

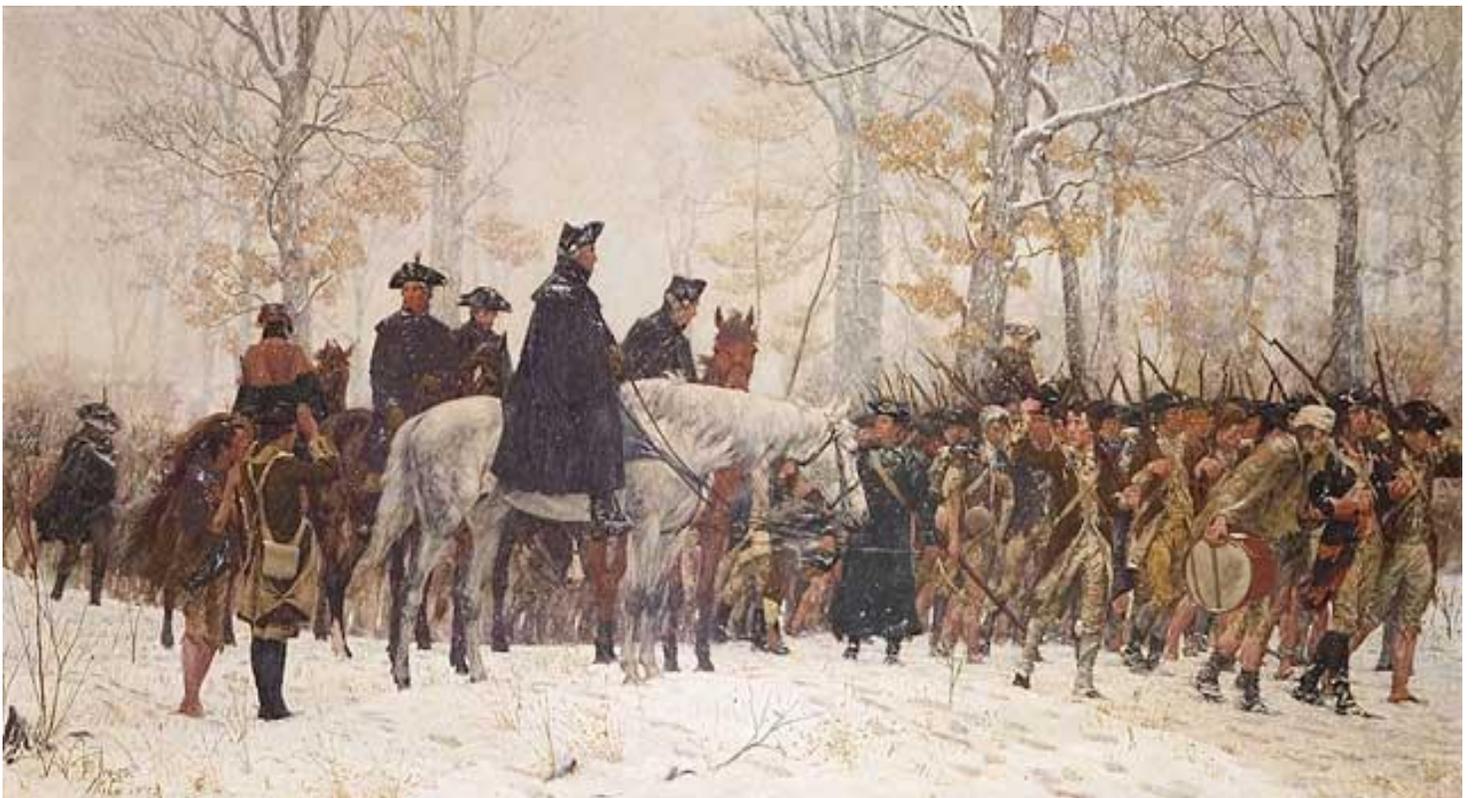
Driving Tour of the Battle of Whitemarsh

December 5–8, 1777

Project of PMCA

Honors History Twelve

Class of 2017



Cover Photo: William B. Trego, George Washington Leading the Continental Army to Valley Forge, Wikimedia Commons.

Driving Tour of the Battle of
Whitemarsh:
December 5–8, 1777

Philadelphia-Montgomery Christian Academy
Honors History Twelve, Class of 2017

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Preface

The following is the product of a year-long effort by students of the 12th Grade Honors History Class of Philadelphia-Montgomery Christian Academy. It grew out of a project annually assigned to the 11th Grade United States History course: the “Revolutionary War Site Project.” A year and a half ago, two of my students—both of whom contributed to this work—decided to study and report on the so-called Battle of Whitemarsh. One component of the assignment is for each student to visit the site under study. When I asked these two students about their visit, they both expressed a bit of disappointment that there just was not much out there identifying locations of the various skirmishes or even the encampment which took place in the area so long ago. This, in part, led to the current project: the Whitemarsh Driving Tour.

I would like to especially commend the students of the class for their diligent work and creativity in producing this tour. If not for their tenacity and scholarship, the project would not have been completed. It is our hope that this work can add to the historical knowledge of the area during the American War for Independence and, in so doing, make the events come alive and more accessible to the general public, whether working on a school project or not.

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2017

Introduction

This year marks the 240th anniversary of the Whitemarsh encampment and related skirmishes. Except for the general lay of the land, the hills, and streams, it is hard to imagine what the area was like during those days. Rather than the busyness of the roadways and the seemingly endless and seamless neighborhoods, businesses and people, the region was quite rural. The population was small compared to the millions who live in the Delaware Valley today. Philadelphia's northernmost outskirts lay just past present day Vine Street. Beyond lay scattered farms, small hamlets and occasional taverns. The area was covered by virgin stands of forest with relatively few areas of cleared land for fields. Nothing of the modern layout of roads and streets existed, even in one's imagination. The roads that did exist were underdeveloped and difficult to traverse. Only a few existed heading north out of Philadelphia. York Road was the main conduit up to New York City, crossing the Delaware River in Bucks County. Branching off to the northwest, not far from the city limits, were the Germantown Road and, splitting off from that at Chestnut Hill, Bethlehem Pike, known then as the North Wales Road. Ridge Pike followed the Schuylkill River roughly parallel to the Germantown Road. A few other roads existed at the time, connecting communities and various sites including the Abington Road (Washington Lane), White Church Road (Church Road), Limekiln Pike and Susquehanna Road, all of which play into the following narrative. Faint trails and underdeveloped byways connected some of these highways. So, it was through this rural landscape that the armies under question marched and made battle with each other from December 5–8, 1777.

The time of year also plays into the following narrative. The experiences at Valley Forge are well known to the student of American history, but the weeks leading up to that episode were just as challenging, with increasing cold and occasional snow and chilling rain. Many soldiers suffered from exposure. In some ways, the time leading up to Valley Forge was not much different in terms of the physical experience than the time to come. In addition, the soldiers in the Continental Army were under significant stress due to the

fighting of the previous two months as well as the possibility of more with the British only fourteen miles away, ensconced—warmly—in Philadelphia. As at Valley Forge, the troops had little food, many had no shoes and there seemingly was little relief to expect from the Congress, which had high-tailed it out to Lancaster. It was a bitter and demoralizing situation. Yet, there was hope. Only weeks before, General Horatio Gates had defeated the British at the Battle of Saratoga thus, in some people’s minds, turning the tide of the war. On top of that, some troops from that victory, including Daniel Morgan and his riflemen, had come south to join Washington’s troops. These marksmen would figure prominently in the skirmishing at Edge Hill during the following days, bolstering the morale of Washington’s troops. It should finally be noted that the Delaware Valley is an area lush in vegetation. Since the encampment and fighting took place from early November to the middle of December, the landscape appeared quite different. There were no leaves on the trees, making it easier for both sides to see the movements of their enemy. Most of the following narrative develops the events from the night of December 4–5 through December 8, although the wider context of the episode is presented as well.

Because the movements of the British troops were quite widespread over the four days, the narrative and tour is divided into three sections: the Whitemarsh Encampment, the fighting and depredations around Chestnut Hill and Germantown and finally, the fighting around Edgehill. There are twelve stops, starting and ending at Fort Hill in Fort Washington. For each section, there are italicized directions along with information regarding the route and destinations. Rather than simply stating addresses or GPS coordinates, we felt it best to include specific directions to ensure that the tourist followed the same routes as the units of the two armies.

Enjoy the tour and learn about the Battle of Whitemarsh!

The Tour Narrative

Whitemarsh Encampment Section

Stop A: Fort Hill

Fort Hill is located across from the Fort Washington State Park Headquarters at 500 South Bethlehem Pike, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Proceed to the top of the hill where the fort (redoubt) was located. (If the gate to Fort Hill is closed, proceed to Hope Lodge, just down Bethlehem Pike south of Fort Hill.) Fort Hill is the location of one of the two redoubts built by the Continental forces during the time of the encampment.

The turntables of the American War for Independence were beginning to move more visibly with the onset of the Philadelphia Campaign of 1777. British General William Howe had pitted himself against American Commander George Washington for the second time. This time his eyes were set on the colonists' capital city, his intentions fixed on totally destroying the Continental Army. Treading the path of numerous other European conquests, Howe envisioned that capturing Philadelphia would be a stab in the heart of the colonial cause. Yet, this move would take Howe's experienced army away from their New York headquarters and the genius of the Hudson Valley Campaign, which ended with a devastating loss for the British. This decision may have been deadly for the British, for a victory in the Hudson Valley may have ended the war with the ultimate defeat of the colonial cause. While Washington's defense would not prove strong enough to preserve Philadelphia, it would be enough to keep the British from making any ultimate advance in the war by saving the army to fight another day. At this time, France was watching and waiting for an opening in the war, an indication of where they would make the greatest gains from this once amateur rebellion. By the end of 1777, George Washington was in the midst of putting forward a notable performance, drawing some eagerly awaiting attention. The Philadelphia campaign helped set the stage for French involvement in the revolution and witnessed the slow yet steady perseverance of the American army to stay alive.

At the beginning of this campaign, however, things were looking bleak for Washington and his men. As Howe disembarked with his 18,000 troops at the head of the Chesapeake Bay and crept up into Pennsylvania, Washington rushed to the Philadelphia area to prepare for the impending attack.¹ Opening up with a dramatic flourish, Howe thoroughly routed Washington at the Battle of Brandywine on September 11, 1777. This began a pattern of failure for the Continentals. Following Brandywine and a short standoff between the two armies at the Battle of the Clouds, the Paoli Massacre proved another loss for the Continentals. The British army was next on their way to Valley Forge in order to ford the Schuylkill River and reach Philadelphia. The Americans, still recovering from the previous battles, had themselves positioned north of the Schuylkill River between Philadelphia and the British army. However, in order to protect the destruction of his men and supply lines, Washington “allowed” Howe to march safely into Philadelphia on September 26. This heavily criticized decision may have been the only option for Washington at this point. Howe’s army spilled out into the hamlets and villages surrounding Philadelphia, with a large group stationed in Germantown to guard the incoming roads.

In response to the loss of the capital city, Washington planned to retake Philadelphia using a brilliant multi-pronged attack against the British line in Germantown. This plan was executed on October 4 but ended in failure due to flawed communication. The Continental Army was forced to retreat. It was during this retreat from Germantown that some of Howe’s men pursued Washington’s troops northward as far as Skippack Pike. During this pursuit, the British hoisted cannons onto Church Hill, where St. Thomas Episcopal Church is located today and fired on the retreating Americans.² Despite this failure on the part of Washington, the British had nonetheless been caught off guard and were reminded of Washington’s growing power and prowess

¹ Isaac Sherman, “To George Washington from Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Sherman,” Received by George Washington (11 March 1778), *Founders Online*, National Archives, founders.archives.gov/?q=Author%3A%22Sherman%2C%20Isaac%22&s=1111311111&r=2; Accessed 4 May 2017. Letter.

² Over the years, it has been reported that during the Battle of Whitemarsh, Howe brought cannons forward to Church Hill and fired in the direction of Fort Hill. More likely, the story handed down was connected to the Continental retreat from Germantown referred to here. Not only does one source from the time of the encampment indicate the forward position of Washington’s line at the church, but it is highly unlikely that Howe would have pushed this far forward within the pincers of both Militia and Camp Hills.

in the field. After the retreat from Germantown, Washington and his army wandered the countryside of Montgomery County for a couple of weeks before landing in Whitpain Township, camping there from October 21 through November 2 before moving onto Whitemarsh. Here in Whitpain, Washington established headquarters in a residence called Dawesfield. This gap of space and time between the Battles of Germantown and Whitemarsh was a no man's land in which tiny skirmishes, spying, and scouting groups were prominent. The British would dispatch these scouts into the area between Philadelphia's border at Vine Street and the Whitemarsh encampment to gather food, do reconnaissance and, at times, burn homes indiscriminately suspected of holding continental soldiers. Torching these homes was not an uncommon action by the British, and over time it led to a great number of Tories abandoning their support for England. By the time Washington had arrived in Whitpain, Howe had withdrawn any remaining troops from Germantown and the surrounding areas, pulling them back into Philadelphia south of Vine Street.

For much of the time until this point, the British had been struggling to provide supplies for their army. This was partly due to the presence of two continental forts on the Delaware River below Philadelphia. These forts—Mifflin on the Pennsylvania side and Mercer on the New Jersey side—commanded the river, thus preventing the British Navy from getting much-needed supplies to the city. Howe, in order to keep Philadelphia, laid a siege on Fort Mifflin in hopes of clearing the waterway. On November 10th, British troops and ships began a heavy bombardment of the fort, forcing an American retreat in the middle of the night. Fort Mercer was abandoned shortly afterward, and the British gained total control of the city and its watery supply line.

On November 2nd, Washington and his troops made the short journey from Whitpain to Whitemarsh. He wanted to be close to the British to keep an eye on them, as well as to take advantage of three of the area's highest hills if the British decided to march out for an attack. The gap between the two armies was narrowing as if to foreshadow an impending collision.

Proceed to Church Hill – St. Thomas Episcopal Church via the Clifton House and Hope Lodge. To get to the Clifton House, turn right out of the Fort Hill lane and proceed a few

hundred yards. Clifton House is on your right. From here, reverse your route past Fort Hill to Hope Lodge. From Hope Lodge, proceed in the same direction and turn left onto Camp Hill Road at the light and RR trestle. Turn right into the main entrance to St. Thomas Church and proceed up to the parking lot near the church building

Stop B: Church Hill – St. Thomas Episcopal Church (Refer to Encampment Map)

Park in the church parking lot and walk past the front entrance to the overlook of Church Road and Bethlehem Pike. It is here where Washington had his advanced position of 400 men and cannons to guard the crossroads. Among the grave markers across from the front entrance of the church, you will note four blue poles marking the location and dimensions of the church during the time of the encampment.

With the American army now encamped at Whitemarsh, Washington took up headquarters in the Emlen House to make plans for the coming weeks. He had chosen Whitemarsh for a number of reasons and now intended to stay at this location to see what might develop. Being closer to Philadelphia provided Washington with better observation of the British in case they decided to march out. It also afforded him the possibility of mounting an attack of his own. He was tired of losing and felt he needed to make an impression not only on his enemy but also on the Congress and his critics. Washington's immediate concern, however, was the defense of the army, and the hills of Whitemarsh were key to this plan. The army's position spread all the way from the rightmost post at Militia Hill to the left end of Camp Hill—a distance of some miles. This defense included troops positioned at Fort Hill as the center of the encampment, as well as a more forward post on Church Hill overlooking the intersection of Church Road and Bethlehem Pike. Here, Washington placed about 400 troops and cannons.³ Militia Hill became the temporary home of the Pennsylvania Militia and 2nd Connecticut Continental Regiment. The legendary Colonel Daniel Morgan's riflemen, along with Colonel Mordecai Gist's Maryland Militia, were assigned to defend the left flank of Camp Hill across the valley

³ Jonathan W. Peters, *The Battle of Whitemarsh: December 5–8, 1777* (Master's Thesis, unpublished, Bob Jones University, 2008), 6.

from Edgehill and near the Limekiln and Susquehanna roads. The bulk of the army was placed directly on Camp Hill with the left occupied by Maj. General Nathanael Greene and the right by Maj. General John Sullivan.⁴ Redoubts were built on both Camp Hill and Fort Hill. Sandy Run stream provided a natural obstacle at the base of Camp Hill. Many of the officers took up lodging at Hope Lodge, the Clifton House, and other residences in the area. Although Washington's army of 11,000 men did not nearly compare with Howe's 18,000, the Continental position, as some have described, was a most impregnable fortress.

At the same time, the state of the Continental Army was certainly pitiful. Many of the troops created small, crude shelters along the hillsides to protect themselves from the cold November weather. For some time, Washington had been pleading with Congress to provide more supplies for his troops. One article they especially lacked was shoes. Washington was desperate enough to creatively offer a reward to "any person, who shall, by nine o'clock Monday morning, produce the best substitute for shoes made of raw hides."⁵

In addition to the army's lack of food, clothing, and materials, many of the troops were demoralized and angry, as they were still serving in the army after their enlistments were up. Circumstances required their service, though, so this issue was put off for their much-needed support. While Washington scratched his head to come up with sensible solutions to each of these problems, he faced others.

