-March 1783 became a foundational lesson in American civil-military relations.

In early February, news of King George III's willingness to relent on American independence reached America. Although far from unexpected, because rumors of peace had been circulating for months, the king's December speech to Parliament made the promise of an end to the war more possible. The same month, the British garrison stopped the French and Spanish offensive against Gibraltar. The king's words also sped up the timetable for the army's compensation to be resolved for both nationalist politicians and cash-strapped officers. Service to his nation had bankrupted General McDougall, for one. He had been in private conversations with certain congressmen about various contingencies. Even though debates in Congress continued and the sentiment for restitution was "daily gaining ground," McDougall was not about to let his pension or recognition slip away because of some diplomats' signatures.

With altered handwriting and the pseudonym Brutus, he dashed off a secret letter to Knox on 12 February with an urgent declaration: "The Army will not, nor ought not to disband till Justice is done to them."

What did he mean by this statement? At its most benign, it could indicate some measure of planning to refuse congressional orders to demobilize the Continental Army—unless they were paid. Even this degree of resistance would violate the core tenets of civilian control of the army, established in 1775. However, the later portions of the letter suggested something more sinister. The army "ought not to lose a moment in preparing," McDougall instructed Knox, for they may need to make a "violent declaration" to get Congress to act. It was unclear just how far McDougall was willing to go.

It was not only the officers who were breaking the norms of civilian supremacy. Some politicians' behavior was equally incendiary. Gouverneur Morris also wrote to Knox, wishing for "the Guardian Genius of America" to "save" the nation from "a Callosity of Soul." Hamilton, who had a foot in both the civilian and the military worlds, also believed that the officers were justified in believing that if they "lay down their arms, they will part with the means of obtaining justice." He assured Washington that his motivation was "a regard to the public good," yet urged the commander not only to allow the army to remain in being, but "to take direction of them." The former aide-de-camp proposed that the general play the puppet master, specifically by using Knox, and walk a very dangerous line: use the army for a political good but restrain them "within the bounds of moderation." Hamilton's proposal was more measured than McDougall's and seemed to envision a controlled mutiny for effect only, not an actual coup. One historian's recent interpretation was that Hamilton wanted to find out if Washington would take a stand rather than remain silent, and that this letter was "one of the most misunderstood documents of the supposed Newburgh Conspiracy." Regardless, Hamilton suggested Washington would need to keep his involvement a secret to "preserve the confidence of the army without losing that of the people."

Although Knox and Washington both agreed that the army had been wronged, they were aghast at the suggestions they received. Knox, who was in command of West Point, refused to "encourage even the threat of mutiny," ardently stating, "I consider the reputation of the American Army as one of the most immaculate things on earth." Knox would rather "suffer wrongs and injuries to the utmost verge of toleration" before he risked the army's honor or acted outside of "proper authority."

"As Citizen and Soldier," Washington considered the situation for "many contemplative hours"; it had been on his mind since at least December. With remarkable composure, he responded to Hamilton's suggestions that such actions could lead to "Civil commotions" with an "end in blood." "God forbid we should be involved in it," he chastised. Still, Washington claimed he was "under no *great* apprehension" of the army "exceeding the bounds of reason & moderation." However, Washington conceded that if he was "mistaken" about the army, he could trace the roots to an old rival: Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates.

Gates was celebrated as the "Hero of Saratoga," a title he shamelessly used in an attempt to become commander in chief of the Continental Army. Ever a political operator, Gates had been a thorn in Washington's side for years. During the winter of 1777–1778, Gates, along with a circle of friendly officers and politicians, had maneuvered to slander Washington's reputation and allegedly have him removed from command. The plot came to be known as the Conway Cabal, after one of Washington's critics, Brig. Gen. Thomas Conway. Although Gates's scheming for the top job backfired, the so-called cabal was more conspiratorial thinking than actuality. However, Washington fervently believed that his second-in-command in New York was still capable of intrigue. He knew a group of officers sought to undermine his reputation; who else could be behind it? The commander was indeed correct. Gates and his circle were not friendly to Washington and had reached out to Robert Morris months earlier about compensation and the army's unhappiness. However, Morris was unwilling to unleash Gates's known ambition. After failing to sway Washington or Knox

to use the army to support the plan, the Morris-aligned nationalist politicians in Philadelphia reluctantly turned to Gates and his inner circle of "hotheaded," anti-Washington young officers and their more flexible senses of honor.

On 8 March, just as Robert Morris was publicizing his resignation over the debt issue, Gates's former aide, Col. Walter Stewart, arrived in New Windsor. Stewart abandoned protocols, ignored Washington, and went straight to his old boss in Newburgh. He shared fictitious, yet believable, news that peace was imminent, and Congress would disband the army without pay. What exactly Gates, his aide-de-camp Maj. John Armstrong Jr., and the rest of their circle discussed is unclear. However, it was more extreme than what Hamilton and certainly Knox were willing to bear. Some evidence indicates that Gates and his allies discussed launching a coup d'etat and setting up a military dictatorship. Stewart probably gave every indication that Morris was behind them, because Gates regarded him as an "agent from our friends in congress." Within a day, they planned in coordination with others in Philadelphia. Gates and Armstrong went to work sharing Stewart's gossip.

"To be tame and unprovoked while injuries press hard upon you—is more than weakness," read the anonymous broadside, secretly written by Armstrong, hung in the New Windsor encampment on 10 March. Before long, it was copied and circulated. Soon, every officer in Newburgh and New Windsor had heard Stewart's news and the poster's call for a meeting the next morning to act. Like the officers' petition to Congress in January, the broadside focused on fears of retiring in destitution, and it played up animosity toward civilians. "Can you then consent to be the only sufferers by this revolution, and retiring from the field, grow old in poverty, wretchedness, and contempt?" Armstrong asked.

The brewing Newburgh Conspiracy was also about honor. The officers' lives had "hitherto been spent in honor," Armstrong reminded them. Were they willing to trade it for "the pity of the world" and dependency? Different definitions of honor exist, but many of them center on a person's independence to make their own choices, whereas others focus on courage. The broadside targeted

both, and went much further than the tempered language of the petition. Waiting on Congress to act was akin to cowardice, and accepting impoverishment was a path to dishonor. This was no longer a call for redress; it was a call to action.

To avoid dishonor, the army needed "to oppose tyranny" in any form and "under whatever garb it may assume—whether it be the plain coat of republicanism, or the splendid robe of royalty." The broadside used revolutionary language centered around "fears of government" to cast Congress as being just as oppressive as the British king or Parliament. These words alone were a direct challenge to the authority of Congress, but Armstrong went even further. Casting it as a matter of personal honor, he contended that the army could no longer suffer "the slightest mark of indignity from Congress now." If peace came, the army would refuse to disband, and "nothing shall separate you from your arms but Death." This statement implied a literal coup, or at least the army turning against the civilian politicians, marching on Philadelphia, and taking their pay by force. However, if war continued, the Continental Army would "retire to some yet unsettled country" and let the British army march out of New York. Abandoning their posts for a life behind the Appalachians, the army would watch, "smile in your turn, and 'mock, when their fear cometh on'" as the British laid waste to undefended patriots. In essence, Armstrong and the other Newburgh conspirators proposed to hold Congress hostage either by the barrels of their muskets or at the tip of British bayonets.

Conversely, Washington had to manage a combustible mixture of honor, money, oaths, and passions. He was disgusted by these "disorderly proceedings" and immediately feared that this anonymous officer's words risked "the reputation and true interest of the Army." Yet, for appearances, he was mostly dismissive of the broadside's potential impact. The commander in chief portrayed confidence in the good sense of his officers, who would "pay very little attention" to the posted diatribe. Privately, Washington knew that the sentiments expressed by the broadside had been brewing for months, if not years, and that politicians and high-ranking officers, especially Gates, had a stake in this proposal. Staying true to civilian

supremacy, Washington promptly reported "this perilous moment" to his superiors in Congress and enclosed copies of Armstrong's writings and his own response. He closed by professing his "utmost Exertions to promote the welfare of my Country."

Given the situation, Washington showed remarkable restraint. A random, unnamed officer did not possess the authority to arrange such a meeting—it was against common order and discipline. Rather than censoring his officers, publicly shaming his old adversary Gates, or launching into his own impassioned plea, Washington deferred to standard military protocol in his 11 March 1783 General Orders to quiet the turmoil. Washington pulled rank, canceled the proposed "irregular" conference, and scheduled another meeting for four days later. The move confused the conspirators, especially as Washington ordered Gates to preside over the meeting. They would have to choose between openly disobeying their popular commanding officer (and risk alienating other officers) or accepting the change. Armstrong even tried to spin Washington's decision as an act that "sanctified your claims." However, the delay reaffirmed Washington's command while also conveying his trust in his officers. He trapped Gates in formality, as standard procedures did not permit the meeting's chair to engage in debate. It also gave the officers time to cool off so that they could engage in a rational discussion and conduct what Washington termed a "mature deliberation."

What the army did not know was that on 12 March, news from Paris of the preliminary peace treaty had reached Philadelphia. On Saturday, 15 March, the officers of the Continental Army huddled with growing anticipation inside their new meeting hall in the New Windsor encampment. Nicknamed the Temple of Virtue, the wooden structure held every general and field officer, plus one from each company. Although coincidental, the meeting ominously fell on the Ides of March—a date best known for the assassination of Julius Caesar and the start of the slow death of the Roman Republic. When Gates took to the low stage at the side of the room, it was unclear if enough virtue remained that day to preserve the American republic, or if an aspiring American Caesar might rise.

Just as Gates called the meeting to order at noon, the doors burst open and George Washington strode in. His unexpected arrival shocked Gates and brought the assembled officers to their feet, and "every eye was fixed upon the illustrious man." It was not simply that he was unannounced, but that Washington had always preferred written communication, and directly addressing a meeting of his officers was a startling change. Gates could do nothing but step aside as the higher-ranking and more physically imposing Washington climbed the stage's two steps. The commander in chief begged forgiveness for the interruption from his "brother officers" and asked their indulgence for him to read the nine pages of text he spread across the podium, written in oversized letters. What the officers did not know was that Washington had been losing his eyesight, and he had written the text at a size that allowed him to read it without his glasses, in an effort to avoid showing any sign of perceived weakness. The room was silent.

