

An Historical Sketch

OF THE
64TH (SECOND STAFFORDSHIRE) REGIMENT
AND OF THE
CAMPAIGNS THROUGH WHICH THEY PASSED



BY MAJOR H. G. PURDON

Part IV.

The British concentrated all the troops they had in New Jersey in two large garrisons of 5,000 men each, one of which was at New Brunswick, and the other at Perth Amboy, and for months no movement took place. The Royal troops suffered much during the winter on account of the severe weather, hard duty, and the difficulty of procuring forage and provisions, as the American partisans overran the country, and food and fuel could only be obtained by fighting for it. The effective strength of the 64th Regiment on the 8th January, 1777, was one Lieut.-Colonel, one Major, seven Captains, ten Lieutenants, four Ensigns, 28 Serjeants, 17 Drummers, and 483 rank and file; the sick and those employed on various duties amounted to 50. With the return of spring active operations recommenced. The Americans were known to have formed large magazines of warlike stores at Peekskill, situated some forty miles up the Hudson River. These stores it was decided to destroy; accordingly on the 22nd March, a force of 500 men, consisting of detachments from the 15th, 23rd, 44th, and 64th Regiments - then stationed in New York - with 50 artillerymen and four field pieces, all under Colonel Bird, of the 15th Regiment, embarked on board four transports, and proceeded up the Hudson under convoy of the *Brune* frigate. The expedition reached Peekskill the next afternoon, and on its approach several hundred Americans were seen drawn up, but these retired after setting fire to their mills, forage yards, and buildings, containing an immense quantity of military stores. When the troops landed they completed the destruction of the magazines, barracks, workshops, &c., bringing off only some of the most valuable articles, not a man being lost or hurt on the occasion.

About a month later an expedition on a larger scale was undertaken with a similar object. Information having been received that the Americans had collected large magazines at Danbury, in Connecticut, an expedition was sent off in order to effect their destruction. It consisted of 250 men from each of the following regiments, which belonged to the first and sixth Brigades:- The 4th, 15th, 27th, 23rd, 44th & 64th Regiments, a subaltern's command of Dragoons, 300 of Governor Brown's Corps, and six 3-pounder guns. The troops, which numbered 2,000 men, were under the orders of Governor Tryon, Brigadier Agnew, and Sir William Erskine. The force proceeded up the East River, and landed near Fairfield at 6 pm on the 25th April. About 10 pm the troops started on their march through the woods for Danbury, which place they reached after a twenty-five mile march at three o'clock on the 26th. The rest of the day was employed in destroying the stores and burning the houses, and at 9 am on the 27th the return march commenced. In the meantime the local Militia had collected and about 11 am 200 of these, under General Wooster, attacked the rear of the British column. After a sharp skirmish they were beaten off, and their commander mortally wounded. Two miles further on a force of some 400 men, under Brigadier-General Arnold, was found barring the way at Ridgefield, and here fighting for an hour took place. The Americans describe the British coming on in a column, with large flank guards of 200 men in each, and with three field-pieces in front and three in rear. The enemy were finally outflanked and driven from their position, the British using their artillery in both encounters. The troops encamped for the night, and next

morning continued their march at four o'clock, but the whole country was now up in arms, and they were galled by musketry as they proceeded, and in the afternoon by artillery. The road by which the British were returning passed over Saugatuck Bridge, which crossed the river of the same name a few miles from the coast. At this point about 500 Americans had collected in the morning with four guns, and under the direction of Brigadier Arnold took up a position on the road about two miles above the bridge, and there awaited the approach of the British.

Presently the latter were attacked in rear by another party of 500 men, and finding General Arnold advantageously posted in front, they turned to the left and forded the Saugatuck some three miles above the bridge already mentioned, then moving down the left flank rapidly - running full speed one account says - passed the turning to the bridge before the enemy could cross it to intercept them. The Americans, who had now collected in strength, formed at the bridge, and pursued in two columns, one on each side of the British; and for three hours smart skirmishing took place, accompanied by artillery fire. At length the Hill of Compo was reached, which was only half a mile from the point of embarkation. From this position the Americans, whom the British estimated at 4,000, tried to dislodge them, but the latter, although fearfully exhausted, mustered 100 of the most able under General Erskine, and charged with the bayonet, when the enemy were routed. No further attempt was made to disturb the embarkation, which was covered by the Marines. The British had ten officers and 200 men killed and wounded, including Captain Carter, Ensign Mercer, and eleven men of the 64th Regiment wounded. The Americans are stated to have lost 100 killed, 250 wounded, and 50 prisoners.