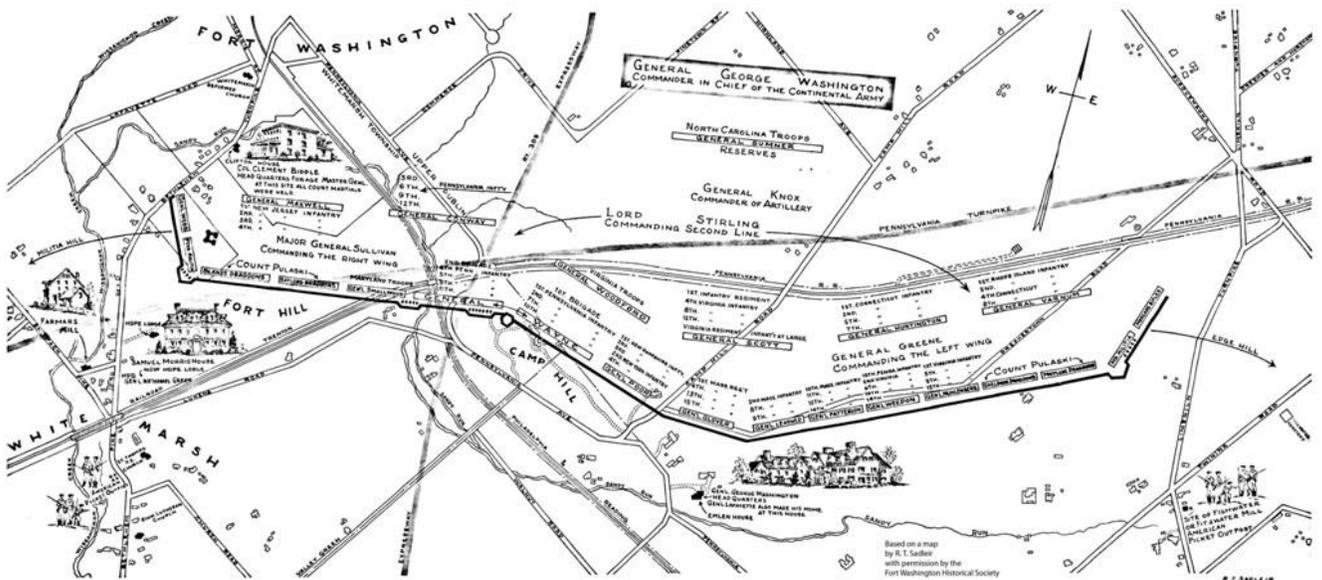
In spite of the perseverance of Washington and his troops under these tough conditions, Washington's leadership was now called into question. On November 8th, a plot between Brigadier General Thomas Conway and Major General Horatio Gates was exposed by one of Washington's loyal friends. The troublesome Conway had been skeptical and jealous of Washington's position as Commander-in-Chief of the American army and had written various letters to other generals to make them aware of Washington's deficiencies. Conway would suggest that Gates would prove the best solution and leader. After hearing of this, Washington politely yet firmly wrote to

⁴ Ibid., 4–5.

⁵ Washington cited by Ray Thompson, *Washington at Whitemarsh: Prelude to Valley Forge* (Fort Washington, Pa: Historical Society of Fort Washington, 1977), 13.

Conway to halt the conspiracy. This awkward and insubordinate series of events has come to be called the “Conway Cabal.”

Proceed to Militia Hill via Camp Hill. Turn right out of the St. Thomas Episcopal Church complex onto Camp Hill Road. Continue on Camp Hill Road crossing Pennsylvania Ave. To your left and above is the site of Camp Hill, the location of the second fort or redoubt built by the Continental Army during the time. Just past the intersection noted above, turn right onto Dreshertown Road and proceed to Limekiln Pike. It is along Dreshertown Road that the main line of the Continental Army was encamped during this time. (Refer to encampment map.) Washington’s headquarters at Emlen House were below this ridge to the right. Turn right onto Limekiln Pike and proceed to Twining Road. Turn right onto Twining Road and proceed to Pennsylvania Ave. (Note the height above to your right where the Continental Army was encamped.) Turn right onto Pennsylvania Ave. and proceed to the marker indicating the location of the Emlen House—visible from the road. Stop here. From the marker, continue on Pennsylvania Ave. to Camp Hill Road. Turn left onto Camp Hill Road and proceed to Bethlehem Pike at the light and RR trestle. Proceed through the intersection onto Skippack Pike (Rt. 73) and take the first left onto Militia Hill Road. Take the first left into Fort Washington State Park and proceed up the hill to the observation platform. Walk out onto the platform.



Stop C: Militia Hill (Refer to December 4–5 Map)

Walk out to the platform to overlook the Wissahickon Valley and Flourtown below. Chestnut Hill is across the valley. It is there where fighting would first take place on December 5th. Along this ridge to your right is where the Pennsylvania Militia and 2nd Connecticut were encamped.

All throughout November both Howe and Washington were scheming, tucking strategies and battle tactics up their sleeves that they hoped would provide them with a victory. Washington debated with his council whether or not to make a direct attack on Philadelphia again, but this was quickly put down by a majority of the group. The other option was to wait for Howe to come to them so that they could overtake his army using the advantage of the hills with perfectly executed troop movements. While these discussions took place, spies were hearing reports of a secret march by Howe to capture Whitemarsh. He wrote, “In the course of last week, from a variety of intelligence I had reason to expect that General Howe was preparing to give us a general action.”⁶

One of these intelligence sources proved very unlikely. Lydia Darragh, a resident of Philadelphia whose home was occupied by British soldiers, heard the signs of an upcoming attack by eavesdropping. Not wishing to see an American defeat, she made the bold and dangerous decision to travel past the British lines to warn Washington of Howe’s plans. Howe was coming, along with about 12,000 troops, the next morning.⁷ His objectives were clear-cut and simple: defeat Washington’s army for the final time before winter set in and, in doing so, seal his winning streak on a powerful note. This win would

⁶ George Washington, “To The President of Congress Head Quarters, White Marsh (10 Dec. 1777),” *The Electronic Text Center*, web.archive.org/web/20130903074719/http://etext.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=WasFi10.xml&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=140&division=div1; Accessed 3 Mar. 2017. Letter.

⁷ Peters, *The Battle of Whitemarsh*, 8–9.

buy Howe fame and honor in England, for he intended to return to his home the following spring.

At around 10:00 p.m. on the evening of December 4th, the British began their journey out of Philadelphia's safe quarters into the cold, dark night.⁸ They would begin their march by moving northward up York Road in the direction of the Continental army. During much of the Philadelphia campaign, Howe's strategy consisted of three main columns: those led by Lt. General Charles Cornwallis, those under Lt. General Wilhelm von Knyphausen (consisting of mostly Hessian regiments), and those under Maj. General Charles Grey. Howe was fond of staging daring flanking maneuvers and loved to use these three groups in a series of distractions. By this time in the war, Washington had learned to anticipate Howe's intricate battle designs, and planned to outthink him. These three columns would play important roles in the outcome of the Battle of Red Bank. As the British troops marched toward their destination, they were arranged in file as just indicated.

Upon reaching the Rising Sun Tavern, the same ground that Lydia Darragh had stood upon hours before, the British came into contact with American troops under the command of Captain Allen McLane. Here, the column swerved left onto Germantown Road to make their way toward Chestnut Hill, located across the Sandy Run Valley from Red Bank. As they continued the twelve-mile march, many of Howe's soldiers were reliving memories as they passed by the houses and buildings that formed Germantown, including the Cliveden House, the epicenter of the Battle of Germantown—now a deserted wreckage. They continued up Germantown Road, passing the various German residences of the area including Beggarstown and Cresheim Village. All throughout the march, Continental pickets sniped at the enemy column from houses lining the road. Having once fired, these lone pickets would then proceed further up the road. In some cases, British troops would force their way into the houses to drive the Continentals out. The residents of these homes would a couple of days later suffer revenge from the British soldiers. Eventually, most of these sniping pickets would arrive back at camp to give firsthand warnings to Washington of the impending attack. Finally, after a long night of

⁸ John Andre, *Major Andre's Journal, Operations of the British Army, June 1777 to November 1778* (1930; repr., New York Times and Arno Press 1968), 67.

marching, the British troops were ordered to halt. The troops were now at Chestnut Hill, where they made their camp. General Howe established headquarters inside the house of Matthias Bush, at the intersection of Germantown Road and Bethlehem Pike. In choosing this intersection, positioned at two main roads, Howe made a smart tactical move, as it gave the British access to a route of escape or maneuvering. These headquarters also happened to be located at the crest of Chestnut Hill, giving the British their own vantage point paralleling the American's elevated position two miles away. General Howe created a line of defense beyond the crest of the hill from the Wissahickon Creek on the left to modern day Wyndmoor on the right. Hessian Jägers would form the left flank of the line guarding the ascent of Germantown Road while the 1st and 2nd Battalions of Light Infantry would expand to the right, guarding Bethlehem Pike.⁹ The rest of the British force would spread out in a quadrangle to the rear in the Village of Chestnut Hill. Howe and his men would stay here for the next 36 hours before departure.

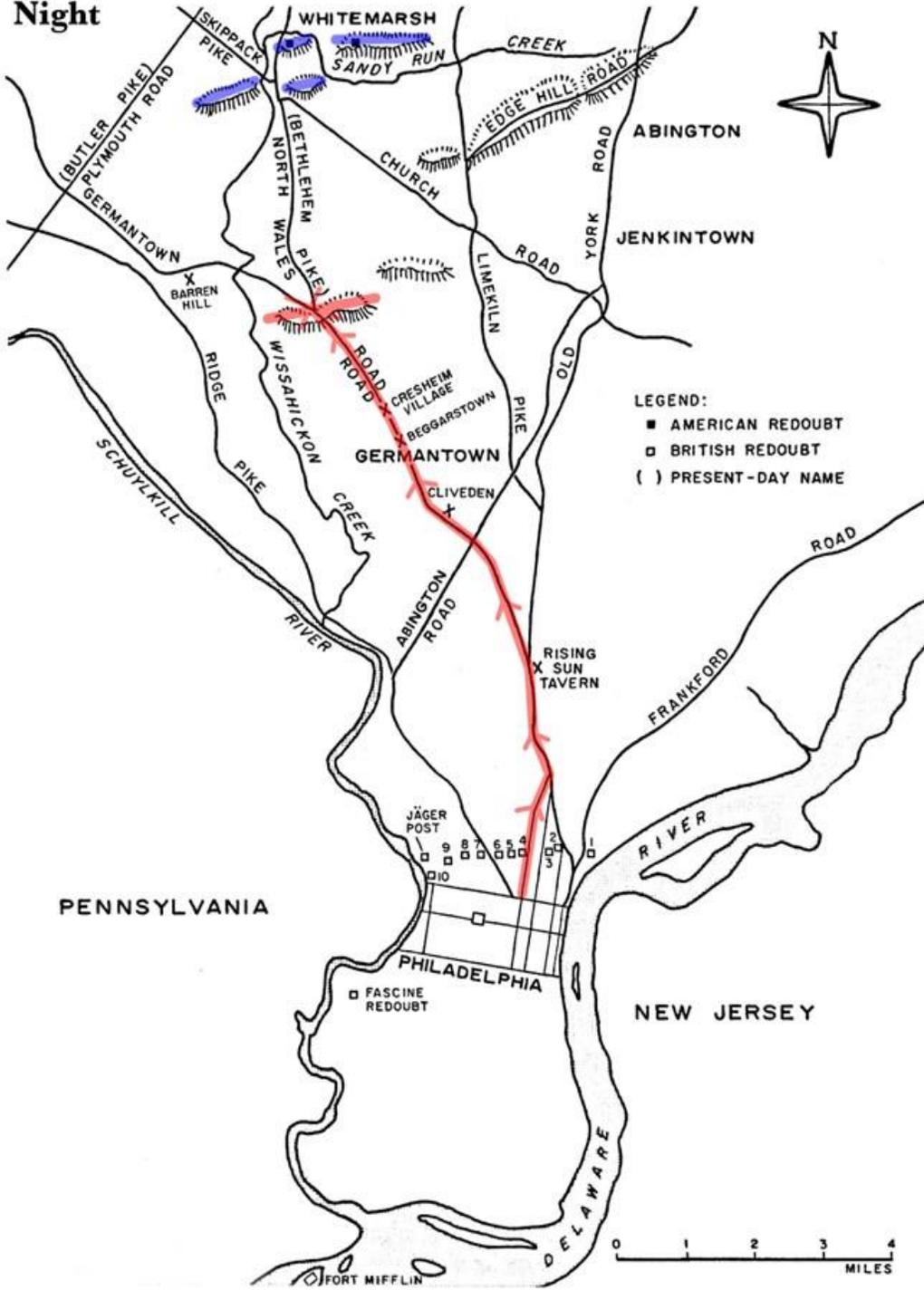
Meanwhile in the American camp, just before Howe's men reached the top of Chestnut Hill, Washington had called the alarm to prepare for battle and instructed his troops to each build two campfires in order to scare the British into thinking that the size of their force was much larger than it actually was—a tactic he had used almost a year before in Trenton. When Howe's army looked out upon the American camp, their eyes were swarmed with thousands of little reminders of the size and magnitude of the enemy army. The British, however, quickly saw through this mind trick and effectively made their camp along the hill.

Proceed to Chestnut Hill College at the intersection of Germantown Pike and Northwestern Ave. To get there, continue along the road of the State Park to Joshua Road and turn left. Proceed on Joshua Road to Germantown Pike and turn left. Proceed on Germantown Pike until you get to the aforementioned intersection. (Along the way, note Church Road on your right as you pass through the community of Lafayette Hill. It is just up the street at St. Peter Lutheran Church where the Battle of Barren Hill

⁹ Captain Johann Ewald, *Diary of the American War, a Hessian Journal*, ed. Joseph Tustin (New Haven, Yale UP, 1979), 109.

occurred months later in May of 1778.) When you arrive at Chestnut Hill College stop in the small circle to your right across from the college.

**December 4 - 5, 1777
Night**



- BRITISH
- CONTINENTALS
- HESSIANS

Based on a map
 by John J. Mangan
 with permission by the
 Fort Washington Historical Society

Chestnut Hill and Germantown Section

Stop D: Chestnut Hill College (Refer to December 5 Map)

Park in the circle at the intersection of Germantown and Northwestern Avenues across from Chestnut Hill College.

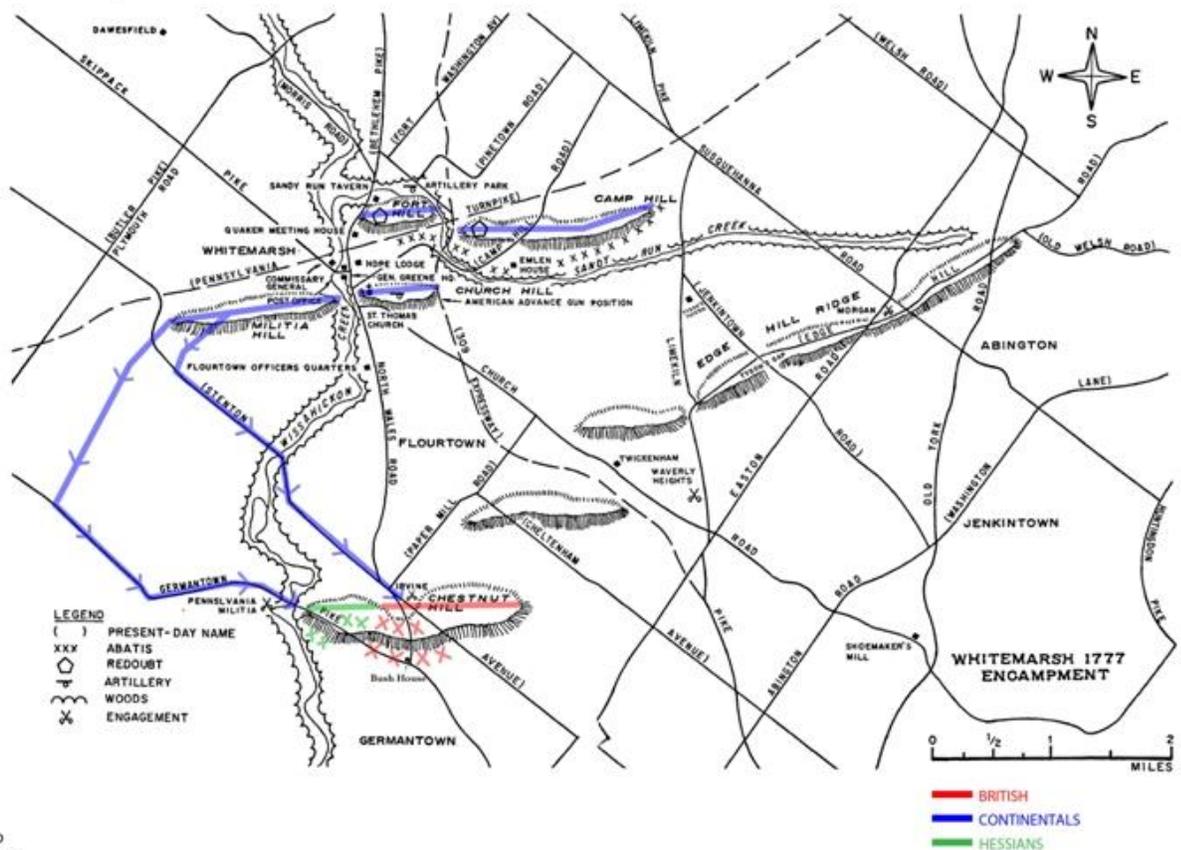
It seemed as though both Howe and Washington were waiting for each other to make the first move. Yet, around midday on December 5th, Washington sent two of his units under Sullivan in the direction of Chestnut Hill in order to gain information on the location and size of the British force. Sullivan ordered Brigadier General James Potter and his brigade of Pennsylvania militia and Connecticut regulars to move off of Militia Hill. Soon after, Sullivan also recruited Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Sherman to join Potter for this probe of Chestnut Hill. They were instructed to proceed along the Germantown Road as far as the Bush House, little knowing who presently occupied the residence. Sherman was frustrated with this order, as he had been told his regiment was to act independently of the other brigades. Yet his resistance did not last long, and he dutifully combined forces under Potter. The group made their way southward, turning left onto Germantown Road. As they proceeded, they would march close to Barren Hill and St. Peter's Lutheran church, the location of a future battle that would take place in May of 1778. As the troops descended into the Wissahickon Creek Valley, they prepared themselves to discover the hidden details of the enemy they would engage over the next couple of days. All that they could tell at this point was that the enemy's left flank was heavily covered by woods, with the Wissahickon in front of them. Sherman dispatched a small contingent to determine the exact location of the British position. After returning with the news of a large force with a firm grip on the area, Sherman and Potter decided to send about 60 men over the creek to test the enemy's strength.¹⁰ Just as Sherman's troops crossed, they were met by a unit of Anspach Jägers who countered their movement. Suddenly, a second wave of Hessians appeared, empowering the British line to fully

¹⁰ Peters, *The Battle of Whitemarsh*, 16.

dwarf the Americans. Upon retreat across the stream, the entire column fearfully turned around and made their way back in the direction of their camp. The Pennsylvania militia would frequently fail and retreat in the face of experienced forces, indicating that their training was not up to par with many of the other American units. This would not be the last time this militia would turn tail and run, even though many had homes and family in the area now under threat of attack and other depredations.

Proceed to Phil-Mont Christian Academy at 35 Hillcrest Ave., Erdenheim, PA 19038. Continue up Germantown Ave. toward Chestnut Hill and turn left onto Hillcrest Ave. Continue on Hillcrest Ave. crossing both Stenton Ave. and Bethlehem Pike and then past the Academy down to the lower parking lot

December 5, 1777



Based on a map by John J. Mangan with permission by the Fort Washington Historical Society

Stop E: Phil-Mont Christian Academy (Refer to December 5 and December 6 Maps)

Walk to the far side of the tennis courts and look up and across Paper Mill Road. It is in this direction that the next Continental assault will take place.