Unlike his General Orders of 11 March, Washington's tone was no longer reticent. "How unmilitary! And how subversive of all order and discipline" was the anonymous summons that had brought them all here. The unnamed author played on "feelings and passions," not "the reason and judgment of the army." It was "designed to answer the most insidious purposes, . . . to insinuate the darkest suspicion, to effect the blackest designs." Washington was a known stoic who only occasionally erupted with flashes of anger. Here, he attempted to play to both reason and emotion. His speech, which came to be known as the Newburgh Address, was passionate but not unbridled; it was stately but also theatrical. Washington had spent the previous four days carefully crafting his words in his Newburgh headquarters to counter Armstrong's broadside.

Looking out at the faces of his officers, Washington knew they were angry and indeed had suffered physically, emotionally, and monetarily. He wanted them to recognize that he was one of them and had still "been a faithful friend to the Army." He hoped to counter the slander that Gates's circle had been spreading. "I was among the first who embarked in the cause of our common Country," he reminded them. "I have never left your side. . . . I have

been the constant companion & witness of your Distresses." Since 1775, Washington had served without pay, shared the burdens of the army, and returned home only once. Washington spoke of his own honor and how tied it was with that of the army and the nation. "My own Military reputation" was "inseparably connected with that of the Army"; their interests were his as well. However, the anonymous conspirator was something different. He was "an insidious Foe" who was no "friend to the Army" or "friend to this Country," Washington chastised. As to the conspirator's plan, "humanity revolts at the idea." It was so shocking because it forced the officers to abandon their duty and sworn oaths for a "dreadful alternative, of either deserting our Country in the extremest hour of her distress or turning our Army against it." So radical and dangerous was the conspirators' plan that Washington speculated the writer might be a British agent. He knew this was untrue but added it for effect. Who else would be "sowing the seeds of discord & seperation between the Civil & Military powers of the Continent?"

Washington tried to maintain the army's devotion to civilian supremacy that had existed since 1775. He assured the officers that Congress, whom he purposefully referred to as "that Hon[ora]ble Body," respected them and held "exalted sentiments of the Services of the Army" and would "do it compleat Justice" for "its merits and sufferings." The General personally "pledg[ed]" himself "in the most unequivocal manner" to use "the utmost of [his] abilities" to ensure they were paid—but democracy took time. They simply needed to "rely on the plighted faith of your Country" and on his word of honor. If they did not, they risked their honor, reputations, and legacy. "The reputation of an Army which is celebrated thro' all Europe, for its fortitude and Patriotism," Washington reminded them. Would they "cast a shade over that glory" or tarnish it?

In the Newburgh Address's most powerful portion, Washington invoked the Declaration of Independence and the pledge the Continental Congress signed on 4 July 1776. He said:

> And let me conjure you, in the name of our common Country—as you value your own sacred honor—as you respect the rights of humanity, & as you regard the Military & national character of America, to express your utmost horror & detestation of the Man who wishes, under any specious pretences, to overturn the liberties of our Country, & who wickedly attempts to open the flood Gates of Civil discord, & deluge our rising Empire in Blood.

To take any action other than to abide by the authority of Congress risked the entire revolution. Whether the conspiracy was about intimidation, a refusal to disband, or an actual coup, every version shattered civilian supremacy and threatened the new republic and the honor of the army. There, in the Temple of Virtue, the officers had the opportunity to "give one more distinguished proof of unexampled patriotism and patient virtue."

Maj. Samuel Shaw, who was in the audience, believed the address "[spoke] for itself." However, looking out at the faces of the officers seated on the benches before him, Washington was uncertain if his words had pulled them back from the brink. Unwilling to take any chances, he reached into his pocket and pulled out a letter from Virginia congressman Joseph Jones promising that Congress had "the purest intentions" and would give "to every Class of the public Creditors ample justice" as proof of the government's faithfulness. Squinting to read the letter, he struggled for a paragraph. Then, Washington did something unplanned and unexpected. He stopped. Reaching into his waistcoat, Washington took out a pair of newly acquired spectacles. He "begged the indulgence of his audience while he put them on, observing at the same time, that he had grown gray in their service and now found himself growing blind." Only a few members of his staff had ever seen Washington in glasses. He had departed from his prepared script and shown his vulnerability. The commander in chief reminded them that he had suffered for his

nation, just as they had—and his loyalty was still unwavering. Many of those present in the room burst into tears.

Washington's words were well-chosen, but it was this simple act of putting on glasses to read that "forced its way to the heart" of the officers. The Newburgh Address laid the foundation; it was Washington who averted the crisis. Thanks to him, "every doubt was dispelled," and the "tide of patriotism" was set right again." With damp eyes, Shaw remarked, "there was something so natural, so unaffected, in this appeal, as rendered it superior to the most studied oratory." Then, Washington departed, leaving the officers alone to decide their fate and that of the revolution and the nation.

Within moments of Washington's exit, the group elected General Knox to chair a different committee to draft a resolution to Congress. (The pro-Washington faction had orchestrated their own plan behind the scenes and had prewritten the resolution.) The officers "resolved unanimously" in support of Washington's sentiments and proclaimed "that the officers of the American army view with abhorrence and reject with disdain the infamous proposition" to break from civilian control. The conspiracy was over. Washington's leadership awed both Knox and Maj. Gen. Philip Schuyler. Knox called it a "masterly performance," but Schuyler saw something more. "Never, through all the war," Schuyler assessed, "did his Excellency achieve a greater victory than on this occasion."

Despite his day of success and his pride in his officers' decision, Washington knew that the civilian-military relationship still must be stabilized. In his message to Congress, the general again left nothing out and reported every word. He acknowledged Congress's authority and praised the army's conduct to Congress. The officers' devotion to the nation over their own interests needed to "be considered as the last glorious proof of patriotism which could have been given by men who aspired to the distinction of a patriot army." However, Washington had made a promise to his officers to intercede on their behalf, and he kept his word. The fact that the army was willing to trust in Congress "will not only confirm their claim to the justice, but will encrease their title to the gratitude of their country," Washington wrote. He pressed Congress for "the most speedy decision" to provide

the "compensation for their meritorious service" that was promised. He expressed his utmost trust that "a country rescued by their arms from impending ruin, will never leave unpaid the debt of gratitude." Meanwhile, as he had throughout the war, Washington professed his own "personal disinterestedness" and asked for no reward for himself.

Washington's trust in Congress paid off. The delegates recognized that "the faith of the United States hath been pledged," and they were honor bound to "compensate those whose services, sacrifi[ces] and sufferings have so just a title to the approbation and rewards of their country." On 22 March, with peace all but finalized, Congress received Washington's dispatch and approved five years of full pay for those entitled to pensions. The infirmed officers received five dollars per month, whereas the enlisted got an eight-dollar bonus and state land grants. Congress intended the vote to "remove all subject of dissatisfaction from the minds of their fellow citizens." With this vote, civilian supremacy was preserved. Everyone from the officers to the Congress emerged unscathed. "It will do honour to the Army," wrote Washington's aide-de-camp Col. David Humphreys, "honour to the Country" and "honour to human nature."

How dangerous was the Newburgh Conspiracy? How close did the officers get to defying Congress or orchestrating a coup? Those are the lingering questions—and historians probably will never answer them definitively. Some participants and later historians have argued that the conspirators' threats were just a scare tactic or an unfortunate misunderstanding. These voices contend that although the officers may have suggested violence, the intention was never to overthrow Congress. Or that even if the officers had tried, a successful coup in the United States was impossible because of Anglo-American antimilitarism and "well-developed traditions." In 1823, Col. John Brooks, who had been among those at the center of the affair, still dismissed any fears as unfounded. "There could have been no union in the pursuit of an object of ever doubtful legitimacy," he wrote. "Washington himself could not have effected it," Brooks claimed. However, were Brooks's memories clouded by the safety that Washington had provided?

Regardless of the motivations, intentions, or results, the Newburgh Conspiracy was a dangerous attempt to wield the military as a partisan weapon. Whether the outcome would have been the army failing to disband during peacetime, taking to the frontier, or marching on Congress, the implications would have been severe. Congressman Jones warned Washington that if the civil and military authorities lost confidence in each other, there was no going back—"the Rubicon is passed." If the Continental Army were to defy Congress, their oaths, and the principles of civilian supremacy that had been in effect since 1775, the new nation would have been at risk and subject to the whims of politicians and officers willing to use or threaten violence. America would have ceased to be a republic.

Washington succeeded in reining in his officers, the Continental Army maintained their oaths, and honor was preserved. In essence, the conspiracy had a beneficial outcome: it formed the foundation of lasting civilian supremacy in the United States. The Newburgh Address, "though intended for opposite purposes," General Knox wrote in 1783, "has been one of the happiest circumstances of the war, and will set the military character of America in a high point of view."

Back to New York

Only days after the crisis was averted, Maj. Gen. Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, rode into Newburgh on 23 March 1783 to deliver word personally of the preliminary peace treaty to the commander in chief. Washington was filled with "joy," and although professing that he had "not in his power to announce officially a general Peace," he notified the Continental Army that the coming end of the war was now a "certainty." The camp "universally participate[d] in the joy which this Event has diffused." Despite the pleasure he took in sharing the news from France, Washington still worried about the reaction of the British in New York if presented with a disbanding American army. Washington was quick to remind his subordinates that the war was not over. "No official information" about peace had arrived, and he

could "make no definitive arrangements for taking possession of the City of New York." Although he principally focused on the state of the British headquarters in New York, Washington still considered the frontier. He ordered General Irvine to continue his "influence & prudence" at Fort Pitt. Washington's vigilance was not unfounded; the British commander in chief, General Carleton, was receiving reports of the imminent dissolution of the Continental Army, and he had not received news of any ceasefire. The Newburgh Conspiracy was barely a week old, so along with his announcement, Washington ordered that until further notice, "no relaxation in the Discipline or police of the Army shall be suffered."

Although Washington knew for almost two weeks that hostilities were over, Carleton did not. Neither knew that any fighting after January 1783 was pointless. The provisional treaty stipulated that if any territory "should be conquered by the arms or either" before the terms were known, it would "be restored." Then, on the night of 5 April, a ship sailed into New York Harbor and delivered to Carleton dispatches from Thomas Townshend, one of the king's ministers of state and colonial affairs, along with a proclamation from George III dated from February "declaring the Cessation of Arms, as well by Sea as land" and the recognition of the United States of America. The king's proclamation would be published throughout America. In that instant, everything had changed.

