

ARRANGED MARRIAGES: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN REGULAR AND IRREGULAR FORCES, DURING THE EARLY AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR IN MONMOUTH COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

A Monograph

by

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ABSTRACT

ARRANGED MARRIAGES: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN REGULAR AND IRREGULAR FORCES DURING THE EARLY AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR IN MONMOUTH COUNTY, NEW JERSEY, by Major Todd S. Bzdafka, 57 pages.

This monograph seeks to answer the question of how the relationship between regular and irregular military forces influenced operations in New Jersey during the winter of 1776-77. Much like an arranged marriage, regular and irregular forces can make the best of the situation and make it work, or hold onto preconceived notions and let the relationship fail. Despite occasional innovations by British commanders in combining regular and irregular forces against the rebels, the marriage ultimately failed. In contrast, the rebels found a way to make the arrangement work.

This monograph begins with a discussion of irregular units as a topic in academic and popular literature. The winning rebel side presented the Continental Army and the rebel militia as the force that gained independence, while the existence of loyalist units was intentionally ignored. Next, it focuses on the colonial wars to provide background and context, specifically, King George's War, 1744-1748, and the French and Indian War, 1754-1763. The interaction between colonists and the British Army during these conflicts established the foundation for relationships during the American Revolutionary War. Then key information about New Jersey and Monmouth County is presented to set the stage for the two case study units, the 1st Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers (loyalist) and the Monmouth County Militia (rebel). These units provide a glimpse into how irregular units were employed and how personal relationships and policies affected operations. Finally, it concludes with a few insights to consider when approaching future relationships.

The difficulty and necessity of building positive working relationships between coalition partners remains a challenge for militaries to this day, and is reflected in United States Army and Joint doctrine, such as ADRP 6-0 Mission Command, as a priority for commanders at all levels of war. While relationships existed between British and colonial Provincial units prior to the Revolutionary War, the relationships were not maintained or made official, and thus ceased to be effective after the termination of those conflicts. The experiences of the British Army during the winter of 1776-1777 show there is a need to coordinate and build a positive working relationship with irregular forces. That some sort of relationship between regular and irregular forces exists is a recurring theme in military operations globally. Irregular forces are a component of conflict and bring inherent limitations and advantages. The side that interacts most effectively will benefit, while the side that fails to utilize these forces may experience challenges guiding the situation towards a favorable outcome.

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INTRODUCTION

Both sides in the American Revolutionary War used irregular (militia) forces, but the rebel side was more successful than Crown forces in employing militia. In 1775, rebel forces wrestled control of New Jersey from the loyalists with relative ease. In November 1776, a British Army-led offensive quickly regained New Jersey, although Crown forces were able to maintain control for only a short time. General George Washington, commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, led a counteroffensive using a mix of regulars and irregulars and pushed back forces led by Britain to regain New Jersey for the rebels.

The British military leadership's relationship with loyalist irregular forces in New Jersey provides insight to why the rebels were more successful. British military officers' previous experiences with colonial forces prevented adjustment of their operational approach and proved the decisive factor in the British loss of New Jersey. The British military's experience in defeating rebellions in Scotland and Ireland, and in fighting the French in North America, shaped the basis of the British approach at the outset of the American Revolutionary War. However, British military leadership identified changes in the nature of the fight faced in 1775 from previous conflicts in America. How did the British military leadership shape its evolving approach in order to combine regular and irregular forces? This monograph seeks to answer the question of how the relationship between regular and irregular military forces influenced operations in New Jersey during the winter of 1776-77, because despite occasional innovations by British commanders in combining regular and irregular forces against the rebels, ultimately the Continental Army was more successful in creating a system by which combining regulars and irregulars created opportunities for victory.

Relevance of the Topic

A study of the relationship between regular and irregular units is important to modern militaries for two reasons. The first reason concerns employment of irregular units and the consequences if the interaction of policy and relationships do not align. Support from colonists willing to support the British Crown was strong during the year 1774 and many volunteered to form military units, which British General Thomas Gage and British Parliament encouraged, but were ill-prepared to support.¹ Writing in 1969, George A. Biliias used the loyalist support in 1774 to critique British generals. “In carrying out their campaigns, many of them tended to be too traditional and to cling too closely to the military orthodoxies of the day.”² The lack of consistency of British policy may have been a contributing factor preventing the support of loyalists as enthusiasm shifted along with British policy and the result was not always favorable for the British. Recent American and Coalition experience in Afghanistan and Iraq revisits this issue of regular forces forming units and working alongside forces with different capabilities and expectations of military service.

The second relevant theme is the idea of locals taking responsibility for their safety and livelihood. Regular forces operating away from home have certain limitations, such as a long logistics tail, that are difficult to mitigate. Regular forces are employed for a limited period of time, operate at a numerical disadvantage compared to the population, and have difficulty matching the local population’s knowledge of the area. Employing irregular forces from the local area provides a means to compensate for the limitations of the regular force and facilitate

¹ Paul H. Smith, *Loyalists and Redcoats: A Study in British Revolutionary Policy* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 11.

² George Athan Biliias, ed., *George Washington’s Opponents: British Generals and Admirals in the American Revolution* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc, 1969), xxvi.

ownership of the problem by the local populace and the host nation. In the end, both sides benefit from a resolution to the conflict that includes the involvement of the host nation rather than predominantly outside parties. Gaining a position of advantage is made easier the quicker indigenous forces are incorporated to help solve the problem. Again, Iraq and Afghanistan provide examples of how positive achievement was gained after the involvement of competent indigenous military forces.

Terminology

Before going further, clarification of some basic terms is necessary. The people who lived during the American Revolutionary War possessed complex and varied opinions regarding the conflict, the exploration of which is a rich topic on its own accord but is beyond the scope of this work. Although generalizations tell an incomplete picture, some are necessary for ease of narration. Definitions presented are the work of the author and intended to create a basic level of understanding for key ideas presented. The definitions presented apply solely to this monograph.

Beginning with the rebels, anyone who favored independence from Britain will be referred to as *Whigs*. Not all Whigs took up arms against the British, but those who did are called *rebels*. The term *militia* refers to both rebel and loyalist units that generally participated in action close to home, on a part-time basis, and for a short duration.³ Specifically, rebel militia units were commonly referred to by their colony or county name, such as New Jersey Militia, or Monmouth County Militia, and fell under the jurisdiction of the rebel governor. Militia was intended to provide for local defense on a temporary basis and the rebel governor had to give approval prior to use outside the colony. Rebels who took up arms full-time and enlisted for at least a one-year

³ Rebel militia units, on occasion, served in adjacent colonies (and states post July 4, 1776), or further away and for extended time periods. The use of militia units outside the border of the colony or state required approval of the rebel governor. However, the more common use was to protect the local community and the colony.

contract are referred to as *Continental*s. These soldiers did not consider themselves as regulars, nor were they on par with British or Hessian regulars in areas such as conventional warfare training. However, Continental units represented the rebel force with the capability most closely associated with British regulars which is why Continentals will be treated as regulars and militia as irregulars.

Opposing the rebels were the British Army, German regiments, and colonial loyalists, collectively referred to as Crown forces. Beginning with the British Army, soldiers included regiments of English, Irish, and Scottish lineage.⁴ The British government attempted to augment the British Army by hiring additional forces, preferring regiments from Russia, but only a few German principalities accepted the offer.⁵ While German forces came from several principalities, the largest contributor was Hesse-Cassel, which provided 20,000 soldiers, compared to a combined total of 10,000 from the other German principalities.⁶ The term *Hessians* will be used indiscriminately to apply to all German regiments regardless of origin. Hessian presence in the British regulars is implicit unless specifically noted.

Colonists in the political faction that opposed independence will be called *Tories*. Anyone who took up arms in support of the British are referred to as *loyalists*. Differentiating various loyalist military units becomes a bit complicated due to variations in unit naming conventions, however a full-time loyalist soldier is referred to as a *Provincial*. The British used two generic terms when referring to such organizations- *Provincial Corps* and *Free Corps*. However, individual units had a variety of names such as the New Jersey Volunteers and the

⁴ Edward E. Curtis, *The Organization of the British Army in the American Revolution*, (New York: AMS Press, Inc, 1969), 1-7.

⁵ Ibid., 52.

⁶ David Hackett Fischer, *Washington's Crossing*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 51.

Queen's American Rangers. A variety of loyalist units existed with a mission similar to the rebel militia. However, little is known about these units due to their informal nature and subsequent lack of documentation. In Monmouth County, New Jersey, an attempt was made to form a loyalist militia which ultimately failed because of poor unit leadership and a shortage of military age males.⁷ Additionally, such organizations existed only where colonies maintained their loyalty, such as Nova Scotia and Quebec, or from areas the British recaptured such as in New York and Georgia.⁸

Structure of the Monograph

Section two explores the discussion of irregular units as a topic in academic and popular literature. The winning rebel side presented the Continental Army and the rebel militia as the force that gained independence, while the existence of loyalist units was intentionally ignored. Strong emotions about the loyalists who opposed the rebellion continued many years after the conclusion of the Revolution, which contributed to a gap in discussion about any loyalist involvement in the war. Generations passed before the topic of loyalists became acceptable to discuss in the U.S. mainstream dialogue about the war. The Bicentennial celebration of the American Revolution, as well as the Vietnam War, sparked interest and discussion about the involvement and contribution of irregular forces.

⁷ Cortlandt Skinner formally mustered the Monmouth County New Jersey Militia (loyalist) on January 10, 1777 and placed Colonel George Taylor, the son of prominent New Jersey politician Edward Taylor, in command of the organization on February 26, 1777. The unit was inhibited by poor timing. Few references discuss the loyalist militia, but British defeats at Trenton and Princeton diminished loyalist support. Additionally, the competition for recruits from by the New Jersey Volunteers likely reduced the pool of people available and capable of serving. Rebel militia similarly experienced a difficult time recruiting members.

⁸ Todd Braisted, ed., "Not All Loyalist Regiments Were Created Equal," *The On-Line Institute for Advanced Loyalist Studies*, February 2, 2001, accessed July 23, 2013, <http://www.royalprovincial.com/military/rlist/establish.htm>.

Section three provides background and context. The focus is on the colonial wars, specifically, King George's War, 1744-1748, and the French and Indian War, 1754-1763.⁹ The interaction between colonists and the British Army during these conflicts established the foundation for relationships during the American Revolutionary War. Then key information about New Jersey and Monmouth County is presented to set the stage for discussion of the case study units.

Section four looks at the interaction between regular and irregular units in Monmouth County, New Jersey. Specifically, section four focuses on the 1st Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers (loyalist) and section five focuses on the Monmouth County Militia (rebel). These units provide a glimpse into how irregular units were employed and how personal relationships and policies affected operations. Section six offers a few insights to consider when approaching future relationships.