At roughly the same time that Potter set out in the direction of Germantown Road with his troops, Brigadier General James Irvine, with the same mission as Potter, was dispatched from Militia Hill with about 600 men in four battalions.¹¹ His trajectory ran parallel with current day Stenton Avenue but was coming from a different angle than Potter's toward Chestnut Hill. This movement may have taken these troops through the present-day Morris Arboretum, or even farther to the left around the location of Phil-Mont Academy. Before ascending Chestnut Hill in front of them, the troops crossed a bridge, over either the Wissahickon or Paper Mill Run. Irvine's men, similar to Potter's, were poorly trained without much experience. When Irvine was in the middle of dividing his men into smaller parties and ascending the hill to probe, they were interrupted by the British who came suddenly upon them. The British 1st Light Infantry Battalion led by Lt. Colonel Robert Abercromby came in a first wave. To provide support, the 2nd Battalion appeared when it seemed as though the Americans were surrounding their comrades. The British opened fire and quickly broke the American line, which began to fall apart as one by one, the Americans turned in retreat. General Irvine atop his tall horse and halfway up the hill bravely attempted to rally his men. Yet this was such a desperate retreat that even when Irvine himself was shot from the horse, not one soldier stopped to help him. Irvine lay on the ground with three fingers torn off and a serious head wound as well.¹² These shameful actions of the American militiamen were noted by the British, who seemed to always remain cool and collected no matter what was going on around them. The desperate retreat of the militia was followed by a British bayonet charge which would

¹¹ Ibid., 18.

¹² A marker of the relative location of Irvine's mishap is to be found on the grounds of the Institutes for the Achievement of Human Potential in Wyndmoor, not far from the historic Yeakel Cemetery on the heights above the reader.

have chased the Americans all the way back to Whitemarsh had Howe not called for their return to Chestnut Hill. Howe was not falling for what appeared to be Washington's plan to draw the British army into the valley. Poor Irvine, along with twenty other militiamen, had been taken prisoner. There had been many more American casualties compared to the British.

Many of these retreating Continentals made their way back along the Bethlehem Pike where they set up camp some distance from the bulk of their army. That night, the British lit bonfires along the road to watch for any movement by the American forces back toward the British line. The major fighting on December 5th had come to an end, yet the troops sat waiting in their shelters for any sign of attack. Meanwhile, Howe sent small groups of men out onto Bethlehem Pike to test the American positions. The Flourtown Valley lay poised for a clash between the two sides.

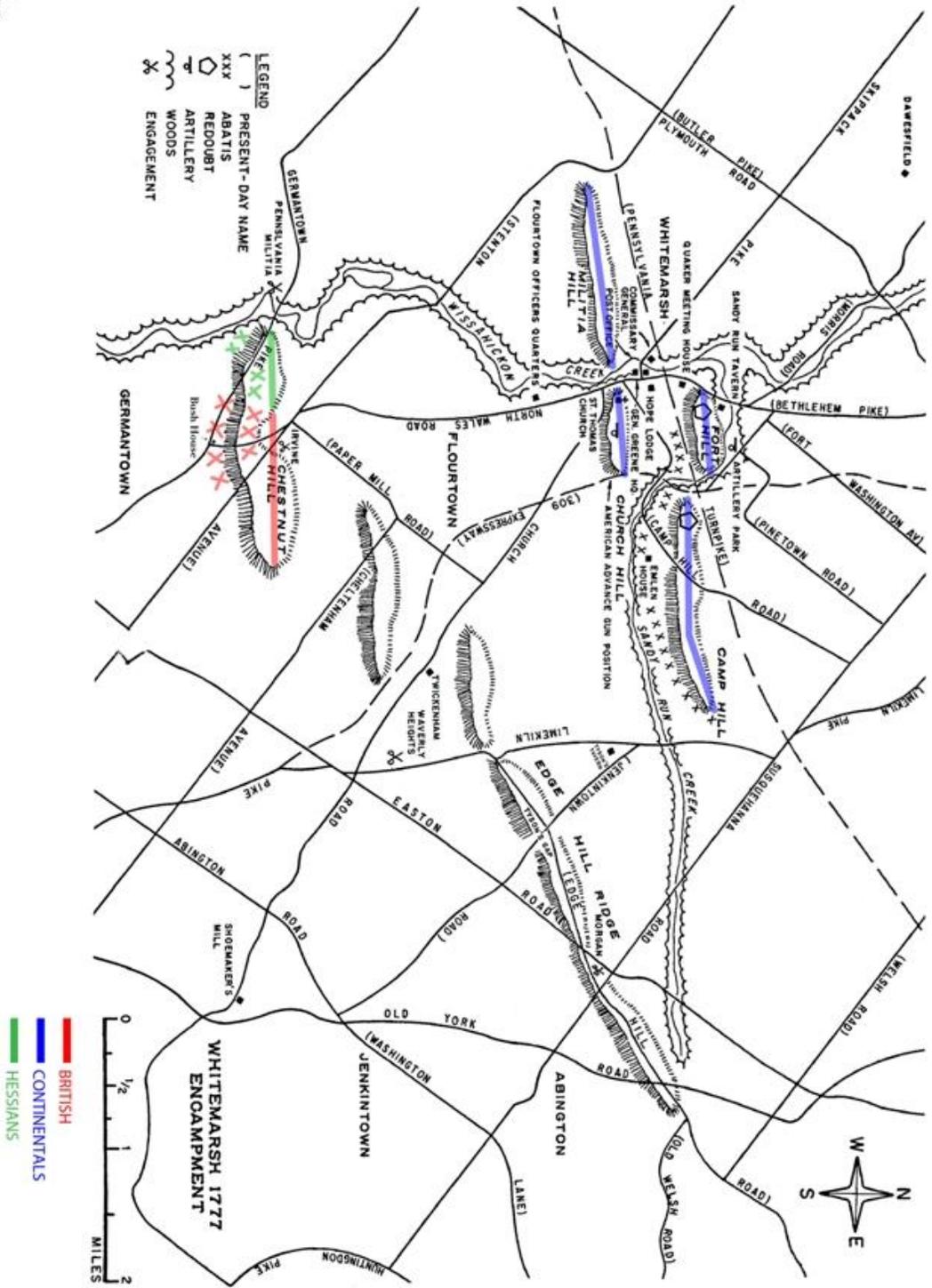
Yet as December 6th dawned, no one stirred any further than they dared in the direction of the opposing camps. Howe was still staked out at the Bush House, and Washington held his breath along with his troops, his mind wandering in and out of the commitment to attack. Interestingly, Howe and Washington seemed to have similar plans regarding winning the battle. Howe wanted to pull Washington's army from their safe bases out into the valley that encompassed Flourtown, and Washington was wary enough of this plan to warn his troops of it. Washington feared a flanking maneuver but was not sure which way it would turn. He hoped that all of his puzzle pieces would fit together to create his own victory over Howe, who knew that the Americans had a high chance of overwhelming him if he ventured too close to their precious hills. Drawing them out into the valley would be to Washington's direct advantage, resulting in the much-needed victory he was hoping for.

However, nothing seemed to be changing for the entirety of December 6th. As opposed to full-scale conflicts, many skirmishes took place that day between mounted troops in the Flourtown Valley, but none had any great significance. Foraging parties were dispatched from Chestnut Hill and during the day British troops, especially the Hessians, committed punishable crimes against the people of Flourtown and the surrounding communities, stealing grain and livestock and even burning some houses. Yet, no major engagements occurred.

Howe was becoming impatient. He feared that if he waited any longer he would run out of time and supplies to make any significant mark on the Americans. The solution became increasingly obvious to Howe: a major flanking maneuver was begging to be a part of this engagement, and without much more thought, Howe began ordering preparations for the movement of his troops out of Chestnut Hill. He would come at the Americans from a new and improved angle, one he had not yet touched. Howe had set his eyes on the American left, near Edge Hill.

Proceed to the Beggarstown School in the heart of Germantown along Germantown Ave. in Philadelphia. Out of Phil-Mont Academy parking lot, turn left and proceed up to Paper Mill Road. Turn right onto Paper Mill Road and proceed to the light at the intersection of Paper Mill Road, Stenton Ave. and Bethlehem Pike. Turn left and then immediately bear to the right onto Bethlehem Pike continuing on to Germantown Ave. (Note on right--at the intersection of Bethlehem Pike and Germantown Ave.—is where the Matthias Bush House was located, where General Howe had his headquarters during the 5th and 6th.) Turn left onto Germantown Ave. and continue through Chestnut Hill, Mount Airy, and Germantown to the location of the Beggarstown School at 6669 Germantown Ave. Stop across the street from the building. (Note that you will have passed through the old village of Cresheim—around Allens Lane and Germantown Ave.—and are now in the area known then as Beggarstown or Bettelhausen.)

December 6, 1777



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Stop F: Beggarstown School (Refer to December 6 and 7 Map)

Stop across from the Beggarstown School. The building is one of the few edifices remaining from the time period. Cliveden, the epicenter of the Battle of Germantown on October 4 is just up the street on the left.

Howe's troops began exiting Chestnut Hill at around 1:00 in the morning on December 7.¹³ Many of the troops thought that they were heading back to Philadelphia, that the little excursion that they had taken over the past 48 hours was finished business. But of course, Howe had other plans and had not given up yet. Marching in their usual groups led by Cornwallis, then Knyphausen, and finally Grey, the army made its way back down Germantown Road past the dark and worried houses. As partial punishment the picketing mischief two nights prior, British soldiers set fire to these homes, illuminating the entire expanse of Beggarstown and Cresheim Village. The destruction of the area was so horrible that even many of the British struggled to watch. According to Captain Johann Ewald of the Field Jäger Corps,

The sight was horrible. The night was very dark. The blazing flames spread about with all swiftness and the wind blew violently. The cries of human voices of the young and old, who had seen their belongings consumed by the flames without saying anything, put everyone in a melancholy mood.¹⁴

The march continued, however, pushing through the chaos that had just been created.

When Howe turned the British column left off of Germantown Road onto the Abington Road, (present day Washington Lane), the previously unsuspecting troops were immediately aware that this march was not a trip back to the relative comfort of Philadelphia, but a flanking maneuver to the Continental left. Cornwallis and Knyphausen had taken the lead, and Grey and his column marched as a caboose.

By very early morning of December 7th, the British had traveled several miles up Abington Road. Having now arrived at the intersection of Church Road, Cornwallis and Knyphausen would continue on to Jenkintown and Abington, but Grey, bringing up the

¹³ Peters, *The Battle of Whitemarsh*, 24.

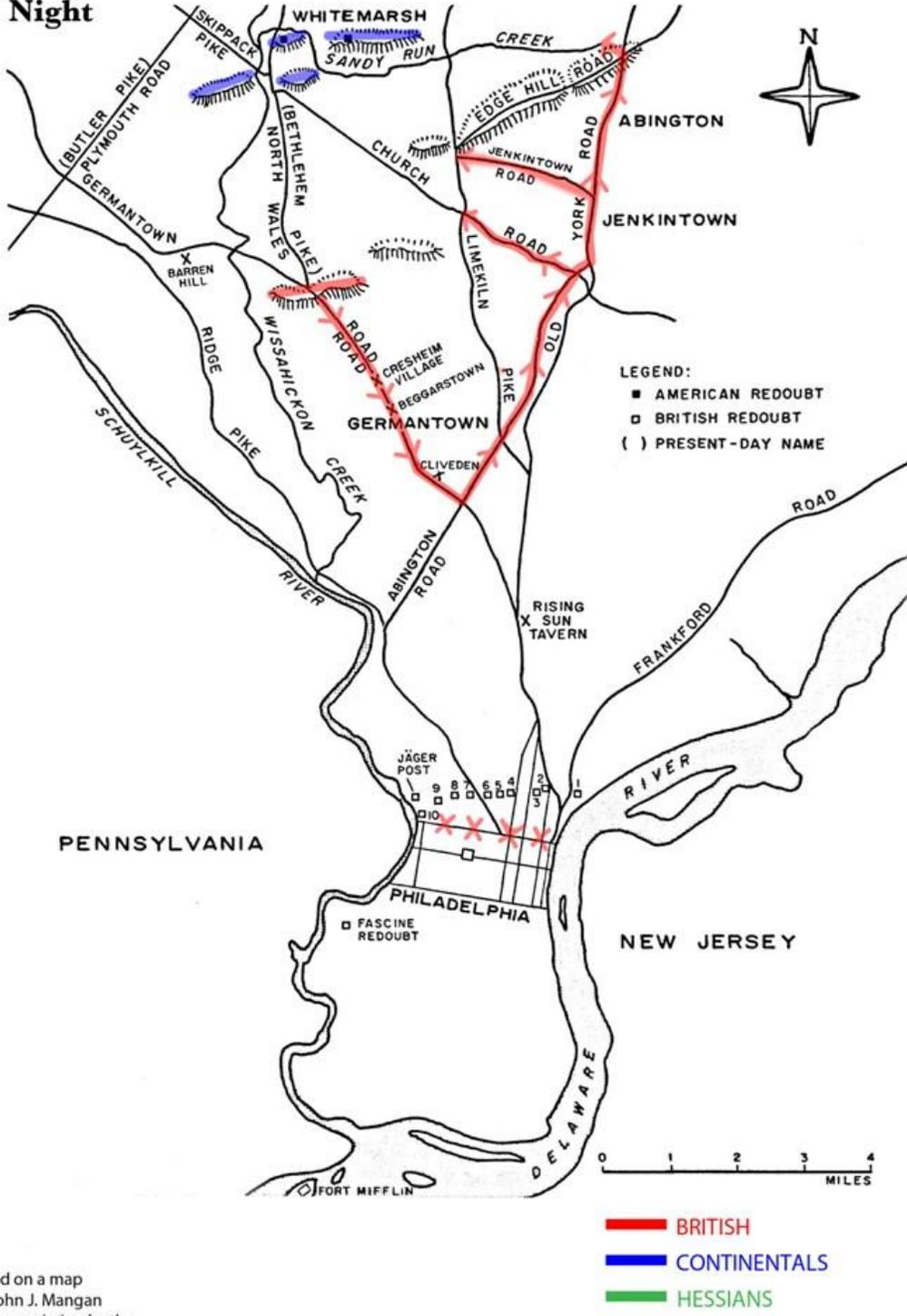
¹⁴ Captain Johann Ewald, *Diary of the American War: A Hessian Journal*, ed. Joseph P. Tustin (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979), 109.

rear along with about 2,000 men, would turn left and depart from the main column. Soon Church Road led Grey to Limekiln Pike, where the column had been instructed by Howe to wait until it heard signs of fighting or were given the word to proceed. Once they had the indication to make a move, Grey was to take his troops up Limekiln Pike in the direction of a place called Tyson's Tavern, located at the intersection of Limekiln Pike, Jenkintown Road and Fitzwatertown Road, where they would drive out a Continental picket position and come within a very short distance of Camp Hill. Grey, more than likely, was being used as a feint as Knyphausen and Cornwallis moved further north. At the moment though, the men were staked out just before the intersection of Church Road and Limekiln Pike, not far from present day Arcadia University. Grey was playing an important role in Howe's master plan. He was to act as a distraction for Washington's army as the main British column was making its way even further to the left of the Continental line. Grey would engage the Americans up ahead in order for Howe to launch his surprise attack.

Next on Howe's plan was to file off the main column under Knyphausen at Jenkintown Road, where it would proceed in the direction of Edge Hill. Cornwallis continued on to York Road and then proceeded to the intersection of Susquehanna Road. The purpose of separating these two columns was probably to ensure that the British would cover a large expanse of space, spanning the entire distance of Edge Hill, but also to gain control of the three major roads heading toward the Continental left. Knyphausen's and Cornwallis' lines would eventually reform in front of Edge Hill as the height faced both Jenkintown Road and modern Easton Road.

Proceed to Laverock in Glenside. Continue on Germantown and then left onto Washington Lane, then known as the Abington Road. Proceed on Washington Lane to Church Road—past Cheltenham Ave. Turn left onto Church and then right onto Limekiln near Arcadia University. Proceed on Limekiln and turn left onto Waverly Road. As you approach Waverly Road along Limekiln, you will be following the route of Grey's column just before they engaged the Continentals to your left. Continue to the small circle at the intersection of Laverock, Beaver and Fox just past Waverly's turn to the left.

**December 6 - 7, 1777
Night**



Based on a map
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Edge Hill Section

Stop G: Laverock (Refer to December 7 Morning Map)

Although the skirmish which occurred in this area was somewhat widespread, this intersection marks the center of the fighting commonly referred to as the Skirmish of Waverly Heights.

Meanwhile, over in the Continental camp, the British departure from Chestnut Hill had not gone unnoticed. Scouts began providing snippets of intelligence to Washington, only able to inform him that the British were probably on the move. Around 10:00 in the morning, Washington sent Potter's brigade of the Pennsylvania militia as well as Samuel Webb's 2nd Connecticut Regulars, commanded by Sherman, back toward the Bush House to see what was going on.¹⁵ When they arrived, the angry town inhabitants told them of the direction and manner of the British departure. The Continental units began traveling back to Militia Hill but were quickly redirected in the direction of Tyson's Tavern, where they were ordered to attack the rear of the left flank of the British column. Tyson's Tavern was most likely located at the crossing of Limekiln Pike and Jenkintown Road, and this intersection would provide both a good spot to see the British movement near Edge Hill as well as the perfect placement to block the British from advancing onto Camp Hill. The Americans dutifully made their way through Springfield Township, each moment moving unknowingly closer to Grey's column.

While this was taking place, Washington was in the midst of administering quick directions of movements to his troops. He ordered Daniel Morgan's riflemen and Mordecai Gist's Maryland Militia to move off of Camp Hill onto Susquehanna Road in the direction of Edge Hill, where Cornwallis and Knyphausen were also headed, but from the opposite direction. The two sides were on a collision course.

At about 11:30 a.m., Grey, having not yet heard any fighting to his right or received orders to march, had become increasingly impatient to move his men. Ignoring orders, he began sending his troops onto Limekiln Pike in the direction of Tyson's

¹⁵ Peters, *The Battle of Whitemarsh*, 27–28.

