

An Historical Sketch

OF THE
64TH (SECOND STAFFORDSHIRE) REGIMENT
 AND OF THE
CAMPAIGNS THROUGH WHICH THEY PASSED
(with illustrations added by the editor)



BY MAJOR H. G. PURDON

Part VI.

On the 25th (of June 1778) the Army marched at an early hour, the train being in front with its strong escort under Lieut.-General Knyphausen. By this time Maxwell's Brigade had been sent on by Washington to assist the New Jersey Militia in blocking the road in front of the British, while

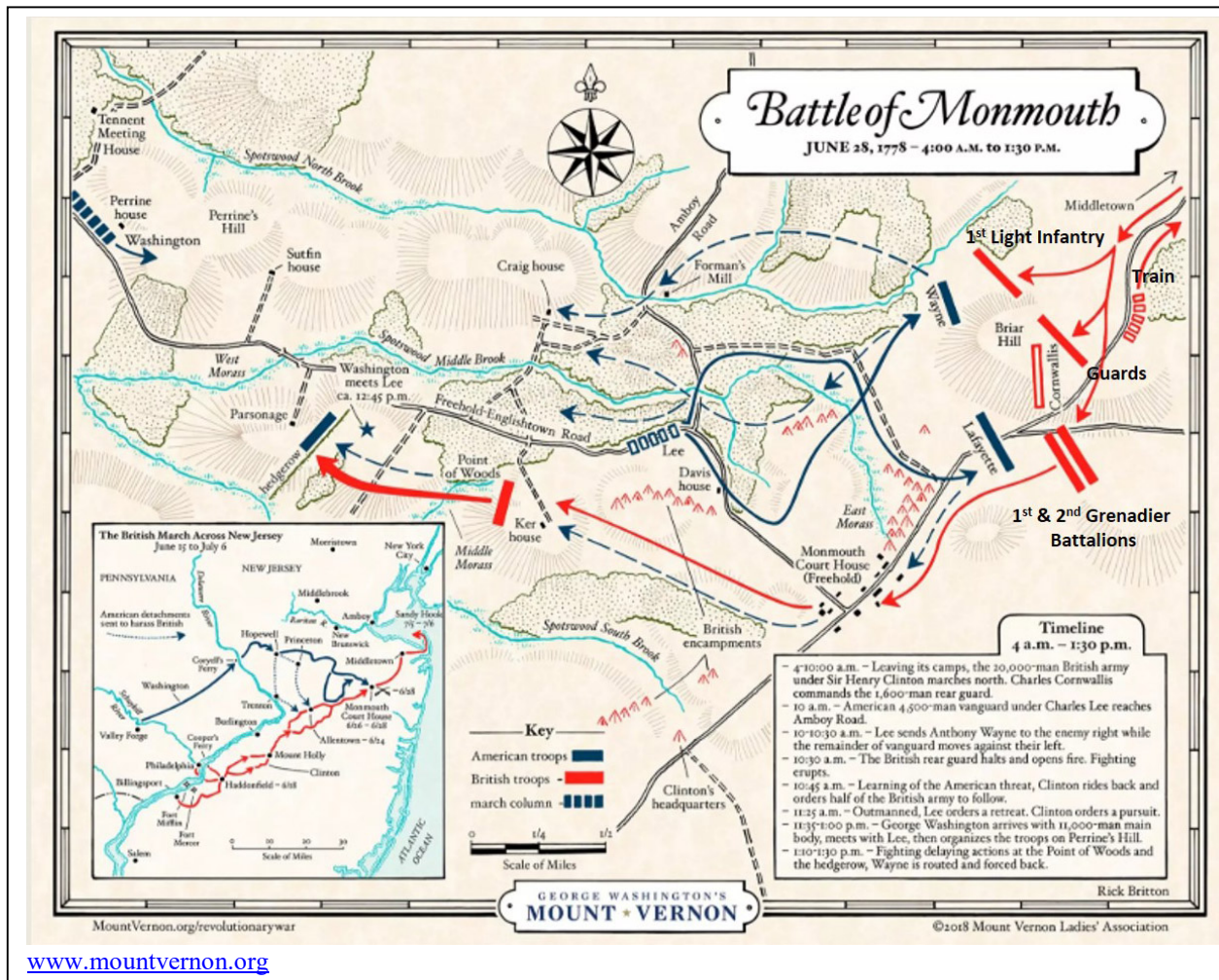


Benson John Lossing, Our Country: A Household History of the United States for all Readers, From the Discovery of America to the Present Time (1873)