Carleton wrote to Washington the next day about this "great occasion." They exchanged a few pleasantries, then Carleton got down to business and announced the immediate release of all prisoners. Naturally, he expected reciprocation and "restitution of confiscated estates" in a "spirit of conciliation." Clearly, they still needed to work out matters and finalize the war. Yet Carleton gave his counterpart the "strongest assurances" that he would "cultivate that spirit of perfect good will, which between the united states of america and the King of Great Britain, and the Subjects and the citizens of both countries will I trust always remain." On 9 April 1783, Carleton sent word to General Haldimand to alert the frontier outposts; it would take weeks for the dispatch to reach Québec and even longer to get to Detroit. New York's patriot governor, George Clinton, feared the

misbehavior that "may be committed in the interim." Even though there had been no major fighting on the western front for more than a year, he still argued that "the frontier Settlements were never in a more defenceless Situation," and were particularly susceptible to "the smallest parties" and "hostility" from Native Americans. As word spread throughout North America, the talks in Paris continued and the negotiations in New York began.

Washington hoped for a "firm Basis of mutual Interest & good Will" between himself and Carleton, but eight years of war had left Washington suspicious and highly cautious about preserving his army. He replied to Carleton that all he could do was "suspend" fighting, continually supporting civilian supremacy. Anything more than that would need to come from Congress. After another two weeks, Washington still had not received any "Official Dispatches of Congress" announcing peace. He had "no particular Instructions." All he had to go on was a "casual conveyance" from Lafayette and the word of the British commander. Washington's intelligence informed him that the British were "making no shew of an early Evacuation of that City." Washington had much to ponder. Could he trust Carleton? Should he announce the end of hostilities to his army without word from Congress? If he did, would his troops, especially those who signed up for the duration of the war, head for home or perhaps push for "new and unusual demands of compensation" in an enlisted version of the Newburgh Conspiracy? Washington was "thrown into a very disagreeable circumstance." He wrote, "I found it difficult to decide on the Line of my Duty."

In this moment of uncertainty, Washington chose to invite the counsel of others. Assembling his officers once again in the Temple of Virtue in New Windsor, Washington put the decision to them. It was a tactic to which the officers had become accustomed. Washington encouraged open discussion and considered the views of his subordinates, although the final decision always rested with him. In this case, the officers' response was a "unanimous Judgment." They suggested the commander in chief announce the news in general orders immediately. Word would get out either way and "it would be impracticable as well as impolitic to suppress the Proclamation."

On 18 April, at the Temple of Virtue and in front of every formation of the army at New Windsor, Washington's General Orders proclaimed the cessation of hostilities. Washington did not know that days earlier, Congress had issued its own proclamation and approval of the preliminary treaty. The chaplains of New Windsor "render[ed] thanks to the Almighty God, for all his mercies, particularly, for his over-ruling the wra[th] of man, to his own glory, and causing the rage of War, to cease amongst the Nations." Washington expressed his "mixture of pleasure; astonishment and gratitude" for the services of his officers and soldiers and the dedication that had shown "the purity of our cause." His joy was indeed on display with his overflowing praise for the Continental Army "who have shared in the Toils, and dangers of effecting this glorious revolution, of rescuing Millions, from the hand of Oppression." Washington singled out "in particular, those gallant and preserving men who had resolved to defend the invaded rights of their Country." They were "crowned with well earned laurels."

However, apprehension lay beneath the surface. Still wary of what might happen if he disbanded the army, he clarified that this order "extends only to the prohibition of Hostilities, and not of the annunciation, of a general peace." Washington was being honest and pragmatic. He hoped to wash away the concluding formality with an "extra ration of liquor . . . issued to every man."

The end of hostilities and Congress's approval of the five years of pay did not solve every issue completely. Only nine states voted for the recompence, and those who dissented, particularly in New England, delayed ratification. The delay only confirmed the officers' need to look out for themselves, each other, and their families. In May 1783, they created the Society of the Cincinnati—a hereditary, fraternal organization open to American Continental and French officers and their male descendants. Its name illustrated that those involved had "the highest veneration for the character" of the Roman military leader Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, who gave up power and returned to his farm rather than become a dictator. It was a signal that the Newburgh Conspiracy or anything like it would not occur—the army would disband peacefully. Founded by many

of the same individuals on both sides of the conspiracy, including Knox, Hamilton, and Gates, the members dedicated the society "to promote and cherish between the respective states, that Union and national honor so essentially necessary to their happiness, and the future dignity of the American Empire." Some critics, like Benjamin Franklin and South Carolina Chief Justice Aedanus Burke, saw danger in this new organization. They feared that the society had "usurp[ed] a nobility" or was "an Order of hereditary Knights, in direct opposition to the solemnly declared Sense of their country." Despite some public battles in the press, the members of the society ultimately proved their devotion to "national honor" and loyalty to the United States, particularly during Shays' Rebellion in 1786.

Although the ratified ceasefire and the Newburgh Address had lowered the stakes and the danger, all was not well. By June 1783, an actual mutiny, along with outbreaks of smallpox and measles, threatened Congress. With bayonets drawn, 700 relatively new Continental Army soldiers led by several sergeants, one lieutenant, and one captain surrounded Congress at Independence Hall "in order to obtain justice." They refused to disperse unless they were paid. Congress had grown unpopular for its treatment of the military, and they feared that the local militia would support the mutineers if called up. Ironically, given his role in the Newburgh Conspiracy, Congressman Alexander Hamilton expressed shock over the mutiny and "the danger they will run by persisting in an improper conduct." President of Congress Elias Boudinot turned to the person he knew would obey Congress: General Washington. He declared that "this wound to the dignity of the Federal Government should not go unpunished."

Washington had been careful with his long-serving officers on the verge of mutiny. However, he did not show the same restraint with these newly enlisted troops, "who have not born the heat and burden of the War." In a furious reply, Washington said these mutineers were "not worthy, to be called Soldiers . . . by insulting the Sovereign Authority of the United States." The commander in chief had mutineers executed back in 1781, and in 1783 he quickly sent 1,500 troops (including the disguised Deborah Sampson)

from New Windsor to Philadelphia under Maj. Gen. Robert Howe, who had previously squashed the mutiny of the New Jersey line. However, Washington's words lacked the same urgency as months earlier at Newburgh. He was confident Howe would suppress this mutiny.

Shockingly, the approaching troops were not even a necessity. The mutineers jeered and sneered at the congressmen but let them pass freely. Congress announced via broadsides that it was leaving the city. Shortly before Howe's troops arrived, the mutiny disintegrated, illustrating that it probably had been more for show than for principle. The mutineers laid down their arms and abandoned their leaders, two of whom fled to England. The ringleaders were tried and two were sentenced to death, but all were pardoned later. This mutiny lacked coordination and any real officer support, making it less dangerous than a Newburgh Conspiracy would have been. In addition, a superior Continental Army force was on the way, and it would have suppressed any uprising quickly. Although there was no fighting, Sampson was still a casualty, as she contracted one of the illnesses swirling about the city. During medical treatment, a doctor discovered her secret, though she remained in the service and received an honorable discharge in October 1783.

As he did after Benedict Arnold's 1780 treason and the Newburgh Conspiracy, Washington chose to reframe the failed mutiny in a positive light. "I feel an inexpressible satisfaction," the commander in chief wrote, "that even this behaviour cannot stain the name of the American Soldiery, it cannot be imputable to, or reflect dishonor on the Army at large." In fact, Washington believed this mutiny, because of "the stricking contrast it exhibits," could be presented "to public view" and show "the other Troops, in the most advantageous point of light." Although this mutiny was an exception to the norms of the Continental Army, the threat was enough to scare Congress to take to the road—first to Princeton, New Jersey, and then Annapolis, Maryland—to avoid a recurrence.

Another crisis had been averted. Still, during the next six months, Washington had to navigate between a frightened Congress, frustrated and possibly mutinous troops who wanted to go home,

and war-weary American civilians (both patriot and loyalist), all the while negotiating an eventual British evacuation of New York with General Carleton. He had to play diplomat as much as general.

With news of peace in April 1783, New York's population swelled with loyalist refugees, as Charleston had before. However, speculators, criminals, and gawkers also flocked to the city to prey on its inhabitants. Carleton was apt to make a quick deal with the Americans. The conditions were becoming complicated, and he remained wary of the unconventional and canny Washington, whom he feared still would launch a spring offensive. However, logistics slowed Carleton; he lacked the ships to deliver his troops and loyal subjects from the city. He also was frustrated by Washington's devotion to civilian supremacy and the American general's constant deference and referrals to Congress. Was Washington not the commanding general? Did he not have the authority to make decisions? Carleton genuinely was confused and may have concluded it was a delaying tactic. He did not and perhaps could not comprehend how fundamentally different the structure of the American military and government now was from their British counterparts.

Washington's reluctance to treat with Carleton in New York was part of a legitimate deference to civil authority. Illustrative of this, Washington left the initial negotiations for surrendering New York to civilians. Congress had not recognized the peace formally yet, so Washington stepped aside in favor of Governor George Clinton, who delegated the initial talks on 11 April to the state's attorney general, Egbert Benson. Only after Congress had ratified the preliminary peace and issued him orders would Washington meet with Carleton in person. Yet even here, Washington doubly reaffirmed civilian supremacy and would only treat with the British commander with Governor Clinton in attendance. Washington, ever the political general, recognized that the restoration of New York was not purely a military matter.

On 6 May, Carleton, Washington, and Clinton, with their staffs, met at the DeWint House in Tappan, New York. Three years earlier, at the very same site, Washington had signed British spy John André's death warrant for his role in Benedict Arnold's treason. They chose

the location for practical rather than symbolic reasons; it simply was a convenient spot halfway between New York and Newburgh. And, aside from the initial pleasantries, the practical matter at hand was the terms for the British evacuation of New York. Still, the American and British commanders in chief had much to discuss. Governor Clinton pushed Washington to bring up Indian atrocities on the frontier, and, only days earlier, Washington had written his own thoughts, "A Peace Establishment for the United States of America." However, Washington again followed his instructions from Congress and focused on the elements of Article 7 of the preliminary peace treaty, which was directly under his military purview. It allowed him to settle on a few clear and direct points: the date and time for the British evacuation and the preservation of property, especially the status of the enslaved.