During the winter and early spring, the English Cabinet had formed a plan for the ensuing campaign in America. It was arranged that an expedition from Canada should proceed down the lakes to Albany, where it was to be joined by a smaller one from Oswego. At the same time Sir William Howe was to move up the Hudson to Albany, and meet the northern expedition under General Burgoyne there. It was thus hoped to effect the isolation and reduction of the New England Colonies, which was the chief stronghold of the revolution, but by some extraordinary oversight General Howe never received any definite instructions regarding the part he was to play in the projected campaign.

However, Howe had another objective in view; he had been informed that the inhabitants of Pennsylvania were more or less favourable to the British cause, and accordingly he made up his mind to make a move on Philadelphia. He had also been told by the home authorities, before the northern campaign had been arranged, that there was no objection to the undertaking.

[General Howe knew that it was intended he should move on Albany and co-operate with Burgoyne, as the latter had written three letters to him, one from Plymouth in April, one from Montreal in May, and one from Crown Point in June, in each of which he had advised Howe of the instructions he had received to force his way to Albany and effect a junction with him. Howe received all three letters at New York, and before leaving for Philadelphia he sent Burgoyne a reply stating that "after your arrival at Albany the movements of the enemy will guide yours." Burgoyne was thus left to his fate.]

Howe first determined to bring Washington to an engagement, and for this purpose transported a portion of his army from Staten Island over to the Jerseys. He then crossed the Rariton River on the 13th June, with 10,000 men, and advanced some way on the road to Philadelphia, as if his object was the capture of that city. Washington meanwhile had taken up a strong position at Middlebrook, on the Rariton, about ten miles from New Brunswick, and rightly believing Howe's southward movement to be only a feint, did not attack. The British commander, after some manoeuvres, finding it impossible to bring on an action, returned on the 30th June to Staten Island, and commenced to put his troops on board some 266 transports and ships of war, in order to convey them by sea to a point from which he could advance on Philadelphia. [The 64th embarked in the transports *Father's Goodwill*, 333 tons, and the *Hartfield* 404 tons.] The expeditionary force consisted of 25 British and seven German battalions, the Queen's Rangers, and 16th Light Dragoons,

in all about 18,000 men. The infantry included four British Line brigades; these had been newly brigaded on the 8th May, 1777, and the fourth Brigade consisted of the 33rd, 37th, 46th, and 64th Regiments, commanded by Brigadier-General Agnew. By the 5th July Howe's troops were all embarked, and a fortnight later nearly all the vessels of the great fleet had dropped down from New York to the lower bay. On the 23rd July the armament sailed, and by the 30th the greater part had arrived in the estuary of the Delaware. Instead of effecting a landing in that river, which could have been carried out at Newcastle, a place only thirteen miles from where the troops were eventually put on shore, the fleet was brought round to Chesapeake Bay, which was reached on the 16th August, and nine more days were spent in ascending its intricate waters, the disembarkation only commencing on the 25th August, on the northern shore of the Elk River.