Morgan, with 600 riflemen, swarmed on their right flank, and Dickenson, with 700 or 800 on their left. The rear Division of the Royal Army halted at the "Rising Sun" seven miles from Allentown, but Knyphausen, in spite of the intense heat and deep sandy roads, pushed on with the train to within four miles of Monmouth or Freehold. On the 26th he marched into the latter place, and the First Division arrived soon after. The whole Army rested on the 27th round Monmouth Court House, the flanks being protected by pine woods, and the front by streams and morasses. Soon after midnight Knypausen was sent on towards Middleton with the train, which presently covered the whole 11 miles of road between the latter place and Monmouth. His escort (the Second Division) consisted of the 17th Light Dragoons, 2nd Battalion Light Infantry, first and second British Brigades, two Hessian Brigades, and some provincials. Cornwallis followed at eight o'clock with the First Division or rearguard, and was well on his way, - the heat even at that hour being intense - when the enemy's columns were seen following in pursuit. Meanwhile, on the 27th, Washington was between Cranbury and Englishtown, and his advanced troops, consisting of 5,000 men and 12 guns, under Major-General Lee, on the same date were at Englishtown, six miles west of Monmouth. Washington wished to bring on an action while the British were in the plain and before they could reach the strong ground about Middleton; he accordingly gave Lee orders to attack their rearguard on the morning of the 28th, if they continued their retirement, in which case he would march at daybreak and come to his support.



<https://revolutionarywar.us>



Lee moved forward in the morning, and about ten o'clock arrived at a point about three-quarters of a mile north of Monmouth Court House, from which position his forces commenced to descend into the plain. Clinton, seeing the enemy coming down on him with strong bodies of troops on each flank, as if they intended to envelope the column, considered that the best way of protecting the convoy was to attack before Washington's main body could arrive on the scene of action. He therefore gave Cornwallis orders to countermarch his Division and deploy, which the latter soon complied with. The troops advanced in the following order:—On the left the two battalions of English Grenadiers, the Guards in the centre, and the first Light Infantry on the right. Two brigades of infantry followed as a second line; the third Brigade, consisting of the 15th, 17th, 42nd, and 44th Regiments, under Major-General Grey, was on the right; the fourth Brigade, composed of the 33rd, 37th, 46th, and 64th Regiments, on the left, the latter supporting the Grenadiers. The fifth Brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General Leslie, and the Hessian Grenadiers, were in rear; the Queen's Rangers moved on the right flank, and the 16th Light Dragoons on the left. The artillery opened fire, and the Guards and Grenadiers advanced, but the Americans did not stand long, as it seems General Lee, after giving some inconsistent orders, retired over a morass (East Ravine) and commenced a retreat which soon resembled a rout. About two miles west of Monmouth Court House - between the West and Middle Ravines - the retreating troops were met by Washington, who halted, and formed them across the road leading from Monmouth to Englishtown, under General Wayne. The pursuing first line of the British crossed the Middle Ravine, and soon the fighting became warm.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emanuel_Leutze
Washington Rallying the Troops at Monmouth, 1857

Wayne had posted some of his troops behind an orchard fence and in some loop-holed farm buildings, just south of the road, and about 400 yards north-west of the Parsonage, and this position was attacked by the Grenadiers, under Lieut.-Colonel Monckton. The latter crossed the fence, and were twice repulsed. Then the Colonel harangued the 2nd Grenadiers - which included those of the 64th Regiment - and placing himself at their head led them to a final assault. But they were met by a deadly fire from the loopholed buildings, and at the same time being enfiladed by a battery on their left, the attack failed, and Lieut.-Colonel Monckton

with many of his men fell. [It is stated that the Grenadiers advanced to the attack 'with so much precision that a cannon ball, which took the muskets of a platoon in flank, disarmed every man'.] Washington's main body had by this time arrived, and he extended it in some strong ground, on each side of the road, with a marshy hollow in front (West Ravine); this position was about half a mile in rear of that occupied by Wayne. The troops under the latter commander were subsequently forced back, or retired on their main body behind the West Ravine, and the British Artillery took up



Attack of the Grenadiers on Wayne's position. By Alonzo Chappel, in Battles of the United States, Henry Dawson (1858)