The evacuations of Savannah and Charleston had seen thousands of enslaved people depart alongside British troops and loyalists. American slaveholders, Washington among them, were worried about their "property" and wanted to prevent a repeat of such actions in New York. Several of Washington's escaped slaves, and those of his wife Martha, were in New York. However, it was not simply a personal financial issue; the institution of slavery was a national economic interest, and slaveholders felt that the British were violating Americans' property rights by conveying enslaved people out of the country. Washington was compelled to enforce the preliminary treaty's terms—making them more likely to stick before all parties signed the finished product. Article 7 declared: "his Britannic Majesty shall, with all convenient Speed, & without causing any Destruction or carrying away any Negroes, or other Property of the American Inhabitants withdraw all his Armies Garrisons and Fleets from the said United States."

Complicating the matter was that Carleton had already sent an unknown number of formerly enslaved people to Nova Scotia. Washington charged Carleton with purposely violating the terms of the peace. Carleton was adamant that he had done no such thing. The preexisting Dunmore Proclamation of 1775 and General Clinton's Philipsburg Proclamation of 1779 had afforded

freedom to slaves who took up arms against the Americans or were under the protection of the British army. Carleton agreed not to transport enslaved people of Americans in New York, but he made no such promises for those who already had escaped or those "I found free when I arrived at New York." As Carleton saw it, "No interpretation could be put upon the Articles inconsistent with prior Engagements binding the National Honor which must be kept with all Colours." It would, he said, "be a dishonorable Violation of the public Faith pledged to the Negroes in the Proclamations that if the sending off the Negroes should hereafter be declared an Infraction of the Treaty." For the British, this opposition to American demands was not an inclination to abolitionism—the Americans had made similar offers to the enslaved labor of loyalists during the war—but rather a dutiful fulfillment of a wartime promise. Naturally, Washington disagreed. The American general complained that Carleton's interpretation of Article 7 "differs very widely from ours." Nonetheless, Washington admitted in private that his reach was limited: "I have discovered enough however, in the course of the conversation which was held, to convince me that the Slaves which have absented from their masters will never be restored to them." The American delegation did not fare much better in setting a date for the British removal. Carleton promised to do it "with all possible Expedition," but these things "must of Necessity take Time." Two factors limited the British withdrawal from New York: a lack of ships and a lack of orders. The evacuation took months to coordinate. However, the Americans did obtain a formal recognition of their status from the British military. As Washington approached the HMS *Perseverance* anchored in the Hudson for a meeting the next day, the ship's cannons gave a seventeen-gun salute—the first the British ever accorded to an American and one befitting Washington's rank as commander in chief.

Across the Atlantic, the short-lived Shelburne administration gave way in April 1783 to a coalition in the British Parliament led primarily by the new Foreign Secretary Charles James Fox and the returning Lord North, this time as secretary of state for

the colonies. Carleton held his post in New York, but the British delegation in Paris was reorganized. Out was Shelburne's agent, Oswald; in was antiwar advocate David Hartley. An old friend of Benjamin Franklin, Hartley embraced the idea of reconciliation between Britain and America. Franklin had been drafting multiple proposals for consideration by the British, from a new commercial treaty to the surrender of Canada to the United States, and Hartley presented them to Fox in a bid to ease postwar tensions. Fox opposed such measures in an attempt to limit any growing power of a new United States. The foreign secretary quickly became worried that Hartley was letting friendship cloud his judgment and that he was "be[ing] taken in by Franklin." Fox finally had enough and ordered Hartley to focus on formalizing the preliminary treaty as the final one, once they reached similar agreements with France and Spain. British fears that Franklin was duping Hartley ultimately shut down any further negotiations, reconciliations, or expansions upon the preliminary treaty.

On 3 September 1783, the Treaty of Paris was signed in the Hôtel d'York, and the French and Spanish treaties were concluded the same day at Versailles. The British had lost a staggering amount. Not only had they recognized American independence, but they also had given up all territory east of the Mississippi and through the Great Lakes (*Map 5*). Although the American delegation was unable to negotiate anything resembling a full reconciliation, they had gained their independence—and their land. As far as Franklin was concerned, "there never was a good War, or a bad Peace."

News of the signed Treaty of Paris reached New York on 30 October 1783 and Philadelphia on 31 October. The following day, newspapers broke the story to the public. Although it took until 22 November for the delegation's official messenger and the actual treaty to reach Congress, with final ratification on 12 May 1784, that body and most of the nation were happy to call the eight-year war over. The victory was astonishing. Washington reflected on the magnitude of the event, "the unparalleled perseverance of the Armies of the United States, through almost every possible suffering and discouragement, for the space of eight long years, was little short


LAKE SUPERIOR
LAKE HURON
LAKE MICHIGAN
LAKE ERIE
Ojibwe (Chippewa)
Potawatomi
Miami
Illinois
Wabash
Lenape (Delaware)
Missouri River
Shawnee
Ohio River
SPANISH LOUISIANA
Cherokee
Chickasaw
Muscogi (Creek)
Choctaw
Mississippi River
NORTH CAROLINA
SOUTH CAROLINA
GEORGIA
Charleston
Savannah
Seminole
WEST FLORIDA
EAST FLORIDA

Map 5


NCE OF QUÉBEC
QUÉBEC
NOVA SCOTIA
Wabanaki
Wyandot
MASSACHUSETTS
(MAINE)
Halifax
Montréal
LAKE
CHAMPLAIN
Ticonderoga
Falmouth
LAKE
ONTARIO
NEW
YORK
NEW
HAMPSHIRE
audenosaunee
(Iroquois)
Portsmouth
Albany
Boston
Providence
MASSACHUSETTS
Hartford
Newport
RHODE
ISLAND
YLVANIA
Lenape
New York
CONNECTICUT
Trenton
Philadelphia
Baltimore
NEW
JERSEY
MARYLAND
Dover
DELAWARE
Oxford
lliamsburg
IA
Norfolk
ATLANTIC
OCEAN
Bern
Wilmington
UNITED STATES BOUNDARIES
TREATY OF PARIS
1783
Cherokee
American Indian Tribal Area
0
70
Miles

Signatories of the Treaty of Paris (*Library of Congress*)

of a standing Miracle." It was time for the Continental Army to go home.

Following Congress's lead, General Washington wasted no time giving the first of his many goodbyes. On 2 November, he presented his "Farewell Address to the Army." Although he was physically just outside Princeton, New Jersey, Washington spoke to all his soldiers "however widely dispersed" they may be, whether with his main army or out on the frontier. By Congress's orders the following day, a massive "discharge" of the troops would take place, and so he was ready to "bid them an affectionate—a long farewell." He praised them, thanked them, and reminded them of the "uncommon scenes" and "astonishing Events" they had witnessed since 1775. However, Washington also used the opportunity to guide them one last time.

With the war over, Washington spoke of building a nation. "Who has before seen a disciplined Army formed at once from such raw materials?" the general asked. If the army could come together, it could also bring the United States together. It was time for these soldiers to leave "the Field of War" and "participate in all the blessings which have been obtained" by their victory. In 1775, Washington had

***Washington's Farewell to his Officers*, Alonzo Chappel, 1865 (*Maryland State House*)**

instructed that "every Post is honourable in which a Man can serve his Country." He now asked them to fulfill their duties and gain honor not on "the Field of War" but on "the Field of Agriculture," in the fisheries, on the frontier—but most of all as citizens. Everyone was aware of the unrest of the Newburgh Conspiracy, the mutinies against Congress, and the ongoing concerns over pay. Washington believed the burden fell to the returning soldiers "to remove the prejudices which may have taken possession of the Minds of any of the good People of the States." The soldiers' loyalty needed to be with the United States, not their personal grievances, and "they should prove themselves not less virtuous and usefull as Citizens" than as soldiers.

If the army embraced the new nation in retirement, it would be "remembered that the reputation of the Federal Armies is established beyond the reach of Malevolence." It would wipe away any lingering doubts from Newburgh. His address in March had been a promise that his officers and soldiers now had to fulfill. Disbandment was not a downgrade in duty. "Honorable Actions" would "not be less

amiable in civil life" than they "were in the Field," Washington assured them. It was now their duty to support "the principles of the Federal Government" and "the Powers of the Union," or else "the honor, dignity, and justice of the Nation would be lost for ever." It was his "last injunction to every Officer and every Soldier." The soldiers were capable of this, as they had proven it throughout the war. "The Curtain of separation will soon be drawn—and the Military Scene to him will be closed for ever," he concluded.

The next act was in New York, but it kept eluding him. He complained to Henry Knox, "the evacuation of New York [has] been so long delayed as to interfere very materially with our arrangement for the Celebration of Peace." Negotiations for the city's surrender had been going on for months with no results. With peace reported and British ships en route to New York from Nova Scotia, the process sped up virtually overnight. By 13 November, Washington, now at West Point, had Carleton's withdrawal plans in hand. The British would abandon the surrounding areas of New York (today's outer boroughs) and Long Island first, keeping Manhattan as "a reserve" in case of ship repairs until "some days before the end of the present month."

Fear abounded within New York. Terrified loyalists and escaped enslaved people were desperate to flee. Fearing patriot vengeance, these refugees flocked to the harbors to board ships. Carleton, concerned with the safety of the king's subjects and the formerly enslaved under his authority, worried about the endgame in New York. Aside from the inherent danger of two rival armies in proximity, he feared rioting, looting, "mobbing the loyalists," and "a deliberate combination" that had been "formed to plunder the town whenever the King's Troops shall withdraw." The last time an army had retreated from New York in 1776, the city had been set ablaze by unknown culprits. In anticipation, Carleton shared intelligence with Washington of supposedly uncovered plots. Although Washington doubted the British spies, he assured Carleton that he had made arrangements to "prevent any outrage or disorder," though he warned that if the evacuation continued to experience delays, "the difficulty of establishing Civil government & maintaining good order may be

greatly encreased." Despite Washington's grumbling, he indeed had been focused on civil government and good order, and had been coordinating with Governor Clinton for weeks. When Carleton gave less than a day's notice of the British evacuation, Washington had a plan in place and was ready to reclaim the city.

At one o'clock in the afternoon on 25 November, a lone cannon shot marked the end of British tenure in New York. Most of the departing British soldiers and loyalists were aboard ships in the harbor, destined for Nova Scotia and farther ports. In total, about 20,000 soldiers and 30,000 civilians would leave the city. As the British signal cut through the air, General Knox led a scant force of 800 troops—most of the Continental Army already had been discharged—to reclaim the city and maintain good order. With the city secure, the pageantry and celebrations finally could begin.