Tavern. At that moment, the Americans under Potter, Sherman, and Webb were just reaching the crest of Edge Hill, not far from a location called Waverly Heights. These Americans were the first to realize that the British were a mere mile away. They immediately descended the hill and began organizing their men into lines around the area of Thomas Wharton's estate, known as Twickenham.¹⁶ Upon approaching the area, Grey became concerned about the heavily forested area on both sides of the road. His concern was that snipers could be using the woods for cover. His apprehension was not unfounded. He quickly ordered four lines of Light Infantry and Jägers to fan out on either side of the road and proceed through the area. Almost immediately, Grey's men began receiving fire from the woods to their left. These were advanced troops connected to the units massing near Twickenham. The two British units to the left surged forward to aggressively engage their enemy: the Pennsylvania Militia and 2nd Connecticut. The Connecticut regiment put up a valiant fight in contrast to the militia, which began to falter not long after facing the enemy. The British obviously had their adversaries outnumbered, but their aggressiveness and good training would simply overwhelm the Continentals at this moment. The outcome of this encounter was also determined by Grey's decision to surround the Americans using a flanking maneuver on the Continentals' left with one of the other units he had but moments before dispatched. This worked well. As the initial two units plowed forward, facing the Americans head on, the other moved quickly to their backs and pounced in for a quick surprise. At this point the Pennsylvania Militia had already begun their anticipated retreat toward the crest of Edge Hill in the direction of Camp Hill, while the remaining Connecticut troops struggled but also managed to disentangle themselves from the fight, ultimately retreating in the same direction as their comrades, leaving the British wondering what was next.

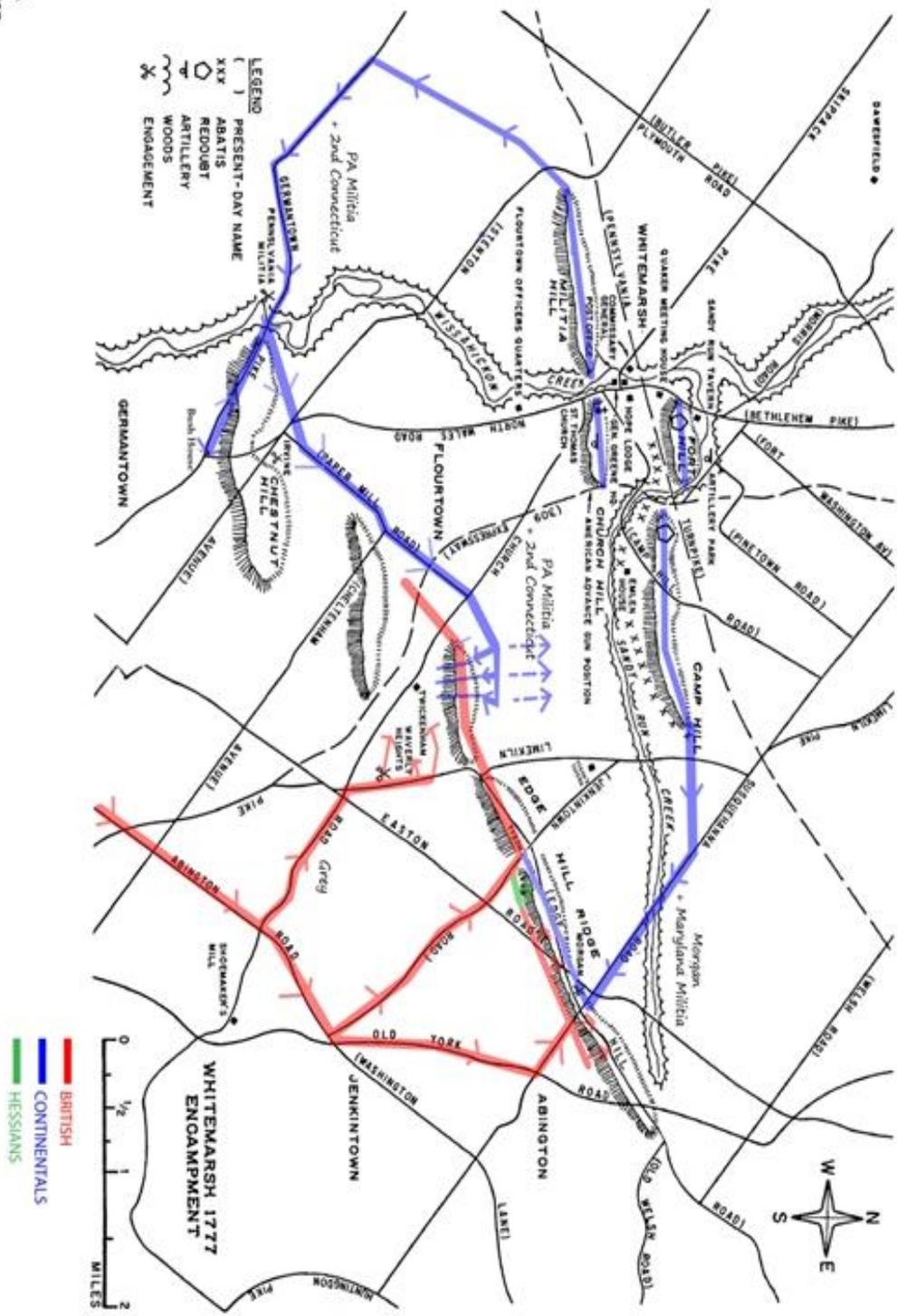
These two sides were not done with each other, however. The Continentals started to regroup, this time under the feeble leadership of Colonel Joseph Reed, who had taken control from Sherman without permission. The drama that followed among the ranks of the Continentals involved Sherman's fuming anger at the man who had "stolen" his

¹⁶ At this time, Thomas Warton Jr. was President of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania having been elected the previous March. The position was analogous to the office of modern day governor. This was his country estate. Wharton died in office the following May.

troops out from under him. Potter and Reed now planned to make some minor flanking maneuvers on the British to regain ground and morale, but the orders were confused and demoralizing to the troops, especially the Connecticut units which were infuriated with the lack of adequate leadership and cowardliness of the militia. The fight now re-engaged with the bulk of the Continental force facing increased units being sent forward by Grey. The fighting occurred in heavy forest and underbrush, making it difficult to see ahead but a few yards. There was now close quarter combat between the two sides. Before the Americans could make any progress, Reed's horse was shot from underneath him, and the man was thrown on the ground to face almost certain death or capture by oncoming, bayonet-bearing soldiers. Just in time, a captain by the name of Allen McLane heroically swooped in to aid the failing Continentals, as one of his dragoons rushed to carry Reed away from his near doom. Even after McLane's aid, though, the Americans were still driven back and forced to retreat, this time over the crest of the hill all the way back to Camp Hill. Following the rout of the Continental forces, Grey and his men ascended to the crest of Edge Hill, looking off to Militia Hill in the distance. Grey continued with part of his column to the area of Tyson's Gap. In the end, Grey's column extended from the southeast corner of present day Cheltenham Township, near Willow Grove Avenue and Cheltenham Avenue all the way to Tyson's Gap at present day Ardsley.

Proceed to Edge Hill Crest, to the grave marker along Fernhill Road in Abington. In order to get there, continue on Laverock to your left out to Church Road, noting the remains of Twickenham on your left, Thomas Wharton's estate. Turn right onto Church Road and then right onto Station Ave. at the bottom of the hill. Station Avenue becomes North Hills Ave. Proceed on North Hills to Fitzwatertown and turn right. Follow to Susquehanna and turn right onto Susquehanna. Continue on Susquehanna and turn right onto Edge Hill Road—at top of the hill past Easton Rd. Proceed on Edge Hill Road a short distance and turn left onto Easton and then an immediate right onto Bradfield (alongside Burger King) and then immediately left onto Fernhill. (From first starting on Susquehanna, this was the route of Morgan's Rifles and Gist's Maryland Militia as they approached Edge Hill as described below.) Proceed on Fernhill a short distance to a residence just before Fernhill bears to the right and intersects with Roslyn Ave. Watch for a small grave marker next to the sidewalk on your right.

December 7, 1777 Morning and Midday



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Stop H: Edge Hill Crest / Fernhill Road – Grave Marker (Refer to December 7 Afternoon Map)

Stop next to the grave marker alongside the road to continue the narrative.

The narrative of the fighting at Edge Hill has been recounted by various historians from the 19th century to the present, many of which differ from each other. As with the fighting at Waverly Heights, most have been put together through bits and pieces of information from both British and American participants in the fight. What follows is a compilation of these stories as best as could be rendered.

Not long after the initial contact between Grey and the Continentals, Howe and the two main columns engaged with Morgan and Gist near the American left at the crest of Edge Hill, the highest point in the area. This was a couple miles east of Grey's encounter. After coming up Jenkintown and Susquehanna Roads, Knyphausen and Cornwallis had met to form a single line that stretched from just beyond Susquehanna Road to near Tyson's Gap, present day Ardsley. The British line was reinforced by Grey when he was finished with Potter's troops and had taken full control from Limekiln Pike to Jenkintown Road. Morgan's riflemen and the Maryland Militia had come down Susquehanna Road, about as far as the Elias Kirk farm at present day Hillside Cemetery.¹⁷ Here, they turned right to move parallel to Edge Hill above them. Then they began moving up the north slope in the direction of the oncoming British troops. Before reaching its crest, the Americans were hit with a jolting wave of the British 1st Light Infantry under Abercromby which had just come over the hilltop. While Morgan's men initially drove these British back down the other side of the hill, they were met with a second wave of Howe's men, the 33rd Regiment of Foot, Howe's personal command and one of the top units in the British Army. Reinforced by these crack soldiers, the 1st Light Infantry was turned around and forced toward the hill once again.¹⁸ It was reported that the 1st Light Infantry had imbibed too much rum as they had rested earlier before their

¹⁷ Peters, *The Battle of Whitmarsh*, 28.

¹⁸ Donald A. Gallagher and Abram Clemmer, *Edge Hill, 1777* (Old York Road Historical Society Bulletin, 1953), 23.

initial ascent of Edge Hill and that many were drunk. In any case, Abercromby was displeased and disappointed in his men's performance.

Gist's Maryland Militia filed off to Morgan's right along the crest of the hill. All along the ridge, they dug trenches and pits to create some sort of defense against the encroaching forces below. A desperate fight now developed without much movement one way or the other. Morgan's troops, at the other end of the ridge, fought "Indian style," using the rocks and trees as cover. The British were firing cannons toward the Continental forces on the hill, but without much effect. Based on the finding of numerous cannon balls in various locations in the years following the fighting, it is conjectured that at Edge Hill, they were either flying over the top of the ridge onto the Kirk farm or bouncing off of splintering trees.¹⁹ Morgan and Gist soon faced the growing threat of being surrounded because the British line was so long and their numbers proved very overwhelming. Over to the American right, Gist's Maryland Militia faced a ferocious uphill bayonet charge by Abercromby's unit which had recovered from its previous indignity. After being driven back, the Marylanders were able to reform and push them back. The battle continued to rage, and the fighting endured well into mid-afternoon. Morgan and the Marylanders were holding their own against a superior force—both in numbers and capability. Yet they continued to hold the hill!

Washington could see some of what was occurring from his high vantage point on Camp Hill. Yet not much was clear to him regarding Morgan's position and predicament. As he rode along the line of the main camp, he discussed with some of his subordinates whether Morgan should be reinforced. Thomas Pickering, one of Washington's officers said to him,

If a small reinforcement be sent, they must soon give way; if a large force be detached, a great breach will be made in the line of defence, and this body also

¹⁹ William J. Buck, "The Battle of Edge Hill," in *Historical Sketches: A Collection of Papers Prepared for the Historical Society of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*, vol. 2 (Norristown, Pa.: Historical Society of Montgomery County, 1900), 230. (It is interesting to note that artifacts were found for years, including cannon balls, in the vicinities of both the Waverly Heights and Edge Hill areas. It was reported that a resident of the neighborhood across from North Hills Country Club in Oreland found a cannon ball while digging in his garden within the past decade—thus indicating that Grey's column was firing on the Continentals as they crossed Edgehill heading back to the main line.)

will not be able long to maintain their ground; and if they should retreat in disorder, the whole line may be thrown into confusion.²⁰

Washington conceded the point. This decision left Morgan's men and the Maryland Militia in a tough situation. They were left to fight alone.

Late in the afternoon, around 4:00 by some accounts, Howe decided to move against the Continental center and left on Camp Hill using three powerful lines.²¹ His purpose was to test these spots for a weakness. Abercromby led the first wave with the 44th Regiment and some Light Infantry. Behind him was a line of British Grenadiers followed by a line of Hessians commanded by Brigadier General William Erskine.²² Howe had pulled some of the Hessian troops from the line facing Edge Hill to complete this force, indicating that the defense on the hill was beginning to falter. Their general direction was probably along the Susquehanna Road but possibly along Jenkintown. Once having approached Camp Hill and seeing the strength of the American position, they were forced to pull back. In any case, this move indicated that Morgan and the Marylanders had finally been forced off of Edge Hill.

In regard to Morgan's retreat, with the waves of British forces approaching Edge Hill and the exhaustion of the Continental troops, not to mention the attrition that had been taking place, the latter were simply overwhelmed. Morgan grudgingly pulled his men back in retreat first to Heston Farm at the base of Edgehill along Susquehanna Road, across from Kirk Farm. From here, Morgan and the Marylanders would make a tactical retreat back to Camp Hill, stopping and firing at the pursuing British forces. Though some of the British pursued the Americans past Tyson's Tavern and even to the base of the main Continental position, it became clear that the Americans had slipped safely out of Howe's reach, at least for a time. Except for the dead and wounded exacted by the British assault, the Americans had returned to Camp Hill, leaving Howe empty-handed. Morgan's men had fought well; even the British admitted this. In the words of Captain Johann Ewald of a British corps of Hessians:

²⁰ Peters, *The Battle of Whitemarsh*, 36.

²¹ John W. Jackson, *Whitemarsh 1777 Impregnable Stronghold* (Fort Washington: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1984), 45.

²² *Ibid.*

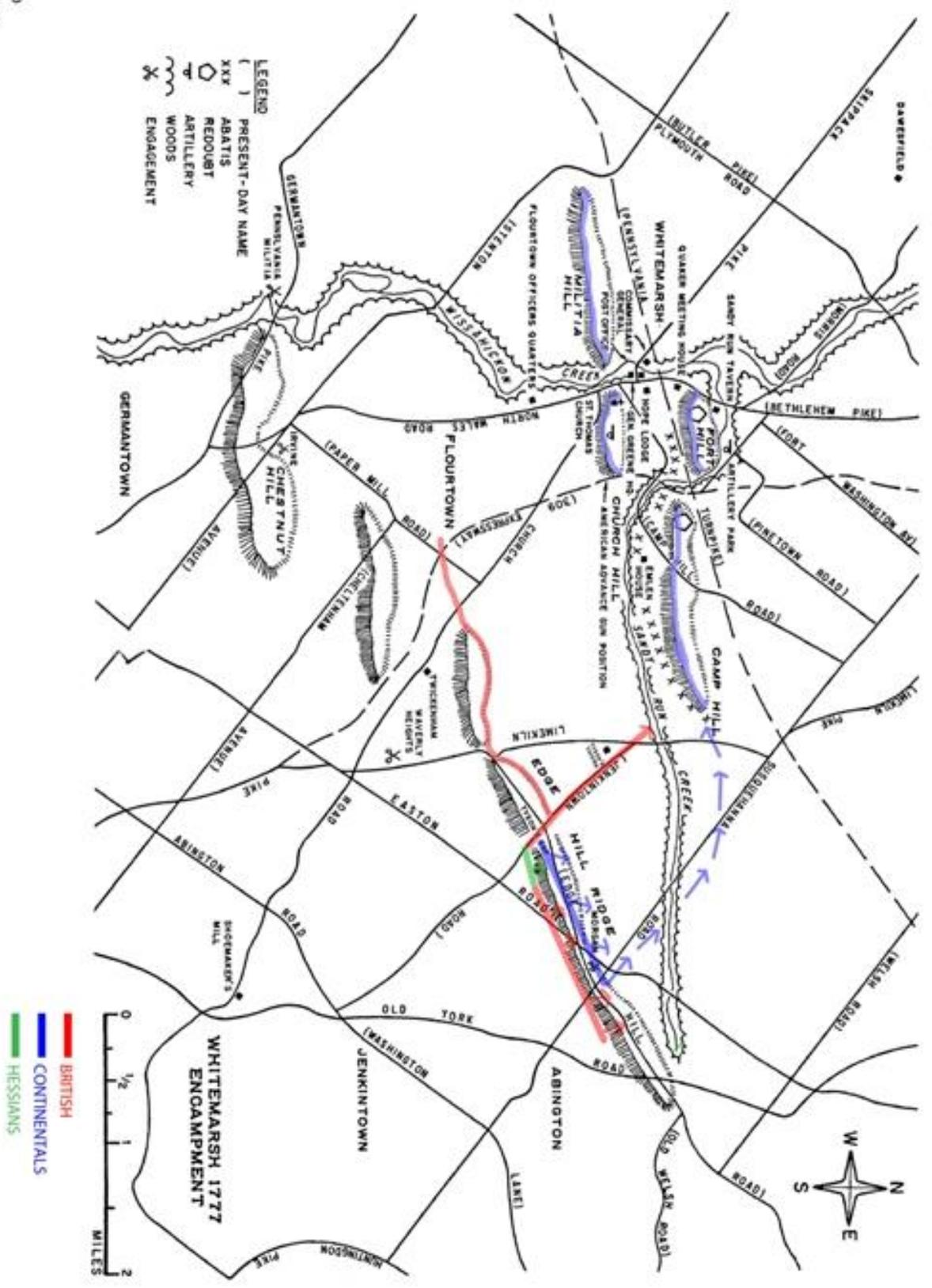
His [Morgan's] scheme could have succeeded if our center had not, by chance, lagged behind. But whether he would have wiped us out completely, that was the question! For the Corps was nearly a thousand men strong.

He added:

For a Jäger Corps which is well trained and knows how to fight advantageously dispersed Is comparable to a swarm of bees when they attack a spirited animal, which, tormented and bitten into madness, stung even harder from all sides, must finally succumb.

Proceed to the Fairhill Shopping Center past the Thomas Fitzwater home. Continue on Fernhill Rd. and immediately onto Roslyn Ave. Watch for wooden stairs along the left side of the street. (You can walk up between these residences to Abington Woods. Abington Woods is the only area left relatively undeveloped since the time of the battle. The area may also be accessed from below at the intersection of Kelly Ln. and Pleasant Ave.) Continue on Roslyn and left on Ardsley, right on Roberts and right onto Jenkintown Rd. Proceed past Tyson's Gap (Ardsley) and the Tyson's Tavern location, continuing past the Thomas Fitzwater Home just before Twining Road. (Jenkintown Road merges with Limekiln at the intersection of the two.) Continue across Twining and pull into the Fairway Shopping Center on your right.

December 7, 1777 Afternoon



Based on a map
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Stop I: Fairway Shopping Center (Refer to December 7 Afternoon Map)

From this site, one can consider the position that the Continental forces held atop Camp Hill across and above Limekiln Pike.