Washington had been much perplexed regarding Howe's movements, being uncertain whether the latter intended going to Albany or striking at Philadelphia. He first moved north, but when he heard that the transports had sailed he proceeded to the Delaware. After much marching and counter-marching, intelligence was received that the fleet was in the Chesapeake, on which Washington marched through Philadelphia, and posted his army at Wilmington, near the mouth of the Brandywine River. The British troops had all landed by the evening of the 26th August, but from that time it rained continuously for thirty-six hours, rendering the roads impassable, and spoiling the biscuits, and ammunition served out to the troops. By the 3rd September, the van, consisting of the 2nd Light Infantry, the Hessian and Anspack Chasseurs, had advanced as far as Iron Hill near the head of Elk River, where they came in contact with a picked body of Americans, and some local Militia, about 1,000 strong, under General Maxwell. A warm encounter ensued, which resulted in the enemy being driven back, with considerable loss; the British had three men killed, two officers, and 19 men wounded. On the 8th September Howe moved past Washington's right flank in order to cut his communications, but the latter retreated on the 9th behind the Brandywine, and marching twelve miles up the left bank, halted at Chad's Ford, where the highway leading to Philadelphia crosses the river. Here Washington made dispositions for holding the line of the Brandywine with his available force, some 11,000 strong. General Wayne was to hold the ford, which was guarded by some entrenchments and three batteries. Green was also posted near with two brigades, while Sullivan, with three Divisions was stationed two miles further up the river, in order to watch the fords as far as the forks of the Brandywine. On the 10th Howe made a long march to Kennet Square, which is about eight miles from Chad's Ford. He now divided his force into two columns, the one on the right under Lieut.-General Knyphausen, nearly 7,000 strong, consisted of the first and second British Brigades, four battalions of Hessians, three of the Fraser Highlanders, the Queen's Rangers, Ferguson's Riflemen, one squadron of the 16th Light Dragoons, six 12-pounder guns, and four howitzers, besides the battalion guns. This column was to attack at Chad's Ford, and engage the enemy's attention, while the other made a turning movement. The larger column, commanded by Cornwallis, about 10,000 strong, consisted of the third and fourth British Brigades, two battalions each of Guards, Grenadiers, and Light Infantry, three battalions of Hessians, mounted and unmounted Chasseurs, and two squadrons of the 16th Light Dragoons. At five o'clock on the morning of the 11th September, Knyphausen started with his column. About ten o'clock he encountered General Maxwell on the near side of the ford, and drove his men over the river; he then planted his batteries, and engaged the American guns on the other side, and for four hours made ostensible preparations for passing the ford. The column under Cornwallis, which was accompanied by General Howe, started at four o'clock in the morning, and proceeding northwards, crossed the west branch of the Brandywine at Trimble's Ford. One or two miles further on, the eastern branch of the same river was passed at Jeffrey's Ford; then turning south-east as far as Osborne's Hill, the troops halted and commenced to form, having traversed 16 miles of difficult country in ten hours. When Cornwallis deployed he placed the two Guard battalions on the right of the first line, next to them the two battalions of Grenadiers, then the two of Light Infantry, and the

two battalions of Hessian Chasseurs on the left. The fourth Brigade was in support. and the third Brigade with the two squadrons of Dragoons in reserve.

Washington's information regarding Cornwallis's turning movement was imperfect and misleading; finally, when the British were seen on Osborne Hill, Sullivan hastened to oppose them, and formed his three Divisions in line across the road just in front of the Birmingham Meeting House. This movement had hardly been completed when Cornwallis's first line attacked with impetuosity. There was severe fighting about the Meeting House, but two brigades on the American right giving way, Sullivan's own Division soon followed; Stirling's Division, which was in the centre, stood longer and resisted stubbornly. The enemy were followed through the woods for over a mile, when they rallied and took up a second position about three-quarters of a mile west of Dilworth, but were dislodged by the second Light Infantry and Hessian Chasseurs. The second Light Infantry, with the second Grenadiers and fourth Brigade, then moved forward about half a mile beyond the village of Dilworth, where they met a fresh body of the enemy. This was Greene's Division, which Washington had sent to support Sullivan when he heard of the latter being attacked in such force. Greene took up a strong position in rear of Sullivan's retreating troops behind Dilworth, on each side of a defile through which the road to Chester passes, and then bordered with thick woods. He had hardly posted his Division before he was attacked, and for an hour the fighting was very warm; here Greene held his ground until darkness set in, and covered the retreat of the remainder of the army towards Chester.

When Knyphausen heard Cornwallis's guns to the northward, and saw bodies of the enemy moving in that direction, he commenced to cross the ford. His men soon entered the entrenchments on the opposite side, and captured the guns, with many of the defenders. Wayne's Brigades were driven back through woods and enclosures until they were taken in flank, and scattered by the Guards and first Grenadiers, which had lost their way in the woods when Cornwallis was advancing, and now unexpectedly fell on Wayne's men. There was no pursuit, the British being much fatigued, and the retreating Americans made their way unmolested to Chester. The British casualties amounted to 90 killed, and 480 wounded. The 64th had Captain Nairne and four men killed; Major McLeroth, Lieutenants Jacob, Torriano, and Wynward, Ensigns Freeman and Grant, five sergeants, and 31 men wounded. The second Light Infantry had 58 casualties, and the second Grenadiers 82. Lieutenant Peters, of the Grenadier Company 64th Regiment, was wounded, but the losses amongst the non-commissioned officers and men of the flank companies, serving with the above-named flank battalions, are not shown separately. The Americans estimated their loss at 300 killed and 600 wounded; they also lost a good many prisoners and 11 guns.