LITERATURE REVIEW: USE OF IRREGULAR UNITS IN NEW JERSEY, 1776-1777

The American Revolutionary War was not fought exclusively between the professional military forces of Britain and the armed rebels of the Continental Army. During the opening years of the conflict, units composed of amateur soldiers, referred to as irregular units in this monograph, played various roles because no professional colonial units, on par with the British or Hessian military, existed at this point.¹⁰ Throughout the conflict, both the British and the rebels struggled to employ irregular units in an effective manner. However, after the colonies achieved independence the existence and actions of loyalist units was set aside from American memory to

⁹ King George's War was the North American portion of the European War of the Austrian Succession, 1740-1748. The French and Indian War was the North American portion of the European Seven Years' War, 1756-1763.

¹⁰ Robert K. Wright, Jr., *Army Lineage Series: The Continental Army*, (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1983), 8.

focus on the heroic actions of the victors and build unity. Popular literature, textbooks, and films reinforced the popularly held notions of the struggle of the rebel colonist against the British Redcoats. Consequently, that perception did not change until the early 1960s, when the Vietnam War, combined with the Bicentennial celebration of the American Revolution, sparked an interest into the actions of irregular units. Although academic literature dealing with the American Revolution went through a renewal, the average American did not read scholarly sources, and inaccurate popular beliefs persist. The period from the 1990s to early 2010s experienced a further increase in interest in the influence of loyalists and loyalist militia as historians sought a more complete picture of the war. However, there is still much to learn about the relationship between regular and irregular forces, particularly the relationship between the British and loyalist units.

The American Revolutionary War Period

The existence of loyalists and their involvement during the American Revolution is captured in historical writing of the period. In *The Crisis*, Thomas Paine devoted much attention to the Tories in his first letter.¹¹ Paine claimed anyone who did not support independence from Britain was a Tory, and anyone that took up arms against the rebel cause was a traitor.¹² Next, Thomas Paine presciently noted what commander-in-chief of the British Army, General Sir William Howe, needed to be successful in defeating the rebels: “Your opinions [Tories] are of no use to him [General Howe], unless you support him personally, for ‘tis soldiers, and not Tories,

¹¹ Thomas Paine, *Common Sense and The Crisis* (1776; repr., Garden City, NY, 1973), 72-73. From *The Crisis*, Letter Number 1, originally published on December 23, 1776.

¹² Paine, *Common Sense*, 97. Italics and emphasis in the original. “*He that is not a supporter of the independent states of America, in the same degree that his religious and political principles would suffer him to support the government of any other country, of which he called himself a subject, is, in the American sense of the word, A TORY; and the instant that he endeavors to bring his toryism into practice, he becomes A TRAITOR.*”

that he wants.”¹³ However, there were colonists willing to take up arms and organize in support of the Crown, as captured in the journal of Friedrich Ernst von Muenchhausen, a Hessian military officer who served as British General Sir William Howe’s aide.

Friedrich von Muenchhausen wrote his first reference to the use of loyalist units, the “Provincials of Jersey,” likely referring to the New Jersey Volunteers, on January 3, 1777.¹⁴ The first entry provides little detail but a later note on March 4, 1777 mentioned a secret mission led by Montfort Brown, a former governor of the Bahamas and brigadier general of a 1,000 man loyalist unit. The purpose of the mission was to free prisoners captured by the rebels and held in Connecticut. The mission failed, but even attempting such a mission required at least a small amount of trust and faith from the British military leadership and a level of loyalist military proficiency. Unfortunately, journals and personal letters of the time period offer few insights into the relationship between the British military and loyalist Provincial units.¹⁵

Post-Revolutionary War Until the 1950s

Very little was written about loyalists from the end of Revolution through the 1950s. In 1847, nearly sixty years after the end of the conflict, emotions among the general public were still high when Lorenzo Sabine published a two volume set of books documenting biographies of 6,000 loyalists. Sabine’s book sparked a good deal of public outrage by bringing attention to a

¹³ Ibid., 72-73.

¹⁴ Friedrich Ernst von Muenchhausen, *At General Howe's Side, 1776-1778: The diary of General William Howe's aide de camp*, ed. Samuel Smith, trans. Ernst Kippings (Monmouth Beach, NJ: Philip Freneau Press, 1974), 9.

¹⁵ See William Glanville Evelyn, *Memoir and Letters of Captain W. Glanville Evelyn, of the 4th Regiment, ("King's Own,") from North America, 1774-1776*, ed. G. D. Scull (New York: Arno Press Inc, 1971); and Muenchhausen, *At General Howe's Side*.

group of people most Americans still considered traitors.¹⁶ In 1895, Moses Coit Tyler published an article that countered popular biases against the Tories as a political party and their place during the war.¹⁷ Tyler drew attention to the absence of writing about Tories and its insignificant role in the description of Revolutionary War history.¹⁸ In 1902, Claude Halstead Van Tyne published a book titled *The Loyalists in the American Revolution*. Van Tyne and Tyler's work began the process of recognizing the influence of loyalists. Although these authors discussed a neglected aspect of the Revolution, interest in role of loyalists did not gain wider attention until the 1960s.

American historians offered various opinions why the involvement of the loyalist militia during the American Revolution took so long to gain attention. John Shy wrote,

Much about the event called the Revolutionary War had been very painful and was unpleasant to remember; only the outcome was unqualifiedly pleasant; so memory, as ever, began to play tricks with the event, which is not always a bad thing, though it makes the historian's task difficult.¹⁹

According to historian Paul H. Smith, "The neglect was largely intentional and sprang from the animosities engendered by the war."²⁰ Don Higginbotham echoed a similar explanation,

But if the complexity of early American military history has only recently been recognized by scholars, and if it went unacknowledged by many eighteenth-century

¹⁶ William L. Welch, "Lorenzo Sabine and His Critics," *The New England Quarterly* (September 2005: 448-452), 448-450.

¹⁷ Moses Coit Tyler, "The Party of the Loyalists in the American Revolution," *The American Historical Review* (Oxford University Press) vol 1, no 1 (October 1895), 26.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁹ John W. Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1990), 13.

²⁰ Smith, *Loyalists and Redcoats*, vii.

Americans as well, there is at least one very important reason--both then and later--for this omission. And that has to do with the power and persistence of myth.²¹

Historian Thomas B. Allen offered a third explanation in *Tories: Fighting for the King in America's First Civil War*,

Within a generation, those rebels would begin to forgive-and forget-the Tories. They would call the revolution a war between Americans and the British, losing from their collective memory the fact that much of the fighting had been between Americans and Americans.²²

It was largely forgotten that much of the fighting during the American Revolutionary War did not occur between the regular forces, but between irregular forces, which included loyalist units.

One potential source of information was from the colonists who fought in the loyalist units and left the United States following the war. In 1968, historian Paul H. Smith quantified the numerical strength of loyalists between the years 1775 and 1783. Smith placed the number of loyalists around 500,000 out of a total colonial population of 2.5 million in 1775 and 2.9 million in 1783.²³ Of that number, between 19,000 and 25,000 joined some sort of loyalist military organization, which is slightly lower than historian Lorenzo Sabine's estimate of 25,000, and he considered this number to be at the low end.²⁴ Sabine estimated twenty percent of that number died in documented engagements or lesser known engagements and skirmishes. This left a potential pool of 20,000 men with experience in loyalist units who fled the United States, most ending up in the Canadian territories, and who could write down their experiences.

²¹ Don Higginbotham, *War and Society in Revolutionary America: The Wider Dimensions of Conflict* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1988), 20.

²² Thomas B. Allen, *Tories: Fighting for the King in America's First Civil War* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 41 and 333.

²³ Paul H. Smith, "The American Loyalists: Notes on Their Organization and Numerical Strength" *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 25:2 (1968: 259-277), 269.

²⁴ Lorenzo Sabine, *Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution. Vol. 1* (1864; repr., Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc, 1979), 73.

Nova Scotia was a popular destination for loyalists seeking safety upon conclusion of the American Revolutionary War. The estimated number of loyalists who ended up in modern day Canadian territories varies, but generally account for over half of all loyalists who fled the United States following the end of the war. Historian Thomas B. Allen believes nearly 100,000 loyalists left their homes,²⁵ and Canadian textbooks place the number around 50,000 fleeing to Canada alone.²⁶ Historian Maya Jasanoff outlines the variations in estimates and difficulties of obtaining accurate numbers in her book, *Liberty's Exiles*.²⁷ She believes the total number leaving the United States was no more than 60,000, with around 35,000 arriving in territories now known as Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Quebec. But even within Anglo-Canadian literature, loyalist writing is scarce. The small number of loyalists who fled meant a smaller potential supply of information.²⁸ Upon arrival at their destination, survival was the priority, not writing their experiences from the failed attempt to end the rebellion.

Interest in Revolutionary Wars and the Influence of Popular Literature

American interest in the Revolutionary War increased with the approach of the Bicentennial in 1976. Notable authors in the early 1960s included British historian Piers Mackesy and American historians Paul H. Smith and Don Higginbotham. Mackesy approached the conflict from a global power projection perspective. Higginbotham wrote on a variety of Revolutionary War topics, including the militia, while Smith's *Loyalists and Redcoats* explored British

²⁵ Thomas B. Allen, *Tories: Fighting for the King in America's First Civil War* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 333.

²⁶ Dana Lindaman and Kyle Ward, *History Lessons: How Textbooks from Around the World Portray U.S. History* (New York: The New Press, 2004), 44.

²⁷ Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 351-358.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

Parliament as well as the British Army and Navy's experiences trying to leverage loyalists to suppress the rebellion.²⁹ The impact of American involvement in the Vietnam War was significant because it sparked interest in the concept of revolutionary warfare, and drew attention to the fight for control within the populace.

The treatment of the American Revolution as a civil war brought to light the involvement of other actors besides the British Army and the Continental Army and the possibility of other layers to the conflict, like the involvement of loyalist units and rebel militia. John Shy noted the intense and violent struggle between colonists, which drew attention to the actions of the rebel militia and the loyalist Provincial Corps. Shy noted the level of internal violence reached a level comparable to the United States' Civil War.³⁰ Stathis N. Kalyvas, a political scientist who wrote *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, explained that violence used intentionally during civil war can serve a political purpose.³¹ The American Revolutionary War is not a foundational example in Kalyvas' book, but the idea that violence can have a political purpose in conflict is a concept worth keeping in mind when considering the recruitment of soldiers and interaction between regular and irregular military forces.

Not all books written in the 1960s and 1970s shared in the revival of the use of the rebel and loyalist militia. *George Washington's Opponents*, a collection of essays by multiple authors, rarely discussed relations between the British military and loyalist militia. Writing in 1969, historian George Athan Bilias believed some historians focused on a narrow view of history solely in terms of "battles and campaigns." Instead, a more complete understanding of the

²⁹ Smith, *Loyalists and Redcoats*.

³⁰ Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed*, vii-viii and 183.