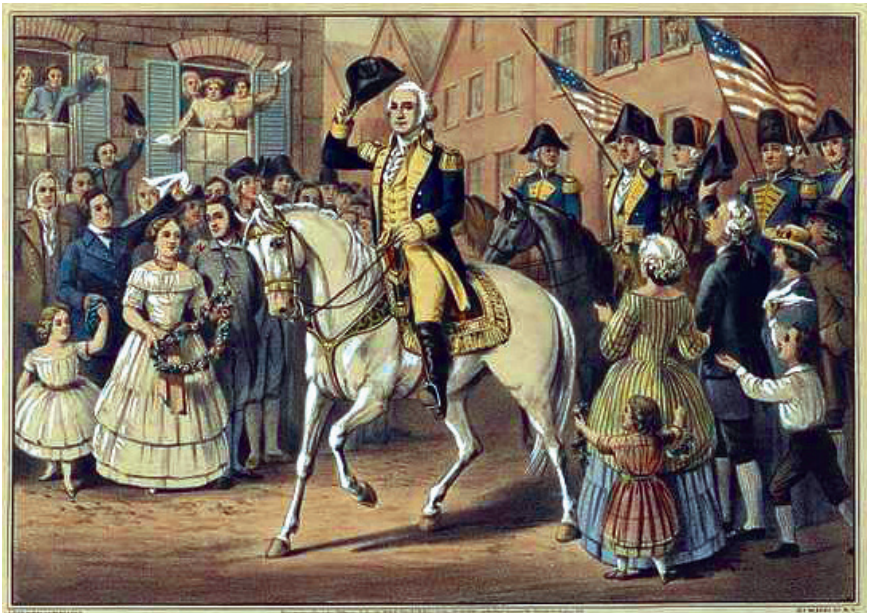
Unlike many artistic depictions of the event created in the nineteenth century, this was not solely a martial affair, and Washington did not march into the city as a conquering hero. He and Governor Clinton jointly led the procession into New York. Washington did not want to appear above the government. It was a deliberate decision that also intended to make it clear that New York was not trading one military occupation for another. New Yorkers were having their rights and a civil government returned. Most of those in the parade were not even from the Continental Army. The horsemen escorting Washington and Clinton were militiamen in civilian clothes from nearby Westchester. Civilians, including the lieutenant governor, council members, and other officials, marched ahead of those in uniform, except for Knox and Washington's staff. The New York–born Col. Benjamin Tallmadge, Washington's chief of military intelligence, praised the perfect march, and its "every countenance seemed to express the triumph of republican principles over the military despotism which had so long pervaded this happy city." The predicted rioting never occurred. Cheering crowds lined the streets, windows, and balconies.

The only disorder came from the departing British. Their final act of defiance was to grease the flagpole and cut the lines at Fort George (the Battery) so the Union Jack could fly a little longer.

***Evacuation of New York by the British, November 25, 1783*, ca. 1883 (*Library of Congress*)**

However, like the evacuation of New York itself, after some delays, patriots raised the American flag above the city.

New York and the nation celebrated for much of the next ten days. Speeches, toasts, and dinners honored everyone and



***Washington's entry into New York, on the evacuation of the city by the British, Nov. 25th 1783*, Currier & Ives, 1857 (*Library of Congress*)**

everything—the United States, Washington, the army, the fallen, and the people of New York. The last British stragglers on Sandy Hook and Staten Island left on 1 December 1783. The following night, a tremendous fireworks display in Bowling Green, a park where a statue of King George III once had stood, celebrated the Treaty of Paris and the end of the war. After ten days, it must have seemed that Washington had met every dignitary and well-wisher in all of New York. The general performed his expected social and political duties with both relish and grace. However, he saved the most personally important gathering for his final afternoon in the city.

On 4 December, Washington gathered thirty of his officers at Fraunces Tavern in lower Manhattan. Shortly after noon, he entered the tavern's Long Room, and his normally stoic reserve cracked upon seeing the faces of his officers before he spoke. In a room filled with emotion, Washington gave his last goodbyes. "With a heart full of gratitude, I now take my leave of you," the general

said. He wished that their "latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable." The room raised their glasses and drank. An overcome Washington shook every officer by the hand at their parting. Colonel Talmadge, who left the only eyewitness account, wrote with some melodrama forty-seven years after the fact: "Tears of deep sensibility filled every eye . . . such a scene of sorrow and weeping I had never before witnessed." Every "heart seemed so full," yet "not a word was uttered to break the solemn silence." Then General Washington left. The officers followed their commander to the riverfront "in mournful silence" to watch him board a barge to travel farther south. From on board, "our great and beloved General waived his hat, and bid us a silent adieu." As he sailed off, Washington knew he had one more stop on his farewell tour. It arguably would become the most crucial moment in United States history.

The American Cincinnatus

Like their British counterparts, Americans had a well-known and deep-seated fear of standing armies, an anxiety that also made them wary of victorious military commanders. As students of Roman and British history, eighteenth-century Anglo-Americans could readily recall the examples of Julius Caesar in ancient Rome and Oliver Cromwell during the seventeenth-century English Civil War—military commanders who seized power and transformed themselves from generals into dictators. More recent abuses under the tyranny of the Crown highlighted these historical examples: the imposition of martial law in Boston, and the occupation of major American cities by the British army. The Newburgh Conspiracy and recent mutiny against Congress further solidified the possibility in many minds of the military or one of its leaders seizing power—thereby undoing the revolution.

Sir Guy Carleton reported back to London of his absolute certainty that in America, "a Monarchy must of necessity take place." The ancestral membership of the Society of the Cincinnati gave many patriots pause for what they saw as its aristocratic nature. In

May 1782, the Irish-born Continental Army officer Col. Lewis Nicola even floated the idea of a crown for Washington, stating, "I believe strong arguments might be produced for admitting the title of king." Even though Nicola knew that "some people have so connected the ideas of tyranny & monarchy as to find it very difficult to separate them," he was prepared to welcome an American king. However, only Washington, the esteemed, victorious commander in chief, was in the position to wield such power. What would Washington do now that the war was over, and independence affirmed? Few were more keenly interested in the answer than King George III himself.

In hindsight, anyone who had observed Washington's long-established dedication to civilian supremacy would not have been surprised when he informed Congress after arriving in Annapolis, Maryland, of his "intention of asking leave to resign the Commission I have the honor of holding in their Service." In world history, such an action was unprecedented, at least since the classical era. Today, this may seem like an exaggerated fear, for Americans especially. However, revolutionary-era Americans had seen the occupation of cities, the quartering of troops in homes, the imposition of martial law, fifty or so mutinies, a possible officers' conspiracy, and the treason of Benedict Arnold. Military dictatorship was not far-fetched. The fact that Congress essentially was hiding in Annapolis after the June 1783 soldiers' mutiny in Philadelphia perfectly highlighted the point.

Washington understood that "a large standing Army in a time of Peace hath been considered dangerous to the liberties of a Country." His deference to Congress was so great that on 20 December 1783, he even asked permission and requested their guidance on how to resign, "whether in writing or at an Audience." He was prepared to "regulate my Conduct accordingly" based on the will of Congress. His actions were even more impressive given that the president of the Congress was former Continental Army Maj. Gen. Thomas Mifflin—one of the officers who had aimed to remove Washington from command during the Conway Cabal in 1777–1778. Washington did not care for Mifflin, but that did not matter; he was ready to do as his former subordinate turned superior said. Congress resolved that only an in-person audience would do. As it often did, Congress

created a three-person committee chaired by Thomas Jefferson and including Elbridge Gerry and James McHenry to plan the particulars of the occasion.

It would be a two-day affair, part celebratory and part ceremonial. The evening of 22 December was the less structured celebration, not unlike the many parties and balls Washington had enjoyed in New York and on his journey southward. Two hundred people attended. With Martha Washington back at Mount Vernon, Virginia, Washington seldom left the ballroom so "that all the ladies might have the pleasure of dancing with him, or as it has since been handsomely expressed, get a touch of him." Despite his full dance card, Washington still made sure to offer a fitting toast to Congress.

The following day, 23 December, Washington arrived at the Maryland State House at noon for "a solemn and affecting spectacle," carefully coordinated by delegates Jefferson, Gerry, and McHenry. Washington entered, flanked by two aides, Cols. Benjamin Walker and David Humphreys. The trio walked into a room, today known as the Old Senate Chamber, filled with "the principal ladies and gentlemen of the city." Gentlemen jockeyed on the floor for space, while ladies packed the small upper gallery. In the front of the room sat Congress with their hats still on; they did not bow before military power, even a commander as honored as Washington. It was a clear and deliberate symbol of civilian supremacy. Secretary Charles Thomson escorted the general forward, and Mifflin spoke first. His tone was formal but matter-of-fact: "Congress, sir, are prepared to receive your Communications." Washington stood and bowed before Congress. The congressmen did not return the gesture; as before, to show civilian supremacy, they merely doffed their hats in recognition.

Washington began reading his prepared address with shaking hands:

> The great events on which my resignation depended having at length taken place; I have now the honor of offering my sincere Congratulations to Congress and of presenting myself before them to surrender

> into their hands the trust committed to me, and to claim the indulgence of retiring from the Service of my Country.

On 15 June 1775, Congress had granted him his commission based on their "especial trust and confidence in your patriotism, conduct and fidelity." His words in 1783 were a recognition that all his power and authority came to him through Congress as representatives of the American people.

Ever self-deprecating, Washington referenced the apprehension with which he took up the commission in June 1775. He had succeeded not based on his own abilities but through "a confidence in the rectitude of our Cause, the support of the Supreme Power of the Union, and the patronage of Heaven." He also thanked "the peculiar Services and distinguished merits of the Gentlemen" of the Continental Army. Knowing that the matter of pay and pensions was not resolved, Washington took the opportunity of recommending to Congress "in particular those, who have continued in Service to the present moment, as worthy of the favorable notice & patronage of Congress."