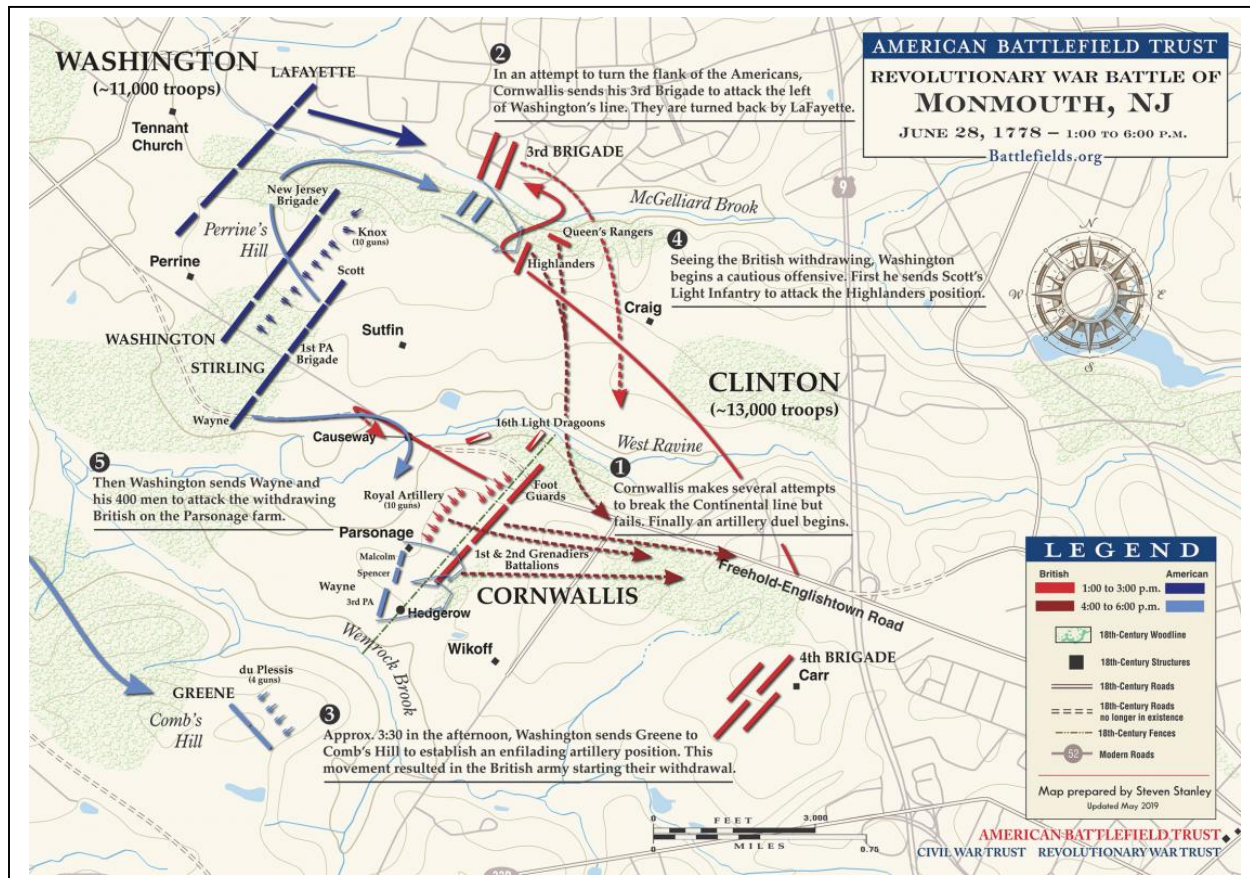


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a position on the ground they abandoned. About this time the third Brigade, from the second line, moved forward towards the enemy's left, and the first Light Infantry and Queen's Rangers had pushed so far forward on the right that they actually turned it.

The fighting had lasted continuously from one to half-past five o'clock, and the heat was so excessive that nearly half the number of deaths on the British side were caused by sunstroke. [Lord Carlisle was told that several of Clinton's men "ran mad" from the heat. A number of unwounded soldiers were found dead under the Alder bushes along a rivulet, where they had crawled for shade and water.] The Americans also lost many from the same cause, but their clothing, it seems, was lighter, and many had dispensed with the greater part of it. Clinton was now out-numbered, his men were exhausted, and had fired away the greater part of

their ammunition; however, he had gained his object - the safety of the convoy - so he withdrew his troops over a mile to a strong defensive position behind the "Middle Ravine," with a stream on each flank. When the British moved back, the first Light Infantry and Queen's Rangers - whose impetuosity had carried them so far forward on the right - were ordered to rejoin the main body, but some of the Americans had repassed the "West Ravine" and occupied ground which would have interfered with their retirement. It therefore became necessary to drive the enemy from the position they had taken up, and this was accomplished by the 1st Guards and the 33rd Regiment, which latter had been brought up from the right of the fourth Brigade; these troops held the ground