³¹ Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 19-28.

Revolutionary War required consideration “in terms of the complex problems of strategy, logistics, and civil-military relations facing the British.”³² Published in 1975, Ian Hogg and John Batchelor’s *Armies of the American Revolution* included a sentence about the strength of loyalists in the cover jacket, but failed to provide further details about loyalist units fighting on behalf of the British.³³ If scholarly sources avoided the topic, non-academic sources did not do any better.

Grade school textbooks and mainstream literature consistently reinforced the popular understanding of the American Revolution. Textbooks portrayed the American Revolution as an epic, heroic, and patriotic struggle for freedom from the oppressive British Redcoats. Historical fiction novels also shaped popular and idealized beliefs about the Revolution. *Johnny Tremain*, written by Esther Forbes and published in 1943, used a Whig perspective to relate a story of hope for rebels fighting the British. Other novels with pro-independence themes include *My Brother Sam is Dead*, *Drums Along the Mohawk*, and *The Kent Family Chronicles* series.³⁴ *Johnny Tremain* and *Drums Along the Mohawk* were also adapted into films in 1957 and 1939 respectively. There may be a practical reason for the exclusion of loyalist influence from popular literature. Schoolbooks and movies can only present a limited amount of material that supports the accepted dominant narrative. Scripts and plots tend to be simple because elementary school children are not expected to understand the complexities of the various competing groups and

³² Biliias, *George Washington’s Opponents*, ix, xv, and 65.

³³ Ian V. Hogg and John H. Batchelor, *Armies of the American Revolution* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1975), 8. “It is often forgotten that something like one-third of the British subjects in the American colonies were loyal to King and Empire throughout the Revolutionary War.” Various soldiers are described, including the Continentals, rebel militia, British, Hessians, Indians, French, but no mention of loyalist units.

³⁴ *The Kent Family Chronicles* series includes eight books published between 1974 and 1979 by John William Jakes under the pen name of Jay Scotland. Walter D. Edmonds wrote *Drums Along the Mohawk* in 1936, which was adapted into film in 1939. James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier wrote *My Brother Sam is Dead* in 1974.

their respective motivations. Fortunately, the absence of attention to irregular forces in non-academic sources has not prevented research and interest in the topic.

1990s to 2010s

A renewal of interest in irregular forces began in the 1990s, carrying through the 2010s, which addresses the multiple parties involved. Published in 1996, *Washington's Partisan War* provided a comprehensive look at the use of the militia and irregular tactics.³⁵ Two decades later, historian Robert J. Allison occasionally mentioned loyalists in his short narrative of the war titled *The American Revolution*. Narrowing the search to New Jersey provides little insight to the interaction between regulars and irregulars. Michael S. Adelberg, a historian specializing in the state's history, wrote *The American Revolution in Monmouth County*, but his focus was more on the residents and their political affiliations and less on the interaction between military regulars and the militia.³⁶ Research during this period made progress but the discussion of loyalists and their influence remains immature and generally limited to broad facts like strength of units, and actions while any mention of relationships and personal interaction are absent. The absence of research into the relationship between loyalist commanders and their counterparts in the British and Hessian military deserves further consideration.

SHAPING OPINIONS AND SETTING THE STAGE

The relationship between regulars and irregulars at the start of the Revolutionary War was shaped by the previous colonial wars, particularly King George's War, 1744-1748, and the French and Indian War, 1754-1763. These conflicts laid the foundation for expectations and

³⁵ Mark V. Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War, 1775-1783* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1996).

³⁶ Michael S. Adelberg, *The American Revolution in Monmouth County: the Theatre of Spoil and Destruction* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2010).

tension between loyalist units and the British military as well as how rebel military forces would be organized. These conflicts provide context to better understand the relationship between regulars and irregulars during the winter campaign in New Jersey from December 1776 to May 1777. The later portion of this section provides a description of relevant information about New Jersey and Monmouth County to better understand the context that shaped the relationship between regular and irregular units.

King George's War, 1744-1748

King George's War, which occurred from 1744 to 1748, was the American portion of the War of Austrian Succession, fought between 1740 and 1748. The conflict started in Europe when the head of the Austrian branch of the House of Habsburg, Emperor Charles VI, died in 1740 leaving his daughter, Maria Theresa, in power. The ability of Maria to hold the position was called into question by the King of Prussia, Frederick II who immediately invaded and seized Silesia Province. Seeing an opportunity, others joined in, including Bavaria, France, and Spain, to capture portions of Austria. Assisting Austria were Britain and the Dutch Republic, among others, although Britain did not formally declare war on France until March, 1744, which brought the conflict to North America.³⁷

Two primary missions of British soldiers stationed in the colonies were to suppress civil insurrection and defend British territory against Native American and European adversaries. However, the British military was unable to send large numbers of regular troops to America with more significant fighting occurring throughout the British Empire and Europe.³⁸ Instead, British

³⁷ Robert Leckie, *The Wars of America, Volume 1: From 1600-1900* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), 30-31.

³⁸ Alan R. Millett, and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense, A Military History of the United States of America* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 36.

colonists would have to do a majority of the fighting themselves. Consequently, British military defeats, like at Cartagena, Spain, undermined the myth of invincibility around the British soldier. Victories by colonists, such as at Louisburg, instilled confidence in the military abilities of the colonists.

In 1741, three years before fighting broke out in North America, British colonists were recruited to join the British army and navy in an expedition against Cartagena, Spain. For this campaign alone, "Eleven colonies provided thirty-six companies of 100 men each, organized into the 'American Regiment' commanded by Virginia Governor William Gooch."³⁹ The regiment linked up with British Admiral Edward Vernon in Jamaica then sailed across the Atlantic to attack the Spanish at Cartagena. The expedition ultimately failed because of disease, lack of supplies, and an ineffective command system more so than the superior action of the Spanish. The mission was led by British military professionals whom the colonists held in high regard, but the defeat undermined the myth of invincibility around the British soldier. Additionally, despite poor conditions for all, colonial soldiers believed they were treated harshly by the British.

In contrast, four years later a colonial militia force, supported by the British Royal Navy, laid siege to a French stronghold and won. The capture of Louisburg in June 1745 was seen as a major victory for colonial forces against the French troops. The colonial militia force, composed of 4,000 men and commanded by William Pepperrell, a prominent merchant from Massachusetts Bay Colony with no military training, laid siege to Louisburg for seven weeks while a British naval squadron prevented assistance from reaching the city. Although one professional soldier present noted the militia was led by "People totally Ignorant of the military skills necessary in such an undertaking" the mission was successful.⁴⁰ The victory at Louisburg increased colonists'

³⁹ Ibid., 35.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 36.

confidence in the abilities of colonial militia forces and further decreased the credibility of British regulars, especially in light of the failure of the Cartagena mission.

In 1746, trying to capitalize on the success of Louisburg, the governor of Massachusetts, William Shirley, proposed a plan to the British government to continue attacking French territories with a combined colonial and British force. Governor Shirley raised a colonial army but the British force did not arrive due to European commitments, which caused colonists to question Britain's commitment to the colonies.

To the detriment of the colonists, Louisburg was returned to the French in 1748 as part of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle that ended the War of Austrian Succession. Colonists felt "the mother country had callously disregarded their sacrifices and had sacrificed their security on the altar of England's own selfish interests."⁴¹ In the end, King George's War provided confidence in the military abilities of colonists but stoked tensions between colonial soldiers and the British military that carried over to the next conflict, the French and Indian War.

French and Indian War, 1754-1763

Fighting broke out again in North America in May 1754 as the French and Indian War, and within two years fighting spread to Europe as the Seven Years' War.⁴² In North America, fighting erupted over control of the Ohio River Valley, as both France and Britain had interest in the fertile region. Fighting throughout the first year was conducted by French and British colonists as the mother countries were happy to keep the conflict contained in North America.

Predicting an outcome by population alone, the British should easily have defeated the French. In 1754, nearly 80,000 French colonists were located in North America, while there were

⁴¹ Ibid., 36-37.

⁴² Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 4-5.

1.25 million British colonists.⁴³ However, the consolidation of the French colonists under one governor, with the authority to command troops, allowed for quicker political and subsequent military decisions. In contrast, the qualities of the British colonists and their separate governments delayed unified action. A British colonial governor could not order the people to fight. British colonists guarded their freedom, peace, and prosperity and were composed of a mix of heterogeneous races, religions, languages, forms of government, and interests.⁴⁴ These qualities continued through to the Revolutionary War and conflicted with methods of raising, organizing and employing colonial loyalist units by British military officers.

The commander sent to America to command British and colonial forces was Major General Edward Braddock, who “had not been in America very long before he condemned most colonials as a crowd of ignorant sloths, reserving a special contempt for colonial troops.”⁴⁵ General Braddock was a proponent of the European style of warfare which concentrated troops to overcome the inaccuracy and short range of the musket to produce shock upon the enemy. Such tactics were not suited well to the terrain in America and proved disastrous when used against the French at Fort Duquesne. The French force of 900 men (650 Native Americans, 100 French Troupes de la Marine, and 150 Canadian militia) attacked Braddock’s force of 1,400 British regulars and 450 Virginia militia seven miles from Fort Duquesne. Braddock’s British troops fought in traditional European fashion while the Virginia militia and enemy fought from behind trees and while laying down to provide a more difficult target to hit. The Virginia militia soldiers were able to hit some of the enemy while the British, grouped in tight formation and standing out

⁴³ Leckie, *The Wars of America*, 40.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 40-41.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 44-45.

in the open, were easily shot.⁴⁶ During the engagement, General Braddock was fatally shot before ordering the retreat. The example of Fort Duquesne demonstrated that although the colonists and British military were supposed to be citizens under the same king, their experiences, views, and style of warfare were vastly different.

Colonists served militarily in two ways. The first method was alongside regulars in British regiments to increase unit strength while the second method involved forming separate provincial units. Regardless of which method was used, British regulars did not hold colonial soldiers in high-regard when it came to military service.⁴⁷ British officers believed colonial troops were “ill-disciplined, lazy, lacked even elementary knowledge of camp sanitation, and suffered as appalling rate of sickness.”⁴⁸ Also, British officers were themselves of a higher social standing than colonial officers and did not treat colonial officers as social or professional equals. Furthermore, colonial enlisted soldiers were generally of a higher social status than British enlisted regulars of similar rank and viewed corporal punishment as demeaning.⁴⁹

While provincial officers had traditionally relied on exhortation and admonishment to maintain discipline, English officers inflicted ferocious punishment upon enlisted men, including liberal use of the lash and, for serious offenses, execution by hanging or firing squad. To colonial soldiers, whippings and executions were horrific and unnecessary.⁵⁰

As a result, British officers gave colonial soldiers menial tasks such as building roads and forts, or serving as boatmen or wagoners. In Europe, these tasks were normally performed by civilians.