Before the assembled crowd, Washington reaffirmed his devotion to "the Interests of our dearest Country." It was so meaningful to him that "his voice faltered and sunk" when he said the words. Now, "Happy in the confirmation of our Independence and Sovereignty, and pleased with the opportunity afforded the United States of becoming a respectable Nation," he could move on to private life. However, he still needed a "pause which was necessary for him to recover himself" before he could declare: "I retire from the great theatre of Action." Thus, reaching into his inside coat pocket, he grasped his commission. It was the only document he never let his aides handle throughout the war. He knew its symbolic meaning to him and to the nation. More than two years after Yorktown, Washington was now ready to turn over his commission to Mifflin, one of those who had opposed him in years past. Without hesitation, Washington presented the document to the president of Congress. "I here offer my Commission, and take my leave of all the

General George Washington Resigning His Commission, John Trumbull, ca. 1817 (*Architect of the Capitol*)

employments of public life," he concluded. The audience and most members of Congress openly wept. Considering the gravity of the moment, Washington was brief. His entire address was only 341 words. Mifflin accepted "this solemn Resignation." In an instant, General Washington, commander in chief, was no more. There only remained George Washington, "a private Citizen on the Banks of the Potomack."

By design, Washington handed over his commission, then took a few steps backward toward his chair but did not sit down. Speaking on behalf of Congress, Mifflin received the commission "with emotions too affecting for utterance." He thanked Washington, promised to look after the Continental Army officers, and praised the "military genius" of the American people. Yet as Mifflin noted, Washington's military skill was not his most important quality. "You have conducted the great military contest," he proclaimed, "with wisdom and fortitude invariably regarding the rights of the civil power through all disasters and changes." Never did Washington waiver from his deference to Congress. In doing so, he preserved the United States. In resigning his commission, Washington upheld

Map 6

the ideals of the revolution, set the standard for civilian control of the military, and ensured the peaceful transition of power, which he again reinforced during his later presidency.

McHenry believed that "history does not present" another such moment. It was partially true. Washington's resignation was so unprecedented that his actions became linked with a comparable example from ancient Rome. In 458 BCE, the Roman military commander Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus was granted dictatorial powers to protect Rome from invasion. His service completed, Cincinnatus laid down his sword, returned to his farm, and picked up a plow. By Christmas, Washington would be back at his farm,

***Genl. Lafayette's Departure from Mount Vernon 1784*, E. Farrell, ca. 1840–1860 (*Library of Congress*)**

Mount Vernon, as the American Cincinnatus. (See *Map 6.*) However, Washington's case was different. It was the way everything came together, remarked McHenry:

> The events of the revolution just accomplished—the new situation into which it had thrown the affairs of the world—the great man who had borne so conspicuous a figure in it, in the act of relinquishing all public employments to return to private life—the past—the present—the future—the manner—the occasion—all conspired to render it a spectacle inexpressibly solemn and affecting.

Despite their prior differences, Mifflin recognized the significance of the decision, and said to Washington, "the glory of your virtues will not terminate with your military Command. It will continue to animate remotest ages."

Washington's resignation transcended America and made him a global figure. The most fitting example was the praise the retired American general received from his former enemy. When King

George III first heard that Washington was giving up power, he remarked with genuine astonishment, "If he does that, he will be the greatest man in the world."

CONCLUSION AND ANALYSIS

The year 1776 dominates the memory of the American Revolution—and with good reason. The Declaration of Independence formally established the United States, and Thomas Jefferson's preamble, highlighted by the words "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" and "all men are created equal," became the foundation of American ideals into the modern day. The year even has a catchphrase, "The Spirit of '76," that has been used to represent the entire era. Although the delegates of the Second Continental Congress deemed it "necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another" and "mutually pledge[d] to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor" to uphold the decision, nothing was certain or even formalized. The British certainly did not recognize the Declaration or the claim that the United States was a new independent republic—nor did much of the world. The events of 1783 affirmed the promises and claims of the Declaration. It set them as the ideological foundation for a new nation, and in doing so it gave them international recognition and established them as civil-military norms.

This is not to downplay the Spirit of '76 and the Declaration of Independence as formative concepts for American identity,

morale, and alliances. However, without a victory in the war and the peace that followed, the American Revolution may have been forgotten alongside countless other failed rebellions. Likewise, the battles and campaigns—whether at Trenton in 1776, Saratoga in 1777, or Yorktown in 1781—gave America its freedom and have great importance to military history. However, the military conflict served the primary strategic and political goal of independence. The conduct of the government and the military after victory, when they held power, was crucial to upholding the ideals of the American Revolution and establishing the character of civil-military relations. If they secured military victory but America descended into a monarchy or a military dictatorship, what truly would have been achieved?

Modern military thinking and doctrine repeat the mantra of aligning the ends, ways, and means to be successful in war. From an American military perspective, the events of 1783 at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels often illustrate this lesson. Military commanders considered not only how they fought, but also the implications their actions would have on campaigns, on strategy, and on sociocultural and economic issues. When Nathanael Greene admonished subordinates for their treatment of loyalists or brutal tactics, he spoke about the ethics of war and the fear that it would lead to an escalation in partisan warfare, undermining the broader strategy. An outnumbered and overmatched Anthony Wayne denying movement to the British army rather than chasing a decisive battle was about long-term and overall success. The peace committee in Paris discussed everything from debt collection to fishing rights but remained focused on achieving the one thing they absolutely could not lose: the recognition of their independence. Through it all, Washington as the commanding general never lost sight of his subservience to civilian authority. To waver from following the orders of Congress and, in turn, the American people, for perhaps fleeting military success, would risk the revolution as a whole.

Much remained unfinished militarily by the peace of Paris and 1783. The British refused to abandon their forts on the frontier, even

as the territory changed hands. Their presence would unsettle the Western defenses for years. Congress, overcome by the joys of peace and the expenses of war, willfully ignored Washington's suggestions for maintaining the military for national defense. With renewed faith after Newburgh, Washington pushed for a "regular and standing force," but the legislature opted instead to rely on state militias. Washington's dreams of a professional army with military academy education went unheeded—at least for a time. The dismissal of the officers and soldiers in the Continental Army without any firm plans for their financial restitution soured many on the new government—and ultimately led to the unrest of Shays' Rebellion that sparked the Constitutional Convention in 1787. Always, the lofty ideals of the revolution were challenged by the hypocrisy of fighting for liberty while Indians were not represented under the terms of peace and while the Continental Army allowed for the reenslavement of Black people.

Yet regardless of these failures, 1783 can be viewed only as a success in terms of civil-military relations and thus crucial to its status today. It was the culmination of a process that began with the raising of the Continental Army on 14 June 1775 and the commissioning of George Washington as commander in chief the next day. The general's commission read: "And you are to regulate your conduct in every respect by the rules and discipline of war . . . and punctually to observe . . . such orders and directions from . . . this or a future Congress of the said United Colonies or a committee of Congress for that purpose appointed." He vowed to "enter upon the momentous duty, and exert every power I Possess In their service & for the Support of the glorious Cause" and to serve to "the Sacred Cause of Country, of Liberty, and human nature."

Washington was following not only Congress, but also the ideas upon which Congress and the nation were built. These were not ideological words or mere formality. It was an oath Washington kept throughout the war, in defeat at New York and during attempts to replace him at Valley Forge. Washington was not the only soldier to support civilian supremacy; many others, named and unnamed, contributed to this tradition, from Greene refusing to negotiate a

surrender in Charleston to Knox resisting attempts to politicize him at Newburgh. There are many what-ifs. The Newburgh Conspiracy, for one, could have descended into insurrection or military dictatorship. However, Washington restrained it not by threats or force but by mentions of personal sacrifice and appeals to honor. It proved that the American military was historically different, and the ideals of the revolution meant something beyond mere words.

Above all, Washington's resignation on 23 December 1783 in Annapolis was and remains arguably one of the most significant moments in American history—and certainly the most crucial in civilian-military relations. Both military and civilian traditions of surrendering power to the will of the people, as manifested by the United States government, can be traced back to it, whether it is the military obeying the legal and ethical orders of the civilian government or a politician stepping down after losing an election.

Across the Atlantic and only a generation later, a victorious Napoleon Bonaparte defied Washington's example and the ideals of the French Revolution by crowning himself emperor. Years later, in exile, Napoleon muttered, "They wanted me to be another Washington." America had Washington, and the Continental Army held to the ideals of the revolution. Because of this, the country's tradition of civilian supremacy has stood for nearly 250 years. It is this principle that has preserved America through domestic unrest, insurrections, and civil war. In many ways, 1783 was the year that made and kept the United States of America a reality.

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.

~

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

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

This monograph is largely a synthesis of secondary sources enhanced with primary sources. Several works regarding the campaign and its main players are listed below. Primary sources consulted include Founders Online (https://founders.archives.gov/), a National Archives website dedicated to documents about the foundation of the country; The Papers of the War Department (https://wardepartmentpapers.org/s/home/page/home), a digital archive from the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University; The Papers of Benjamin Franklin (https://franklinpapers.org/), an online repository from Yale University; The Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, Canada (https://archives.gnb.ca/); George III Calendar papers from the Royal Collection Trust (https://ra.rct.uk/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=GIII_CALENDAR); The Virtual Vault of the Georgia Archives (https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/); The Henry Knox Papers and the Gilder Lehrman Collection at the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History (https://www.gilderlehrman.org/); The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, a digital archive by the University of Virginia (https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=TSJN-print&mode=TOC); and the Maryland State Archives (https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc2900/sc2908/html/index.html).

There are only three major works that focus on an overview of the war in the years after Yorktown: Fowler, *American Crisis*; Fleming, *The Perils of Peace*; and Glickstein, *After Yorktown*. These three works serve as the principal sources for much of *Securing Victory's* narrative.

Atkinson, C. T. "British Forces in North America, 1774–1781: Their Distribution and Strength." *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 16, no. 61 (Spring 1937): 3–23.

Barnwell, Joseph W. "The Evacuation of Charleston by the British in 1782." *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 11, no. 1 (Jan 1910): 1–26.

Blackstone, Krysten E. "The Hardest Conflict: Morale in the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War, 1775–1783." PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2022.

Browne, Stephen Howard. *The Ides of War: George Washington and the Newburgh Crisis*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2016.

Buchanan, John. *The Road to Charleston: Nathanael Greene and the American Revolution*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019.

———. *The Road to Guilford Courthouse: The American Revolution in the Carolinas*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997.

Butler, Lindley S., and John Hairr. "Wilmington Campaign of 1781." NCpedia. 2006. https://www.ncpedia.org/wilmington-campaign-1781.

Butterfield, Consul Willshire, ed. *Washington-Irvine Correspondence*. Madison, WI: D. Atwood, 1882.