With the fighting now temporarily over, General Howe, with some subordinate officers, approached the American line at the base of Camp Hill crossing Sandy Run Creek just past the Thomas Fitzwater home. He had ridden to the spot in order to truly understand the American position. As he considered the height above, swarming with well dug in troops behind abatis as well as cannons, he was forced to make an important decision. Should he try to attack the Continental main line or not? Howe would set up camp on Edgehill that evening and wait for the morning to come before attempting any more probes at Washington's defense. That night, some of Morgan's brave men left their shelters and moved close to the British camp, close enough to hear them talking. Morgan's men soon quit spying and made their way back to their own hill.

That night, Howe became increasingly uncomfortable with his situation. He was worried about making a direct attack on Washington's main position. As Friedrich von Muenchhausen, one of Howe's subordinates recalled, Howe "found everywhere strong natural and manmade obstacles, which prevented any hope of success."²³ Washington's position was seemingly impregnable and unless he himself decided to come down from the height to fight, there was little Howe could do. In addition, the British food supply, only meant for a couple of days, was running out. His army was tired, longing for the comforts associated with Philadelphia. He was finished with traveling and camping. Unbeknownst to Washington and his troops, Howe was preparing to remove himself from the area.

Proceed to the North Penn VFW. Cross Limekiln Pike from the parking lot and proceed down Martin Lane to the cul-de-sac to turn around. As you drive on Martin, consider the perspective that Howe had as he contemplated Washington's position on Camp Hill above. Reverse your route through Tyson's Gap and proceed to North Penn VFW on your left just past Tyson Ave. Drive up to the flagpole in front of the building.

²³ Peters, *The Battle of Whitemarsh*, 9, quoting Captain Friedrich von Muenchhausen, *At General Howe's Side 1776-1778; The Diary of General William Howe's Aide De Camp, Captain Friedrich Von Muenchhausen*, trans. Ernest Kipping (Monmouth Beach, NJ: Philip Freneau Press, 1974).

Stop J: North Penn VFW

We now depart for a brief spell from the narrative to consider the four markers at the base of the flagpole before you. In 1855, a Mr. Russell Smith purchased a piece of land alongside the south face of Edge Hill, not far from this spot, where much of the fighting on December 7 had taken place. In 1861 his daughter, Mary, while playing in the woods, found a relic of the battle: a bayonet. After further investigation by the family, more artifacts were uncovered as well as the remains of four unidentified bodies. It was determined that these were Continental soldiers who died during the fighting and were buried, together, near where they died. Here they reposed for almost another hundred years. In 1953, however, Xanthus Smith, Russell Smith's grandson, allowed the bodies to be exhumed and moved to their present location. The re-interment took place on Memorial Day of the same year.

As one contemplates the final resting place of these four unknown soldiers, it is perhaps appropriate to consider the terrible toll of war, including the one under consideration. The devastation brought by the conflict to the area is in many ways incalculable. Both sides required supplies to carry on, but nothing compared to the depredations carried out by the British and Hessian forces while roaming the area. Personal property was despoiled, including crops and livestock on farms. In some cases, residents of the area were personally assaulted. Houses were burned with total disregard for the innocent. Families were displaced and forced out into the cold of winter with no provisions to sustain them. Hardest hit were the residences along Germantown Road. At war's end, the American government was submitted with various claims by people from these neighborhoods. The following is but a sampling: Julius Kerper – £1,750, Henry Cress – £1,275, Wigard Miller – £680, Matthias Bush – £640, John Biddis – £625, Christopher Yeakel – £290, William Ottinger – £138, and the list goes on.²⁴ Even the house of Matthias Bush was pillaged while General Howe made his temporary residence there (see biographies under Bush). Of course, no one can calculate the psychological trauma suffered by those who were victimized during this episode. For many, they would

²⁴ John J. McFarlane, *History of Early Chestnut Hill*, City History of Philadelphia (1927).

never get over the disruption as they simply sought to live quiet, productive lives. Many were not even necessarily supporters of the Patriot cause, yet they suffered like all the rest.

The greatest toll, of course, was the harvest which death took along the way. Although the total number of casualties is not known today and was probably unknown even at the time, it is estimated that the Continentals lost 42 killed at Waverly Heights and perhaps as many as 30–40 under Morgan’s and Gist’s commands, according to sources on both sides. Indeed, the men buried in front of you were among those fallen under the two commanders. The number of British and Hessian soldiers killed and wounded was around 100.²⁵ (Estimates run as high as 500 British wounded from the American side, but this number was probably exaggerated. It is also interesting to note that the number of deserters from the British and Hessian ranks was considerable, far outstripping the wounded and dead.) Most of the dead from these skirmishes were buried near where they died in unmarked graves, like those before you. How many people over the years have stepped over these final resting places, completely unaware of the significance of the spot as well as the tragedy and sacrifice which took place just steps away? Perhaps the best way to end this interlude in our narrative is to consider the following.

Unknown Soldiers

*The unidentified bodies that lie here on the hill,
Were sons, fathers, friends, and foe.
Each one that is counted solely as a number,
Is a painful and gruesome memory for many.
Each deserves more than a flag in the ground,
Or a passing thought of wonder and respect.
The war that raged, with blood and death;
For the freedom to call it home.
Bodies glistening with sweat,*

²⁵ Thomas J. McGuire, *The Philadelphia Campaign Germantown and the Roads to Valley Forge*, Vol. 2, (Mechanics, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 2007), 249–253.

*Passion pouring forth.
Death took more than
One thinks it should ever deserve.
The men buried here, with no high title
or command, beg for our attention.
To these, and all men who fought,
We give thanks at your anonymous tombs
For you've etched freedom in our bones.*

-Rebekah Dolton

Proceed to Shoemaker's Mill. Turn left onto Jenkintown Rd. and proceed to Washington Ln. (Jenkintown Rd. becomes Walnut along the way.) Turn right onto Washington Ln., left onto Township Line Rd. and right onto Old York Rd. Continue to Church Rd. Turn right onto Church Rd. and immediately left onto Shoemaker's Mill site.

Stop K: Shoemaker's Mill (Refer to December 8 Maps – Edge Hill and Retreat)

There are some historical markers at this location, including the location of the mill along with the events that occurred at this site on December 8 during the British retreat.

The next morning, Washington prepared the talented Morgan to make a direct attack on Howe's right and sent an additional 35 men to fight with the riflemen.²⁶ He also sent dragoons out into the valley to scout out more information about the British army. Foraging parties from the British camp made their usual rounds of plundering and in some cases destroying properties. That afternoon, Howe called a meeting with his brigade officers and relayed the news of his uneasiness. The British, who had already encountered the Americans again at Edge Hill, were pulled back in retreat, this time their path taking them truly away from Whitemarsh. Around 2:00 p.m., Cornwallis and

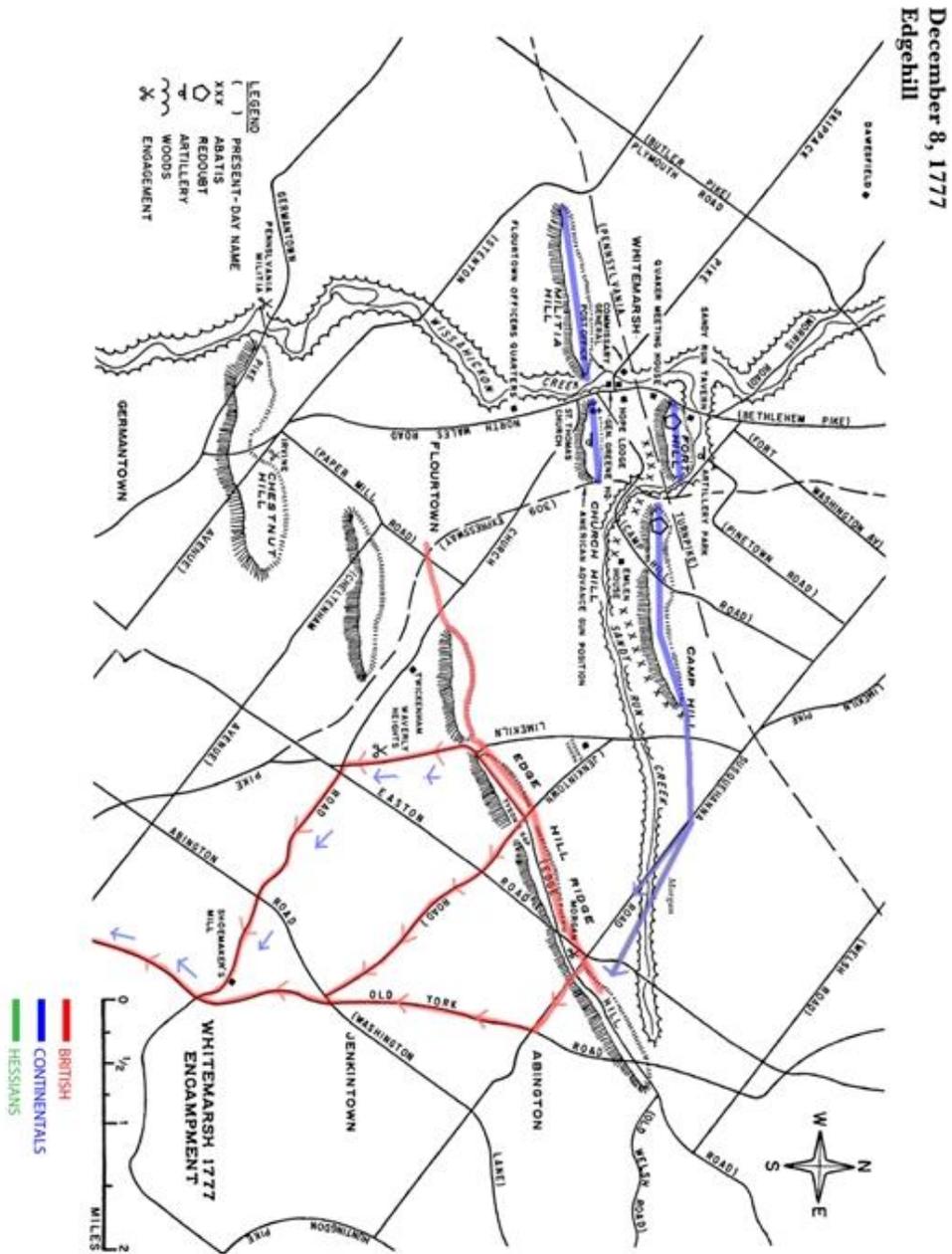
²⁶ Peters, *The Battle of Whitemarsh*, 39.

Knyphausen turned their backs on the Americans and started to march.²⁷ They were headed to Philadelphia, and would not turn back now that its comfort awaited them. As the British left, Howe had instructed them to leave campfires burning in order to confuse the Americans and distract them from their retreat. Yet the Continentals noticed what was happening, and one soldier rode to Camp Hill to inform Washington. The main column under Cornwallis and Knyphausen made their way from Susquehanna Road and Jenkintown Road onto York Road. Once Grey had gathered all of his men, about an hour after the others, he started marching on Limekiln Road and then onto Church Road. By this point, Washington knew that Howe's movement was, in fact, a retreat and he dispatched men under Major General John Kalb to take stabs at the British from behind. The Americans met up with Grey on Church Road, but Grey was able to push these Continentals back using his Light Infantry and Jägers. Grey then continued on to meet up with the main column by utilizing a smaller route of Church Road. Along the way and once Grey had caught up, the British army stopped at a place called Shoemaker's Mill. Here, Grey's Hessian column ruined the mill and stole its livestock and goods. To complete their path of destruction, the three columns burned the Rising Sun Tavern to the ground once they had reached the intersection with Germantown Road. This inn had been used as a resource by Washington, who had sent spies and supplies to and from its location to oppose the British. By this point, Washington had heard of the British movement, and he sent dragoons to snipe at their stragglers from afar. The bulk of the British army was approaching the safety of Philadelphia though, and the Americans soon backed down and returned to Whitemarsh. The Battle of Whitemarsh had come to a close with neither army suffering mass destruction or devastating defeat.

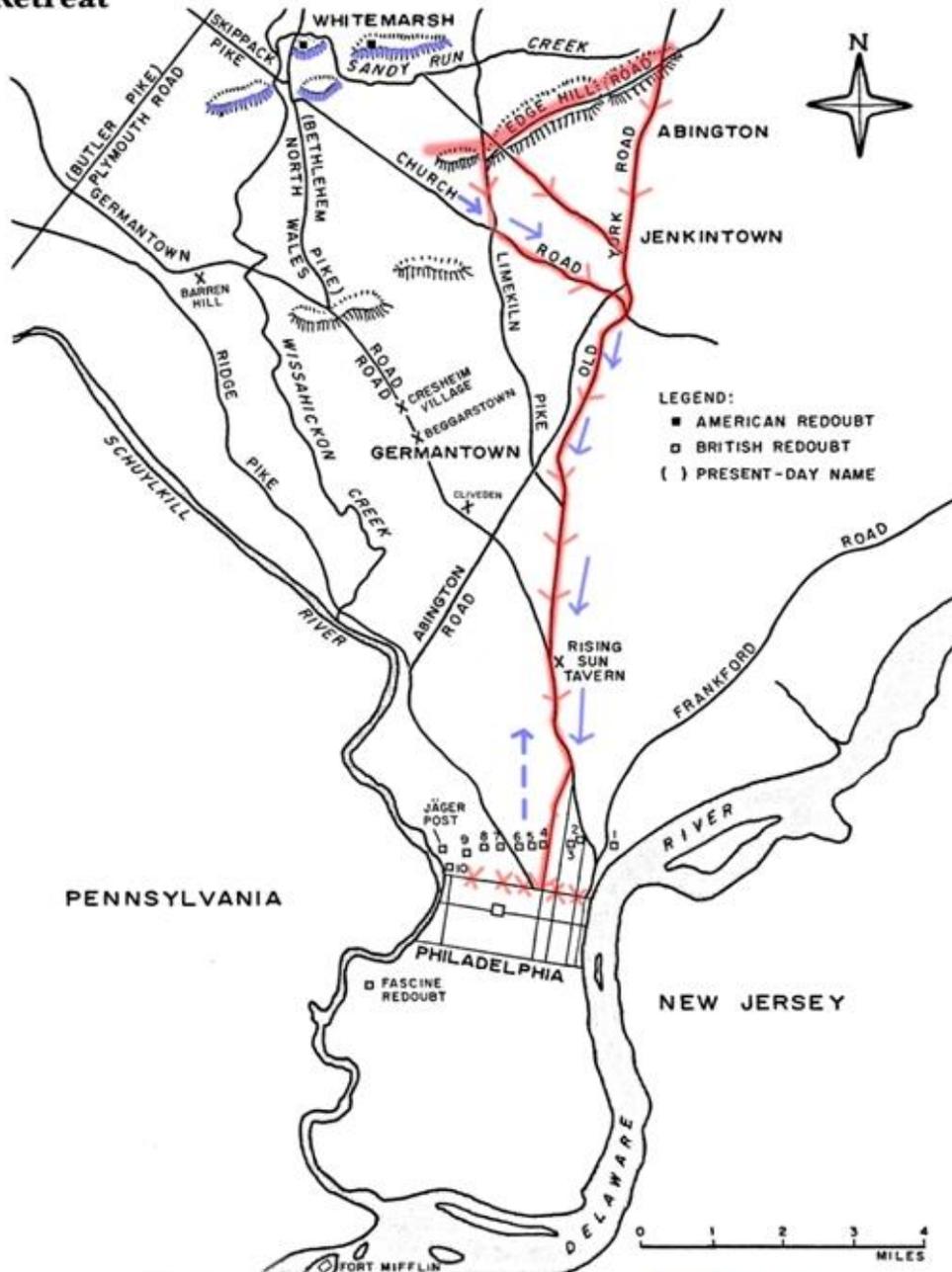
Washington was able to breathe a sigh of relief. He knew that the British would keep to the city for most of the winter and that the intense mind games he had been occupied with over the past couple of days were over for a time. His army had pulled through, featuring newfound heroes and bravery. They had proven themselves through the dutiful protection of their presence at Whitemarsh. Howe had escaped without falling for a trap. The Continentals were now in for a long, cold, winter.

²⁷ Ibid., 41.

Proceed to Fort Hill. To get there, turn left out of the Shoemaker's Mill site and proceed on Church Road to Bethlehem Pike. Turn right onto Bethlehem Pike and proceed to Fort Hill, your starting point. Proceed to the top of the hill.



December 8, 1777 Retreat



Based on a map
by John J. Mangan
with permission by the
Fort Washington Historical Society

- BRITISH
- CONTINENTALS
- HESSIANS

Stop L: Fort Hill

Following the British retreat to Philadelphia on the 8th, Washington made the decision to move away from Whitemarsh and eventually to Valley Forge. Although some wanted to move the army farther away from the British, Washington believed that staying in proximity to Philadelphia would afford some protection to the people of the area from the foraging expeditions of the British. At the same time, it would be far enough away to avoid a surprise attack from Howe, as remote as that possibility seemed by that point.

Having dispersed the sick and wounded to various “hospitals,” but leaving many sick and wounded at Whitemarsh, Washington, on December 11th, began the march toward Valley Forge.²⁸ Leading the column was the Pennsylvania Militia under General Potter. They proceeded up Skippack Pike to present day Butler Pike and swung to the left. This was the intersection to which the British had pursued the fleeing Continental Army following the defeat at Germantown. Once on Butler Pike, the column proceeded to Matson’s Ford on the Schuylkill River, near present day Conshohocken. There the soldiers put together a temporary bridge and crossed over. Not long after reaching the other side the militia ran into advanced units of a British column led by none other than General Cornwallis. The British column had crossed over the river near Philadelphia on a foraging expedition to the west of the city. A firefight ensued and the militia was driven back across the river, tearing up the temporary bridge as they fled. Washington was now stuck, or so it seemed. After a temporary decision to halt, the army eventually moved further up the river to Swede’s Ford near Norristown. Here, the army made its crossing unmolested and proceeded to the area of Gulph Mills, where it encamped for several days in exceedingly wintry weather before finally continuing on to Valley Forge on the 19th. It was at Gulph Mills on the 17th that Washington put forth the following general orders, emphasizing his conviction to remain in the vicinity to protect the citizens from the ravages of the enemy:

²⁸ Buck, “The Battle of Edge Hill,” 232.