As the war progressed, the British military adapted to an American style of fighting that

⁴⁶ Ibid., 44-49.

⁴⁷ Higginbotham, *War and Society in Revolutionary America*, 35.

⁴⁸ Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 42.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 42-46.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 43.

incorporated people with different degrees of military training, including Native Americans, colonists, as well as recent immigrants from Europe. All of these recruits required equipment, training and organization prior to use by the British military. Historian Stephen Brumwell wrote “The challenge of American campaigning created a remarkably flexible [British] force that proved capable of waging both the ‘conventional’ warfare of the Old World, and operating under the very different ‘irregular’ conditions of the New.”⁵¹ The experience incorporating recruits of a varied background should have better prepared Britain for some of the challenges it would face during the Revolutionary War.

Nearly twenty-eight thousand colonists fought during the Seven Years’ War,⁵² and historian Douglas Edward Leach argues in *Roots of Conflict* that some colonists believed their style of warfare was “neither possessed nor appreciated by the [British] regulars”⁵³ Historians Millett and Maslowski summarized the view of colonists regarding the performance of the British military early in the war by noting “Ambitious plans produced meager results, while New France seemed to succeed in every endeavor.”⁵⁴ In contrast, British military officers believed “the inadequacies of the [Provincial soldiers] and the difficulties experienced in raising colonial forces obliged the army command to rely more heavily on regulars sent from Britain, which increased Parliamentary responsibility and the burden the war placed on the British tax- payer”⁵⁵ British military officers and soldiers fought alongside colonial officers and soldiers yet neither was able

⁵¹ Brumwell, *Redcoats*, 6-7.

⁵² Sabine, *Biographical Sketches*. Vol. 1, 72.

⁵³ Douglas Edward Leach, *Roots of Conflict* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 161-166.

⁵⁴ Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 39.

⁵⁵ Keith Perry, *British Politics and the American Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 28.

to truly understand one another. This lack of understanding would carry over to the American Revolutionary War in New Jersey.

Significance of New Jersey in 1776

In 1776, Thomas Paine wrote “Why is it that the enemy have left the New-England provinces, and made these middle ones the seat of war? The answer is easy: New-England is not infested with Tories, and we are.”⁵⁶ The colonies of Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey were the primary theater of operations and the area “where the largest armies of both sides remained from 1776 to the end.”⁵⁷

Towards the end of 1776, Continental soldiers deserted the ranks daily. General George Washington’s combined force of twenty thousand Continentals and militia did its best just to survive the British onslaught and winter weather. Washington struggled to maintain some sense of cohesion as a fighting force as the Continental Army and the rebellion grew closer to complete destruction. Achieving the goals of the Declaration of Independence, adopted in July 1776, looked hopeless.

Sir William Howe’s force of thirty-two thousand men, the largest expeditionary military force ever assembled by Britain, experienced little trouble against the opposing rebel forces. There was a real opportunity for the British to end the entire rebellion by destroying General Washington’s Army in New Jersey. However, the British assessment at the time concluded that the rebellion would end when the Continental Army’s one year enlistments expired on December 31, 1776. Under this assumption, General Howe did not aggressively pursue destruction of

⁵⁶ Paine, *Common Sense*, 72-73.

⁵⁷ Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War*, xiv.

Washington's Army to put an end to the conflict.⁵⁸

New Jersey possessed several advantages for loyalists and the British. First, there was a significant population of loyalists due to close proximity to the city of New York, which also provided an economic boost upon establishment of British camps at Staten and Long Island. British ties with coastal New Jersey were further strengthened because of trade via sea with Great Britain. The rebellion was not popular in New Jersey because it threatened the livelihoods of many colonists.⁵⁹

New Jersey's royal governor, William Franklin chose to maintain loyalty to the Crown and oppose the rebellion against the wishes of his father and prominent rebel, Benjamin Franklin. William could have chosen to support the rebels, like Connecticut's governor Jonathan Trumbull, Sr., but instead decided to honor his oath of office.⁶⁰ Militarily, the largest loyalist unit, the New Jersey Volunteers, came from New Jersey. Even with these advantages, "at first, General Howe planned only to occupy eastern New Jersey, where he would station a large force to collect forage and supplies... [However] loyalists assured Howe that Washington's army was disintegrating, and if pursued further, the rebels would disperse."⁶¹ Instead of fizzling out, the rebellion gained new life in New Jersey.

Within New Jersey, four counties possessed characteristics advantageous for the British. Of the thirteen counties in New Jersey, the four situated closest to the British stronghold of New York City were Bergen, Essex, Middlesex and Monmouth. All four counties had access to

⁵⁸ Alfred Hoyt Bill, *New Jersey and the Revolutionary War* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1964), 13.

⁵⁹ William H. Nelson, *The American Tory* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1980), 87 and 91.

⁶⁰ Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War*, 4-6.

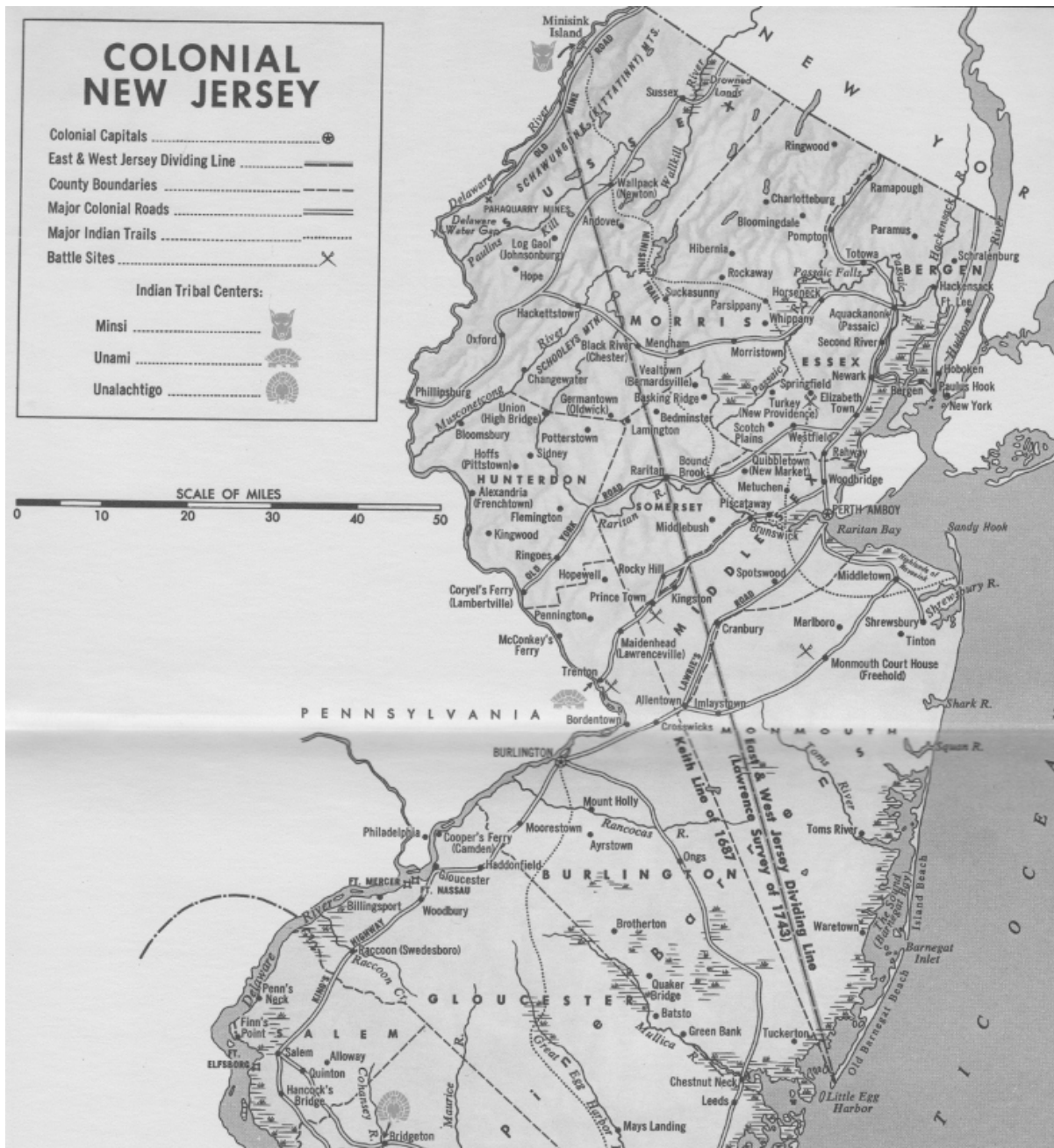
⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 90. See notes 58 and 59 on page 90.

navigable waterways for the British Navy. Loyalist support was higher in these counties than in other parts of New Jersey. Of all post-war claims by loyalists in New Jersey to Britain, two-thirds came from these four counties.⁶² The post war New Jersey state government confiscated 120 loyalist estates in Monmouth County. This number exceeds that of any other New Jersey county.⁶³ Additionally, for the purpose of military study, all four counties witnessed minor skirmishes as well as larger battles. These four counties offered the best opportunity for the British to maintain royal control.

⁶² David J. Fowler, *Egregious Villains, Wood Rangers, and London Traders: The Pine Robber Phenomenon in New Jersey During the Revolutionary War* (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1987), 38-39.

⁶³ Adelberg, *The American Revolution*, 25.

Figure 1. Map of Colonial New Jersey



Source. Alfred Hoyt Bill, *New Jersey and the Revolutionary War* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1964).

Monmouth County

During the Revolutionary War, Monmouth County included present day Monmouth and Ocean Counties. Between the pine forest interior and coastal area exterior, Monmouth County

was rugged and wild. Historian David J. Fowler described the people who lived there as similarly rugged and independent.⁶⁴ The land area ran 32 miles east-west and 65 miles north-south, nearly 1,100 square miles total. The county was rural and sparsely populated, with few roads. The coastline stretched 80 miles, with much of the shore areas unpopulated. The lighthouse at Sandy Hook aided the safe passage of ships into New York Harbor, which meant control of the lighthouse also meant control of New York harbor. The ports were too shallow for the large ships of the British Navy to use, although ships could be anchored at sea and troops sent ashore on smaller landing craft.⁶⁵

Monmouth County was the second wealthiest county in New Jersey based upon tax assessments and trade. It was also one of the most diverse, ethnically, religiously, and culturally in New Jersey.⁶⁶ The county divided economic ties between New York City and Philadelphia, with the former dominating the northern part of the county and the latter dominating the southern. Salt making provided a source of income, of which Union Saltworks was the largest producer. Additionally, proximity to newly arrived British troops to Staten Island proved a lucrative and profitable business as British troops created a high demand for goods.⁶⁷

In 2009, Michael S. Adelberg, a historian specializing in the history of Monmouth County during the American Revolution, completed a comprehensive study of Monmouth County's Revolutionary-era records to determine the political orientation of the population and the severity of impact of the revolution. Of the total population of 12,500 people, Adelberg was

⁶⁴ Fowler, *Egregious Villains*, 2-6.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 37-43.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 27-28. See Ch 1, notes 1 and 2.