Butterfield, G. W. *An Historical Account of the Expedition Against the Sandusky under Col. William Crawford in 1782.* Cincinnati, OH: Robert Clarke, 1873.

Canfield, Daniel C. "The Futility of Force and the Preservation of Power: British Strategic Failure in America, 1780–83." *Parameters* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 2012): 69, 71–74.

Calloway, Colin G. *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

———. "Suspicion and Self-Interest: The British-Indian Alliance and the Peace of Paris." *The Historian* 48, no. 1 (Nov 1985): 41–60.

———. *The Victory with No Name: The Native American Defeat of the First American Army*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

———. "'We Have Always Been the Frontier': The American Revolution in Shawnee Country." *American Indian Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 43.

"Charleston: Siege of Charleston." American Battlefield Trust. n.d. https://www.battlefields.org/learn/revolutionary-war/battles/charleston.

Chervinsky, Lindsey. *The Cabinet: George Washington and the Creation of an American Institution*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020.

Clark, Thomas D., ed. *The Voice of the Frontier: John Bradford's Notes on Kentucky*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993.

Collins, Richard H. "The Siege of Bryan's Station." *Register of Kentucky State Historical Society* 36, no. 114 (Jan 1938): 16–18.

Collins, Varnum Lansing. *The Continental Congress at Princeton*. Princeton, NJ: University Library, 1908.

"Continental Army Along the Hudson: West Point and Verplanck's Point, 1782." Museum of the American Revolution. n.d. https://www.amrevmuseum.org/virtualexhibits/among-his-troops/pages/continental-army-along-the-hudson.

DeMond, Robert O. *The Loyalists in North Carolina during the Revolution*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1940.

Dempsey, Janet. *Washington's Last Cantonment: "High Time for a Peace."* Monroe, NY: Library Research Associates, 1990.

De Van Massey, Gregory. "The British Expedition to Wilmington, January–November, 1781." *North Carolina Historical Review* 66, no. 4 (Oct 1989): 387–411.

Doddridge, Joseph. *Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars*. Pittsburgh: John S. Ritenour and William T. Lindsey, 1912.

Elliot, Steven. *Surviving the Winters: Housing Washington's Army during the American Revolution*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2021.

Ellis, Franklin. *History of Monmouth County, New Jersey*. Philadelphia: R. T. Peck, 1885.

English, William Hayden. *Conquest of the Country Northwest of the River Ohio 1778–1783 and Life of Gen. George Rogers Clark*. Indianapolis: Bowen-Merrill, 1896.

Ernst, Robert. "A Tory-Eye View of the Evacuation of New York." *New York History* 64, no. 4 (Oct 1983): 376–94.

Feaver, Peter D. "The Irony of American Civil-Military Relations." *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (Fall 2015): 3–12.

Ferreiro, Larrie D. *Brothers at Arms: American Independence and the Men of France and Spain Who Saved It*. New York: Vintage, 2016.

Finney, Walter, and Joseph Lee Boyle. "The Revolutionary War Diaries of Captain Walter Finney." *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 98, no. 2 (Apr 1997): 148.

Fischer, David Hackett. *Washington's Crossing*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Fleming, Thomas. *Beat the Last Drum: The Siege of Yorktown*. Boston: New Word City, 2016.

———. *The Perils of Peace: America's Struggle for Survival After Yorktown*. New York: Collins, 2007.

Fowler, William, Jr. *American Crisis: George Washington and the Dangerous Two Years After Yorktown, 1781–1783*. New York: Walker, 2011.

George III. *The Correspondence of King George the Third from 1760 to December 1783*. London: Macmillan, 1927.

Glickstein, Don. *After Yorktown: The Final Struggle for American Independence*. Yardley, PA: Westholme, 2016.

Gnadenhuetten Monument Society. *A True History of the Massacre of Ninety-Six Christian Indians, at Gnadenhuetten, Ohio, March 8th, 1782*. New Philadelphia, OH: Ohio Democrat, 1847.

Golway, Terry. *Washington's General: Nathanael Greene and the Triumph of the American Revolution*. New York: Henry Holt, 2005.

Greene, George Washington. *The Life of Nathanael Greene: Major-General in the Army of the Revolution*. New York: G. P. Putnam and Son, 1867.

Greene, Nathanael. *The Papers of Nathanael Greene*. 13 vols. Richard K. Showman, Margaret Cobb, and Robert E. McCarthy, eds. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Haggard, Robert F. "The Nicola Affair: Lewis Nicola, George Washington, and American Military Discontent during the Revolutionary War." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 146, no. 2 (Jun 2002): 139–69.

Hamer, Philip M., ed. *The Papers of Henry Laurens*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003.

Harper, Rob. "Looking the Other Way: The Gnadenhutten Massacre and the Contextual Interpretation of Violence." *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (Jul 2007): 621–44.

Harrington, Hugh T. "Anthony Wayne's 1782 Savannah Campaign." *Journal of the American Revolution*. 9 Oct 2014. https://allthingsliberty.com/2014/10/anthony-waynes-1782-savannah-campaign/.

Head, David. *A Crisis of Peace: George Washington, the Newburgh Conspiracy, and the Fate of the American Revolution*. New York: Pegasus, 2019.

———. "The Officers' Spirited Memorial: A Prelude to the Newburgh Conspiracy." *Journal of the American Revolution*. 14 Nov 2019. https://allthingsliberty.com/2019/11/the-officers-spirited-memorial-a-prelude-to-the-newburgh-conspiracy/.

Heckewelder, Johann Gottlied Ernestus. *A Narrative of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Delaware and Mohegan Indians*. Philadelphia: McCarty and Davis, 1820.

Henriques, Peter R. "Washington Came This Close to Executing an Innocent Man." HistoryNet. 19 Nov 2019. https://www.historynet.com/washington-came-thisclose-to-executing-an-innocent-man/.

Holton, Woody. "The Ohio Indians and the Coming of the American Revolution in Virginia." *Journal of Southern History* 60, no. 3 (Aug 1994): 453–78.

Hoock, Holger. *Scars of Independence: America's Violent Birth*. New York: Crown, 2017.

Howe, George. *History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*. Columbia, SC: Duffie and Chapman, 1870.

Inman, Natalie. "'A Dark and Bloody Ground': American Indian Responses to Expansion during the American Revolution." *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 70, no. 4 (2011): 258–75.

James, James Alton, ed. *George Rogers Clark Papers: 1781–1784*. Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1926.

Jasanoff, Maya. *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World*. New York: Vintage, 2011.

Ketchum, Richard M. *Victory at Yorktown: The Campaign that Won the American Revolution*. New York: Henry Holt, 2004.

Kohn, Richard H. "The Inside History of the Newburgh Conspiracy: America and the Coup d'État." *William and Mary Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (Apr 1970): 189–91.

Kwasny, Mark V. *Washington's Partisan War, 1775–1783*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1996.

Lamb, Roger. *An Original and Authentic Journal of Occurrences during the Late American War, from its Commencement to the Year 1783*. Dublin: Wilkinson and Courtney, 1809.

Lender, Mark Edward. *Cabal!: The Plot Against General Washington*. Yardley, PA: Westholme, 2019.

Lepore, Jill. *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity*. New York: Vintage, 1999.

Lesser, Charles H. *The Sinews of Independence: Monthly Strength Reports of the Continental Army*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.

Lossing, Benson J. *The Life and Times of Philip Schuyler*. New York: Sheldon and Company, 1873.

Mann, Herman. *The Female Review: Or, Memoirs of an American Young Lady*. Dedham, MA: Nathaniel and Benjamin Heaton, 1797.

Martin, James Kirby, and Sean Hannah, *Leading with Character: George Washington and the Newburgh Conspiracy*. Mount Vernon, VA: George Washington Leadership Institute, 2017.

Martin, James Kirby, and David L. Preston, eds. *Theaters of the American Revolution*. Yardley, PA: Westholme, 2017.
Martino, Gina M. "Women and War in Early America." Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History. 19 Oct 2022. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.013.1030.
Mayer, Holly A. *Belonging to the Army: Camp Followers and Community during the American Revolution*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996.
Mayo, Katherine. *General Washington's Dilemma*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1938.
McClung, John A. *Sketches of Western Adventure*. Dayton, OH: Ellis, Clafflin, 1847.
McCrady, Edward. *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775–1780.* Norwood, MA: Norwood Press, 1901.
McMillen, Christian. "UVA and the History of Race: The George Rogers Clark Statue and Native Americans." UVA Today. 27 Jul 2020. https://news.virginia.edu/content/uva-and-history-race-george-rogers-clark-statue-and-native-americans.
Middlekauff, Robert. *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763–1789*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
Middleton, Richard. *Cornwallis: Soldier and Statesman in a Revolutionary World*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022.
Morris, Richard B. "The Great Peace of 1783." *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*. Third Series, 95 (1983): 29–51.
———. *The Peacemakers: The Great Powers and American Independence*. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.
Moultrie, William. *Memoirs of the American Revolution*. New York: David Longworth, 1802.
Myers, Minor, Jr. *Liberty Without Anarchy: A History of the Society of the Cincinnati*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004.
Nelson, Paul David. "Horatio Gates at Newburgh, 1783: A Misunderstood Role." *William and Mary Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (Jan 1972): 143–58.

Nestor, William R. *George Rogers Clark: "I Glory in War."* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012.

O'Shaughnessy, Andrew Jackson. *The Men Who Lost America: British Leadership, the American Revolution, and the Fate of the Empire*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013.

Philbrick, Nathaniel. *In the Hurricane's Eye: The Genius of George Washington and the Victory at Yorktown*. New York: Viking, 2018.

Quaife, M. M. "The Ohio Campaigns of 1782." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 17, no. 4 (Mar 1931): 515–16.

Ramsay, David. *The History of the American Revolution*. Lexington, KY: Downing and Phillips, 1815.

Rankin, Hugh F. *North Carolina in the American Revolution*. Raleigh, NC: State Department of Archives and History, 1959.

Reid, Darren. "Soldiers of Settlement: Violence and Psychological Warfare on the Kentucky Frontier, 1775–1783." *Eras* 10 (Nov 2008). https://www.monash.edu/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1669447/reid-article.pdf.

Riker, James. *"Evacuation Day," 1783, Its Many Stirring Events*. New York: privately printed, 1883.

Ritcheson, C. R. "The Earl of Shelbourne and Peace with America, 1782–1783: Vision and Reality." *International History Review* 5, no. 3 (Aug 1983): 322–45.

