

As General George Washington's Main Army lived out the winter in February 1781 in the Hudson Highlands checking British General Sir Henry Clinton's garrison in New York City, the Commander in Chief was confronting challenges to the American cause from Lieutenant General Charles Lord Cornwallis's campaign in the Southern Theater and the aftereffects of mutinies by troops within the Pennsylvania and New Jersey Lines. The Pennsylvania Line had mutinied at Morristown, New Jersey, on January 1st over accumulated grievances about terms of enlistment, pay, and harsh living conditions. Brigadier General Anthony Wayne, the hero of Stony Point, and President of the Pennsylvania Council Joseph Reed, backed by a Committee of Congress, negotiated a settlement with a Board of Sergeants that neutralized the threat to the Continental Congress and resulted in the discharge of more than half of the men in the regiments and a furlough for all. Washington had acted more forcefully against the mutineers of the New Jersey Line at Pompton, New Jersey, on January 27th. He personally supervised Major General Robert Howe's actions as he surrounded the camp with troops from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, disarmed the mutineers, and tried and executed two of the ring leaders on the spot. Determined action in both cases had restored discipline to the army.

As the situation in New Jersey returned to normal, good news arrived from the South. On January 17th, Brigadier General Daniel Morgan had defeated Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton's British Legion at Cowpens, South Carolina. "Bloody" Tarleton lost 100 killed and 229 wounded as a result of Morgan's skillful management of his mixed Continental and militia force. General Cornwallis would pursue Major General Nathanael Greene's southern army across North Carolina to Virginia through the month of February. When Greene's troops crossed the Dan River into the old Dominion, Cornwallis lost his chance to link up with Arnold's force, setting the stage for the bloody battle of Guilford Courthouse on March 15th. Greene had already shown his skill as a master operational commander who lost battles but won campaigns.

The almost 5,000 troops at West Point and its dependencies were dealing with the normal wet and cold conditions of winter even as they prepared for present and future dangers. On February 1st, Colonel Thomas Pickering, the Quartermaster General, would learn that "the new road to West Point is so far opened, as to be passable by Sleighs" allowing flour to "be thrown directly into the Garrison by that way. . . ." Carpenters and soldiers on fatigue details had logs "at a landing about two Miles above Newburgh" "in tolerable forwardness" so that the Great Chain could be floated across the Hudson River in the early spring. Washington alerted a corps of 1,200 light infantry troops to assemble at Peekskill on the 19th under the command of the French General the Marquis de Lafayette for movement first to Morristown, New Jersey, and then to Virginia to confront the threat posed by British Brigadier General Benedict Arnold's expedition, which had occupied Richmond from January 5-7. The light infantry companies comprised picked troops of five feet six inches to five feet ten inches in height from each of the line regiments whose "appearance and behaviour" made them fitting representatives of the rest of the Army.

To learn more about the Revolution in the Hudson River Valley in this the 225th anniversary of the War for Independence, log onto www.hudsonrivervalley.net and www.hudsonrivervalley.com. The fall issue of *Hudson River Valley Review* spotlights the Civil War, America's Second American Revolution; to subscribe see <http://www.hudsonrivervalley.net/hrvr/subscribe/index.php>. Huzza from the Hudson Highlands.