⁶⁷ Adelberg, *The American Revolution*, 100.

able to identify the political orientation of 5,500 adult white men and 1,000 women.⁶⁸ Adelberg determined “those opposing the Revolution were nearly as numerous as supporters (approximately 1,600 versus 1,900) and that over 20 percent of the adult males in the county suffered tangibly during the war.”⁶⁹ Accounting for a portion of the remaining population, African Americans totaled 1,000, or about 10 percent of the population.⁷⁰ Quakers were neutral and pacifists according to their religious beliefs, but a small minority succumbed to pressure from non-Quakers to participate in the conflict. Of those that took sides, thirty-six became Whigs, and twenty-six loyalists.⁷¹

Monmouth County represented the best chance for continued British control of any of the counties in New Jersey for a variety of reasons. Of the county’s estimated population of 12,500, more than 600 men from Monmouth County enrolled in the New Jersey Volunteers, the largest loyalist unit of the colonies.⁷² In 1776, nearly thirty percent of the population in Monmouth County, 1,700 people, supported the British. In contrast, nearly 2,000 Monmouthers supported the

⁶⁸ Michael S. Adelberg, "An Evenly Balanced County: The Scope and Severity of Civil Warfare in Revolutionary Monmouth County, New Jersey," *The Journal of Military History* (January 2009: 9-47), 15. Page 12 of the article notes how the author compiled the assessment. “In this case, the author has pulled together a comprehensive population roster and events database for one particularly war-torn county, Monmouth County, New Jersey, tabulating individual-level data from the widest possible variety of sources: letters, newspaper accounts, military returns and records, tax lists, church lists, court records, petitions, and credible local histories.”

⁶⁹ Adelberg, "An Evenly Balanced County," 9. Adverse incidents during the war included death, wounding, capture, property loss, or legal punishment.

⁷⁰ Adelberg, *The American Revolution*, 28-41.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁷² Fowler, *Egregious Villains*, chapter 2, note 19; and Adelberg, "An Evenly Balanced County," 25.

Revolution.⁷³ On June 29, 1776, the British captured the lighthouse at Sandy Hook before any other portion of New Jersey and maintained a garrison there to protect it throughout the conflict. Possession of the lighthouse ensured continued access for the Royal Navy to New York Harbor. It was for all these reasons that Monmouth County provided needed advantages for the British during the winter of 1776-1777.

Despite loyalist tendencies and advantages for British forces, Adelberg wrote “It is important to bear in mind that throughout the Revolutionary war and its civil war, Monmouth County comprised a patchwork of allegiances in a dynamic situation that could change daily.”⁷⁴ The town of Freehold, located towards the interior of the state, was firmly anti-British. Closer to the northern coast, Shrewsbury was the opposite and firmly loyalist. Both locations experienced battles and skirmishes.⁷⁵ These factors combine to make Monmouth County a useful case study for the winter campaign of 1776-1777 in New Jersey.

RELATIONSHIP WITH BRITISH REGULARS

This section takes a closer look at the loyalist side through the experiences of the 1st Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers (loyalist). Policies and interaction between British military and loyalist units are explored to frame the discussion. Then, the history of the 1st Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers (loyalist) is provided. The discussion begins with a look at the recruitment of soldiers for the British Army to suppress the rebellion, which offers insight into the mindset of the British officers as well as their personal biases against colonists.

⁷³ Adelberg, "An Evenly Balanced County," 23.

⁷⁴ Fowler, *Egregious Villains*, 33-34.

⁷⁵ John K. Robertson, Patrick O'Kelley, and Norm Desmarais, eds, "Battles, Raids, and Skirmishes of the American Revolution," *RevWar*'75, February 16, 2003, accessed November 18, 2013. <http://revwar75.com/battles/index.htm>.

Recruitment of Forces

The British government pursued several methods to increase the strength of its army to suppress the uprising in the American colonies including expanding the pool of potential recruits from the British Isles, hiring existing professional armies from Europe and commissioning gentlemen to raise entire regiments, and finally recruiting from colonists. The first recruiting method pursued was expanding voluntary service by softening policies to bring in recruits. Military service was now open to Roman Catholics if they signed a statement declaring they were Protestant. Service in the military was normally for life, however the obligation for service was changed to three years or until the end of the rebellion.⁷⁶ Another method used to expand recruitment was to pardon convicted criminals who agreed to serve in the military. Eventually, Britain also expanded the available pool of recruits beyond Englishmen to include Irishmen and Scotsmen.

Next, the British government tried to hire whole units from other lands, such as the Russians and the Hessians. Monarchs from the later eventually accepted. General Howe explained his preference for organized European military units,

South Carolina and Georgia must be the Objects for Winter. But to complete this Plan, not less than ten Ships of the Line will be absolutely requisite, and a Reinforcement of Troops to the Amount of 15,000 Rank and File, which I should hope may be had from Russia, or from Hanover, and other German States, particularly some Hanoverian Chasseurs, who I am well informed are exceeding good Troops.”⁷⁷

When efforts to hire European units fell short, the Crown allowed the military to pursue other

⁷⁶ Curtis, *The Organization of the British Army*, 163. Letter from War Office, December 16, 1775.

⁷⁷ William Howe to Lord Germain, letter dated November 30, 1776, (British Public Record Office, Colonial Office, Class 5 Files: Part 5: The American Revolution, 1772-1784. Reel II, Volume 93: Military Correspondence of the British Generals, January 1776-December 1776) letter number 0527.

routes to increase manning, such as allowing British gentlemen, from the British Isles as well as the colonies, to raise their own regiments. Thirteen such regiments of foot, and an additional three regiments of dragoons, were raised in this manner between 1775 and 1779.⁷⁸ The gentleman authorized by the king to raise the unit was often commissioned as the unit's commanding officer, regardless of military training or experience, and gained several responsibilities. This included recruiting soldiers, nominating officers, and other conditions as agreed upon between the individual and the secretary of war. Subordinate officers generally bought their commissions in such units.⁷⁹

Eventually, the supply of soldiers from Britain was determined by General Howe and Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord George Germain to be insufficient and the recruitment of colonists was expanded.⁸⁰ General Sir William Howe arrived at Staten Island, New York on July 7, 1776, to find that about sixty men from Shrewsbury, New Jersey, arrived a few days prior and offered their services. Howe was delighted to hear from colonists loyal to the Crown, pledging to fight the rebellion, with more just waiting for the British to arrive and free them from the rebels. So ecstatic was Howe that he ordered the procurement of supplies to outfit 10,000 loyalist soldiers. However, by the fall of 1776 only around 3,000 loyalists came forward, far short of expectations.⁸¹

The technique of commissioning gentlemen to raise regiments was also used in the colonies and the method used to raise the six battalions of the New Jersey Volunteers. On 4

⁷⁸ Curtis, *The Organization of the British Army*, 72.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 72.

⁸⁰ Todd Braisted, ed., "Regular Army/Royal Navy," *The On-Line Institute for Advanced Loyalist Studies*, January 2, 2013, accessed August 13, 2013 <http://www.royalprovincial.com/military/army/rarrcrt.htm>.

⁸¹ Smith, *Loyalists and Redcoats*, 61.

September 1776, the British appointed Cortland Skinner, one of New Jersey's most famous loyalists, as a Brigadier General, and placed him in command of expanding the New Jersey Volunteers. Skinner was a former attorney general of New Jersey and a major general in the Monmouth County Militia under the royal government of William Franklin.⁸² However, Skinner was never able to bring the New Jersey Volunteers to its requested full strength of 1,600 men. Overall, British efforts to recruit loyalists were not very successful as Skinner was never able to reach full regimental strength and Howe's expectations of 10,000 loyalist recruits was a gross overestimation. An explanation for the disparity between expectations and low recruitment of loyalists lies with British assumptions about the necessity of loyalist forces and their intended use.

British Assumptions Influence the Use of Loyalists

Throughout 1776, the Howe brothers felt their force could handle the rebels. The British Army succeeded in suppressing the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 in Scotland, had experience fighting in the colonies, and possessed the capability to project force through land and sea power. Furthermore, as their experience in the colonies continued, British generals saw only evidence confirming preconceived notions that the colonials were undisciplined and incapable of traditional European style warfare. The Howe brothers did not believe a large loyalist force was necessary to end the rebellion, although they did not turn away loyalists willing to fight. The British did not seriously consider expanding the use of loyalists until 1778 when Friedrich von Lossberg, a Hessian general, pointed out that the territory was too large and populated for the size of the military force available. The result was that loyalists were included in the southern strategy

⁸² Todd Braisted, ed., "Major Figures General Cortland Skinner 1776-1783," *The On-Line Institute for Advanced Loyalist Studies*, October 22, 2013, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www.royalprovincial.com/history/figures/skinner.shtml>.

beginning in March, 1778, where regulars would fight to defeat the rebel military forces and gain control of territory, then loyalist forces would take over and maintain order.⁸³ Interestingly, this was the opposite technique employed to defeat the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, where irregulars did the fighting and regulars secured the territory under British control.⁸⁴

However, loyalists did come forward to fight for the Crown, but many did so as individuals seeking muskets and gunpowder from the British to fight their Whig neighbors, not organize into military units. General Howe did not approve of this type of activity and offered arms only to those willing to organize into military units under British authority. Howe also believed placing loyalists in positions to fight against their fellow colonists would make the accomplishment of peace more difficult. Instead, Howe preferred to use loyalists in garrison duty, transport, and similar non-combat activities because there was no sense of urgency to recruit colonists to fight on behalf of the Crown.⁸⁵ Drawing on Howe's European military experience, the primary uses for indigenous recruits were spies, guides, supplies and a labor force. The tasks given to loyalists did not prove as much a point of contention between loyalists and the British as the lack of equal status and use of corporal punishment. Despite the fact that British soldiers were recruited from all walks of life, including convicted criminals, colonial recruits were held in lower regard by British military soldiers and officers alike.

Harsh treatment and corporal punishment by British redcoats was a common complaint of provincials during the colonial wars, well before the American Revolution. Historian John Grenier observed that European armies,

⁸³ Higginbotham, *War and Society in Revolutionary America*, 165-166.

⁸⁴ John Grenier, *The First Way of War, American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 102-108.

⁸⁵ Donald Barr Chidsey, *The Tide Turns, An Informal History of the Campaign of 1776 in the American Revolution* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc, 1966), 85-87.