as a rearguard until the light corps had been safely withdrawn. The weary men bivouacked on the ground to which they had retired, but their rest was short, as the retreat to Middleton had to be carried out without delay, so the first regiment moved quietly away at ten o'clock, and by twelve midnight all had left except some of the more severely wounded. Washington knew nothing of the silent retirement of the British; he had intended to renew the action in the morning, but finding Clinton had got such a start, he despaired of overtaking him, before he had reached the strong ground about Middleton, so he gave up the idea of pursuing, and retired to the Hudson.

Clinton halted on the 29th and 30th about Middleton, and on the 1st July arrived without the loss of a wagon at Novesink, a highland near Sandy Hook. The fleet had already arrived at the latter place, and here the Army, with its great following, embarked on July 5th, and sailed for New York.

The British losses at Monmouth were as follows:- 1 Lieut.-Colonel, 1 Captain, 2 Lieutenants, 4 Sergeants, and 55 rank and file killed; 3 Sergeants and 58 rank and file died of heat and fatigue; 1 Colonel, 1 Lieut.-Colonel, 1 Major, 7 Captains, 5 Lieutenants, 7 Sergeants, 148 rank and file wounded; 3 Sergeants and 61 rank and file missing; but Washington stated that his men buried 249 of the British on the field.

The muster rolls of the Grenadier Company of the 64th show three men killed on the 28th June, the number of wounded is not given. The 2nd Grenadier Battalion sustained the following casualties:- 1 Lieut.-Colonel, 1 Lieutenant, 2 Sergeants, and 18 rank and file killed; 9 rank and file dead from fatigue; 1 Major, 2 Captains, 5 Lieutenants, 2 Sergeants, and 46 rank and file wounded, and 10 rank and file missing. The battalion companies of the 64th lost four men from heat and fatigue, and one missing. The 33rd Regiment, which was the only battalion of the fourth Brigade actively engaged, had two rank and file killed, two wounded, and four missing. In the 37th Regiment two rank and file died of fatigue, and one was missing. The 16th Regiment had no casualties. The third Brigade had several killed and wounded. The fifth Brigade had only one man wounded, but these brigades lost men from fatigue and had some missing. More than half the losses at Monmouth were sustained by the 1st Battalion of the Guards, and the two Grenadier Battalions. Washington reported his loss at 58 killed, 161 wounded, and 131 missing. The desertions during the retreat were numerous; within a fortnight after leaving Philadelphia 600 men of the British Army were back in the place, over two-thirds of this number being Hessians. The 64th lost few prisoners, if any, during the retreat, only twelve fell into the hands of the Americans during the year.

After their return north the battalion companies of the 64th Regiment were quartered at Bedford, Long Island, where their muster rolls for the half-year ending the 24th June, 1778, were signed on the 28th July. The Grenadiers were also stationed on Long Island, and the Light Company at Cripples Bush Camp. The muster rolls of the latter companies were signed at the above places on the 7th August. In these rolls Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. Alexander Leslie (Brigadier-General in the Army - and appointed Major-General on 19th February, 1779) is shown as doing duty with the fifth Brigade, and Captain Lewis as an acting Brigade Major.

Lord Howe had hardly seen Clinton's Army safely landed in New York when he had to hasten back to the fleet, which was anchored behind the Bar off Sandy Hook. Count d'Estaing had arrived outside on the 11th July with a superior number of ships, carrying 1,000 soldiers, but after lingering eleven days south of the Bar, without attempting to cross it, in order to engage the British fleet, he sailed for Newport on Rhode Island. It had been arranged to make a combined land and sea attack on the British garrison in the latter place, which numbered barely 1,000 men, under Sir Robert Pigot. The American General Sullivan had collected some 10,000 men, mostly Militia, with which he crossed over to the island on which Newport stood, and made preparations to besiege the place. D'Estaing got his ships into the bay behind the on August 8th, and landed his 1,000 soldiers to aid in the siege. Sir Robert Pigot was now in a very critical position, but fortunately Lord Howe, who had followed the French fleet, appeared with his ships off the harbour, on the 9th August, and d'Estaing, having re-embarked his troops, put out to meet him next day. However, a storm came on which dispersed both fleets, and Howe was obliged to return to New York to refit, while the French



The British occupation of Newport, December 8th of 1776

<https://www.redwoodlibrary.org/blog/lwhite/2016/12/08/british-occupation-newport>

Admiral only looked in at Newport to inform the Americans that it was necessary for him to sail to Boston, in order to have his ships repaired, and refused to land his troops, although urged to do so.