The General ardently wishes it were now in his power to conduct the troops into the best winter quarters; but where are they to be found? Should we retire to the interior of the State, we would find it crowded with virtuous citizens, who, sacrificing their whole, have left Philadelphia and fled hither for protection; to their distress humanity forbids us to add. This is not all. We should leave a vast extent of country to be despoiled and ravaged by the enemy, from which they would draw vast supplies, and where many of our firm friends would be exposed to all the miseries of an insulting and wanton depredation. A train of evils might be enumerated, but these will suffice. These considerations make it necessary for the army to take such a position as will enable it most effectually to prevent distress, and give the most extensive security; and in that position, we must make ourselves the best shelter in our power.

These urgent reasons have determined the General to take post in the neighborhood of this camp, and influenced by them, he persuades himself that the officers and soldiers, with one heart and one mind, will resolve to surmount every difficulty with a fortitude and patience becoming their profession, and the sacred cause in which they are engaged.²⁹

Aftermath

The old saying, “nothing ventured, nothing gained” may aptly characterize the significance of the Battle of Red Bank. In the end, nothing really came out of Howe’s venture between December 4–8. Both sides remained relatively unscathed, since there had been no major engagement of the two armies. For Howe, the trip had not afforded his desire to direct one final blow against his adversary. The cost of life, able soldiers (now wounded) and provisions had gained him very little if anything. Although the general would get one last attempt to gain a victory before returning to England—against the Marquis de Lafayette at Barren Hill months later—an ultimate victory against Washington would never materialize. Probably one of the greatest costs of the expedition

²⁹ “The Overhanging Rock at Gulph Mills”, *Historic Valley Forge*, <http://www.ushistory.org/valleyforge/history/rock.html> (June 30, 1017).

had been the loyalty of many Tories and fence-sitters in the area. The depredations carried out by both British soldiers and Hessian mercenaries were extreme. Even the British command felt so as courts martial were carried out against the perpetrators. If anything, the foray toward Whitemarsh had solidified the Patriot cause in the region. The people would be glad to see both armies leave the region by early summer, but especially the now-hated English.

For Washington, even though he was not able to entice the British onto the field near the hills of Whitemarsh, offering the possibility of a major victory over them, he could breathe a great sigh of relief. Tactically opposing Howe in the field would have been a dice throw for Washington at best. Washington had never engaged his opponent in the open field and been victorious. Nevertheless, Washington reported to Henry Laurens, president of the Congress, the following:

*I sincerely wish that they had made an Attack; the Issue in all probability, from the disposition of our troops and the strong situation of our camp, would have been fortunate and happy. At the same time, I must add that reason, prudence, and every principle of policy, forbade us quitting our post to attack them. Nothing but Success would have justified the measure, and this could not be expected from their position.*³⁰

As the months at Valley Forge would prove, the Continental Army was probably still not ready for such a pitched battle. Nevertheless, Washington and his troops could take solace in the fact that they were still intact, having remained relatively unscathed. Washington would have his army to fight another day.

Finis

³⁰ Benson John Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-book of the Revolution: Or, Illustrations, by Pen and Pencil, of the History, Biography, Scenery, Relics, and Traditions of the War for Independence, Volume 1* (New York: Harper & Brothers: 1850), <http://books.google.com>.

Appendix 1: The Armies

Continental Army

The Continental Congress helped established an army on June 30, 1775. The size of the Continental Army would range from 10,000 to 30,000 men during the eight years of the American Revolution. General Richard Lee had originally objected to an army, believing that the Americans should primarily focus on guerilla warfare. He believed that if the Colonists were to train an army on the same playing field as the British, the Americans would not be on par with them. Washington disagreed, claiming that such tactics would cause chaos without structured commands. Washington along with the congress decided that the colonies would need to form a professional army: The Continental Army.



Continental Officers, Land of the Brave

A misconceived notion about the Continental Army is that they were the complete antithesis of the British. While it is true that they were perhaps not as well trained or experienced, the American forces in many ways resembled the British Army. Many Continental Army officers came from the aristocrats of Britain. Just like in the British army, Continental officers were expected to act in a respectable way, had higher earnings

than soldiers, and were to be obeyed. In addition, officers had more privileges and would not dwell or dine with soldiers. The colonists also borrowed several of the divisions in the army from the British. The Continental Army was able to be formed so quickly because its structure was largely borrowed from that of the British Army.³¹

A major transformation in the Continental Army occurred at the Valley Forge encampment. There, under the direction of Baron von Steuben, the Continental Army became more disciplined and resembled even more a European military like the British. Instances of punishment at Valley Forge indicate the severity of discipline in the army. These included 100 lashes with a whip and fourteen troops who came under the death sentence for misconduct or desertion, of which four were finally executed. Earlier, punishments had been more relaxed, but Congress would pass stricter regulations when military officers complained that weak punishments could not discipline troops. Steuben, during the Valley Forge encampment, instructed forces on how to march, follow orders and move into formations. Much of what Steuben taught the Americans was standard



Don Troiani, American Militia

procedure for well-trained armies like the British.³²

A large portion of the American troops who were fighting were not in the official Continental Army, but were rather militiamen: civilians serving in case of an emergency. Besides differences in training, there were also distinctions in wealth between the Continental Army and militia. Research has shown that soldiers in the Continental Army were not as wealthy as men in the militia. Indeed, those in the Continental Army earned regular wages, while the militia was not so much an occupation. Both types of soldiers had to give

³¹ Edward G. Gray and Jane Kamensky, editors, *The Oxford Handbook of the American Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015).

³² David G Martin, *The Philadelphia Campaign, June 1777–1778* (Da Capo Press, 1993).

up some of their liberties to join military service, but those in the Continental Army had more restrictions. Near the beginning of the war, Washington had been critical of the militia, but when they assisted him in victories at the Battles of Trenton and Princeton, he began to think otherwise. Despite the aid of the militia American leaders knew that the Continental Army was necessary to defeat the British.

Although the Continental Army had been modeled after the British, some differences remained with regard to the troops. Troops in the colonies had more freedom than British soldiers and could choose to serve limited terms. When the term of a soldier expired, he could either re-enlist or go back home to his family. Sometimes, soldiers could even negotiate prices for their terms with the states. In the British army, when soldiers served, they were in the army for life and could not as easily leave.

Often colonists wanted to avoid the masses of troops of the Continental Army. Many feared these soldiers when they went through their towns. States sometimes struggled to raise funds and supplies for the troops. Nevertheless, the Continental Army would become an enriching community for the soldiers. Although they faced many hardships and had to give up some of their liberties, the Continental Army would be a force that would change the course of history.



Don Troiani, Georgia Militia, History of American Wars

British Army

British politicians debated whether they should primarily use the British Army or the Navy to crush the American rebels. They chose the army, which consisted of nearly 50,000 troops. Over the several years of the Revolution, probably about 100,000 troops served for the British. Within the forces that initially arrived, about 40,000 were infantry and 10,000 consisted of cavalry and artillery.³³

The British soldiers came from diverse backgrounds. Throughout the British Army, there was a strong sense of ranking and titles associated with aristocracy. Officers could climb in rank through wealth and money, even if they were perhaps not the best qualified. Still, some military leaders came from the working class. Many of the common soldiers were from lower rungs of society; some were even convicted criminals. Soldiers came not only from Britain, but were also mercenaries from Ireland and German states such as Hesse-Cassel.

British officers' relations with their troops were somewhat less harsh than the typical stereotype. Rewards for actions occurred more frequently than punishments. Although the British Army employed very stringent punishments such as flogging, these were used only occasionally. British military commanders would often explain their commands and not simply issue them. In addition, officers often had sympathy for the soldiers and became like fathers to their troops.



British Soldiers of The American Revolution, Wikimedia Commons

³³ “Organization of the British Army in the American Revolution: Chapter 1 The British Army at the Outbreak of the Revolution: a General Survey,” American Revolution, The JDN Group, 2016, www.americanrevolution.org/britisharmyl.php, Accessed 27 May 2017.

This sentiment between British troops and officers stood in stark contrast to the opinions that most British officers had of the Continental forces. They viewed the Americans as very unprofessional and unorganized. When the Americans would avoid directly confronting the British forces, such as through guerrilla warfare tactics, the British viewed it as a weakness. Such low opinions of the Continental Army are not surprising, as the Americans in a sense were outsiders, not part of the long history of European warfare. The British thought so little of the Continental Army that when they surrendered, they would have preferred to surrender to the French Army rather than to the Continental forces.

During the war the British had to change their fighting tactics to cope with the Continental Army. Before the Battle of Bunker Hill, the British troops had mainly engaged in battles through full direct attacks. At Bunker Hill, the British learned that this strategy resulted in too many losses and was inefficient against the American tactics and landscape. Later, the British commanders would develop the skill of flanking maneuvers. These were movements of troops in such a way that would surprise the Continental forces. General Howe would often carry out battles with flanking maneuvers to minimize casualties, since he knew not many new soldiers from Britain would be available.

One topic concerning the British Army that has caused much debate is the question of why they lost. One problem for the British was that the officers overestimated support of the colonists. The British officers, at first, were counting on a lot of support within the colonies. However, many of the colonial authority structures that had existed during the war crumbled, since most colonists were against the British. Even support from Loyalists would dwindle as the British frequently destroyed the property of colonists.

Another key reason for the loss was the fact that the fighting was not in Europe. The British Army had difficulty concentrating on one region as America expanded over so much land. Furthermore, unlike European countries, America did not have an official capital that could be seized and thus end the war. Even though Howe captured Philadelphia, he had not taken over the Continental Army. An additional difficulty was bringing supplies from Britain to the colonies. As the British forces were often very mobile in the Americas, delivering their supplies to them was difficult. By the end,

France's involvement in the war would overwhelm the British and shift Britain's focus, as the war was no longer confined to the colonies.³⁴

Britain may have been diverted by global conflict with other colonies and powers like France and Spain, but they still remained in the war. However, near the end of the war the British shifted more of their attention to their Southern colonies. This was partly because they were motivated to preserve the Caribbean Islands, which provided a lot of money through the sugar plantations and the slave trade. As the years progressed, Britain would grow increasingly anxious, trying to juggle all of its colonies around the globe. Ultimately, the British Empire would collapse with the loss of the British army in the American Revolution.



British Officers, Totally History

British Army Units

The British army would typically have three lines of men, one of which was for backup. Each line would have about four brigades (consisting of a couple thousand troops) making a total line of about 8,000 troops. Each brigade usually consisted of four regiments. A British regiment (consisting of 500 troops) would be equally divided into about ten companies (of about 50 troops each), as seen below. Each of these companies would then be led by various officers. Regiments were divided according to the function

³⁴ Eric A. McCoy, "The Impact of Logistics on the British Defeat in the Revolutionary War," *Army Sustainment*, vol. 44, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 2012), pp. 25–27.

of the troops or the title of officers. In the British army, there was flexibility in the leadership. For instance, the major, colonel, and lieutenant-colonel could also have positions over larger groups of soldiers than a company. Some office duties, such as the brigadier general were temporary. There are several other military units in the British army such as battalions and divisions.

Division of Regiment

- Colonel's Company = commanded by Colonel, Captain-Lieutenant, and Ensign
- Lieutenant-Colonel's Company = commanded by Lieut.-Colonel, Lieut., and Ensign
- Major's Company = commanded by Major, Lieutenant, Ensign
- Grenadier Company = commanded by Captain and two Lieutenants
- Light Infantry Company = commanded by Captain and two Lieutenants
- Five Captain's Companies = commanded by Captain, Lieutenant, and Ensign.



British Troops, Journal of the American Revolution

The Hessians

Although the British had one of the most powerful militaries in the world at the time, they were in need of more troops. In terms of numbers, the British merely had about 50,000 troops; in comparison, France had 160,000 soldiers and Austria about 150,000 men. The Seven Years War and French and Indian War took a huge toll on the British army, as many lives and supplies were lost. The British had difficulty recruiting more troops from their own country. In desperation, Britain sought to hire soldiers from other countries. When Britain asked Empress Catherine of Russia to provide Russian soldiers, she refused. Eventually the British arranged to hire troops from some German states, including Hesse-Cassel.

The British and German leaders negotiated treaties in 1776 in which nearly 30,000 troops would be sent in the British Army from German states. The first German leader involved in such bargaining was Charles of Hesse-Cassel. These leaders would often send troops to the British merely to procure more money. On the British side, there was some opposition to these treaties, with claims that it was inhumane to sell humans. Yet, most British were of the same opinion as the British Prime Minister Sir Frederick North, who claimed that employing the Hessians was necessary to crush the American rebels.



Hessian Soldiers, Land of the Brave

One notable German dealer was the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel. He was able to provide about 16,000 troops for the British army in exchange for three million pounds. Part of the deal was formulated in such a way that he would receive even more money when German troops died.³⁵ Through the Landgrave, one can clearly see that the sale of Hessians soldiers was more of an exploitation of soldiers through which political leaders, such as the Landgrave, profited. There are even reports that some Hessians were forced against their will to join the British army.

³⁵ Even Benjamin Franklin disparaged the system that was used by the leader of Hesse-Kassel, so much so that he was delighted when he learned that Hessians troops had escaped.



John Trumbull, Capture of the Hessians at Trenton, Wikimedia Commons

Eventually, even among the German troops, princes of German states began to have difficulty recruiting qualified soldiers. These princes had already shipped off most of their best men, probably because they did not expect the war to last several years. Many of the German men who remained available were simply too old or unfit to fight. Even the German Jägers, more professionally disciplined soldiers, the British found not to be as well trained. This lack of skill and training may have contributed to the negative opinion that British held of Hessian troops that they were dirty and uncultivated.

The initial opinions that the Hessians and Americans had of each other were not so positive either. Coming from relatively poor German states, the Hessian soldiers found the Americans to be too consumed by their wealth. Hessian officers looked down upon American troops, who were merely an amalgam of various professions, such as bankers, tailors or bakers. On the other hand, Americans preconceived that the Hessians were savages. Over time, however, these opinions changed. Hoping to procure more troops, Congress and Washington encouraged attempts to try to bring Hessian troops over to the Continental army, as many were reluctant to fight for the British.³⁶

³⁶ It is interesting to note that due to the language barrier and cultural differences, many Hessian troops did not even know why the American Revolution was being fought.

One notable episode of the Revolutionary War involving the Hessian troops was the Battle of Trenton, at which George Washington defeated Hessian soldiers in a surprise attack. It was winter time and George Washington was aware that the term of service for many of the Continental soldiers expired on December 31. Thus, Washington decided to cross the Delaware River and attack the Hessian encampment on Christmas Day, when they were least expecting it. With many Hessians still sleepy and drunk, the Americans were able to seize a solid victory with minor losses and the Hessians surrendered.

Despite the fact that the Hessians did not help the British defeat the Americans, they contributed to the complicated dynamics of the American Revolution. German troops assisted the British in all the major battles since their arrival in the Americas. Some British would blame the Hessians for their loss of the war. At the end of the war, many Hessian soldiers would eventually settle in the surrounding regions in



Pamela Patrick White, Jaegers Advance at Thornbury Farm,
Journal of the American Revolution

Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland, while others would return back to their homeland.³⁷

³⁷ The information for this article is derived primarily from Reese, Lee Fleming Reese, "Hessians in the Revolutionary War," *Education*, vol. 113, no. 1 (Fall-Winter 1992), pp. 16–18, and Debra Brill, "The Hessians," *American History*, vol. 30, no. 5 (Nov/Dec 1995), pp. 20–25.

Appendix 2: Lydia Darragh

Lydia Darragh grew up in a Quaker family and came from Dublin, Ireland, but eventually moved with her family to America. After the Continental Army lost the Battles of Brandywine and Germantown, the British had taken over Philadelphia. Many of the city's residents fled to the surrounding region, but Lydia remained home with her family. Coincidentally, Lydia Darragh's house was in close proximity to Howe's headquarters in Philadelphia. She did not know that these circumstances would lead her to becoming a Patriot spy during the American Revolution.

The British military was known for occupying civilian homes, so it is not surprising that British officers would convene in Darragh's house to discuss their plans. With the assistance of her cousin, a British soldier, Lydia persuaded the British to let her remain in the house with her family. At one meeting, Lydia listened in on the discussion while hiding in a closet. She learned that the British, with a large force, were planning to attack Washington's forces at Red Bank on December 4th.

After some thought, Lydia resolved that she had to convey the news. Perhaps she decided to go because her son was in the army at the Red Bank encampment or perhaps because of her strong sense of patriotism. Either way, she demonstrated much courage as she traversed over six miles of snowy and rugged roads while risking her life. She had to remain vigilant, as the British closely monitored the civilians who remained in Philadelphia. Acquainted with such regulations, she used a pass to purchase flour so that she could leave and bring the message.



Anne Darragh, daughter of Lydia Darragh, who wrote down mother's story, City History Society of Philadelphia

On her way to the Rising Sun Tavern, she encountered Colonel Craig, an officer she knew, and conveyed the message to him³⁸. Craig most likely went to the Rising Sun Tavern and discussed the issue with Elias Boudinot, who was the “Intelligence of the Army”³⁹. Eventually the information would reach Washington. Many sources indicate that Washington had received important, confidential information concerning a British attack, indicating that this news had been previously unknown to him.

Through Lydia’s message, the American troops under Washington were able to prepare themselves for any imminent attack. If it were not for Lydia’s bravery, the Americans might have been crushed by the British troops. Instead, the Continentals were able to create a strong defensive force that even Howe could not breach. Eventually realizing how impenetrable the Whitemarsh encampment was, Howe retreated back to Philadelphia with his troops. Thus, one could argue that Lydia Darragh played a pivotal role in the survival of the American forces at the Battle of Whitemarsh.



Lydia Darragh’s House, US History.org

³⁸ There have been conflicts concerning how Lydia’s message was brought to Washington, which have caused some to question the truthfulness of Lydia’s story. The account narrated here comes primarily from Henry Darrach’s: *Lydia Darragh One of the Heroines of the Revolution*. According to Henry, the source of Elias Boudinot can actually confirm the accounts of Anne Darragh and others.

³⁹ It is apparent that there were other sources that also conveyed the message of the attack, as can be observed through the source of Elias. He mentions that the note from Lydia Darragh confirmed other informants. Elias Boudinot, “British Army of Chestnut Hill,” *Journal or Historical Recollections of American Events during the American Revolution*, vol. 50, no. 53 (1980).

Appendix 3: The Conway Cabal

In the years 1776 to 1777, the situation for the Continental forces was looking rather desperate. The British were occupying Philadelphia under General William Howe and General John Burgoyne was planning to cut New England off from the rest of the colonies. Washington only had negligible victories at Trenton and Philadelphia. The Americans appeared to be hopeless as the British were flaunting their world class military.

As a result, many military leaders and members of Congress grew skeptical of George Washington's capabilities. Several members of Congress, after the capture of Philadelphia, thought it might be better just to negotiate a deal to end the war. These Conservatives believed that victory against the British would be an impossible goal and that a peace treaty with Britain would be more advantageous than being completely overpowered. Others, however, were more indefatigable and wished to find a replacement for George Washington so that the Americans could defeat the British and declare independence.