The day after the battle Washington retreated to Germantown, but re-crossing the Schuylkill at Sweed's Ford, he advanced along the old Lancaster road and met Howe on the 16th September near Westchester. The armies were about to engage when a violent storm came on, and wet the ammunition on both sides, so no battle took place. Washington then retired to Potsgrove, on the east side of the river, but left Wayne's Division, 1,500 strong, behind, for the purpose of attacking the rear of the British troops should they attempt to cross the Schuylkill. On the 20th September Wayne encamped round the Paoli Tavern, believing that Howe was ignorant of his position, but the Tories had informed the British General of the fact, and he soon took advantage of it. Major-General Grey, whom the Americans called the "No Flint General" on account of his predilection for the bayonet, was ordered to make a night attack on the isolated division. Consequently on the night of the 20th, which was dark and wet, Grey started at ten o'clock, with the 42nd, 44th, and second Light Infantry, followed by the 40th and 55th Regiments under Lieut.-Colonel Musgrave. The muskets were unloaded, or had the flints knocked out.

The enemy's pickets were surprised, and the second Light Infantry, which was in front, came in on the right of the camp it seems, and rushing along the line bayoneted all they met with; the 44th Regiment followed in support, and the 42nd in a third line. It was an utter rout; 300 of the Americans were killed or wounded, and about 30 were taken prisoners; the British had four killed

and four wounded. It appears that the surprise took place about one o'clock, when the enemy were assembling for some object. One account says Wayne ordered his men to sleep on their arms, as an attack was not unexpected. On the evening of the 22nd September, the British Army set out for the Schuylkill River, which they crossed during the night at Fatland Ford. The two battalions of Light Infantry were despatched to Sweed's Ford, where a small party of the enemy were stationed; however, they retired before being attacked, leaving six guns behind. On the 25th the Army marched in two columns to Germantown, and next day Lord Cornwallis with 3,000 men took possession of Philadelphia. The village of Germantown then consisted of a straggling street running in a north-westerly direction for nearly two miles, as far as Mount Airey, where the pickets of the second Light Infantry were posted. About half-way down the village on its eastern side, the 40th Regiment, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel T. Musgrave (late of the 64th), was stationed in the grounds about Chief Justice Chew's house, which was a substantial building. [This distinguished officer entered the service in 1754; he joined the 64th Regiment as a Captain in 1759, and was promoted into the 40th Regiment as Lieut.-Colonel on the 21st August. 1776. He became Colonel of the 76th Regiment, Governor of Gravesend and Tilbury Fort, and died a General in 1812.] General Howe encamped the main body of the army behind or south of School House Lane, which intersects the road leading through Germantown near the southern end of the village, at the market square. The left wing, commanded by Lieut.-General Knyphausen, was stationed behind the lane, between the Schuylkill River and the Germantown road. This wing was comprised of the third Brigade, under Major-General Grey, which was encamped on the right; the fourth Brigade, under Brigadier Agnew, was on their left; three battalions of Hessians were stationed in the vicinity of the Germantown road, and the Hessian Chasseurs on the left near the Schuylkill. Evidently there had been some changes in the brigading of regiments since the battle of Brandywine, but it seems the fourth Brigade still consisted of the 33rd, 37th, 46th, and 64th Regiments; and the third Brigade, of the 15th, 17th, and 44th Regiments, being minus one battalion (42nd Regiment). On the right of the Germantown road Major-General Grant commanded, and here were encamped the Guards, the 4th, 5th, 27th, 28th, 49th, and 55th Regiments. The first Light Infantry furnished the advanced troops for this wing, and the Queen's Rangers protected the right flank; the whole line extended for a distance of about two and a half miles. According to the official return for October, the Army under Sir W. Howe numbered 16,000 men fit for duty, but only 9,000 were present at Germantown. There were 3,000 in Philadelphia, and a strong detachment in the Jerseys; the 10th, 23rd, and 42nd Regiments were escorting provision columns at the time the battle took place. Washington having been reinforced by some 2,500 men, and hearing that a great part of Sir W. Howe's Army was detached, resolved to surprise the British at Germantown, his plan being somewhat similar to that which proved so successful at Trenton. He had now 8,000 Continental troops and 3,000 Militia at his disposal; accordingly on the 3rd October he put his forces in motion, and set out for Germantown, some eighteen miles distant. A halt was made five miles east of Skippack Creek, and at seven o'clock in the evening the night march commenced. Sullivan, with his own and Wayne's Divisions marched on the main road, his objective being the British left, while Greene, with his own and Stephen's Divisions, was to make a detour and come in on their right by the Lime-kiln road. The Pennsylvania Militia were to demonstrate against the left rear, and the Maryland and Jersey Militia were to act in a similar manner on the other flank of the Royal Army. Sullivan arrived first on the ground, and Conway's Brigade, passing over Chestnut Hill through a thick mist about dawn, came on the pickets of the second Light Infantry. The latter fell back on the battalion, and the whole retired, contesting every inch of ground, to where the 40th Regiment was drawn up in the orchard of Chief Justice Chew's house. Here the fighting was obstinately maintained in the fog for some time; but the British were outnumbered and obliged to retire; before doing so however, Lieut.-Colonel Musgrave was able to garrison the house with six weak companies of the 40th Regiment, amounting to only 140 men. The building was now attacked on all sides, and soon 3,000 Americans were swarming round it in tumult and confusion. Three guns were brought to bear on the mansion, but