Were little more than mobile prisons manned by the poorest and most destitute members of European society. Controlling pillaging, and thus desertion – the greatest threat to eighteenth century armies – became one of the main responsibilities of the West European officer and noncommissioned officer corps. [To keep soldiers in line,] Officers and noncommissioned officers...brutalized their men with corporal punishments. Discipline ... was the soul of the armies.⁸⁶

Discipline could be harsh. Military historian Maurer Maurer explained how “British courts-martial could, and did, impose sentences of five hundred, one thousand, or even two thousand lashes.”⁸⁷ Colonists in general, including loyalists, were not accustomed to such treatment. Historian Paul H. Smith noted “[t]he early failure [between 1774-1775] to utilize loyalists, however, resulted not from a want of loyalist enthusiasm but primarily from unpreparedness and the inability of the administration to coordinate them with other plans emanating from Whitehall.”⁸⁸

British Officer Opinions of Loyalists

Loyalists had two strikes against them when dealing with British regulars. First, British officers generally held all colonists in low regard. One particular British Marine officer, Captain John Bowater, wrote,

The Natives [colonists] are such a Leveling, underbred, Artfull, Race of people that we Cannot Associate with them. Void of principal, their whole Conversation is turn'd on their Interest, and as gratitude they have no such word in their dictionary & cant or wont understand what it means.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 91-92.

⁸⁷ Maurer Maurer, "Military Justice Under General Washington," in *Military Analysis of the Revolutionary War, An Anthology by the Editors of Military Affairs* (Millwood, NY: KTO Press, 1977), 60.

⁸⁸ Smith, *Loyalists and Redcoats*, 11.

⁸⁹ Marion Balderston and David Syrett, *The Lost War, Letters from British Officers during the American Revolution* (New York: Horizon Press, 1975), 121-123. Letter from Captain John Bowater to Lord Basil Feilding, the 6th Earl of Denbigh, April 4, 1777.

Second, professional British officers did not think much of amateur colonials, dabbling in the practice of warfare. British military officers and soldiers would not accept that amateur military officers might rise in rank and create a situation where professional British soldiers might serve under a military officer of colonial heritage. One such officer was Sir Henry Clinton, commander-in-chief of the British Army from 1778 until 1782, who discussed the relationship between Provincial officers and British officers in his memoirs, published after the war. Clinton explained that British officers did not like taking orders from the Provincials. The British viewed Provincials as ignorant of the profession of arms. Highlighting this opinion is General Clinton's decision to continue a policy from the French and Indian War that required Provincial officers in the rank of major, lieutenant colonel and colonel to take orders from captains in the British army.⁹⁰ The policy applied when provincial units were in the field so that British regulars did not take orders from provincial officers. However, in 1758, King George II changed the policy to gain the support of the colonies to raise regiments for the war. Now provincial officers would maintain their rank and only serve as juniors to comparable regular officers.⁹¹

According to historian Paul H. Smith, "Britain's disappointment with the Loyalists' active participation derived from at least two fundamental factors- official overestimation of the numerical strength of the Loyalists, and chronic inability to formulate realistic policies which would secure their maximum assistance."⁹² As a result of having insufficient numbers to form independent colonial units, the British were faced with the difficult issue of how to utilize those

⁹⁰ Henry Clinton, *The American Rebellion, Sir Henry Clinton's Narrative of his Campaigns, 1775-1782, with an Appendix of Original Documents*, ed. William B. Willcox (Archon Books, 1971), 127-128.

⁹¹ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and The Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 214 and 227-229.

⁹² Smith, *Loyalists and Redcoats*, 61-62.

loyalists who did come forward to defend the Crown. One policy of the British Parliament was to use loyalists to augment the British Army, which stemmed from the regimental system of organization. Existing regiments would receive recruits to reach full strength rather than create new regiments. In theory, loyalist men were of sufficient quantity to bolster the British ranks. This policy was acceptable for enlisted ranks, but proved troublesome for officers. The British officer belief of superiority over colonials and policies that placed colonial officers under lower-ranked British officers contributed to resentment among loyalists who considered themselves British subjects and of equal status.

However, despite unfavorable past experiences, not all Provincials were viewed with contempt. General Sir William Howe thought highly of Cortland Skinner, the second most influential New Jersey loyalist after Governor William Franklin. Howe wrote that Skinner possessed “Extensive knowledge of the country and the characters of the Americans.”⁹³ General William Howe expressed his support for Cortland Skinner to Lord George Germain in a letter dated December 20, 1776. Howe stated:

“I cannot close this letter without making mention of the good services rendered in the course of the campaign by Cortland Skinner, Esq., Attorney-General in the Jerseys, who has been indefatigable, and of infinite service, since the Army entered those Provinces; I therefore humbly recommend him as a gentleman meriting the Royal favour.”⁹⁴

General Howe mentioned Skinner again in a letter written six months later, on 30 July, 1777, addressed to General Clinton. Howe discussed the defense of Staten Island and the important role Skinner played.⁹⁵ Any praise by the commander-in-chief of British forces speaks favorably upon Skinner and his unit.

⁹³ Allen, *Tories*, 193 and 277.

⁹⁴ Howe to German, Dec 20, 1776, accessed July 1, 2013, <http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.28308:1.amarch>.

⁹⁵ Clinton, *The American Rebellion*, 66.

British Maltreatment of the Civilian Population

The British did not consider the degree to which brutality by regulars against the civilian population of New Jersey would undermine their efforts to recruit loyalist troops and drive support to the rebellion.⁹⁶ General Howe issued protection papers for anyone willing to swear an oath to King George III during a sixty day grace period beginning on December 1, 1776. The papers were meant to protect against the looting of property and harassment of individuals loyal to the Crown by Hessian and British soldiers who considered looting a common practice.⁹⁷ Instead, what started out as legitimate foraging with the policy of paying for goods and services quickly deteriorated into blatant thievery, destruction, and rape by the Hessians and British regulars and officers alike. British senior officers, including General Howe were aware of the acts committed but unable to stop them through policies and even orders to hang anyone caught plundering.⁹⁸ General Howe believed the British Army would be unable to raise loyalist units if potential recruits, particularly those harboring some pro-independence sentiment, were alienated by the horrific actions of British and Hessian soldiers.⁹⁹ The inability to stop the abuse of New Jersey colonists with protection papers and policies also drove potentially neutral civilians to sympathize and perhaps even fight on the rebel side.

Another area that hurt the relationship was the inability to protect colonists who sided with the British. British troops entered New Jersey on November 20, 1776, when Lord Cornwallis landed at the Palisades to take Fort Lee. By December 8, 1776, Lord Cornwallis chased General

⁹⁶ Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War*, 97.

⁹⁷ Chidsey, *The Tide Turns*, 89.

⁹⁸ Fischer, *Washington's Crossing*, 173-181.

⁹⁹ Robert J. Allison, *The American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc), 41.

Washington's forces across the Delaware River and New Jersey was under British control. Thousands began to swear oaths to King George III as the survival of the rebellion seemed in jeopardy. However, General Washington's success at Trenton on December 25-26, 1776, began the retreat of British forces from New Jersey. Suddenly, colonists who had declared loyalty to the Crown were now in danger as the British could not protect them.¹⁰⁰ A similar situation occurred in Philadelphia when the British took control of the city on September 26, 1777. Many loyalists came out to offer support, but nine months later on June 18, 1778, Sir Henry Clinton, who replaced General Howe as Commander-in-Chief of British forces, was directed to give up the city and return to defend New York City after France entered the war. Loyalists who openly supported the British faced the possibility of harsh retribution if they chose to stay behind. Due to these expectations, General Clinton allowed many loyalists to accompany him upon departure from Philadelphia.¹⁰¹

1st Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers (Loyalist)

Two years before the retreat from Philadelphia was even a possibility, the first loyalist unit established in New Jersey began in June, 1776, when a group of about 60 men from Monmouth County traveled to Staten Island and offered their services to the British. On July 1, 1776, this group of men officially became the 1st Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers. The British appointed one of the group's leaders, Elisha Lawrence, as a lieutenant colonel and the unit's commander. The British also appointed John Morris, another prominent leader from the group, as a lieutenant colonel. John Morris commanded the 2nd Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers, which

¹⁰⁰ Fischer, *Washington's Crossing*, 115-136.

¹⁰¹ Allison, *The American Revolution*, 51.

would compete for recruits with the 1st Battalion.¹⁰² Portions of both battalions returned to Monmouth County in December, 1776, to recruit new members. Other members fought at Trenton during the same timeframe.¹⁰³ Eventually, the British raised four additional battalions and the New Jersey Volunteers became the largest loyalist corps in the colonies.¹⁰⁴

Engagements involving 1st Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers, concentrated around northeast Monmouth County. The towns of Freehold and Shrewsbury, together with Staten Island, formed a triangle of activity. The town of Shrewsbury formed the eastern point, and was the location of four separate engagements during the months of December 1776 and November 1777. In the north, the headquarters of the New Jersey Volunteers at Staten Island, New York, experienced three raids by rebel units. The third point of the triangle, Freehold, in the southwest was a particularly active location in December 1776, when three separate engagements occurred. The concentration of battles in this area was largely due to the battalion remaining close to British support. The battalion remained close to British support at Staten Island and Sandy Hook as well as Monmouth County, the source of most of the recruits.¹⁰⁵

However, Monmouth County appeared to be more of a supporting effort for the British military than a main effort. The British did not make a serious effort to move inland and quell rebel activity. Only the lighthouse at Sandy Hook, already noted as key terrain for the Royal

¹⁰² Todd Braisted, ed., "A History of the 2nd Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers 2001," *The On-Line Institute for Advanced Loyalist Studies*, February 1, 2001, accessed July 1, 2013, <http://www.royalprovincial.com/military/rhist/njv/2njvhist.htm>.

¹⁰³ Todd Braisted, ed., "A History of the 1st Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers," *The On-Line Institute for Advanced Loyalist Studies*, February 1, 2001, accessed July 1, 2013, <http://www.royalprovincial.com/military/rhist/njv/1njvhist.htm>.

¹⁰⁴ Adelberg, *The American Revolution*, 35.

¹⁰⁵ Todd Braisted, ed., "War Chronology," *The On-Line Institute for Advanced Loyalist Studies*, August 10, 2013, accessed August 12, 2013, <http://www.royalprovincial.com/history/chronology/chrono.shtml>.

Navy, was continuously occupied and defended. The main British activities in Monmouth County centered on procuring supplies to support the army, and at the headquarters for the New Jersey Volunteers located on Staten Island. The British traveled along the coast to conduct trade and procure supplies from the inhabitants, which the rebel Monmouth County militia tried on several occasions to stop, but failed.¹⁰⁶

The first experience of fighting for 1st Battalion occurred unexpectedly. On 15 October, 1776, rebel General Mercer led a raid to Staten Island and captured a few British and Hessian soldiers, but no men from 1st Battalion. In December, 1776, 1st Battalion returned in whole to New Jersey as part of British efforts fighting General Washington. The battalion returned to Monmouth County to recruit new members, fight rebels, and return the county to royal control. In January, 1777, about 40 men and officers took up station at the Sandy Hook lighthouse. Men from 1st Battalion would occupy Sandy Hook lighthouse until 1782. In June 1777, the battalion, with the exception of the garrison at Sandy Hook, accompanied General Howe to Staten Island as he left New Jersey to prepare for his Philadelphia Campaign. The specifics of 1st Battalion's actions for the remainder of 1777 were not well documented and few reports from the other battalions of the New Jersey Volunteers exist to offer insight into the likely actions of 1st Battalion. A few reports of engagements and actions after 1778 exist but care must be used not to draw conclusions between the time periods.¹⁰⁷ Having considered the British employment of loyalist irregular forces, the discussion now shifts to consider the rebel employment of the militia.