Those who wanted to replace Washington, mainly New England critics, struggled to find someone more reputable than Washington. After the victory at the Battle of Saratoga, though, a new military hero of the name Horatio Gates emerged. Gate's major



John Trumbull, Surrender of General Burgoyne, Wikimedia Commons

victory thwarted Burgoyne's plans and brought a new optimism to the Americans. Washington's opponents seized the opportunity, supporting Horatio Gates as the new commander-in-chief.

Many individuals, especially in the military, expressed their enthusiasm for Gates in order to advance their own statuses and careers. One

such man was Thomas Conway (1733-1800), a brigadier general from France. Under

Washington's leadership, Conway was unable to rise through the ranks. He thus decided that he might have a better chance if Horatio Gates were the commander. He even wrote several letters to General Gates, in which he disparaged Washington's abilities. It was after Thomas Conway that the conspiracy received its name.

Attempts to remove Washington did not go far. Washington eventually discovered the letters that Conway had sent to Gates and exposed these criticisms to the public. Consequently, Conway and a few other military leaders who had participated in the conspiracy left the army. Conway returned to France. In the end, Washington was able to cooperate with Congress and respect for him increased as he did not misuse his power when dealing with his opponents.

Although the Conway Cabal was not successful, it is significant in how it sheds light on the times. It revealed that within the American government, during the American Revolution, there were factions and often much conflict. The Cabal demonstrated the severity of the crisis that the Americans were facing, almost on the verge of defeat. Together, these crises were the context in which the Battle of Red Bank took place.



Thomas Conway, Wikimedia Commons



Gilbert Stuart, Oil painting of Continental Army general Horatio Gates, The Athenaeum

Important Places

Emlen House



Lossing, Benjamin, J. Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution, Vol. II, Chapter IV. New York: Harper and Brother, Publishers, Franklin Square. 1859. Web.

During the encampment at Whitemarsh, the Emlen House played an important role as the location of Washington's headquarters. It was here that Washington intercepted the infamous "Conway Cabal," and the location served as the origin of over a hundred dispatches by the general during the time including correspondence with General Howe regarding possible prisoner exchanges. Directly following the Battle of Edgehill on December 7 various soldiers were treated for wounds in the house before being sent to other locations. Before Washington ever set foot in its rooms, the building was constructed before 1745, more than thirty years prior to the onset of the Philadelphia campaign. The Emlen House was the summer estate of the wealthy Philadelphia merchant, George Emlen who died the year previous to the encampment in 1776, and is located just north of Pennsylvania Avenue near the encampments on Camp Hill. The house has been privately owned for many years by the Piszek family and has kept its original touch despite undergoing various renovations and surrounding development.

Clifton House (Sandy Run Tavern)

The Clifton house is presently the home of the Fort Washington Historical Society. Yet during the days of the Whitemarsh encampment a building at this location housed Washington's

Quartermaster General, Stephen Moylan, as well as his companion Colonel Clement Biddle. Weary soldiers would cram themselves into the space, eager to warm their bodies from the deathly cold air outside. In the times surrounding the Revolutionary War, the Clifton House was a tavern called the Sandy Run Inn, as the Sandy Run Creek ran near to it. Unfortunately, the original building was destroyed. Rebuilt in 1801, the place still proved a convenient stop for travelers to stay the night. Again in 1857, Clifton House suffered ruin by a devastating fire, only to be rebuilt, this time adhering to the architectural style of the mid nineteenth century. After being taken over by Pennsylvania in 1928, the Historical Society of Fort Washington rescued the Clifton House from its hard times. Today the house is open to visitors to consider the deep histories and stories that were once part of its halls and the general area.

Cliveden House



Lossing, Benjamin, J. Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution, Vol. II, Chapter IV. New York: Harper and Brother, Publishers, Franklin Square. 1859. Web.

The Cliveden House, otherwise known as the Chew Mansion, was built by the attorney general of Pennsylvania, Benjamin Chew in the 1760s. The house, located on Germantown Avenue, was meant to be his country estate. However, due to his questionable support for the patriots at the onset of the revolution, Chew's political position was taken away and he was even imprisoned for a brief time. In October of 1777, it was British soldiers that occupied the Chew mansion. On the 4th of October, the Battle of Germantown struck and Cliveden became the epicenter. (The

Americans were trying to recapture Philadelphia, but the British would prove to be too strong in their defense.) About 100 British soldiers under the command of Lt. Colonel Thomas Musgrave retreated into the mansion after their position was overrun by Continental forces. Here Musgrave and his men put up a valiant resistance against earnest assaults to dislodge them. At one point in the fighting the Americans even used artillery to fire upon the house which did almost nothing to help their cause, since the walls were so thick. Musgrave and his men held forth until the Continentals were forced to retreat. The house was left heavily damaged. Two months later the British marched along Germantown Avenue again past the wreckage of the Chew mansion on their way to fight Washington at Red Bank. A year after this Benjamin Chew was permitted to return to his house and begin its repair. The mansion remained almost completely in the ownership of the Chews until 1972 when the house was transferred to the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Hope Lodge



Cousins, Frank and Phil M. Riley. "The Colonial Architecture of Philadelphia." Boston: Little, Brown, and Company. 1920. Web.

Hope Lodge is unique amongst many of the homes in Whitemarsh. Built around 1740, it has been perfectly preserved and kept up for nearly 300 years. In 1777 Hope Lodge was owned by a man named William West who supported the resistance of British taxes. West graciously allowed Washington's chief surgeon, John Cochran, and other physicians to stay at his house when they

arrived in November. Whether the house was used as a full-scale hospital at the time has been debated, but either way the house was opened to help the sick and injured soldiers during the early onslaught of brutal winter weather. After West's death, the house was purchased by Henry Hope, hence the name Hope Lodge. After a series of ownerships Hope Lodge was transferred over to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1957, and it remains as a museum and relic of colonial and revolutionary America.

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church



“The Little Church at White Marsh”

With permission by St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, Whitemarsh, Pa.

St. Thomas Episcopal Church first existed as a log edifice. It was built in 1698 by Edward Farmar, one of the early settlers in the area. This structure was burned and then replaced by a stone church in 1710. It then became known as the “The Little Church at White Marsh” for about 100 years. In 1740 George Whitefield, the famous English evangelist, preached here to about 2,000 people. Church Road, so-called because it served as a conduit between this location and Trinity Church Oxford in present day Northeast Philadelphia, in colonial days ran right up and over the hill in front of the church building. For a time, the two churches shared a pastor. Not only did the location serve as an advance post for Washington's troops during the Whitemarsh encampment, it also saw action weeks earlier on October 4. Following the American loss and retreat at the Battle of Germantown the British trailed in pursuit of the Americans who were

headed in the direction of Skippack Pike. The British, under the command of William Howe, took control of the church and hill and fired cannon balls down onto the fleeing continentals. For another two months “The Little Church at White Marsh” witnessed the numerous events and trials that plagued the Americans during their encampment at Whitemarsh. During the war the church was largely abandoned and no records of the time are extant. In 1818 another church building was erected followed by the present structure in the 1850s. The blue poles in the graveyard across from the main entrance mark the original outlay of the early church.

Beggarstown School



“Beggarstown School in Northwestern Philadelphia.” On NRHP. Wikimedia Commons.

The Beggarstown School was built on the Germantown Road around 1740. This colonial style schoolhouse is one of the few buildings around today that was standing during the various British marches up and down this early highway. For almost three hundred years it has preserved its style and original flavor, despite having a couple of slight alterations. A place where children once learned to read, write and do arithmetic, the school is owned by the St. Michael's Evangelical Lutheran Church. During the Battle of Whitemarsh the British troops wreaked havoc along Germantown Road, all throughout Chestnut Hill, Beggarstown, and Cresheim Village. They set fire to buildings and stole from the townspeople. The Beggarstown school survived these burnings and still stands today.

Twickenham

The remnants of an estate called Twickenham are located just north of Church Road where Grey and his soldiers once fought the Continentals during the Battle at Edge Hill. In early colonial days Twickenham was a stone farmhouse that served as the summer home for Thomas Wharton, Jr., a Philadelphia merchant and known supporter of the revolution. Wharton was first president of the Pennsylvania Executive Council. The name given to the place by locals was “The Governor’s Mansion” and Wharton was known for entertaining guests at the house. When the British soldiers struck Edgehill on December 7, 1777, Grey’s troops fought against the Continentals all throughout the Wharton property. Thomas Wharton died only a year later in 1778. When the property was purchased by Robert Scott years later, the house and land underwent many transformations and updates. Today, only later wings that were added remain of the mansion. The original building was torn down in the 1950s. Today there isn’t much left of the original building that stood in December of 1777, but its location is still obvious.

Thomas Fitzwater House

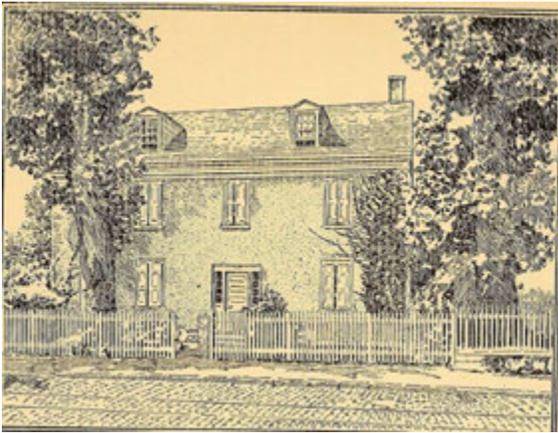


Smith, Sabra. “Thomas Fitzwater House”, *My Time Machine - Buildings, Places, People and Things*. 24 June, 2009. Web. 14 July, 2017.

The Thomas Fitzwater House, located on Limekiln Pike in Upper Dublin, was one of the first houses built in Pennsylvania after William Penn arrived in 1682. It was first the property of Thomas Fitzwater who was on the ship with Penn when he sailed to America. The limestone

deposits and subsequent kilns that were so common in the area led to the naming of “Limekiln Pike”, the first road leading out from the underdeveloped area and into Philadelphia. Limestone that was quarried and processed in the area was shipped to the port of Philadelphia and some was used to build Independence Hall. This house, expanded from its original size., was present when the British and American armies clashed at Edgehill and was certainly a landmark that soldiers passed during the American retreat to Camp Hill. Although previously under threat of demolition, today, the property has been preserved and is owned by the Lulu Country Club.

Cresheim Village and Beggarstown



Jenkins, Charles Francis. 1865-1951 Site and Relic Society of Germantown (Philadelphia, Pa.), The guidebook to historic Germantown- Wikimedia commons.

The area that is presently known as Mount Airy was once part of the larger Germantown Village. The original Germantown was founded 1683 and given importance by Francis Daniel Pastorius, a Lutheran Pietist and one of several who first protested slavery in America. The area was home to quite a lot of Germans, hence the name. Both Dunker and Lutheran churches were prominent in the area. Beggarstown, or Bettelhausen, was comprised of the “sidelands” of Germantown proper. The community owes its name to the first person to build a house in the sidelands - John Pettikoffer, a beggar. Contrary to its name, the people of Beggarstown were said to be economically stable during and after the Revolutionary War. When it came time for the Philadelphia Campaign, Cresheim Village and Beggarstown were frequent stops on the map for

the British. In the early days of their occupation of Philadelphia, Howe stationed troops here and around Germantown to scout out for Washington's men. In October, the Battle of Germantown took over these streets and houses. Then, in December, the British marched once again through Beggarstown and Cresheim Village on their way to Whitemarsh. The communities suffered extensive depredations by the British and Hessians during their retreat from Chestnut Hill on the night of December 6 and 7, 1777. In the nineteenth century, the word "Franklinville" circled around the town as an alternate name for the village. However, the name "Beggarstown" survived until the community was eclipsed by the ever-expanding City of Philadelphia. What was Beggarstown existed roughly between Upsal Street and Gorgas Lane along the Germantown Road. The Village of Cresheim was further up toward Chestnut Hill toward Cresheim Creek. An old edifice at the corner of Germantown and Gowen is purported to be of pre-Revolutionary vintage. Cresheim Village takes its name from the area of Germany from which the first settlers emigrated.

Chestnut Hill



"Glen Fern" along the Wissahickon Creek below Chestnut Hill – located along Livezey Lane in Philadelphia. Cousins, Frank and Phil M. Riley. "The Colonial Architecture of Philadelphia." Boston: Little, Brown, & Company. 1920. Web

Bordering on the Wissahickon Creek at its base, Chestnut Hill is the area directly north west of Beggarstown and Cresheim Village on Germantown Avenue. Similarly, to those two areas,

Chestnut Hill was predominantly German during the colonial years of America. To add to the German Heritage, parts of Chestnut Hill and Germantown were made up of Hollanders and Swiss Mennonites previously settled in Holland, as well as French Huguenots who had fled the cancellation of the Edict of Nantes. During the Battle of Whitemarsh, Chestnut Hill fell into Howe's hands on December 5th and 6th. Howe himself took up headquarters in the house of Mathias Bush, an important Jewish businessman, landowner and supporter of the revolution. The Bush house once stood at the intersection of Germantown Avenue and Bethlehem Pike. The rest of the British troops were positioned around Chestnut Hill until they departed late on the 6th. While many buildings were destroyed when the British burned the streets that night, Chestnut Hill has kept up a unique old fashioned taste evident in the cobblestones on Germantown Avenue and the colonial style homes.

Shoemaker Mill



Smith, Xanthus Russell (1839-1929). Farmstead at Shoemakertown [Montgomery County], 1876
Pencil on paper, 8 x 12 in. (The Schwarz Gallery, Philadelphia Collection LXIV, Jan. 1999)

In 1746, Dorothy Penrose Shoemaker, one of the descendants of the first inhabitants of the area, began and operated a corn-grist mill along with Richard Mather and John Tyson. The mill was located at the intersection of Church Road and York Road along the Tookany Creek, and was standing during the Battle of Edgehill. On December 8th, 1777, the British began their retreat from Whitemarsh as Howe gradually withdrew his troops from their positions. Once the army was pulled together they made a stop at Shoemaker's Mill where a group of Hessians destroyed

and plundered the mill of its livestock and goods. In 1847, the place was repaired and purchased by Charles Bolster, whose family ran the mill until 1923. Unfortunately, Shoemaker's mill was destroyed for good in 1927. The Richard Wall house, which stands at the location, is one of the oldest homes still existence in the region. It was built by the one bearings its name in 1683. Wall was an early Quaker in the area and in 1688 the second reading of Pastorius' proclamation against slavery was read in the house.

Dawsefield



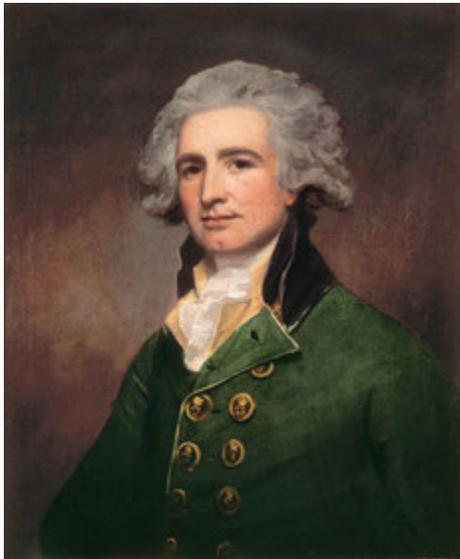
Lewis, Edmund Darch. (American, 1835–1910) Dawesfield [Whitpain Township, Montgomery County], 1855 Watercolor on paper, 11 x 15 in. (The Schwarz Gallery, Philadelphia Collection XLVII, Nov. 1991)

In 1728, Abraham Dawes built a 300-acre colonial estate that would one day become Washington's headquarters. Dawesfield lies along Lewis Lane in Whitpain Township, close to present day Ambler, and it was here that the Continental troops camped from October 21 through November 2, 1777 just prior to their move to Whitmarsh. After the Battle of Germantown on October 4th, the Americans had been journeying throughout Montgomery Township, looking for a place to camp. It wasn't until they found Whitpain that they settled for a time. A number of events occurred at Dawesfield during the Whitpain encampment, including the court-martial of General "Mad Anthony" Wayne dealing with the "Paoli Massacre." He was exonerated. A council of war was also held at this location to determine the army's next course of action. During

this encampment, Dawesfield was owned by a man named James Morris. Not only did Washington sleep here, but so did Lafayette. The house can still be clearly seen from Lewis Lane.

Biographies of Military Leaders

Abercromby, Robert (1740–1828) was born in Clackmannanshire, Scotland into a prominent aristocratic family. He entered the military as a young man and served during



Robert Abercromby, Wikimedia Commons

both the French and Indian War and American War for Independence. During this time, he rose in rank achieving Lt. Colonel of the 37th Regiment of Foot. During the War for Independence he not only participated in the skirmishes around Whitemarsh but also most of the major engagements. After the war, he was made Colonel of the 75th Highland Regiment and served in India in the 1790s during England's fighting with France. There, he was made Governor of Bombay and eventually Commander in Chief of the British Army in

India. Upon returning to Great Britain in 1797 due to failing eyesight, then Governor General of India, Sir John Shore, commended him “for his zeal, excessive good nature and disregard for material gain.”⁴⁰ He entered Parliament for a time. In 1801, he was made Governor of Edinburgh Castle which he held till his death and in 1802 was elevated to the office of general in the British Army. Abercromby held distinction as Knight of the Bath.

⁴⁰ R. G. Thorne, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, Volume 1, 179–1720* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1986), p. 17.

Bush, Mathias (1722–1790) was a prominent member of the colonial Jewish community in Philadelphia during the time of the American Revolution. Born in Prague, Bohemia, he emigrated to New York in 1740 and eventually made his way to Philadelphia and then Germantown. Mathias eventually became naturalized as a citizen. Mathias was a merchant, shipowner and owned tracts of land in the region as well as in Virginia. He is noted as one of the signatories of the Philadelphia Merchants Non-Importation Act, 8 in response to the Stamp Act in 1765. Some of Mathias' children were active in the Continental Army including Lewis Bush who was killed at Brandywine and Solomon Bush who was severely wounded in the thigh at the same battle. Solomon was brought to his father's home in Chestnut Hill where he convalesced for some time. When General Howe took over the Bush house, the British soldiers threatened to run him through with a bayonet. This caused his stepmother so much anxiety that she miscarried the child she was carrying. Solomon was taken prisoner and eventually treated by an English physician and recovered.