no impression could be made on it, or on Musgrave's musketeers. Sullivan presently managed to push forward, with his own Division on the right of the road, and Wayne's on the left. Nash's Brigade was brought up to cover the right flank, while the reserve under Maxwell continued the attack on the house. The British were forced slowly back towards the Market Place, but Major-General Grey with the third Brigade, supported on the left by the fourth Brigade, presently came forward, and forming the three battalions of his own Brigade to the right took Sullivan in flank when engaged amidst the houses and enclosures, thus arresting his further progress. Meanwhile General Greene, who arrived late on the field, came from the direction of the Lime-kiln road, and drove back the pickets and other troops which he encountered, but Stephen's Division, losing its way in the fog, got behind Wayne, and fired into his men, mistaking them for the enemy. This fortuitous occurrence caused confusion, and led to the retreat of both Divisions from the field, Sullivan's left was now uncovered, and Greene, who had advanced far into the British position, was isolated and unprotected on his right by Stephen's retirement. General Grant, who soon grasped the situation, reformed his troops, and prepared to act vigorously. He brought up the 49th Regiment, and four field guns on the left of the 4th Regiment, which had been sent to the right front to support the pickets, and these troops it seems attacked Greene on his outer flank. The 5th and 55th Regiments from the right centre fell on Sullivan's left flank in the village when he was engaged with Grey on the other side, and the remainder of the right wing formed up to oppose Greene. However at this juncture (about ten o'clock) a panic took place amongst the Americans, caused either by the firing in their rear at Chew's house, or by a rumour that they were being surrounded, and soon all the troops that had been engaged were retreating from the field. But one of Greene's regiments, the ninth Continentals, known as "the Tall Virginians", being unable to extricate themselves in time from an entangled position, were surrounded and taken after a desperate resistance. With the exception of a shots fired by the Pennsylvanians, near the Schuylkill River, the Militia took no part in the action, and Washington, after fruitless efforts to rally the troops, made dispositions to cover the retreat.

On hearing the sound of the firing at Germantown, Cornwallis, who commanded in Philadelphia - which was over five miles distant from the scene of action - started at once with two battalions of British and one of Hessian Grenadiers. They ran a good part of the way, and arrived before the engagement was quite over. When the enemy retreated, Cornwallis followed them with the Dragoons and Grenadiers to Whitemarsh, where Washington skilfully posted his rear guard, and Wayne's guns came into action. Here Howe discontinued his languid pursuit early in the day, although the British were comparatively fresh: they had sustained small loss, and several of the regiments took little or no part in the battle. "The period which intervened between ten in the morning and dusk on the 4th of October, 1777, was for Sir William Howe a lost - and as fate willed it a last - opportunity." [Trevelyan] So the Americans, with empty cartridge boxes, and suffering from exhaustion, having marched nearly twenty miles before the action, got clear away with all their guns.

In an account of the action in "Gaine's Mercury" of November 10th, 1777 (a Loyalist journal), it states that a column of the enemy which had filed off towards our left - apparently Nash's Brigade - was driven off by the 33rd, 46th, and 64th Regiments; in fact the fourth Brigade. The commanders of these Brigades, Brigadiers Agnew and Nash, were both mortally wounded. It also states that "The Commander-in-Chief having perceived a large body that had rallied, forming itself on Chestnut Hill, apparently to retard the pursuit, his Excellency ordered Major-General Grey to advance upon it with the 17th, 33rd, 14th, 46th, and 64th Regiments, directing other corps to follow as fast as possible to sustain," but the Americans retreated on their approach. The journal declares that the American columns which attacked the British right were defeated by the 1st Light Infantry, the 4th, 5th, 15th, 37th, 49th, and 55th Regiments, and that the rest of the Army had not the opportunity of engaging. This statement seems to indicate that the two battalions of the left wing, viz., the 15th

Regiment of the third Brigade, and the 37th Regiment of the fourth Brigade, were sent to assist the right wing, but the whole action was confused and hard to unravel.