¹⁰⁶ Leonard Lundin, *Cockpit of the Revolution: The War for Independence in New Jersey* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1940), 249.

¹⁰⁷ Braisted, "A History of 1st Battalion."

Figure 2. Engagements involving 1st Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers

Date	Location	County	Note
15 Oct 1776	Staten Island, NY	N/A	
10 Dec 1776	Near Pennington, NJ	Hunterdon County	
12 Dec 1776	Short Hills, NJ	Essex County	
12 Dec 1776	Near Amboy, NJ	Middlesex County	
13 Dec 1776	Boundbrook, NJ	Somerset County	Capture of rebel General Charles Lee
16 Dec 1776	Freehold, NJ	Monmouth County	
20 Dec 1776	Shrewsbury, NJ	Monmouth County	
23 Dec 1776	Freehold, NJ	Monmouth County	
25 Dec 1776	Upper Freehold, NJ	Monmouth County	
18 Feb 1777	Lawrence Neck, NJ	Monmouth County	(D) 1 st Bn, (D) 2 nd Bn, (D) 3 rd Bn, and (D) 6 th Bn, New Jersey Volunteers
15 Mar 1777	Rahway, NJ	Essex County	(D) 1 st Bn
18 Aug 1777	Middletown, NJ	Monmouth County	(D) 1 st Bn
22 Aug 1777	Staten Island, NY	N/A	also (D) 2 nd Bn, 3 rd Bn, 4 th Bn, 5 th Bn, 6 th Bn, and Richmond County Militia
28 Aug 1777	Shrewsbury, NJ	Monmouth County	(D) 1 st Bn
03 Oct 1777	Shrewsbury, NJ	Monmouth County	(D) 1 st Bn
05 Nov 1777	Shrewsbury, NJ	Monmouth County	
27 Nov 1777	Staten Island, NY	N/A	also (D) 2 nd Bn, 3 rd Bn, 4 th Bn, 5 th Bn, 6 th Bn, and Richmond County Militia
	(D) = Detachment		

Source. Todd Braisted, ed, "War Chronology," *The On-Line Institute for Advanced Loyalist Studies*, August 10, 2013, accessed August 12, 2013, <http://www.royalprovincial.com/history/chronology/chrono.shtml>.

RELATIONSHIP WITH REBEL CONTINENTALS

Attesting to the impact of rebel militia, General Howe considered its impact in the justification of his actions as early as the spring of 1777. Historian Mark V. Kwasny wrote "Howe thus recognized, both after the fact and during his tenure as commander, that the presence of the

militia had to be considered.”¹⁰⁸ This section explores the rebel side and the experiences of the Monmouth County Militia (rebel) to exercise control during the winter of 1776-1777. Defining characteristics of colonial soldiers, in contrast to British soldiers, was a desire to be led rather than driven and an aversion to severe corporal punishment. Yet, the type of rebel force was not universally agreed upon by rebel leaders and both sides of the debate are presented which highlights the malleability of the rebel force to conform to the needs of the conflict. While the debate was occurring, the situation in Monmouth County required attention.

Monmouth County Militia

In November, 1776, the size and enthusiasm of the loyalist population in Monmouth County was strong enough that while Washington’s force of about 3,000 men disintegrated around him during the retreat across New Jersey, he detached the Monmouth County Militia, under the command of Colonel David Forman to put down a Tory uprising in Monmouth County.¹⁰⁹ General Washington’s orders provided Forman with general instructions, but allowed flexibility to adjust to circumstances on the ground, an example of Washington’s ability not to exert too much control over subordinate commanders.¹¹⁰ Colonel David Forman was the highest ranking Continental officer in Monmouth County, holding two military positions simultaneously, a general in the Monmouth militia and a colonel in the Continental Army.¹¹¹ Forman’s initial efforts at recruitment in May/June 1776 yielded 451 men due to the strength of the loyalists and proximity to British regulars yet declined to around 200 by December when the six month

¹⁰⁸ Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War*, 142-143.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹¹⁰ George Washington to David Forman, letter dated November 24, 1776, accessed October 22, 2013, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mgw:1:/temp/~ammem_EMUF::

¹¹¹ Adelberg, *The American Revolution*, 101-2.

enlistments neared completion. Furthermore, Forman's harsh tactics to quell loyalists between November 1776 and January 1777 hurt recruitment and coincided with hundreds of loyalists flocking to the loyalist New Jersey Volunteers.¹¹² "Throughout the next six years, New Jersey militiamen and detachments of Continentals skirmished almost constantly [with the British]. Washington encouraged, but did not always control these activities."¹¹³ But in November 1776, the militia proved unsuccessful in stopping the uprising, labeled by locals as the "Tory Ascendency" which continued through January 1777 and eventually required Continentals from Delaware and Pennsylvania to eventually put an end to the anti-rebellion activity.¹¹⁴

Debate Over Use of Militia Versus Regulars

Colonial militia, as a social institution, was very important to colonists. The militia was one of four institutions John Adams noted in 1782 that were the key to understanding American history. The other three were the towns, congregations, and schools.¹¹⁵ By 1770, less time was devoted to training and more to elegant dinners and conversing with one another. However, efforts changed with the approach of the American Revolution. Many men held simultaneous positions in the militia and public service and the hierarchy in the militia often mirrored that of political and social institutions in towns. The strong sense of service and intermingling of militia and civic service contrasted with the British soldier model already discussed.

¹¹² Ibid., 109.

¹¹³ Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War*, 315.

¹¹⁴ Michael S. Adelberg, "The Transformation of Local Governance in Monmouth County, New Jersey, during the War of the American Revolution," *Journal of the Early Republic* (Fall 2011: 467-498), 474.

¹¹⁵ Ronald L. Boucher, "The Colonial Militia as a Social Institution: Salem, Massachusetts 1764-1775," in *Military Analysis of the Revolutionary War, An Anthology by the Editors of Military Affairs* (Millwood, NY: KTO press, 1977: 35-43), 35.

Rebel leaders were divided over the type of units to employ in the rebellion against the British. Historian Paul David Nelson summarized the discussion among rebel commanders about the two types of forces, militia and regulars. For the rebels, "It is generally conceded that no commander believed that the patriot army should be composed entirely of one or the other type of troops, yet it is clear that the officers divided on what they saw as the right "mix" of the two and on how much reliance they ought to place on each type."¹¹⁶ Arguments came down to control and reliability provided by a regular army versus fear of and threats to liberty from the same force.¹¹⁷ The discussion was rooted in past experience with British regulars as well as leading militia forces.

Among the rebel officers who considered the militia a capable force were Generals Charles Lee, Horatio Gates and Benedict Arnold. General Lee, a former British officer with experience in the French and Indian War, thought New England militiamen were among the finest soldiers anywhere. General Arnold fought alongside militia on many occasions and was another commander who spoke highly of the militia.¹¹⁸ The opinions of these officers developed from their views about what the revolution should achieve and how to obtain it.¹¹⁹

General Washington led the argument for a professional force based on his experience commanding a Virginia militia unit during the Seven Years' War. His low opinion of militiamen stemmed from their lack of discipline in comparison to regulars and carried over to the beginning of the Revolutionary War. General Washington wrote to his brother, John on December 18, 1776,

¹¹⁶ Paul David Nelson, "Citizen Soldiers or Regulars: The Views of American General Officers on the Military Establishment, 1775-1781," *Military Affairs* 43, no. 3 (October 1979: 126-132), 126.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 129-130.

¹¹⁸ Allen, *Tories*, 205-207.

¹¹⁹ Nelson, "Citizen Soldiers or Regulars," 127.

and offered several reasons for the lack of success against Crown forces and poor condition of the rebel army, the principle reasons being short enlistments and over reliance on the militia.¹²⁰

Richard Montgomery, a rebel leader with British training, did not like the militia's lack of discipline either as militia had a tendency to leave camp, without warning. Yet, for every individual who went home, an equal number came forward to replace them.¹²¹

Creating a Continental Army of sufficient size to take over the entire conflict required time and more long term recruits than Washington had at the moment. Militia provided a means to buy time and keep the rebellion going. Service in the militia was every able bodied white male's duty, and in many locations, the law required adult white males to serve in the militia, although readiness and enforcement varied by location and time period.¹²² But fighting was a temporary affair and the sense of threat weakened as the distance from the individual's home and colony increased. Regardless of Washington's preference for regular forces, the militia could be effective, particularly when using tactics now associated with guerrilla or partisan warfare.

General Washington's Use of Patriotism as a Recruitment Tool

Despite General Washington's reservations about militia discipline, his writing reveals insight about his relationship with rebel military forces. In a letter to rebel governor William Livingston dated November 30, 1776, Washington wrote "I hope the four Regiments, to be raised to serve till the first of April, will be quickly full, as more dependence is to be put upon them,

¹²⁰ George Washington to John Washington, letter dated December 18, 1776, in *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, vol. 6, (Washington, DC: U.S. George Washington Bicentennial Commission, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1932), 398.

¹²¹ Nelson, "Citizen Soldiers or Regulars," 127-28.

¹²² Hugh Jameson, "Equipment for the Militia of the Middle States, 1775-1781," in *Military Analysis of the Revolutionary War, An Anthology by the Editors of Military Affairs* (Millwood, NY: KTO Press, 1977: 121-130), 121-122.

than Common Militia.”¹²³ The expectation is that whatever the state of equipping and training of the militia, expectations will be high. Washington also played to the patriotism of the militia. On December 31, 1776, Washington published a call for militia to come forth after Washington’s return to the state of New Jersey. “I most warmly request the Militia of said State at this Important Crisis to Evince their love to their Country, by boldly stepping forth and defending the Cause of Freedom.”¹²⁴ In contrast to the writing of the British, there is no mention of social status of any of the officers or men. The unit would realize success or failure based upon the unit’s efforts and performance.