Roberts, Andrew. *The Last King of America: The Misunderstood Reign of George III*. New York: Viking, 2021.

Rosenberg, Chaim M. "James Henry Craig: The Pocket Hercules." *Journal of the American Revolution*. 30 Oct 2017. https://allthingsliberty.com/2017/10/james-henry-craig-pocket-hercules/.

Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts. *Report on American Manuscripts in the Royal Institution of Great Britain*. London: Mackie, 1907.

Royster, Charles. *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979.

Selig, Robert A. "En Avant to Victory: The Allied March to Yorktown, June–October 1781." In *The 10 Key Campaigns of the American Revolution*, edited by Edward G. Lengel, 199–216. Washington, DC: Regency, 2020.

Shaw, Samuel. *The Journals of Major Samuel Shaw, the First American Consul at Canton*. Boston: W. Crosby and H. P. Nichols, 1847.

Shy, John, ed., *Winding Down: The Revolutionary War Letters of Lieutenant Benjamin Gilbert of Massachusetts, 1780–1783*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989.

Skeen. C. Edward, and Richard H. Kohn. "The Newburgh Conspiracy Reconsidered." *William and Mary Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (Apr 1974): 273–98.

Smith, Craig Bruce. *American Honor: The Creation of the Nation's Ideals during the Revolutionary Era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018.

———. "In the Eyes of the World," *Mount Vernon Magazine* (Fall/Winter 2022): 16–23.

Smith, Paul H., ed. *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774–1789*. 26 vols. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1976.

Snyder, Christina. *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Spero, Patrick. *Frontier Country: The Politics of War in Early Pennsylvania*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.

Sterner, Eric. *Anatomy of a Massacre: The Destruction of Gnadenhutten, 1782*. Yardley, PA: Westholme, 2020.

———. *The Battle of the Upper Sandusky, 1782*. Yardley, PA: Westholme, 2023.

———. "Moravians in the Middle: The Gnadenhutten Massacre." *Journal of the American Revolution*. 6 Feb 2018. https://allthingsliberty.com/2018/02/moravians-middle-gnadenhutten-massacre/.

Stevens, Benjamin Franklin, ed. *The Campaign in Virginia, 1781*. London, 1888.

Tallmadge, Benjamin. *Memoir of Col. Benjamin Tallmadge*. New York: T. Holman, 1858.

Taylor, Alan. *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution*. New York: Vintage, 2006.

"The United States in Congress Assembled, To All Who Shall These Presents Greeting." Library of Congress. 15 Jun 1783. https://www.loc.gov/item/90898287/.

United States Continental Congress. *Journals of the American Congress from 1774–1788: In Four Volumes*. Washington, DC: Way and Gideon, 1823.

Van Buskirk, Judith. *Generous Enemies: Patriots and Loyalists in Revolutionary New York*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.

Vattel, Emer de. *The Law of Nations; or, Principles of the Law of Nature, Applied to the Conduct and Affairs of Nations and Sovereigns*. Philadelphia: T. and J. W. Johnson, 1883.

Waller, George M. "George Rogers Clark and the American Revolution in the West." *Indiana Magazine of History* 72, no. 1 (Mar 1976): 1–20.

White, Richard. *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Withers, Alexander Scott. *Chronicles of Border Warfare; or, a History of the Settlement by the Whites, of North-Western Virginia, and of the Indian Wars and Massacres in that section of the Indian Wars and Massacres in that section of the State*. Cincinnati, OH: Robert Clarke, 1895.

Woodburn, James A. "Benjamin Franklin and the Peace Treaty of 1783." *Indiana Magazine of History* 30, no. 3 (Sep 1934): 227–35.

Wright, Robert K., Jr. *Continental Army*. Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2006.

Young, Alfred F. *Masquerade: The Life and Times of Deborah Sampson, Continental Soldier*. New York: Knopf, 2004.

Zeisberger, David. *Diary of David Zeisberger: A Moravian Missionary among the Indians of Ohio*. Trans. Eugene F. Bliss. Cincinnati: Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, 1885.

Series Sources

The following sources were used in preparation of this entire series and are recommended for further reading:

Blackmore, David. *Destructive and Formidable: British Infantry Firepower, 1642–1765*. London: Frontline Books, 2014.

Mayer, Holly A. *Belonging to the Army: Camp Followers and Community during the American Revolution*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996.

Peterson, Harold L. *Forts in America*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964.

———. *Round Shot and Rammers*. Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1969.

Risch, Erna. *Supplying Washington's Army*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1981.

Rothenberg, Gunther. *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1980.

Spring, Matthew. *With Zeal and Bayonets Only*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008.

Wright, Robert K., Jr. *Continental Army*. Washington, D.C. U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2006 (revision forthcoming).

MAP SYMBOLS


Route of march/attack


Retreat

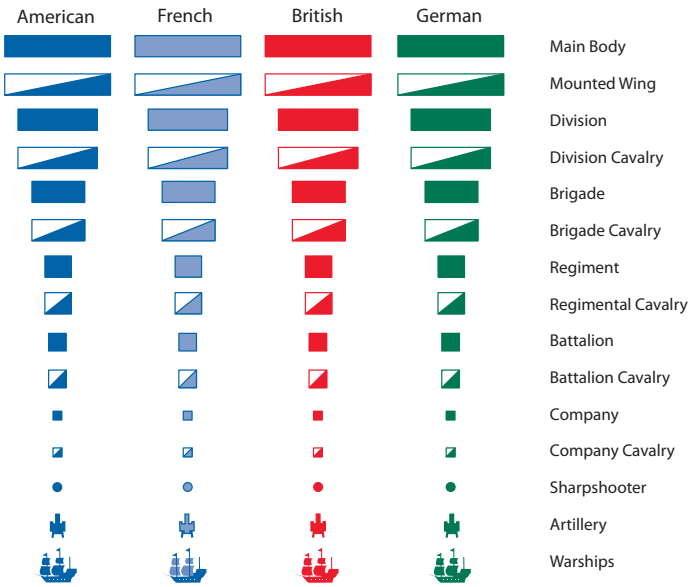

Fortifications/Redoubts


Boat Bridge


Battle/Engagement

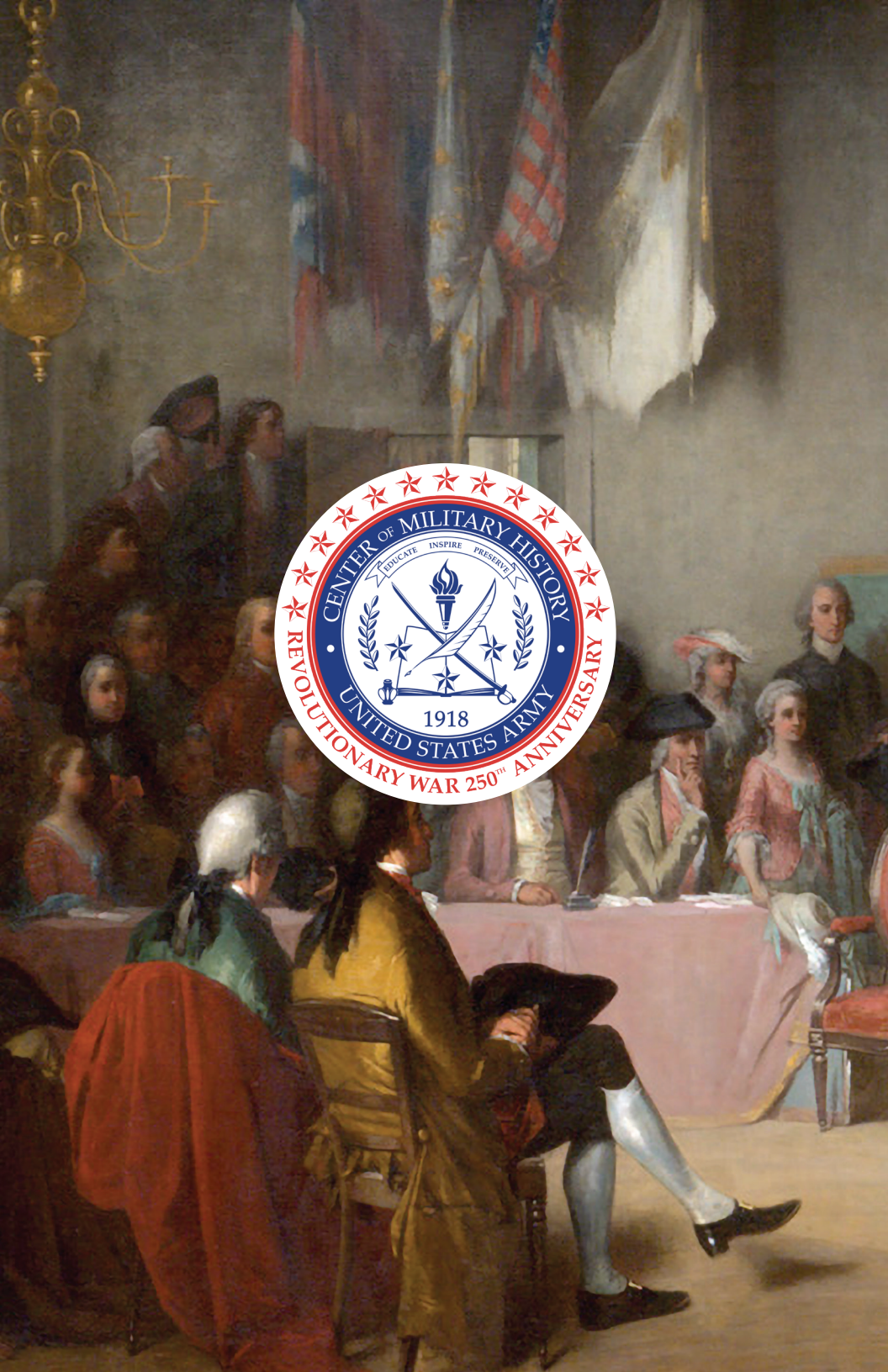

Abatis

MILITARY UNITS



THE AUTHOR

Craig Bruce Smith is a historian and the author of *American Honor: The Creation of the Nation's Ideals during the Revolutionary Era* (University of North Carolina Press, 2018).


CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY
EDUCATE INSPIRE PRESERVE
1918
UNITED STATES ARMY
REVOLUTIONARY WAR 250TH ANNIVERSARY