The British casualties amounted to 70 killed and 425 wounded, the latter including 24 Hessians. The 64th had one rank and file killed and six wounded. What casualties the Light Company sustained are not shown separately; the second Light Infantry battalion, of which they formed part, lost 68 killed and wounded, besides five missing. Brigadier Agnew died a few days after the action from his wounds. Ensign Grant, of the 64th, died on the day of the battle, probably from wounds received at Brandywine. The Americans stated their loss at 152 killed and 521 wounded, besides 100 taken prisoners.

The opening of the Delaware in order to receive sea-borne supplies, now became an urgent necessity, as Washington's patrols and the New Jersey partisans rendered the collecting of foodstuffs from the surrounding countryside well-nigh impossible. The defences on the river constructed by the Americans consisted of an enclosed work called Fort Mifflin, situated on a low island, near the Pennsylvania side, a short way below the mouth of the Schuylkill River. Another work, called Fort Mercer, stood opposite at Red Bank, on the Jersey shore, and about three miles lower down, on the same side of the river, a redoubt had been constructed at Billingsport; the channel was also obstructed by chevaux-de-frise. The Americans had besides a fine frigate on the river, and a flotilla of schooners, galleys, and various sorts of vessels to aid in the defence.

In the meantime Admiral Lord Howe, in spite of the difficult navigation, brought the fleet round from the Chesapeake to the Delaware, and on the 4th October his leading vessels anchored off the town of Chester, fifteen miles below Philadelphia. On the 6th a body of infantry took possession of Billingsport, and it was decided that Fort Mercer should be next reduced. This task was entrusted to Count Von Donop and 2,000 Hessians; these were ferried across the river from Philadelphia on the 21st October, and next day the assault took place. The Hessians carried the outer breastworks, but when they advanced against the fort, they were met by a deadly fire, and being enfiladed by the enemy's galleys, the attack, although gallantly made, was repulsed. Three Colonels and 20 officers fell, including Count Von Donop; 127 men were killed, and many wounded. On the 3rd November the capitulation of General Burgoyne at Saratoga on the 16th October was announced, which news had a depressing effect on the troops. It was the sound of their cannon Burgoyne had so anxiously listened for on the Hudson previous to the surrender, as he had stipulated for and depended upon Howe's co-operation before he undertook the expedition.

Fort Mifflin was attacked on the 10th November, when a heavy fire was brought to bear on the defences; this was followed by a combined land and sea attack on the 15th, which reduced the place to ruins, the survivors of the garrison making their escape during the night to Fort Mercer. Howe now sent Cornwallis against this fort with ten regiments - about 5,500 men. They crossed the Delaware at Chester, and moved up the east bank to invest the place, but the garrison, deeming it impossible to hold out against such a force, evacuated the defences on the 20th November. Next morning the American flotilla was set on fire by its crews, and Cornwallis, after dismantling the fort, returned to his camp. Howe's communications by sea were now open, and supplies came in without interruption. In order to protect Philadelphia on the land side, a line of works was constructed just north of the city, which extended from the Schuylkill River to the Delaware, a distance of two and a half miles, and behind which the Royal troops encamped.

In the end of October Washington advanced to near Whitemarsh, about four miles from Chestnut Hill, and there established himself in strong lines. Howe moved out on the 4th December with about 1,000 men to Chestnut Hill, intending to attack, and next day Lieut.-Colonel Abercrombie, with the 2nd Battalion and part of the 1st Battalion Light Infantry, was sent forward to feel the American right. A warm skirmish took place with the Pennsylvania Militia, who were defeated, and their commander, General Irvine, wounded and taken prisoner. On the 7th, the British left Chestnut Hill and took up a position on Edge Hill towards the American left, and another smart affair took place between the 1st Light Infantry and 33rd Regiment, under Cornwallis, and Colonel

Morgan with his riflemen and the Maryland Militia, the enemy sustaining a loss of 11 men. Major-General Grey, with the Queen's Rangers, the Hessian Chasseurs, was "the cockpit in Moore's Alley, the wild suppers at the 'Bunch of Grapes,' and the club dinners, late and long, in the rooms of the Indian Queen."