Rebel Military Justice

The militia’s standard of discipline might have been lower than General Washington preferred, but the system worked well given the strengths and weaknesses of colonial society. General Washington did not like administering punitive measures against soldiers but found them necessary. An example of corporal punishment in 1776 for “plundering and stealing” brought 39 lashes, which is a light punishment when compared to 1,000 lashes commonly handed out by British officers.¹²⁵ Washington advised subordinate commanders to exercise sufficient good judgment and restraint when administering punishment, especially executions. He did not want punishment to lose its effect.¹²⁶ Furthermore, acting in a manner similar to the British may have

¹²³ George Washington to William Livingston, letter dated November 30, 1776. in *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799*. ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, vol. 6 (Washington, DC: U.S. George Washington Bicentennial Commission, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1932), 460.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Headquarters of the Continental Army at Harlem Heights, General Ordes dated September 28, 1776, accessed August 12, 2013, <http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/cgi-bin/amarch/getdoc.pl?/var/lib/philologic/databases/amarch/.23569>.

¹²⁶ Maurer, "Military Justice," 65.

blurred the distinction between friendly commanders and the enemy for willing recruits and an impressionable population.¹²⁷ Given the rocky past experience between colonists and the British army during King George's War and the French and Indian War, few colonists desired military service in an organization with such harsh punishment as the British Army.

Style of warfare

The British, and to a large extent, European, ideal image of warfare conflicted with the reality of warfare that developed in America and what would later be categorized by military historians and military theorists as irregular warfare, or *petite guerre*. European armies wanted chivalrous combat between professional soldiers, conducted face-to-face using accepted practices of conduct for the time. And while irregular troops and hired mercenaries may have been a part of the fight behind the scenes and in the periphery, the main fighting was stylized and honorable.¹²⁸ Historian John Grenier writes that "In Britain, *petite guerre* was the bastard child of a military culture that found it useful within limits but so distasteful as to be unworthy of acknowledgement as an acceptable mode of military operations. "For the eighteenth-century regular officer, *petite guerre* was not a form of war, but rather a manifestation of criminality."¹²⁹

British officers used the term "Barbarous Nations" as a derogatory term for any nation that practiced such warfare. In America, it was a key component to the primary means of waging war."¹³⁰ John Grenier offers "that war focused on noncombatant populations is itself a

¹²⁷ Nelson, "Citizen Soldiers or Regulars," 127.

¹²⁸ Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 87-88.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

fundamental part of Americans' military past, indeed, is America's first way of war."¹³¹ Russell Weigley's, *The American Way of War*, focused on regular armies, but Americans "fought outside professional military organizations for nearly 175 years before the [American] Army came into existence in 1775."¹³²

Rebel military commanders utilized a mix of regular and irregular units and tactics throughout the war. John Morgan Dederer succinctly summarized the transition between regular and irregular tactics,

American military efforts sometimes followed the Old World pattern in the coastal areas. Certain generals, such as Major Generals Charles Lee and Horatio Gates, had served in the British army, but by their frequent use of thin skirmish lines, highly mobile forces, night marches, winter campaigns, and hit-and-run tactics revealed New World fighting methods alien to the conventional eighteenth-century practice. Today, actions of this nature are called guerrilla or partisan warfare.¹³³

Another example took place in June, 1777, when Daniel Morgan, a colonel in the Continental Army, used a hand-selected group of 500 Continentals to harass the British near New Brunswick, New Jersey.¹³⁴ Higginbotham noted "the Americans did resort to guerrilla tactics when the British left the coastal plains and plunged into the interior, a region mainly unsuited to European combat and inhabited by backcountry men who fought according to their own rules." Discussing the Southern Campaign of 1780-1781, historian John Morgan Dederer drew attention to another American general, Nathanael Greene. Greene's style of guerrilla warfare was ahead of its time, and had more in common with individuals who lived 150 years later like, Mao Zedong and Vo

¹³¹ Ibid., 2.

¹³² Ibid., 4.

¹³³ John Morgan Dederer, *Making Bricks Without Straw: Nathanael Greene's Southern Campaign and Mao Tse-Tung's Mobile War* (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 1983), 133.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 139.

Nguyen Giap, than with Greene's contemporary generals.¹³⁵ Rebel use of tactics suited to the terrain rather than an idealized notion of warfare highlights the adaptive nature of rebel leaders and their willingness to incorporate techniques that worked.

CONCLUSION

One problem with drawing conclusions about a relationship that occurred 250 years ago is that much of the coordination was conducted face-to-face and involved communication, both verbal and non-verbal which is just not possible to know. Accurately determining a relationship from the private and public writings of a few individuals illuminates only a portion of the complete picture. There is much left to fill in that can never be completely known. In light of these limitations, a few insights are worth noting.

First, while relationships existed between British and colonial Provincial units prior to the Revolutionary War, as already noted during King George's War and the French and Indian War, the relationships were not maintained or made official after the termination of those conflicts. British and Hessian officers and soldiers did not know each other or the loyalist officers and soldiers they would fight alongside. For the British, Hessians and loyalist counterparts, viable working relationships had to be built from scratch. The difficulty and necessity of building positive working relationships between coalition partners remains a challenge for militaries to this day, and is reflected in United States Army and Joint doctrine as a priority for commanders at all levels of war. The United States Army captures the importance of the commander's ability to build relationships in Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-0, Mission Command. The document states "[e]ffective commanders build cohesive teams in an environment of mutual trust. There are few shortcuts to gaining the trust of others. Developing trust takes time, and it must be

¹³⁵ Ibid.

earned.”¹³⁶ Commanders are expected to build trust within and between organizations which first requires a degree of interaction.

Recent examples demonstrate efforts by the United States Army to develop trust and relationships globally such as the integration of foreign officers in Professional Military Education at the Command and General Staff College, and other army schools and rotating units overseas. While the effectiveness of short deployments and rotating forces is debatable, the purpose is to develop personal and cultural relationships between individual soldiers. Other examples include the alignment of United States forces throughout the world. Recognizing the importance of language, cultural experience, and partnerships, United States Army Special Operations Forces (Special Forces, Military Information Support Operations, and Civil Affairs) align regionally and strive to maintain ties with regional military partners at the personal and unit level through deployments, exercises, unit exchanges and other programs. The shift of the General Purpose Force towards regional alignment of Brigades and Divisions is a similar attempt to foster relationships, not just in Europe, but globally.

The rotation of Brigade Combat Teams to Europe as part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Response Force, although involving only regular forces, is an attempt to continuously maintain relationships with European militaries. The commander of NATO Allied Land Command, Lieutenant General Frederick “Ben” Hodges, believes the rotation serves as a means to “maintain and grow the ability of forces from across NATO to work together.”¹³⁷ The

¹³⁶ US Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-0, Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 2012), 2-4.

¹³⁷ Michelle Tan, "U.S. commits BCT to NATO rotation," *Army Times*, July 22, 2013, accessed August 12, 2013, <http://www.armytimes.com/article/20130722/NEWS/307220008/U-S-commits-BCT-NATO-rotation>.

rotation of forces will also maintain interoperability and attempt to prevent loss of relationships and lessons learned from fighting alongside NATO partners in Afghanistan.

A more recent example of the United States incorporating irregulars was the Sons of Iraq. “It was not until the Sons of Iraq stood up that bloodshed fell fast enough; without them, our findings suggest that Iraq’s violence would still have been at mid-2006 levels when the surge ended.”¹³⁸ Forming irregular units to assist in establishing security at the local level demonstrates the utility of irregular forces. Local knowledge is not easily obtained by regular forces operating in an unfamiliar environment, and organizations like the Sons of Iraq highlight how irregular forces can impact the situation. Careful attention should be paid to ensure the relationship is positive for both sides.

Another lesson the U.S. Army can draw from the experience of the British military interacting with the loyalist militias is the influence of biases and past experiences, not only in their own forces but among the local populace and other armed groups. Colonists, the British military and the British government’s experiences during both King George’s War and the French and Indian War laid the framework for the role and relationship between the British Army and colonial forces. Both the British military and colonial troops took different lessons from these conflicts. Even the history and experience of the population in dealing with military forces impacts relations which is why military leaders can benefit from an awareness of biases and prejudices towards military force when approaching a new or ongoing situation. Effort may be required to overcome past experiences to gain the trust of irregular units and to understand each party’s experience and expectations for military units to gain a common framework. Once established a plan can be developed for future interaction.

¹³⁸ Stephen Biddle, Jeffrey A. Friedman, and Jacob N. Shapiro, “Testing the Surge,” *International Security* 37, no. 1 (Summer 2012): 36.

The preference for an idealistic and chivalrous style of warfare prevented acceptance of irregular warfare and inhibited the use of nontraditional techniques that may have been successful in suppressing the rebellion. The British had experience with irregular warfare techniques, or *petite guerre*, prior to the American Revolutionary War in places like Ireland, Scotland, and even North America. Yet, this type of warfare was discounted among British military officers despite their experiences due to a difference in values developed over time. British subjects living in the colonies required values distinct from British subjects living in Britain. Americans valued autonomy and independence and thus were willing to undertake the distributed tactics necessary to wage a *petite guerre* successfully. The British rigid adherence to its system of privileged hierarchy and the sustainment of the continental system of warfare became a source of tension rather than a source of cooperation. Similar sources of tension are likely to exist wherever U.S. military forces operate in future conflicts and may present a significant challenge if not identified and addressed in a productive manner.

Finally, as General Howe and Colonel Skinner discovered with the New Jersey Volunteers, standing up a unit is a difficult task that takes time. Even given the same language and supposedly similar culture, background, and status as subjects of the same king, the process was difficult. The British experience of an insufficient quantity and quality of soldiers was not an isolated occurrence in history, a situation often complicated by British biases and prejudices nearly two hundred years later. During World War II, Field-Marshal Viscount William Slim, commander of Allied forces in Burma and India, had subordinate commanders asking for Indian soldiers rather than British soldiers because of regimental history bias.¹³⁹ The length of time required to raise units is a reason to maintain relationships between units and a consideration when considering military operations in an area where there is little information known about

¹³⁹ William Slim, *Defeat into Victory* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000), 376-377.

indigenous forces.

Militaries are more effective when using every asset available, including irregular forces. General Washington discovered this at Trenton, when the presence of militia provided him with opportunities as well as challenges. The British, in contrast, did not learn this lesson in time to win the Revolutionary War. The interaction between regular and irregular forces is a recurring theme in contemporary conflicts and the United States' military acknowledges this concept through the discussion of joint and coalition forces. Examples are numerous from recent history. Special Operations Forces used irregular forces (Northern Alliance) to overthrow the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001. In Iraq, coalition forces used Sons of Iraq (Sunnis) to help establish and maintain order beginning in late 2005. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization supported rebels in Libya against Gaddafi in Operation ODYSSEY DAWN in 2010. The experiences of the British Army during the winter of 1776-1777 show there is a need to coordinate and build a positive working relationship with irregular forces. That some sort of relationship between regular and irregular forces exists is a recurring theme in military operations globally. Irregular forces are a component of conflict and bring inherent limitations and advantages. The side that interacts most effectively will benefit, while the side that fails to utilize these forces may experience challenges guiding the situation towards a favorable outcome.

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