André, John (1750–1780), born in London, joined the British Army in 1771 and by 1779, was promoted to major and adjutant general. He was in close correspondence with Benedict Arnold, and together they schemed to gain control of West Point, New York. On multiple occasions, Arnold and André exchanged key information and negotiated the surrender of West Point. When André was returning to the British lines he was halted by the New York militia, who discovered a map of West Point in André's possession. He was then questioned and found out to be a spy. Washington ordered his execution, which took place by hanging on October 2, 1780.



John André in the London Tower,
Wikimedia Commons



John Singleton Copley, Charles Cornwallis – First

uprisings and maintained a perfect record. He later became viceroy and commander-in-chief of Ireland and was a signer of the Treaty of Amiens between France and England in 1802.

Cornwallis, Charles (1738–1805) began his military career at the age of eighteen. Also, politically engaged, he was elected to the House of Commons and later the House of Lords, where he defended the American colonies until rumors of American rebellion began to arise. He had an extremely successful military career with many victories in the Americas. However, he was always subordinate to men he disliked, including William Howe. As others blamed him for the lost war, he decided to serve as the Governor General of India. While governing India, he introduced many reforms, subdued



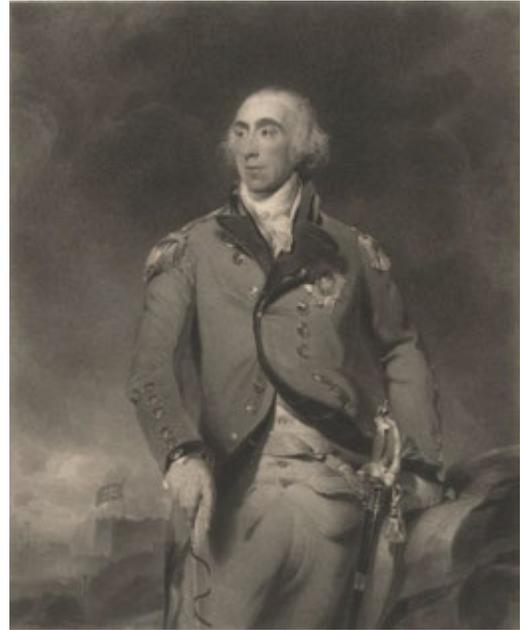
Charles Wilson Peale, [Nathanael Greene](#),

Wikimedia Commons

Greene, Nathanael (1742–1786) was a major general during the American Revolution. He had a military reputation that trailed only that of George Washington. Ironically, he was born into a pacifist Quaker family. He is known for his involvement and command in the Southern Campaigns in the Carolinas, where he pushed Cornwallis up to Virginia. He was also involved in the

Philadelphia Campaign, including the Battles of Brandywine, Germantown and Monmouth.

Grey, Charles (1729–1807) was born in London and, at the age of nineteen, was promoted to lieutenant colonel. He traveled to America with William Howe in 1776 and was made a major general. After his performance in the Battle of Paoli, He was widely known as “No- Flint Grey.” He became lieutenant general in 1782, four years after returning to England. At the end of his career, he served in the West Indies in the French Revolutionary Wars before retiring in 1801. That same year, he was named a baron and in 1806, was named Viscount Howick and Earl Grey. He died the next year at the age of 78.



Joseph Collyer the Younger, Charles Grey, 1st Earl Grey, Wikimedia Commons



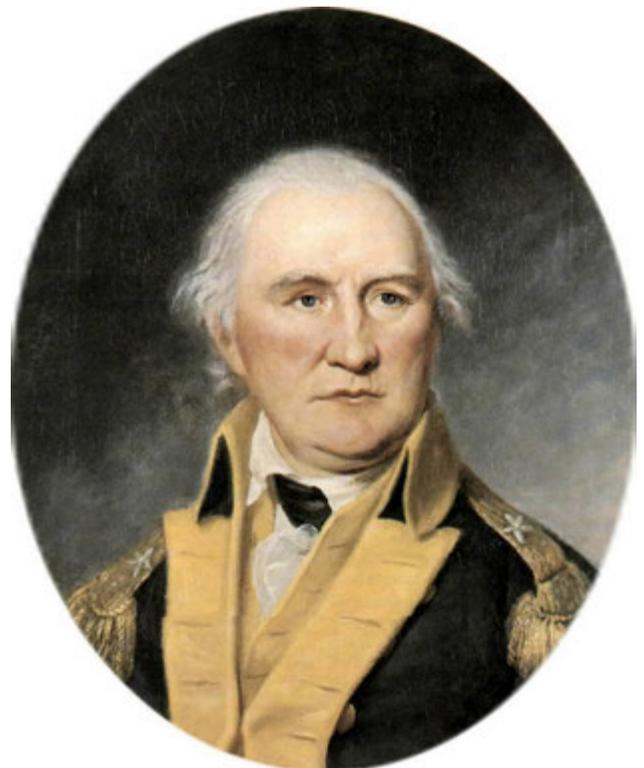
Henry Bryan Hall, William Howe, Wikimedia Commons

Howe, William (1729–1814) was born into a family with connections to the crown. At the age of seventeen, he followed his brothers in joining the military. With his skill and social connections, he steadily rose through the ranks, becoming a lieutenant, captain, colonel and eventually major general. Besides his

participation in the Battle of Whitemarsh, he is also known for his involvement in the French and Indian War, Seven Years War and other battles in the American War for Independence. In addition to serving in the military, he also was a part of the political scene in Britain. He served as a representative in Parliament who fought against the Intolerable Acts and was the governor of the Isle of Wight.

Irvine, James (1735–1819) was born on August 4, 1735, in Philadelphia, the son of Irish immigrants. He worked as a hatter before joining the military in 1760. During his military career, he served in the French and Indian War as a captain. He was promoted to colonel in 1776, but later resigned, since he had not been assigned as general. Months later, he returned as a brigadier general in the Pennsylvania militia. In the Battle of Whitemarsh, he lost three fingers and suffered neck injuries. Also involved in politics, he served as the vice-president of Pennsylvania, and served on the Pennsylvania General Assembly, the State Senate and the Board of Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania. After a prolonged sickness, he died in Philadelphia.

Morgan, Daniel (1735–1802), the grandson of Welsh immigrants, was known for being abrasive and tough. Reports claim that he knocked out a lieutenant and had been involved in many bar fights. He was also able to handle the roughest conditions as he was a prisoner of war in the Invasion of Canada and survived a bullet through the back of his neck. As an excellent rifleman and an expert in Indian fighting tactics, he was assigned to be captain of a rifle company in Pennsylvania. In addition to the Battle of Whitemarsh, he participated in the Battle of



Charles Wilson Peale, Daniel Morgan,
Wikimedia Commons

Saratoga and the Battle at Cowpens. After ending his military career, he served in the House of Representatives.

Potter, James (1729–1789), born in Ireland, later moved with his family to Delaware and Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. He entered the militia and became lieutenant at the age of twenty-five. During the French and Indian War, he became a captain and then a lieutenant colonel. He led troops at the Battles of Trenton, Germantown, Princeton and Brandywine. In addition to his military service, Potter engaged in a political career in Pennsylvania. In 1780, he was elected to Pennsylvania's Supreme Executive Council and won its vice-presidency in 1781, a post he held for one term. During this time, he also served as a trustee of the University of the State of Pennsylvania, now the University of Pennsylvania. Later, he served as deputy surveyor for Pennsylvania in Northumberland County until he died as a result of a construction injury.

Sherman, Isaac (1753–1819), from Connecticut, was the son of Roger Sherman, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Originally, he had intended to enter the mercantile business but had to join the Continental forces at the beginning of the war. He eventually rose to the position of command of a regiment. Sherman was most remembered for his leadership during the march to Princeton. He was very disciplined and meticulous with the drills and marching of his soldiers. After his service in the military, he joined Congress to help oversee western territory.



Tenney, American Revolutionary War General John Sullivan, Wikimedia Commons

Sullivan, John (1740–1795) was involved in both the War for Independence and American politics. As a major general of the Continental Army, he is most famous for his victories against the Iroquois and Tories living in New York. He served as the governor of New Hampshire for some time and was a representative in the Continental Congress. Later he would oversee the New Hampshire's ratification of the Constitution and would serve as a U.S. district judge.



The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Wilhelm von Knyphausen, The New York Public Library Digital Collections

Von Knyphausen, Wilhelm (1716–1800) was born in what would become modern day Germany. After the remarriage of his mother to his uncle, the family moved to Berlin, where he was educated. He entered the Prussian military in 1734 and steadily rose through its ranks. He received full command over the Hessian auxiliaries in 1777 and later took the place of Henry Clinton, who had been in charge of New York City. Knyphausen played an essential role in the Battles of Brandywine, Germantown, Monmouth and many others. He was known to be a fair and excellent general who continued his career into old age despite various health problems.

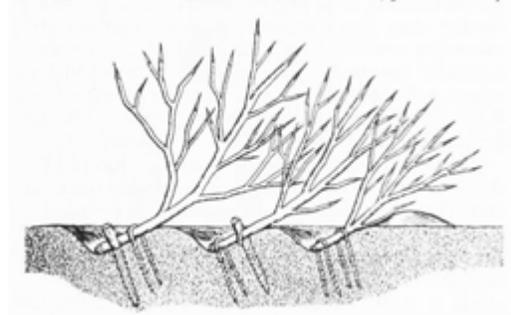
Washington, George (1732–1799) grew up in a middle-class planter family in Virginia. Due to the deaths of his father and brother, Washington, at age twenty-two, became head of Mount Vernon, one of the largest estates in Virginia. Shortly thereafter, he was appointed to the rank of major in the Virginia militia and would later fight in the French and Indian War. In 1775, he was designated the commander-in-chief of the entire Continental Army, partly because of his strong patriotism and charisma. His ability to hold the American troops together and defeat the British during the American Revolution made him a national hero. As a result, in 1787, he was unanimously elected as the first President of the United States of America. He died at the age of 67 at his estate, Mount Vernon.



Gilbert Stuart, Portrait of George Washington
Wikimedia Commons

Military Terms

Abatis – A mechanism of defense to create obstacles out of tree limbs. It could block troop movement and was employed often due to many wooded areas. However, it could be easily burned down and would eventually be replaced by metal wiring.



Abatis, Wikimedia Commons

Adjutant-general – A high ranking officer; only one served the entire army. The most notable officer to hold this position in the American Revolution was Horatio Gates.

Artillery – Associated with larger weapons projected into the air, such as missiles. During the American Revolution, this would mainly consist of canons, as well as mortars and howitzers.

Battalion – A unit of soldiers normally made up of somewhere between 300 to 800 troops. Often equated with the regiment at the time. A battalion would consist of several companies.

Battery – Army unit that is about the same size as a company, or about 100 to 300 soldiers, but oversees artillery; can also refer to a group of artillery weapons.

Barricade – General term for any type of fortification to block troop movement.

Bayonet – Additional blade attached to the open end of a rifle. This makes the muskets or rifles like spears used by infantry, especially for close-up fighting.

Brigade – Unit in an army that consists of a couple thousand soldiers. Made up of several battalions and significantly larger than a regiment.

Brigade general – Military leader, who is in charge a brigade; Congress appointed eight of them, including Nathanael Greene and John Sullivan.

Cabal – Represents the plots of a particular group involved in some sort of conspiracy; secret political group. This is most notable in the Conway Cabal.

Campaign – A collective group of military actions to achieve a single goal. For instance, the Philadelphia Campaign represents all of the operations involved in the British attempt to seize the city of Philadelphia.

Canon – Mobile artillery used in the war; different kinds had different purposes. Some were employed to rip through infantry lines, while others destroyed fortifications and buildings.



Canon During American Revolution, Wikimedia Commons

Captain – A military leader in charge of a company of soldiers, equivalent to several hundred troops.

Cavalry – Members of an army on horseback. Washington had the Continental Army form a group of a couple thousand of these that would be called the Corps of Continental Light Dragoons. These included cavalry scouts, who would try to observe and conjecture enemy troop movement.

Chasseur – A member of infantry or light cavalry that was able to swiftly maneuver and attack associated with regiments of French soldiers.

Colonel – Army officer between the position of lieutenant colonel and brigadier general—typically head of an entire regiment.

Commander-in-chief – Head of the entire American army, the highest position in the military. Congress elected George Washington to this position.

Company – Military unit subdivided into several platoons, typically consisting of about 50 to 100 soldiers.

Continental Army – Name for the army of the Thirteen Colonies that were fighting for independence against the British.

Corp – General term for any group or division of an army, unit of the army.

Corporal – Lower ranking officer between a sergeant and private.

Detachment – Division of troops that are sent on a particular mission.

Dragoon – Any member of the army, often infantry, also acquainted with riding horses; notable dragoons in the American Revolution were the 1st Continental Light Dragoons. Fewer in the army than infantry, but better trained.

Embrasure – Openings in buildings through which shots could be fired, such as canon or bullets; found in military forts.

Entrenchment – Natural fortification of digging up ground as a defense.

Field officer – Officer remaining in camp to make sure that no baggage was left behind and the camp was secure.

Flank – One particular side, left or right, of a group of soldiers.

Flanking maneuver – A military tactic in which troops are repositioned around the flank of enemy forces. These repositioned troops would then be in a more advantageous position. Often used by General William Howe.

General – A very high ranking officer in the army. During the War, the Continental Congress would appoint them. At the time, they only consisted of brigadier and major generals, except for George Washington.

Grenadier – Particularly well-trained soldiers within the infantry. Trained for direct attacks with grenades and assailed the enemy after sieges.

Hessians – Soldiers hired by the British Army from the German region of Hesse-Kassel. The British government most likely hired soldiers in this fashion because it was easier to borrow money to pay for soldiers than to hire and recruit their own men.

Howitzer – A larger weapon intended to send out projectiles; artillery combination of cannon and mortar.

Infantry – Soldiers who marched on foot, as opposed to cavalry. Most common type of soldier in the armies.

Jägers – Name for German foot soldier, who were skilled in carrying out quick skirmishes. In German, the word can be translated as “hunter.”



Howitzer, Visiting Yorktown

Light infantry – Group of soldiers that carried fewer supplies and armory, such as canons, for quick attacks and skirmishes. The Continental Army often would send men from the normal regiments to work in these groups. In the German army, these were known as Jägers.

Lieutenant – Officer of lower rank in the military, who would sometimes lead a group of soldiers if other officers of higher rank were not present.

Loyalist – Name for those American Colonists who did not endorse the ideals of independence for the colonies, but rather supported Britain. These colonists were often of great aid to the British army, some even working as spies. After the war, the Loyalists faced persecution and many fled.

Major general – Higher rank officer in charge of several thousand troops, who was normally higher than a brigadier general; only four in the Continental Army.



Mortar, National Park Service

Mercenary – Soldiers who would fight in foreign lands. These troops would not be citizens of the countries fighting but were often there for the purposes of gaining money. The British employed German troops, known as Hessians, in this way.

Militia – Less-trained part of armies that consists of civilians who are quickly called upon in case of an emergency. The American forces consisted primarily of these types of troops. Earlier, such troops had been employed against Native American raids.

Mortar – Artillery that exploded at a very high angle and would often explode in the air. Different kinds were used on land and sea. These always had a fixed elevation angle but used the charge to determine where to fire at a particular target.

Musket – Weapon held from the shoulder that was used frequently during this time. The bullet would be placed at the end of the muzzle, the part where propellant leaves the firearm.



Muskets from Valley Forge National Historic Park, National Park Service

Musketeers – Soldiers who were skilled in using muskets as firearms.

Outpost – Groups of soldiers sent away from the main forces in order to prepare for any sudden assault.

Patriots – Colonists during the American Revolution who supported the independence of the colonies from Britain. The other main faction during the time included the Loyalists.

Picket – Group of soldiers sent out for the purpose of observing enemy movement.

Pontoon – Substance that can float and serve as a temporary bridge. Troops with heavy artillery would have used this to cross the several creeks in the region surrounding the Battle of Whitemarsh.

Private – Lowest rank in the military that a soldier can obtain; did not carry any insignia or ribbon that higher ranking officers would normally wear.

Quartermaster general – Person in an army in charge of providing lodging and equipment for soldiers.



Bowles and Carver, Military Camp During American Revolution, Second Virginia.Wordpress

Ranger – Type of soldier that would move between different locations where main troops were positioned.

Rank – General term for different levels of leadership in the army, ranging from Private to General or Commander-in-Chief.

Rearguard – Those forces positioned at the tail of the army to defend the army when retreating.

Reconnoiter – Trying to figure out the position or movement of enemy troops. This was vital for the armies as troops were constantly moving into new tactical positions.

Redoubt – A temporary fortification or structure for the purpose of defense.

Regiment – A unit of soldiers consisting of about 500 troops; often equated with a brigade.

Regular – Any soldier who was part of the standard and well-trained army as opposed to volunteer troops such as in the militia.

Rifle – Weapon similar to muskets. Rifles would eventually replace muskets because they were lighter and had better aim.

Round(s) – A collective number of bullets needed to fire one shot among a unit of soldiers.

Scout – Someone responsible for exploring the region and reconnoitering.

Sergeant – Lower ranking officer in the army, above a private and corporal officer.

Skirmish – Fighting that does not last long and involves smaller units of soldiers, unlike a full-scale battle with large masses of troops.

Squadron – A smaller unit of cavalry, similarly in size to a company of soldiers.

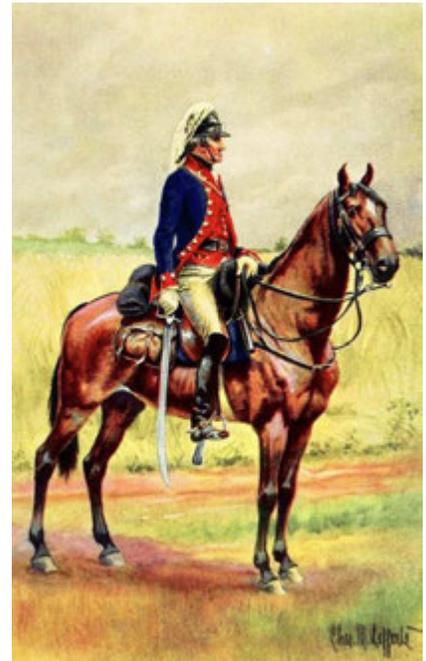
Staff officer – Officer in an army who assists in arranging military activities.

Subaltern – Unit officer name derived from British Army that was between Captain and Lieutenant; signified through green badges on their hats.

Tory – Another name for a Loyalist.

Vanguard – Troops that are at the head of the army; as opposed to the rearguard.

Volley – Firing of several missile weapons all at once.



Lt. Charles M. Lefferts, Virginia Light Dragoons, New York Historical Society

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