General Sullivan, who had commenced the siege on the 15th August, was very indignant at d'Estaing's conduct, and on hearing of the departure of the French fleet, most of the American Militia returned home. Sullivan was therefore obliged to raise the siege, but retired to a strong position in the north end of the

island, where he was followed by Pigot, and a sharp action took place on August 29th. Next morning the American Commander, hearing that the British fleet was again approaching, recrossed to the mainland in order to avoid a surrender. Lord Howe had sailed for Newport as soon as his ships were ready for sea; he had General Clinton and 5,000 troops on board, including the 33rd, 42nd, 16th, and 64th Regiments, under Major-General Grey; the latter corps embarking at the east end of Long Island. The fleet dropped anchor in Newport harbour on August 31st, a few hours after Sullivan had escaped to the mainland.

The British commander, having been disappointed in not cutting off the Americans, decided to send an expedition to destroy the privateers in the Acushnet River - some 25 miles east of Newport, in Plymouth County - together with a number of prizes which they had lately taken. The command of the expedition devolved on Sir Charles Grey; it consisted of the 1st Batt. Light Infantry, 1st Batt. Grenadiers, the 33rd, 42nd, 16th, and 64th Regiments, and the service was most effectually performed. The troops were landed on the banks of the Acushnet River on the evening of the 5th September, and so rapidly did they carry out the work of destruction that by noon the next day they were all re-embarked, having in the meantime burnt more than 70 sail, and a number of buildings at New Bedford filled with provisions and stores of all kinds. They also destroyed a fort on the east side of the river, mounting 11 pieces of heavy cannon, blew up the magazine, and burnt the barracks. The loss sustained was only one man killed, four wounded, and 16 missing; the 64th had one man wounded.

The fleet next proceeded to the island called Martha's Vineyard, which lay some 20 miles to the southward, where the British burnt several vessels, and made the inhabitants furnish a contribution of 10,000 sheep and 300 oxen, and with these seasonable provisions the expedition returned to New York. The British commander in the latter city, having received information that 700 Militia were cantoned in the neighbourhood of Hackensack, decided to surprise them. A body of troops accordingly was drawn from New York and Long Island, and landed at Paulus Hook, in New Jersey, on the 23rd or 24th September. This force, consisting of the 2nd Light Infantry, 2nd Grenadiers, 33rd and 64th Regiments, under Major-General Grey, marched after 9 pm on the 27th, and between one and two o'clock on the morning of the 28th arrived near the enemy's cantonments. The 2nd Light Infantry was in advance, supported by the 2nd Grenadiers; six companies of the Light Infantry had been detached under Major Straubensee to make a detour,

while six companies under Major Maitland kept the road, and captured the enemy's patrol of a sergeant and 12 men, who evidently were unable to give any alarm.

Major Straubenzee meanwhile moved on, and surprised about 100 Virginian Dragoons in a village; Lieut.-Colonel Baylor, their commanding officer, and the Major were mortally wounded; another officer was killed, besides a number of the men who resisted. Major Maitland's companies came on the scene soon after, and completed the discomfiture of the enemy. The troops lay on their arms until daybreak, when the Grenadiers and Light Infantry had a skirmish with a company of Militia. The latter, having lost several killed and wounded, retreated to Tappan, pursued by the Light Infantry; only one man of the latter corps was killed on this service.

In November the British forces in America were reduced by 5,000 men, as Sir Henry Clinton was ordered to send that number to the West Indies. The military operations in the North were subsequently of little importance; the British occupied New York and Newport, while Washington distributed his troops from Long Island Sound to West Point, and from there to Middlebrook, forming a semi-circle round New York.

The muster rolls of the battalion companies of the 64th regiment for the half-year ending the 24th December, 1778, were signed at Paulus Hook, on the New Jersey shore - just west of New York - on the 2nd February, 1779. The Light Company was stationed at Southampton, Long Island, and the Grenadiers at Jamaica, Long Island, where their muster rolls were signed on the 29th December, 1778. The average strength of the companies was 46.

(Note: illustrations have been added, and were not part of Major H. G. Purdon's original work.)